

## Greyhounds and Dog Parks

When the weather gets warmer, many folks want to take their greyhounds to a dog park. Adopters often ask us for advice about taking their greyhounds to dog parks. Dog parks can be fun and it's a delight to see our babies run. Dog parks can also be very dangerous.

Many a dog has been injured at a dog park. We are aware of greyhounds who have been killed at a dog park, plenty of greyhounds that have been injured at a dog park, and several greyhounds that have killed or severely injured other small dogs.

### **In all situations** (*even in your own backyard*)

- Don't let your greyhound run for too long – greyhounds are sprinters - they can and will overexert themselves possibly resulting in injuries.
- Remove your greyhound's sweater or coat before you allow your dog to run.
- Watch your dog for dehydration. With greyhounds this can happen very easily, especially when the weather is warmer.
- Absolutely do not run them in the hot weather or you will have a case of heat exhaustion or possibly death on your hands. Know the signs of heat exhaustion.

### **Assessing a dog park**

Use this dog park assessment to help you decide if it's a good idea for your greyhounds.

#### **MY GREYHOUND**

Vaccinations up to date?	Dog parks can be a haven of intestinal parasites (e.g. worms) and illnesses (leptospirosis, kennel cough (a/k/a "dog flu"). Check your dog often for parasites and anything unusual.
High prey drive?	If your greyhound has <b>high prey drive, do NOT allow your dog to run with other breeds</b> . You never know when another small breed dog will enter and if you are nowhere near your dog you won't be able to stop the chase and possible severe injuries/death.

#### **ME**

Am I able to pay attention?	Your vigilance in paying attention to your and other dogs' activity is key to dog park safety.
Have a squawker?	Be prepared to call your dog to you.
Water for my dog?	Be sure to take plenty of water with you for your dog.
First aid kit in car?	Make sure you have a first aid kit. Remember that your greyhound has very thin skin that tears extremely easily. A simple nip or nail strike can turn into a major vet visit.

#### **THIS PARK**

A <b>greyhounds-only</b> park?	If you are going to allow your dog in dog park, your best choice is a place with greyhounds only – no other breeds. In a <b>greyhound-only park, muzzle ALL greyhounds</b> . Should one dog nip at another (which all dogs are prone to do) and one squeals, you will then have a dog fight on your hands. You want to avoid this at all costs.
An <b>all-breed</b> dog park?	In an <b>all-breed park, DO NOT MUZZLE your greyhound</b> with other unmuzzled dogs; you will leave your greyhound unable to defend itself. If your greyhound has <b>high prey drive, do NOT allow your dog to run with other breeds</b> . You never know when another small breed dog will enter and if you are nowhere near your dog you won't be able to stop the chase and possible severe injuries/death.

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Right size?	Avoid overly large areas. Don't assume you can get to your dog (or any group of dogs) should a scuffle start in a large area. Greyhounds have been known to run themselves basically to death because they started chasing something. It's wiser to choose a smaller area than one too large. A good size is about the size of a horse arena, or a quarter acre or less.
Intact, secure fencing?	Pay attention to the type, state of repair, and height of the fencing around the dog park. <b>If a dog can get through the fence, don't use the park!</b> If your greyhound can jump the fence, don't use the park!
Fence height that my dog can't jump?	It is important that you know your dog and the fence height. Although most greyhounds aren't jumpers, some can easily jump a 4-foot fence. If you have one of those and the fence is only 4-foot-high, don't use the park. <b>If your greyhound can jump the fence, don't use the park!</b>
Secure gates?	Where are all the gates? Can you see them while inside the park to avoid an escape because a gate was left open? <b>Make sure the dog park is secure with all gates closed.</b> Some folks take bungee cords with them and secure the gates closed so that someone can't walk in accidentally and let a dog out or surprise you with another dog. Pay attention to the comings and goings in the park.

### THIS PARK RIGHT NOW

How many dogs in the park?	Protect your dog from uncontrolled pack behavior: More than 2 dogs is a pack. When a pack of dogs (3 or more) are allowed to run together in an area where there are no strong human pack leaders, they instinctively try to establish a pack order. Too often this results in dog fights to determine which rank a dog will assume.  If there are too many dogs or the dogs are uncontrolled, it may be wiser to find an alternative activity.
Dog behavior	How are the dogs in the park behaving? Friendly play? Rough? Aggressive?
How many humans?	How are the human pack leaders behaving? Are there enough humans to keep the park-pack under control?
Human behavior	Are the dog owners paying attention to their dogs? or are they chatting in a corner and not paying attention. If owners aren't paying attention, it may be wiser to find an alternative activity.
Weather	Is it too hot? or too wet and slippery? If the weather isn't agreeable, it may be wiser to find an alternative activity?

### IF YOU GO...

- Go to the park at off-peak hours when there are unlikely to be other dogs there and the weather is cooler.
- After running, check your dog over fully for minor injuries and treat as necessary.

Hopefully that hasn't scared you too much. Dog parks can be a greyt thing and a wonderful way to exercise your dog when you use caution and common sense.