

PEORIA DOG PARK RULES

Hours: Dawn until Dusk

BY USING THIS FACILITY, DOG OWNERS AGREE TO FOLLOW THE RULES THEMSELVES AND TO ENSURE THAT OTHER USERS FOLLOW THEM AS WELL.

- 1. You are solely responsible for the actions of your dog.**
- 2. An owner/handler may not have more than two dogs in the park at one time. (Professional trainers may not use the facility to conduct their business)**
- 3. No aggressive dogs – the dog owner agrees to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages, or loss connected to or associated with the actions of their dogs and may be subject to state laws and ordinances concerning dangerous or vicious dogs.**
Explanation: Not all dogs will be able to use the dog park. Some dogs are simply too aggressive. Dogs that have lived apart from other dogs, dogs who are scared, dogs that have been trained for security, and dogs that are fiercely territorial may not be able to interact with other dogs in a friendly manner. YOU are responsible for YOUR dog - in a moral and legal sense! YOU can be sued if your dog attacks another dog or person! When in doubt, keep them out.
- 4. Dogs showing aggression toward people or other dogs must be immediately leashed and removed from the dog park.**
- 5. Owner/handlers must have a dog ID tag and personal photo ID at all times.**
- 6. All dogs must wear rabies tags. Therefore no puppies under the age of 4 months are allowed in the park.**
Explanation: Proof of rabies vaccination is the minimum health requirement for entrance to the park. Rabies is a killer, and is easily preventable by a yearly vaccine. Puppies typically receive their first rabies vaccination around 4 months. Until that time, they are not allowed in the park.
- 7. We strongly recommend that dogs entering the dog park be current on all vaccinations.**
- 8. Dogs in heat are NOT allowed in the dog park.**
- 9. Dogs must be leashed at all times while entering and exiting the park.**
- 10. Once inside the gates, dogs MUST be unleashed. Please remove pinch and spike collars from your dog prior to entering. Owners/handlers must have leashes in their possession at all times; must remain with their dogs in the fenced area; and must keep their dogs in sight at all times.**
Explanation: Leashes, owners, and dogs can easily become tangled with each other, causing choking injuries to dogs, and possible injuries to the hands, wrists, and fingers. You must remain with your dog, observant of their behavior, as you know your dog best. If your dog becomes upset, belligerent, or a nuisance to other users, it is expected that you will leash them, and remove them from the park. You also need to watch where your dog “goes” so you can clean it up!

11. No children under the age of 12 are allowed in the park. An adult must supervise children between the ages of 13 and 17.

Explanation: Of the 369,000 non-fatal dog bite injuries treated in hospitals in 2001, 41% of those involved children under 14 years old. 65% of those injuries were to the head and neck. Children tend to underestimate the danger of dogs, and may not pick up on the cues that an older, more experienced adult may see. Dogs are not humans, and they react in fundamentally different ways, that even most adults do not understand. We can not expect a child to have the focus and experience to identify the warning signs of a dog about to bite. Sure, anyone knows to stay away from a dog baring its teeth, barking wildly, and throwing itself at a fence. But the facts are that most dog bites do not occur in situations like that. If it were that easy to tell, we wouldn't have over a thousand dog bites a day reported at hospitals in this country. Most dog bites occur from children interacting with a dog (often a beloved family dog) in a way the dog does not like. The dog obviously can't speak its mind, so it has only a few options to respond – run, or bite. Why take the risk?

So yes, we are excluding children, even when accompanied by an adult. The dog handler (adult) should be focused solely on their animal, to prevent and anticipate problems. Having both a child and a dog in the park means one will not get the full attention they need to have in a potentially dangerous situation.

Our first priority is to make community recreation available that is safe. The rules for the dog park are not there to inconvenience; they are there to help protect people. The rules are based on extensive research, and literally hundreds of dog parks across the country have the same rule in place. This rule is in place to protect children as much as possible from the hazards of dog bites, in the face of extensive research that shows children as the most at-risk for dog bites. None of us wants to see a child bitten and scarred for life in this dog park that we have all worked so hard to create. Although this rule may not be popular with all people, it is in place solely for the safety of children. Please let your children play in the other 115 acres available in Laura Bradley Park. This area is for dogs and their handlers only.

12. Absolutely no food or dog treats allowed in the park. Food and treats can cause dog fights.

Explanation: In pack behavior, the "top dog" eats first and gets the best food. In the dog park setting, the issue of which dog present is "top dog" can be rather fluid. By bringing food and treats into the equation, it is suddenly much more urgent (from a dog's point of view) who is "top dog", and therefore who gets to eat first. A dominant dog who thinks they are the "top dog" may see the giving of food to another dog as a direct challenge to their authority. To re-assert their authority, the dog has but one recourse - to fight. Save the treats for later!

13. Owners/handlers must clean up and dispose of feces left by their dogs.

Persistent/repeated failure to clean up after your dog(s) may result in loss of your pet's privilege to use the park.

Explanation: This rule is in place because no-one likes to step in it! Dog waste can also transmit disease to other dogs. If employees have to perform this service regularly, users may have to pay an entry fee in the future.

14. Owners/handlers and other park users creating a disturbance or violating posted rules must leave the dog park upon request of law enforcement or park personnel.

15. If there are any problems you cannot handle, please call the Peoria Police Department at (309) 673-4521. They routinely dispatch available Park District or city officers to ensure that public safety is not threatened.

Explanation: The success of this park depends on self-policing and the good manners of its users. Users must be proactive - address potential problems before they become big problems. A friendly reminder is better than an angry confrontation. However, do not get in over your head! You always have the option of calling the police, or taking your dog and walking away.

ENJOY THIS TIME AND SPACE WITH YOUR FOUR-LEGGED PALS

Call 682-6684 or 682-1200 to inform us of any problems.

