



Living Safely With Dogs: Tips for Dog Owners

Be a responsible pet owner

- (1) **Selection:** Select dogs appropriate for your lifestyle and the environment in which you live.
- (2) **Identification:** License, microchip, and ensure your dog always wears a collar with an I.D. tag.
- (3) **Socialization:** From puppyhood, socialize your dog with people and other dogs through obedience training.
- (4) **Sterilization:** Spay or neuter your dog to improve its health and to minimize aggressive behaviors.
- (5) **Supervision:** Supervise and safely house your dog; never leave young children alone with a dog; and never tether a dog, which can lead to aggressive behaviors.

The Coalition for Living Safely with Dogs is a group of Colorado animal health, care, and control professionals that exists to promote understanding of the human and animal behaviors that impact community safety and to reframe the civic conversation about dangerous dogs.

- All Breed Rescue Network (ABRN)
- Animal Assistance Foundation (AAF)
- Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO)
- Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians (CACVT)
- Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies (CFAWA)
- Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)
- Denver Area Veterinary Medical Society (DAVMS)
- Metro Denver Shelter Alliance (MDSA)
- Summerlee Foundation

General Inquiries: David Gies, Animal Assistance Foundation, 303/744-8396, D_Dog@aaf-fd.org
Media Inquiries: Michaela Perea, Denver Area Veterinary Medical Society, 303/318-0447, michaclaperea@colovma.org

Living Safely With Dogs: Expanded Tips

FOR DOG OWNERS

Be a responsible pet owner.

(1) Select dogs appropriate for your lifestyle and the environment in which you live.

- Are you active or sedentary?
- How much time and money can you invest in training your dog?
- Do you have limited space or lots of space?
- Where will your dog spend most of its time?
- Ask questions about the dog's background. Do not consider dogs with prior histories of aggression.
- Spend time with a dog before bringing it into your home.
- Animal shelters and veterinarians can conduct behavior assessments on dogs to help determine aggressive tendencies.
- Consider adopting an older animal.

(2) License, microchip, and ensure your dog always wears a collar with an I.D. tag.

- The law requires that you license and vaccinate your dog against the rabies virus. Each time your dog is vaccinated, the veterinarian will give you a tag to put on your dog's collar indicating that your dog is up-to-date on its rabies shots.
- Even house dogs can get loose. Protect them by keeping a collar and tags on them at all times.
- If your dog is lost, a license can reunite you with your dog quickly.
- Microchipping is permanent identification that works even if the tag is lost.

(3) From puppyhood, socialize your dog with people and other dogs through obedience training.

- "Socializing and supervising dogs with children reduces the risk of dogs behaving aggressively towards children and prevents types of aggression where the dog feels threatened or may be provoked." (Delise K. *Fatal Dog Attacks: The Stories Behind the Statistics*, 2002:17)
- Take your dog to behavior classes to learn good behavior and how to behave around other dogs.
- Spend time with your dog on walks or at a "dog park." A tired dog is a well-behaved dog.

- People often own dogs for protection, but an aggressive dog is a threat to your family and others, not protection.
- Socializing your dog can help your animal adjust to new situations and respond appropriately.
- Having a well-trained dog will strengthen the bond between you and your pet.

(4) Spay or neuter your dog to improve its health and to minimize aggressive behaviors.

- "Reproductive drive is directly linked to aggression." ("Do Dog Bans Create Dangerous Situations?" November 4, 2005, www.9news.com)
- "Unneutered dogs are 2.6 times more likely to bite than neutered dogs." (Gershman KA Sacks JJ Wright JC. "Which Dogs Bite?: A Case-Control Study of Risk Factors," *Pediatrics* 1994;93:913-917)
- Sterilized dogs live healthier lives. Spayed female dogs have a decreased risk for developing breast and ovarian cancer and uterine infections. Neutered male dogs have a decreased risk for developing enlarged prostate glands and testicular cancer.

(5) Supervise and safely house your dog; never leave children alone with a dog; and never tether a dog, which can lead to aggressive behaviors.

- "Chaining a dog is the single most dangerous condition in which to maintain a dog. It creates an unnatural and unhealthy environment and takes away the dog's option of flight." (Delise K. *Fatal Dog Attacks: The Stories Behind the Statistics*, 2002:23)
- Tethered dogs can be territorial or bite because they cannot get away from a situation that feels threatening to them. Tethering in public areas is unlawful in most communities.
- Always supervise young children and animals when they are interacting together.
- Animals need a safe and secure place to live. Give outdoor dogs shelter from weather and access to food and water.
- Tall fences will keep your dog at home where it belongs. Never allow your dog to run at large.