

## Etiquette, Safety and Health Awareness

### Etiquette --

- Clean up after your dog.
- Pick up when you are finished with food or drink items.
- Stay aware of personal SPACE between dogs, some dogs need the discipline not to approach without permission, the rest appreciate not being mugged by a rude, exuberant novice.
- USE time-outs for over-stimulated or overwhelmed dogs.
- Excessive barking is not fair to the neighbors or the property owners. Please bring items (food, toys) that will redirect that energy and keep your dog calm. Avoid crating *barkers* where they are easily stimulated by student traffic, use covers over crates to help provide comfort and silence.
- Keep your food and dog treats in a DOG PROOF container. This is also a group safety issue for dogs who are persistent hunters and suffer food allergies.
- Septic system on premise, do not flush anything down the toilet except septic-friendly paper.

### Safety --

- Water durable shoes and life jackets for people are mandatory when in the water.
- Life jackets or harnesses for dogs are mandatory when the dog is in the water.
- NO canine neckwear permitted when dog is in the water; handlers should tuck in or remove any neckwear too!
- No smoking -- tobacco is toxic to dogs. Smoke is toxic to people.
- No alcoholic beverages before or during training hours.
- Beach and water is a no-glass zone.
- Water leashes must be free of knots and no loop handle. Leashes must be less than five feet in length and must float in the water. No long lines.
- No aversive training methods are allowed -- no punishment, force, threats or intimidation. No dog shall be compelled to enter the water or remain in the water.
- While on land, the dog may wear a simple collar or harness. No prong collars, E-collars or choke collars. Leads shall be six feet or less in length. NO FLEXI LEADS or long lines.
- Watch your dogs for signs of fatigue -- Remember swimming is five times more demanding on the dog than running on land. Submersion work can be very demanding on the dog and can drain stamina faster than swimming. Be a watchful advocate, remove your dog from the activity and provide a quiet place for rest if you think your dog is getting tired. Signs of fatigue include: heavy panting, an inability or unwillingness to focus on the behavior, swimming slower or lower in the water, dog turning her back to the trainer, dog leaving the trainer or leaving the water.
- Stop training if the dog appears ill, injured, tired, withdrawn, fearful, stressed, over-aroused (excited), excessively barking, or unwilling or unable to respond to a cued behavior that is usually reliable.

## Health Awareness --

- **Eyes** -- dogs need to see when underwater or swimming. Trim hair or pull it up with elastic bands so the dog can see.
- **Ear care** -- Use canine ear wash before and after swimming to prevent infections.
- **Toenails** -- keep 'em short. Long canine nails can snag and break leaving a bloody mess that might require a vet visit and a long training delay.
- **Swimmer's tail** --- A condition when the dog is unable to use or lift her tail after swimming. This condition is very painful for the dog. Do not continue to swim the dog if you observe a limp tail, the dog does not want to sit, the dog is not able to wag or lift her tail. Cold water, unconditioned muscles and over use of the tail during swimming or jumping is most likely the cause. Pack pain meds. *I use T-Relief (Traumeel) or arnica montana -- homeopathic formulas for sprains, strains and pain. Rest is important. Ice can help.*
- **Aspiration Pneumonia** -- Dogs sometime inhale water when swimming, but most of the time they are able to clear it by coughing. When the dog can't clear it there is a risk of pneumonia. Don't ignore a dog who continues to cough hours after exposure to water. Aspiration pneumonia is life-threatening. Symptoms of aspiration pneumonia include difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, coughing, rapid breathing, an increased heart rate, loss of appetite, fever, and lethargy. <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/12/31/aspiration-pneumonia.aspx>
- **Water toxicity** -- Some dogs drink water when they swim or retrieve toys in the water. Too much drinking can be fatal as it disturbs the normal balance of electrolytes in the body and affects brain functions. Symptoms of water intoxication include staggering, loss of coordination, lethargy, nausea, bloating, vomiting, dilated pupils, glazed eyes, light gum color, and excessive salivation. In severe cases, there can also be difficulty breathing, collapse, loss of consciousness, seizures, coma, and death. <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2013/10/28/water-intoxification.aspx>
- **Giardia** -- a parasite found in natural water sources, usually stagnant water. The most common symptom is diarrhea. Left untreated, a giardia infection can cause serious GI inflammation, chronic diarrhea, malabsorption and other digestive issues, and weight loss. <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/03/19/giardia-infection-on-pets.aspx>
- **Blue-green Algae blooms (Cyanobacteria)** -- Avoid swimming your dog in ponds or lakes that have visible signs of algae growing on the surface of the water. Drinking the contaminated water can cause vomiting, diarrhea, bloody stool, disorientation, muscle tremors, muscle rigidity, seizures, coma and shock -- death. <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2013/09/16/cyanobacteria-blue-green-algae.aspx>
- **Tick borne diseases** -- Ticks are a parasite often found in wooded and grassy areas near the water as they are transported there by their prey -- deer, mice, birds. Some ticks carry diseases that can affect dogs and people. The tick must imbed itself into the host body to transfer the disease through blood exchange. Symptoms of infection include; disinterest or refusal to swim (when the dog usually loves this activity), decrease in appetite, lameness -- gait change, fever, sore or swollen joint. Humans may get a bull's-eye-shaped rash at the bite site. <http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/07/23/tick-borne-disease-in-dogs.aspx>
- Please put this info into your phone: Newtown Veterinary Specialists -- Emergency, 52 Church Hill Rd. Newtown, CT. EMERGENCY: 203-270-8387 <http://www.newtownvets.com/>