

Dog Run Etiquette and User Safety

Dog runs are designated fenced-up spaces for dogs to interact in a safe area, free from risks of traffic accidents and unintended conflict with other users of public spaces. Although these spaces allow dogs to run off-leash and interact freely with others, there are necessary considerations to be taken to ensure safe and enjoyable use of the runs.

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Double-gated entrance(s) and exit(s)

- Double gates are installed in most dog runs to allow for safer entry and exit of users. When used sensibly, they prevent unleashed dogs from accidentally leaving the dog run, getting lost, and meeting with road traffic accidents or conflicting with other park users.
- Sensible use of double gates:
 - o One user at a time, please. If someone is exiting the run, wait for them to do so before entering.
 - o Check that the double-gated area is clear of any unsupervised or unleashed dogs before opening either gate.
 - o Remove your dog's leash *in between* the double gates before opening the inner gate to the dog run area. This will help prevent injuries to necks as dogs tend to bolt into the run area once the inner gate is opened.
 - o Remember to leash your dog up before returning to the main park area.
- Scheduled dog breeds may be unleashed but must remain muzzled while in dog runs.
 - o Click [here](#), or visit the last section of this document, for the list of scheduled dog breeds and related rules

Condition of dogs when visiting dog runs

- Healthy
 - o Free from signs of ill-health, such as lethargy, abnormal discharges, sneezing, coughing, vomiting or diarrhoea.
 - o No open wounds.
 - o Not in the midst of recovering from surgeries or procedures.
- Up to date with preventative healthcare
 - o Vaccinations
 - Vaccinations are evidence-based practices to protect individuals and populations against infectious diseases. They safeguard animal health and welfare and protect public human health by reducing potentially zoonotic diseases and combatting antimicrobial resistance.
 - Click [here](#) to download the Singapore Vaccination Guidelines for Dogs and Cats, produced as a joint effort between the Animal and Veterinary Service (AVS) and the Singapore Veterinary Association (SVA).
 - Speak to your veterinarian about the appropriate vaccinations for your dog.

- o Parasite preventatives
 - Dogs can get affected by various types of parasites that cause discomfort and sickness.
 - Parasites that commonly affect unprotected dogs include ticks, fleas, mites, gastrointestinal worms, and heartworm. They can be transmitted by direct contact with other infected animals, the environment, or insects such as mosquitoes.
 - Parasite preventatives are available as chewable tablets and spot-on liquids applied to skin. They should be given at regular intervals, as directed by your veterinarian or the product instructions.
 - If your dog is not currently on heartworm preventatives, a blood test may be needed before starting it to avoid adverse complications. Speak to your veterinarian to find out more.
- Trained in basic obedience
 - o Dogs should be able to “sit” and “stay” on cue, amidst distractions (i.e. in a public setting, in the dog run).
 - o They should also be able to return to your side promptly when called (recall-trained).
 - o Basic obedience training help manage dogs when they are off-leash and is particularly important in emergencies. For example, recalling a dog may diffuse a tense situation and prevent a dog fight from breaking out.
- Well-socialised
 - o Socialisation is the process of teaching dogs to enjoy social interactions and be comfortable with other animals, people, places and situations. This should take place in a controlled environment through positive experiences, before the dog is introduced to dog runs.
 - o Dogs should only be brought to dog runs if they are comfortable interacting with other dogs without showing signs of fear or aggression.
 - o However, it is important that even well-socialised dogs are supervised during play times at the dog run to look out for behavioural signs of distress.
 - o If you dog has been socialised and is being introduced to a dog run for the first time, or if your dog is more shy or timid, it is advised to visit dog runs during off-peak hours or when it is less crowded.
 - General off-peak hours: Weekday mornings and afternoons.
 - Note that the weather during non-peak hours may be warm (especially in the afternoon) so do monitor your pet for signs of heat stress (see below).

- Sterilised/ Neutered
 - o Surgical sterilisation is a routine procedure advised to owners for dogs' health and behavioural benefit.
 - o Some benefits of sterilisation:
 - Protection against conditions of the reproductive tract and organs associated to reproductive hormones (e.g. cancers, infections, etc.)
 - Avoid unplanned pregnancies and unwanted litters
 - o Side note: Sterilising female dogs before their first heat cycle greatly reduces the risk of mammary (breast) cancer. If female dogs are not spayed by their first heat cycle, the risk of mammary cancer increases from 0.5% to 8%; and after the second heat cycle, to 26%.
 - o Please read the next section if your female dog is not sterilised.
- Not "in heat" (for female dogs/ bitches)
 - o Unsterilised female dogs go through phases of the reproductive cycle where they are fertile (i.e. capable to get pregnant and reproduce). Going to the dog run during these times may result in unwanted pregnancies and/or unnecessary stress in dogs.
 - o Female dog may get stressed being chased by a group of male dogs and attack the male dogs if she is not ready to mate, while male dogs may exhibit signs of aggression towards each other in competition for the female.
 - o When female dogs are "in heat" (proestrus phase), the vulva swells up and a thick, red-coloured bloody discharge is released from there. Male dogs are attracted to female dogs because of the female hormones released but female dogs do not allow mating at this point (they may attack male dogs).
 - o After 7-10 days, females enter the oestrus phase and their vulval discharge becomes watery and less red in colour. The female dog accepts male dogs to mate with her, standing firmly with her tail lifted during this phase. The oestrus phase lasts for about 9 days but can range from 3 to 18 days in normal situations.
 - o Pregnancies are likely to follow if mating occurs around the onset of the oestrus phase (5 days before oestrus starts, to 7 days after the onset of oestrus).
 - o However, there are variations in cycle lengths among individual dogs, and sperm can survive in the female reproductive tract for up to a week.
 - o Therefore, it is best to only bring sterilised dogs to the run, or at least avoid bringing unsterilised female dogs that have any vulval discharges/ are in the fertile period of their reproductive cycle (i.e. avoid bringing unsterilised female dogs to the dog run in the first two weeks after the onset of the heat cycle).

- o If dogs mate, a copulatory tie forms between male and female dog. Separating dogs during a tie will be painful for both dogs and will not prevent a pregnancy from ensuing. So, if your dog mates in the dog run, wait for the tie to be complete then bring them to your veterinarian for advice and follow ups to manage the situation.

Preparation before going to a dog run

What to know

- Familiarise yourself with dog behaviour
 - o Recognise signs of distress such as lip licking and cowering with its ears back (see below for more).
- Note on children
 - o Young children below 12 years of age should not enter dog runs to avoid accidents as they may get knocked over or frightened by excited or unfamiliar dogs.
 - o Children who enter dog runs must be actively supervised by an adult.
 - o Adults should teach children how to interact respectfully with dogs- to be calm around them, not to chase, shout/scream at or grab them.
- Each owner should only bring the number of dogs that they can comfortably supervise, with 1 or 2 dogs being advised.
- If bringing treats to the dog run, feed them directly into your dog's mouth instead of leaving treats on the ground.
 - o Dogs may show aggression related to resource-guarding if food is left on the ground.
 - o Some dogs may be allergic to certain foods so only feed other dogs with their owner's permission.
- Human food
 - o Avoid bringing and consuming human food within the dog runs. If you have to bring food in, keep them out of the dogs' sight and reach.
- Dog toys are discouraged to avoid resource-guarding aggression among dogs.

What to bring

- Water bottles and drinking bowls
- Poop bags
- Dog collar or harness
- Dog leash

When at a dog run

- Always supervise and prevent your dog from causing annoyance or nuisance, or damage to or interference with any plant, property or other animal (Parks and Tree Regulations).
 - o Move your dog away from the entrance of the dog run to prevent unwanted escaping and mobbing behaviour, the latter of which may cause incoming dogs to feel overwhelmed.
- Observe your dog's behaviour
 - o Dogs communicate their emotional state to us through their body language. Understanding this can help prevent distress and the development of negative associations and experiences with other dogs and people in the dog run. Reading your dog's body language accurately can also minimise the risks of undesirable or dangerous behaviours (e.g. dog bites or fights).
 - o Dogs show behaviours in response to threats to either appease or avert them. These help dogs avoid the need for aggression and its associated injuries.
 - o Behavioural responses are often related to the intensity of its distress. A dog's behaviour can escalate from something manageable (e.g. lip-licking, avoidance) to something that is dangerous (e.g. growling, snapping) if not removed from the situation/ threat. The Canine Ladder of Aggression reflects the behaviours observed when dogs are experiencing increasing levels of distress.
 - o When dogs show signs of distress, owners should take measures early to de-escalate the situation e.g. through removing dogs from a group of playing dogs or from bringing the dog out of the dog run for a period of time.
 - o The table below lists the signs of distress that may be observed in dogs:

Table 1: Table listing signs of distress in dogs

Mild to moderate levels of distress	Moderate to severe levels of distress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excessive lip or nose licking, yawning, or shaking off - Turning away of the head and body - Walking away - Showing whites of the eyes - Cowering and keeping its head down and ears back - Tucking its tail between its legs - Rolling onto its back - Actively running away or backing away from other dogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tensing and stiffening up its body and tail - Staring intensely - Standing tall on all fours and raising the hairs on its body - Growling and/or teeth baring - Snapping - Biting 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dogs in this state are feeling uncomfortable. - They <u>should be removed from the situation</u> to prevent their level of distress from escalating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dogs in this state are feeling threatened and will likely inflict physical harm to eliminate the threat. - They should be <u>removed from the situation and/or dog run immediately</u> to de-escalate the situation.

- Heat stress and heat stroke
 - o Unlike humans, dogs cannot sweat to cool down. They can only pant.
 - o An increase of just 2 degrees in a dog’s body temperature can start causing signs of heat stroke, which can cause be fatal in as little as 15 minutes.
 - o Heat stroke can cause severe and even permanent organ or damage and failure.
 - o Dogs at higher risk:
 - Dogs with thick fur coats (e.g. Huskies, Chow Chows);
 - Short snouts (e.g. pugs, French bulldogs, Pekinese);
 - Pre-existing health conditions (e.g. heart disease, obesity);
 - Previous incidences of heat stroke; and/or
 - Recent relocation from a cooler climate
 - o The following table lists the signs of heat stress and the precautions and remedial actions that owners should be aware of:

Table 2: Signs of heat stress in dogs

Signs of heat stress in dogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excessive panting and drooling - Reddened gums - Thick, sticky saliva - Vomiting or diarrhoea - Lethargy - Being slow to respond to stimuli in its environment e.g. being called - Being unable to walk properly - Collapsing in severe cases, requiring veterinary intervention
Preventative/ Remedial action to take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit dog runs during cooler hours of the day - Offer water for drinking - Limit play durations or put play time on hold - Bring your dog to a cool shaded area - Pour some water on your dog’s body (cool water, not icy cold) - If symptoms are severe, contact your vet or the nearest emergency vet immediately

- Dog fights
 - o In peace time, occasionally call out to your dog and positively reinforce its return to your side with verbal praises, physical pets, or treats fed directly to its mouth.
 - o Recognise signs of distress early and start separating dogs as soon as warning signs are seen.
 - o In case of dog fights:
 - Try breaking up the fight by distracting with loud noises or water.
 - Use large objects like backpacks or towels to separate dogs while providing a visual barrier between the dogs.
 - Never use your bare hands or body to get in between two fighting dogs and avoid reaching for their collars as you may get bitten.

When leaving a dog run

- Dispose of waste and dog poop appropriately
- Remove any uneaten dog food or treats
- Wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly
- Leash your dogs before returning to the main park area
- Bring along all your belongings

After leaving a dog run

- Provide a quiet and undisturbed space at home for your dog to rest.
- Ensure water is available and encourage your dog to drink and rehydrate.
- Check for any bodily wounds and monitor for changes in behaviour and/or activity. Sudden changes in behaviour (e.g. biting when usually receptive to touch) and/or activity (e.g. hiding more) may be signs of pain arising from unknown or unobserved injuries during play, whereby veterinary attention may then be warranted.

Faulty equipment reporting

- To report damaged or faulty equipment, please use the OneService Mobile App. You may scan the first QR code below to download it:



Please use the OneService App or Kaki, the OneService Chatbot to submit feedback on municipal issues in your 'hood!

OneService App	WhatsApp	Telegram
		
	+65 9821 9004	@OneServiceSGBot

Scheduled breeds of dogs

Breeds of dogs listed in the Second Schedule of the Animals and Birds (Dog Licensing and Control) Rules

List of Specified Dogs (with effect from 15 Nov 2010)

Part I

1. Pit Bull, which includes the American Pit Bull Terrier (which is also known as the American Pit Bull and Pit Bull Terrier), American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Bulldog, and crosses between them and other breeds
2. Akita
3. Neapolitan Mastiff
4. Tosa
5. Dogo Argentino
6. Fila Brasileiro
7. Boerboel
8. Perro De Presa Canario (moved from Part II to Part 1 wef 15 Nov 2010)
9. Crosses of 1 to 8.

Part II

1. Bull Terrier
2. Doberman Pinscher

3. Rottweiler

4. German Shepherd Dog with its related breeds such as the Belgian Shepherd Dog and the East European Shepherd Dog

5. Mastiffs, including the Bull Mastiff, Cane Corso and Dogue De Bordeaux

6. Crosses of 1 to 5.

Summary of Additional Licensing Conditions with effect from 15 Nov 2010

Part I Specified Dogs

1. Dogs must be leashed and securely muzzled when in a public place

2. Dogs must be microchipped

3. Dogs must be sterilised if over six months of age

4. The licensee must take up an insurance policy for at least \$100,000 coverage against injury to persons and damage to property

5. The licensee must take up banker's guarantee of \$5,000

6. Any existing banker's guarantee would be forfeited for non-compliance and the licensee must take up a fresh banker's guarantee of \$5,000.

7. Newly licensed dogs must undergo obedience training (Note : With effect from 15 Nov 2010, the existing 22 licensed Perro de Presa Canario will be moved from Part II to Part I of the Schedule. There are no other Part dogs in Singapore.)

Part II Specified Dogs

1. Dogs must be leashed and securely muzzled when in a public place

2. Dogs must be microchipped

3. Licensee must take up an insurance policy for at least \$100,000 coverage against injury to persons and damage to property

4. Licensee must take up banker's guarantee of \$2,000

5. Any existing banker's guarantee would be forfeited for non-compliance and the owner must take up a fresh banker's guarantee of \$2,000

6. Newly licensed dogs must undergo obedience training