



# **Easton Park & Recreation Dog Park Manual**

## **Guidelines, Park Rules and Information**



**Easton Park & Recreation  
(203) 268-7200**

## **Where is the Dog Park?**

The Easton Dog Park is located at the Veteran's Park Complex off Sport Hill Road, between Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton Community Center. There is parking in front of the park or across the street in the staff parking lot at Helen Keller School.

## **Hours**

The Dog Park is open daily from sunrise to sunset.

## **Dog Park Amenities**

20,000 square feet with pea gravel surface  
4-foot-high perimeter fencing with double gated entrance  
Accessible parking area  
Waste bag dispenser and garbage cans for dog waste

## **DOG PARK RULES**

**Dogs may be allowed off-leash within the fenced area of the dog park subject to the rules and regulations set forth below.**

- **Park hours: Sunrise to sunset.**
- **Dogs must not be left unattended. Park users and dog owners/attendants assume all risks and responsibilities related to use of the dog park.**
- **Users are limited to two dogs per person at any one time.**
- **Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.**
- **All dogs must have valid rabies vaccinations. Dogs over six months must wear tag and license on collar.**
- **Females in heat, sick dogs, aggressive dogs, and dogs under four months of age are not allowed.**
- **Dogs must be on a leash when entering and exiting the off-leash area.**
- **Dogs displaying aggressive or dangerous behavior must be immediately leashed and removed from park.**
- **Attendants must keep leash in hand for each dog at all times.**
- **Choke, prong, pinch, spiked, and electronic collars must be removed when your dog is in the park.**
- **Dog waste and litter must be cleaned up and promptly disposed of in proper receptacles.**
- **Attendants are responsible for damage caused by their dog.**
- **Pets other than dogs are not allowed in the park.**
- **No smoking, food, dog chews, or bones are permitted within the dog park.**
- **Bikes, strollers, baby carriages, skateboards, rollerblades, and motorized vehicles are not allowed.**

## Recommendations for Fun and Safety

- Do not open the outside gate if an inside gate is open.
- Check all entrances before unleashing your dog.
- Dogs should receive year-round heartworm prevention treatment.
- Have all drinking water readily available for your dog before and especially after exercise.
- ALL dogs benefit from guidance and structure. Basic obedience is a must for a well-socialized happy dog.
- Children under the age of 16 are not allowed in the park unless accompanied by an attendant 16 years of age or older.

## Potential Risks

The Easton Park and Recreation Department strives to provide a fun, safe environment for you and your dog, however, by using this facility you agree that you understand and assume all responsibility and liability for the risks associated with use of this facility. Potential risks include, but are not limited to:

- Infectious diseases such as rabies, kennel cough, or Lyme disease.
- Dog theft or unlawful capture by other people.
- Dog escapes over or under fences.
- Park vegetation that may have burrs or seeds that could get tangled in a dog's coat or lodged in a dog's feet, ears, or eyes.
- Mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, fleas or other insects that may be present.
- Dog fights, dog bites and injuries to humans and other dogs.
- Wild animals in the parks such as skunks, raccoons, or stray dogs, all of which might injure or infect your dog.

While it may be tempting to stand back and be a passive observer, all users will have a much more rewarding experience if basic rules are actively observed. Use of the Dog Park is not a right; it is a privilege. Please do not allow unacceptable or irresponsible behavior to ruin the fun for other users.

## Children and Dogs

**Children under 16 years of age are not allowed in the dog park unless supervised by someone age 16 or older.** Young children are easily knocked over or trampled by running dogs. Herding dogs may nip at children while attempting to round them up. This is the dog's park. Not all dogs are child-friendly. Never allow any child to approach or pet a dog without the owner's presence and approval.

## **Play or Fight? Know Your Dog!**

Before you use the Dog Park, know your dog! Check your ego at the gate and be realistic rather than idealistic when it comes to your dog's temperament.

Be aware that dogs have different play styles, temperaments and physical abilities. Many dogs love rambunctious play, but some dogs suffer from injuries and some are more timid and aloof. Some dogs have rough play styles and can be overpowering though non-aggressive. Mounting can initiate a potentially harmful situation. If your dog is visibly stressing another dog, please remove your dog to another part of the park. Don't wait for someone to ask you to do the polite thing. Remember, a little common sense and courtesy goes a long way when the success of the Dog Park relies on the people who use it. Always respect the wishes of the handler and be prepared to move to another area of the park if your dog is too rambunctious. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting aggressively. Aggressive dogs are not allowed and are not appreciated by others. No matter how cute you think he is and no matter how much you want your dog to be able to use the park, if he's acting aggressively he needs to be removed.

## **Prevent a Dog Fight Before It Happens - Learn the 4-P Warning Signs**

- **Posture:** A dog's body language can communicate fear, hostility or submission. Learn to read and respond to your dog's body language, and others.
- **Packing:** More than 2 or 3 dogs packed together can lead to trouble. Break it up before it starts by leading your dog to a neutral area at least 30 feet away.
- **Possession:** Whether it's you, a ball, or a treat, most dogs will protect what is theirs. Remain aware.
- **Provoking:** If your dog is continuously annoying another dog, or provoking attention, it's time to leave the park.

## **What You Can Do To Prevent a Fight**

- Pay attention to your dog and be aware of where he is and what he is doing at all times.
- Stay close enough to control or protect your dog in the face of a potential fight.
- Keep a collar on your dog at all times so that you have something to grab, if needed.
- It is recommended that you not bring dog toys or balls to the Dog Park. Toys may provoke possessive or aggressive conduct.
- Leave the Park. Some days it's just a bad mix. Go for a walk or come back later. You and your dog will be better off.

## What You Can Do If a Fight Occurs

Never reach your hands into the middle of a dogfight. You may get bit, and often by your own dog.

Distract the dogs and divert their attention. A blast of water from a water bottle, a loud whistle, or a pocket air horn may work.

If your dog is not in the fight, make sure he does not join in.

If a fight occurs, control your dog and remove him to a neutral area.

Maintain a cool head. Getting upset and yelling will only add to the frenzy.

When warranted, exchange contact information with the other dog owners. If you can't because you must attend to your dog, designate someone else to get the information.

**Attitude:** Even the calmest, most pleasant, well-adjusted person may become upset, angry or belligerent, if they or their dog is injured in a fight. Emotional behavior often occurs. Try to remain calm and as objective as possible.

**Legal Responsibility:** Owners are solely liable for injuries or damage caused by their dogs. This includes injury to another dog or person, no matter how it began, who said what, or whatever happened.

**Exchange Information:** All involved parties should provide pertinent information including name, address, phone numbers and vaccination records to each other.

**Report the Incident:** Minor scuffles occur frequently. If a dog clearly exhibits aggressive or dangerous behavior and the attendant refuses to remove the dog, remove yourself and your dog from harms way and contact the police. In the case of a serious fight where a dog is injured, contact the police to report the incident immediately.

A dog fight can be violent and is upsetting to everyone present.

## **Your Dog Is Your Personal Property. You Are Legally Responsible for Damage or Injury Caused by Your Dog.**

### What to do if a Dog Bite Occurs

The Dog Park is in the Town of Easton and any bites should be reported to the Easton Police immediately by calling 203-268-4111. See section 22-358 (Dog Bite Statute) of the Connecticut General Statutes for additional information on dog bites.

A dog bite to a human or another animal should be reported.

- Immediately secure the biting dog and the victim dog. Leash them and keep separated.
- Any wounds should be washed immediately with clean water.
- Owners of dogs involved should exchange names, addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Owners should then take their dog home or to a veterinarian for necessary medical care. If a bite occurred to a person, consult a physician.

## Dog Etiquette

- **On leash or off?** Believe it or not, many dog parks request dogs to be off leash, unless dog and owner are specifically traveling from one end of the park to the other. Off-leash dogs intimidate leashed dogs. When leashed, a dog knows he doesn't have the same freedom of movement and tends to react defensively or fearful. You may want to let him run around with the leash still attached, so you can grab him at a great distances, if need be.
- **Dog Fights:** because they are on "neutral territory" in a park, dogs have less to fight about. Even territorial dogs often become friendlier when off their home turf. However, fights do occur occasionally. Dogs that have the most fun at parks are those that have been well socialized at an early age.
- **Health issues:** It is extremely important for your dog to have up-to-date vaccinations (rabies and distemper, for instance). Likewise, don't bring your dog if he's not feeling well. He may get even sicker or make someone else's dog ill.

## Human Etiquette

- **Scoop the poop:** The biggest complaints arise when nature calls. The park is NOT a convenient place to let your dog do its business. Scooping the poop is always the responsibility of the owner. Bags and trash cans are available at the Dog Park entrance to make this necessary task easier. Take one when you enter so that you will have it with you when needed.
- **Overly friendly dogs:** Think of your dog's behavior as a reflection on your own manners. Is it polite to let a child run up to strangers and kiss them repeatedly? (Hopefully, you answered no to that one.) Well, it isn't polite to let your dog run up to other people uninvited and plant sloppy kisses on them either. This is a major complaint at dog parks.
- **Supervise children closely:** Children under sixteen are not allowed in the Dog Park unless supervised by someone 16 or older. This is because young children may become frightened by a friendly dog, or could get knocked down and hurt accidentally.

## New to the Dog Park?

- If your dog shows aggressive behavior, take it out of the park. It can endanger other dogs and dog owners. Please do not be afraid to encourage other park users to remove their dog if it exhibits inappropriate behavior.
- Ease your dog into the park atmosphere. Plan visits during off-hours (weekends and weekdays after 3pm are the most crowded).
- Always keep a leash handy.
- Allow your dog to meet and greet other dogs. They need to establish a relationship and feel comfortable with each other.
- Keep dogs away from entry gates. They may intimidate newly arriving dogs or dash out of the gate. Always clean up after your dog. Waste bags and trash cans are provided at the park entrance.