

Dog Health and Safety on the Trail

Your dog relies on you to keep him safe and healthy on the trail. Make sure that your dog is fit enough to hike before you hit the trails. Check with your vet!

Dog First Aid Kit Items:

Pet first aid book
Latex gloves
Saline eye wash
Muzzle (a stocking will work)
Vet wrap
Blunt scissors
Gauze pads and gauze wrap
Antibiotic ointment
Buffered aspirin
Tweezers
Dog nail clippers
Space blanket
Dog bootie or sock (for injured paws)

Hazards on the Trail:

Ticks/Parasites—Check your dog for ticks after a hike. Consider using a dog safe tick repellent on your dog.

Poison Ivy—Your dog may not get poison ivy, but the oils may stick to his coat and spread to you.

Stinging Insects – Bees, wasps, and even caterpillars can cause nasty stings to you and your dog.

Hazardous Plants – Stinging nettles, and a variety of thorny brambles can hurt your dog. Be careful when leading your dog through such areas.

Snakes—Most snakes are non-poisonous, but even non-poisonous bites can cause infections. It's a good idea to keep an eye out for both you and your dog, especially around rocks and water.

Contaminated water/food – Water (and “food”) along the trail may be polluted or contain hazardous microorganisms (such as giardia). Bring your own food and water for your dog or filter trail water.

Weather Extremes – Excessive heat or cold can be tough on your dog. Take into account how weather conditions may effect your dog and plan your activities and supplies accordingly.

Additional Resources

K9 Trailblazers—Dog hiking organization leading leashed dog hikes in the DC/Baltimore area.
<http://www.k9trailblazers.org>

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) - Books, maps, and information on hiking and backpacking in the Potomac region.
<http://www.patc.net>

Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Information on MD park lands and state forests including info. on what areas are open to dogs.
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us>

National Parks Service (NPS) - Information on the national park system including rules regarding pets in parks.
<http://www.nps.gov>

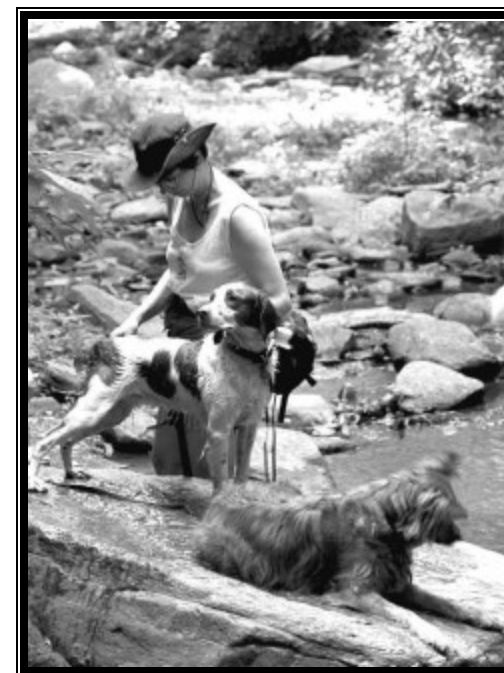
Leave No Trace—Information on “Leave No Trace” outdoor ethics.
<http://www.lnt.org>

Dogwise Books—A wide selection of books on dog breeds, health and activities.
<http://www.dogwise.com>

The Dogpatch—Excellent on-line starting point for information on dogs, dog products, and dog activities
<http://www.dogpatch.org/dogs>



K9 Trailblazers' Pocket Guide to Hiking Responsibly With Your Dog



Pointers on how to safely hit the trail with your canine companion.



What does “Responsible” hiking with your dog mean?

Basically hiking responsibly means being considerate of other hikers and respecting the environment. There are three easy things to do to accomplish this:

- 1) Leash your dog—Most parks and other areas that allow dogs require dogs to be on leash. It’s the best way to keep your dog with you, under control, and safe.
- 2) Clean up after your dog—Dog waste left on or even off the trail can pose a hazard and nuisance to other hikers as well as wildlife
- 3) Be considerate of others on the trail – Remember, there are many people on the trail that don’t like or are afraid of dogs. Step off to the side of the trail and put your dog in a sit to let others pass (including bikers and horses).

Responsible hiking also means taking care of your dog on the trail and making sure that you have everything you both need to safe and comfortable.



Top 5 Reasons to Leash and Scoop:

- #5) To reduce the risk of your dog getting into something smelly, slimy, disgusting or dangerous (and bringing it back to you).
- #4) You wouldn’t want to step in it, and neither does anyone else (and under the leaves doesn’t really hide it).
- #3) As misguided as they may be, not everyone on the trail loves your dog as much as you do.
- #2) Your dog can’t read a map or compass, and probably wouldn’t ask for directions if he got lost.
- #1) It’s the law in most areas, and you wouldn’t want to lead your dog into a life of crime.

The “Ten Essentials”

There are many variations of this list of the 10 essential items for your pack. These are all items that are a good idea to bring on any hike:

- 1) Map and compass (and know how to use them!)
- 2) Water – 2qts for you and your dog and way to purify water on trail
- 3) Food & high energy snacks
- 4) First aid kit
- 5) Flashlight – with extra batteries and bulbs
- 6) Extra clothing – rain protection, socks, and shoelaces in a plastic bag
- 7) Pocket knife
- 8) Pencil and paper – for writing emergency note
- 9) Plastic trash bags – or emergency blanket
- 10) Signaling device – whistle, mirror, flares, radio or telephone.

What to Bring on a Dog Hike

Exactly what you bring will depend on the time of year and the length of the hike. Here are some considerations for dog equipment:

Day hikes

Water (and a bowl), dog treats, proof of vaccinations, dog first aid kit, extra leash, photo of dog (in case lost), vet contact info, space blanket, reflective/blaze orange vest or leash for hunting season.

Overnight hikes (in addition to day hike items)

Dog food, any dog medication, dog brush or comb, sleeping pad, extra strap to tie your dog’s leash to a tree

Hot weather hikes

Insect repellent (dog safe), extra water (to drink and wet down your dog if necessary), tarp or other “portable” shade

Cold weather hikes

Dog booties, “Musher’s Secret” or other balm to protect paws from ice, fleece vest, high energy snacks, extra food and water, ground cover for insulation.

