



# **Glastonbury Dog Park Manual**

Guidelines, Park Rules & Information



**Glastonbury Parks and Recreation**

<http://dogpark.glastonbury-ct.gov>

(860) 652-7679

Revised 3.28.11

## **Why a Dog Park?**

Dogs are such an important part of many people's lives today. Being social creatures, dogs like to interact--both with the humans they live with and with other dogs. A dog park is designed as a fenced area where dogs can exercise and socialize without having to remain on a leash.

Until recently, it was unlawful for dogs to be off-leash on Town owned land including public parks and open space areas. In 2008, a group of Glastonbury residents expressed the desire to develop a place where dogs could be allowed to run off-leash legally. With support from the Glastonbury Town Council, several Town owned properties were reviewed and evaluated for their suitability as a public dog park. After careful review, a 2 acre site within the Riverfront Park, 200 Welles Street, was designated for the development of a dog park.

From 2008-2011, an ad hoc group of Glastonbury residents worked together to raise the funds needed to build the dog park. The group also helped formulate the rules for park use and was an integral part of the park's design. With over 2,500 licensed dogs in Glastonbury, it is anticipated that the park will be well used by Glastonbury's dog owners and lovers. The dog park is the one legal, public, off-leash area that has been set aside for dogs.

The Glastonbury Dog Park offers many benefits including:

- A safe and controlled environment for dogs to play and exercise.
- A well-shaded designated off-leash area for dogs and dog owners to socialize with each other.
- Encouraging responsible dog ownership by promoting dog licensing, vaccination, and clean up.

## **Where is the Dog Park?**

The Dog Park is located at the Riverfront Park on 200 Welles Street. The 2 acre site has several positive attributes including:

- Existing Infrastructure (access, parking, utilities)
- A handicap accessible route
- Synergy with other park uses
- Compatibility with surrounding neighborhood
- Central, well known location
- Ease of development and maintenance
- Both open and shaded areas

## **Hours**

The Dog Park is open daily from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset. For the security of everyone, please do not visit the park outside of these hours.

## **Dog Park Amenities**

- 2 acres with wood chip surface
- Five-foot-high perimeter fencing and a double-gated entrances
- Water fountain with watering station for dogs is available seasonally April through November
- Accessible parking area and route for people with disabilities
- Benches
- Waste bag dispenser and garbage cans for dog waste
- small dog fenced area with separate gate entrance
- Accessible Port-a-Potty
- Dog play elements within the park

## **Rules & Regulations**

Dogs may be allowed off leash within the fenced area of the dog park subject to the rules and regulations set forth below:

- Owners/attendants are responsible for the acts and conduct of their dog at all times when it is in a Town park. Park users and dog owners/attendants assume all risks related to use of the dog park.
- Park Hours: One half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset.
- Smoking and food are not allowed within the dog park.
- All dogs must have valid rabies vaccinations and wear tag on collar. If tag is lost, dog attendant must be prepared to provide current rabies vaccination paperwork on demand.
- All dogs six months and older must wear license on collar.
- Females in heat, sick dogs, aggressive dogs and dogs under four months of age are not allowed.
- Dogs with a known history of aggressive or dangerous behavior are not allowed.
- Dogs must be on a leash when entering and exiting the off-leash area.
- Attendants must keep a leash in hand for each dog at all times.
- Dogs must be within sight and under voice control of their attendant at all times.
- Users are limited to two dogs per person at any one time.
- Children under the age of 16 are not allowed in the park unless accompanied by an attendant 16 years of age or older.
- Choke, prong, pinch, spiked and electronic collars must be removed when your dog is in the park.
- Dogs that display either aggressive or dangerous behavior must be immediately leashed and removed.
- Attendants must immediately cleanup and remove dog feces left by their dog. Attendants must possess a device for feces removal. Waste must be disposed of in proper receptacles.
- Attendants are responsible for filling holes and repairing damage caused by their dog.
- Dog treats, chews and dog bones are not allowed in the park.
- Pets other than dogs are not allowed in the park.
- Bikes, strollers, baby carriages, skateboards, skates, rollerblades and motorized vehicles are not allowed.

## **Recommendations for Fun and Safety**

- Do not open the outside gate if an inside gate is open.
- Check all entrances before unleashing your dog.
- Dogs should receive year-round heartworm prevention treatment.
- Have drinking water readily available for your dog before and especially after exercise.
- ALL dogs benefit from guidance and structure. Basic obedience is a must for a well-socialized happy dog.
- Children under the age of 16 are not allowed in the park unless accompanied by an attendant 16 years of age or older.

## Potential Risks

The Glastonbury Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide a fun, safe environment for you and your dog, however, by using this facility you agree that you understand and assume all responsibility and liability for the risks associated with use of this facility. Potential risks include, but are not limited to:

- Infectious diseases such as rabies, kennel cough or Lyme disease
- Dog theft or unlawful capture by other people
- Dog escapes over or under fences
- Park vegetation that may have burrs or seeds that could get tangled in a dog's coat or lodge in a dog's feet, ears, or eyes
- Mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, fleas or other insects that may be present
- Dog fights, dog bites and injuries to humans and other dogs
- Wild animals in the parks such as skunks, raccoons, or stray dogs, all of which might injure or infect your dog.

While it may be tempting to stand back and be a passive observer, all users will have a much more rewarding experience if basic rules are actively observed. Use of the Dog Park is not a right; it is a privilege. Please do not allow unacceptable or irresponsible behavior to ruin the fun for other users.

## Children and Dogs

**Children under 16 years of age are not allowed in the dog park unless supervised by someone age 16 or older.** Young children are easily knocked over or trampled by running dogs. Herding dogs may nip at children while attempting to round them up. This is the dog's park. Not all dogs are child-friendly. Never allow any child to approach or pet a dog without the owner's presence and approval.

## Play or Fight? Know Your Dog!

Before you use the Dog Park, know your dog! Check your ego at the gate and be realistic rather than idealistic when it comes to your dog's temperament.

Be aware that dogs have different play styles, temperaments and physical abilities. Many dogs love rambunctious play, but some dogs suffer from injuries and some are more timid and aloof. Some dogs have rough play styles and can be overpowering though non-aggressive. Mounting can initiate a potentially harmful situation. If your dog is visibly stressing another dog-- please remove your dog to another part of the park. Don't wait for someone to ask you to do the polite thing. Remember, a little common sense and courtesy go a long way when the success of the Dog Park relies on the people who use it. Always respect the wishes of the handler and be prepared to move to another area of the park if your dog is too rambunctious. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting aggressively. Aggressive dogs are not allowed and are not appreciated by others. No matter how cute you think he is and no matter how much you want your dog to be able to use the park, if he's acting aggressively he needs to be removed.

## Prevent a Dog Fight Before It Happens-Learn the 4-P Warning Signs

- **Posture:** A dog's body language can communicate fear, hostility or submission. Learn to read and respond to your own dog's body language, and others.
- **Packing:** More than 2 or 3 dogs packed together can lead to trouble. Break it up before it starts by leading your dog to a neutral area at least 30 feet away.
- **Possession:** Whether it's you, a ball, or a treat, most dogs will protect what is theirs. Remain aware.
- **Provoking:** If your dog is continuously annoying another dog, or provoking attention, it's time to leave the park.

## What You Can Do To Prevent a Fight

- Pay attention to your dog and be aware of where he is and what he is doing at all times.
- Stay close enough to control or protect your dog in the face of a potential fight.
- Keep a collar on your dog at all times so you have something to grab, if needed.
- It is recommended that you not bring dog toys or balls to the Dog Park. Toys may provoke possessive or aggressive conduct.
- Leave the Park. Some days it's just a bad mix. Go for a walk or come back later. You and your dog will be better off.

## What You Can Do If a Fight Occurs

- Never reach your hands into the middle of a dogfight. You may get bit, and often by your own dog.
- Distract the dogs and divert their attention. A blast of water from a water bottle, a loud whistle, or a pocket air horn may work.
- If your dog is not in the fight, make sure he does not join in.
- If a fight occurs, control your dog and remove him to a neutral area.
- Maintain a cool head. Getting upset and yelling will only add to the frenzy.
- When warranted, exchange contact information with the other dog owners. If you can't because you must attend to your dog, designate someone else to get information.
- **Attitude:** Even the calmest, most pleasant, well-adjusted person may become upset, angry or belligerent, if they or their dog is injured in a fight. Emotional behavior often occurs. Try to remain calm and as objective as possible.
- **Legal Responsibility:** Owners are solely liable for injuries or damage caused by their dogs. This includes injury to another dog or person, no matter how it began, who said what, or whatever.
- **Exchange Information:** All involved parties should provide pertinent information including name, address, phone numbers and vaccination records to each other.
- **Report the Incident:** Minor scuffles occur frequently. If a dog clearly exhibits aggressive or dangerous behavior and the attendant refuses to remove the dog, remove yourself and your dog from harms way and, contact the police. In the case of a serious fight where a dog is injured, contact the police to report the incident immediately.

A dogfight can be violent and is upsetting to everyone present.

## Your Dog Is Your Personal Property. You Are Legally Responsible for Damage or Injury Caused by Your Dog!

### What to Do if a Dog Bite Occurs

The dog park is in the Town of Glastonbury and any bites should be reported to the Glastonbury Police immediately by calling (860)633-8301. See section 22-358 (Dog Bite Statute) of the CT. General Statutes for additional information on dog bites.

A dog bite to a human or another animal should be reported.

- Immediately secure the biting dog and the victim dog. Leash them and keep separated.
- Any wounds should be washed immediately with clean water.
- Owners of dogs involved should exchange names, addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Owners should then take their dog home or to a veterinarian for necessary medical care. If a bite has occurred to a person, consult a physician.

## Dog Etiquette

- **On leash or off?** Believe it or not, many dog parks request dogs to be off leash, unless dog and owner are specifically traveling from one end of the park to the other. Off-leash dogs intimidate leashed dogs. When leashed, a dog knows he doesn't have the same freedom of movement and tends to react defensively or fearfully. You may want to let him run around with the leash still attached, so you can grab him at a greater distance, if need be.
- **Dog fights.** Because they are on "neutral territory" in a park, dogs have less to fight about. Even territorial Dogs often become friendlier when off their home turf. However, fights do occur occasionally. Dogs that have the most fun at parks are those that have been well socialized at an early age.
- **Health issues.** It is extremely important for your dog to have up-to-date vaccinations (rabies and distemper, for instance). Likewise, don't bring your dog if he's not feeling well. He may get even sicker or make someone else's dog ill.

## Human Etiquette

- **Scoop the poop.** The biggest complaints arise when nature calls. The park is NOT a convenient place to let your dog do its business. Scooping the poop is always the responsibility of the owner. Bags and trash cans are available at the Dog Park entrance to make this necessary task easier. Take one when you enter so that you will have it with you when needed.
- **Overly friendly dogs.** Think of your dog's behavior as a reflection on your own manners. Is it polite to let a child run up to strangers and kiss them repeatedly? (Hopefully, you answered no to that one.) Well, it isn't polite to let your dog run up to other people uninvited and plant sloppy kisses on them either. This is a major complaint at dog parks.
- **Supervise children closely.** Children under sixteen are not allowed in the Dog Park unless supervised by someone age 16 or older. This is because young children may become frightened by a friendly dog, or could get knocked down and hurt accidentally.

## New to the Dog Park?

- If your dog shows aggressive behavior, take it out of the park. It can endanger other dogs and dog owners. Please do not be afraid to encourage other park users to remove their dog if it exhibits inappropriate behavior.
- Ease your dog into the park atmosphere. Plan visits during off-hours (weekends and weekdays after 3 p.m. are the most crowded).
- Always keep a leash handy.
- Allow your dog to meet and greet other dogs. They need to establish a relationship and feel comfortable with each other.
- Keep dogs away from entry gates. They may intimidate newly arriving dogs or dash out the gate.
- Always clean up after your dog. Waste bags and trash cans are provided at the park entrance.

## Questions or Concerns?

If you are concerned that someone has violated the law (dog bite, dog fight, not properly disposing of pet waste), even after receiving considerate requests from others to comply, please do not hesitate to call for help from the Glastonbury Police Department. Do not confront combative or argumentative individuals, just call the authorities or leave the park (and call the authorities). **Contact the Glastonbury Police Department at (860)633-8301.** The police department will not respond to spats between dog owners over dog etiquette.