

The “Small Dog Area”

Perhaps you have wondered if anyone ever uses that small, wedge-shaped area at the front of the park called the “Small or Shy Dog Area.” While this enclosure can be used for small dogs, that is certainly not its only purpose.

The first important point is that small dogs do not *have* to be kept in this area. Many little dogs can more than hold their own with the big guys.

So if little dogs don’t always need it, who does? Well, it is an excellent way to gradually introduce a new dog to the park. The dog can spend some time getting used to the sights and sounds of other dogs, even sniff noses through the fence, before venturing into the main area. In addition, any dog can go into the small area if he becomes scared or overwhelmed.

Another appropriate use of “the wedge” is as a cooling down area after an altercation. Dogs can remain “pumped up” after a fight, and a time-out can help cool tempers (and not just the dogs!).

Any dog can have a day where, for whatever reason, he feels like taking on the world and insists on nipping, mounting, or otherwise imposing himself on other dogs. In this case, some time in the small area may be warranted.

Finally, the small area can be used for training or otherwise working with an individual dog away from distractions.

In short, perhaps we should think of this area more as an “adjustment area” than simply an enclosure for small dogs.

No Food Please — For Dogs or People

Permit holders should not bring food inside the dog field, for obvious reasons. First of all, you would become the object of attention of almost every dog in the park. You would not enjoy your food, and a dog may get hold of something it shouldn’t have. There are picnic tables outside the fence where you are welcome to enjoy your food before entering the dog field.

Some people want to bring dog treats into the park, but this is also not a good idea. Again, you run the risk of being jumped on and “hounded” by the dogs. In addition, dogs can become aggressive toward one another in the presence of food. Please leave treats at home, or take your dog into the “small dog area” if you want to use treats for training your dog.

Dogs and Children— And Safety

If you bring children to the dog field, please remember to monitor their activities. To avoid potential problems, parents should remind their children of the following:

- Never pet a strange dog unless the owner says it’s o.k.
- Don’t run around waving your arms and screaming. This can stimulate a dog’s chase instinct, and you may get nipped or knocked down.
- Sit on a bench and watch the dogs. That is the safest place you can be other than outside the park.
- Don’t bring kid toys into the park. Dogs can’t tell the difference and may try to take them.

And remember, babies in strollers are right at dog level; probably not a great idea.

**A friendly reminder:
Your permit tag must be
visible at all times.**



This park district rule makes it easier for park personnel to do their job. The brightly colored lanyard is visible from a distance so someone can be easily identified as a permit holder.