

Urbana Dog Park Member Manual



Welcome to the Urbana Dog Park!

This is one of 22 parks operated and maintained by the Urbana Park District. The Dog Park is part of a larger park system. The Perkins Road Park site and Webber Park are two adjacent parks on Perkins Road. The district has adopted a master plan for these parks. The master plan for both areas will be developed as funding allows.

Currently only the Dog Park is open for public use. It is the only park where your dog may be off leash. The park is managed by a variety of district personnel. If you have any questions about the park, call 217-344-9583.

Why a Dog Park? Dogs are such an important part of many people's lives today. Being social creatures, dogs like to interact--both with the humans they live with and with other dogs. A dog park is designed as a fenced area where dogs can exercise and socialize without having to remain on a leash. In spring 2000, a group of citizens approached the Urbana Park District Board of Commissioners about creating a place where they and their dogs could go. Leash laws in the City of Urbana and in Urbana Park District parks prohibit off-leash activity with dogs. The board agreed that a place should be provided to let dogs exercise off leash. However, the funds to build the park were not in the capital budget. Therefore the park was built (and amenities continue to be added) exclusively through donations and grant money.

Where is the Dog Park? The Dog Park is located at 1501 E. Perkins Rd., Urbana, 1/2 mile east of Cunningham Avenue. The dog park is a nearly 10-acre site along Perkins Rd., and is part of a larger park that has been leased from the Champaign-Urbana Sanitary District.

The Dog Park Features:

- Nearly 10 acres, grass surface
- Central wooded natural area with wood chipped trail
- Six-foot-high perimeter fencing and a double-gated entrance
- Water fountain with watering station for dogs is available seasonally mid-April through mid-October.
- Dog rinsing station outside the dog park fence – available mid-April through mid-October. Water from the hydrant is not potable and is for animal use only.
- Accessible parking area for people with disabilities
- Accessible entry and water area for people with disabilities
- Benches
- Waste bag dispenser and garbage cans for dog waste
- Timid, training or small dog fenced area with separate gate entrance
- Accessible Port-a-Potty

Park Hours

The Dog Park is open daily sunrise to sunset. For security of all members, do not visit the park after dark. Membership, which includes a gate fob, are required to access the park.

Membership

Memberships are available on a yearly basis from the date of purchase at the Phillips Recreation Office; 505 W. Stoughton, Urbana. Online registration is not possible at this time. The following is required:

1. A completed and signed membership form, which is available at the Phillips Recreation Center or visit www.urbanaparks.org/parks/dog-park-perkins-rd-site/ to save or print a fillable membership form.
2. Proof of current vaccinations from your vet, showing proof of distemper and rabies vaccination. Your vet may fax these documents to the Phillips Recreation Office at 217-367-1592 or email them to info@urbanaparks.org
3. Payment:
 - a. In person: Pay by cash, check, or credit card.
 - b. By mail: Include a check with your membership form.
 - c. By phone: Staff will call you for your credit card once they have received the completed membership form and necessary documentation. DO NOT email your credit card information.Resident and non-resident rates apply. Reciprocal Agreement: The Urbana Park District and Champaign Park District have a reciprocal agreement that allows for a resident of one district to participate in programs and services of the other district at the resident rate.
4. Your membership will include a fob to open the electronic gate at the Urbana Dog Park entrance. It will be mailed to you if you register by mail or phone. The Urbana Park District is not responsible for fobs lost through the mail. It is active through the duration of your membership, unless park use is revoked. The fob fee is \$10/fob. You may purchase more than one to share with family members. Replacement fobs are \$10/fob.
5. Use your gate fob to enter the park. The fob will expire one year from purchase. Renewing membership will reactivate fob. Only active members have working fobs. Do not open the gate for others. If your fob does not work, call 217-367-1544.

Membership Fees

One dog: \$46 Resident \$69 Non-Resident
Each Additional Dog: \$6 Resident \$9 Non-Resident
Fob Fee: \$10 each

Two Memberships for One Discount!

The Champaign Park District operates the Bark Park on the corner of Windsor and Rising Roads. The two park districts have an agreement that allows members to purchase a Bark Park gate fob for just \$10. Members must take a copy of their membership receipt to the Champaign Park District to register for the additional dog park access. Bark Park members must bring their membership receipt to the Urbana Park District to purchase a Dog Park Fob. Rules for both parks are the same.

Monthly Trial Visitor Pass

Daily passes are not offered. Visitors may purchase a monthly trial visitor pass for \$10 plus the \$10 fob fee. If in that month, the patron wishes to purchase a year's membership, their trial pass fee will be applied toward an annual membership fee. All rules and membership requirements are expected.

Dog Park Rules & Regulations

When you complete and sign the membership form, you agree to abide by the following rules. **Infraction of any rules can result in temporary or permanent loss of park privileges.**

1. The dog owner agrees to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages or loss connected with or associated with the use of the Dog Park. Owners are responsible for the actions of their dogs and may be subject to state laws and local ordinances concerning dangerous or vicious dogs (see page 6).
2. Annual membership is for one year from date of purchase. Membership is not pro-rated or refundable.
3. All dogs must be current with required vaccination and be registered with the county.
4. Registered member dogs must wear county registration tag. Members must carry a photo ID with them and present upon request.
5. Dogs must be leashed while entering and exiting the park. Member must have a leash at all times. Please remove pinch (prong) collars and spike collars from dogs before entering the park. Other dogs can be injured while playing.
6. Dogs may not be left unattended or out of sight range or voice command. A member age 16 or older must be present at all times and is solely responsible for the actions of their dog(s). Always keep an eye on your dog. Never leave your dog unattended.
7. Children must be at least 6 years old and accompanied by a parent or guardian to enter the park. Some dogs exhibit unpredictable behavior around small children.
8. Dogs known to exhibit vicious, fierce, aggressive, or dangerous behavior are not permitted in the Dog Park. If your dog becomes unruly or aggressive toward other dogs, you must leash your dog and exit the enclosure immediately. Excessive barking is strongly discouraged.
9. Female dogs in heat are not permitted in the park.
10. Dogs less than four months old are not permitted in the park. Puppies are not fully vaccinated and are vulnerable to disease and injury.
11. Cooperation between members is expected and required (see page 9).
12. Members must immediately pick up after their dog(s). Bags and trash cans are provided for waste disposal.
13. Food (people food, dog food or dog treats) is not allowed in the park. Many owners do not feed treats and some dogs may be allergic. Food may also make a dog aggressive.
14. Smoking is not permitted inside the Dog Park. Cigarette butts can be dangerous if swallowed.
15. Members are limited to three dogs per visit.
16. Maintenance needs of the site will vary based on weather and use. You may be asked to leave the dog park during maintenance activities.
17. Dogs, owners and users creating a disturbance or violating posted rules must leave the dog park if requested by law enforcement personnel, park personnel, or their designated agents.
18. **Infraction of any of these rules can result in temporary or permanent loss of park privileges.**

Safety First - 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 drinking water readily available for your dog before and especially after exercise. Water is available at the park from mid-April to mid-October.
- ALL dogs benefit from guidance and structure. Basic obedience is a must for a well-socialized happy dog.
- Children must be at least six years old and supervised by an adult.

New to the Dog Park?

- Ease your dog into the park atmosphere. Plan visits during off-hours (weekends and weekdays after 3 p.m. are the most crowded).
- Always clean up after your dog. Waste bags and trash cans are provided at the park entrance
- Always keep a leash in your possession.
- Allow your dog to meet and greet other dogs. They need to establish a relationship and feel comfortable with each other.
- 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.
- Keep dogs away from entry gates. They may intimidate newly arriving dogs or dash out the gate.
- Supervise younger children. They can get hurt and sometimes scare other dogs. Children under six are not allowed in the dog park.

Potential Risks

The Urbana Park District 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 of unleashing your dog in the 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 lodge 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 six years of age are not allowed in the dog park at any time. 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 a 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 go 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 leave.

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 own 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.

Prevent Fights:

- 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 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.

If a Fight Occurs

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

- 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. Jackets and water bottles are good to use as distraction tools. By squirting water in the dogs face or covering it with a jacket, you can distract the dogs long enough to separate them.
- 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 information.
- A dogfight can be violent and is upsetting to everyone present.
- **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 is automatic; 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.
- **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. In the case of a serious fight or injury or a dog that clearly exhibits aggressive or dangerous behavior, call local emergency authorities by calling 217-333-8911 to report the incident immediately. Also report the event to the Urbana Park District by calling 217-344-9583 so a record can be kept. You must have information on the offending person, even if it is only a license plate number.

If a dog bite occurs - Call local emergency authorities at 217-333-8911 for immediate police assistance and the Urbana Park District at 217-344-9583 to make a report. In order for the bite to be defined as a bite, it must break the skin and must have been caused by oral contact (not a nail scratch).

A dog bite to a human or another animal **must be reported to the police.** Animal Control will conduct an investigation and will advise the Urbana Park District regarding any actions.

- 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 involved dogs 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 has occurred to a person, consult a physician.
- **Call 333-8911! Making a Report.** The dog park is in the city of Urbana and all bites must be reported to the emergency authorities **immediately by calling 333-8911.**
- Please report the incident to the Urbana Park District by calling 217-344-9583 or visiting the Urbana Park District at 1011 E. Kerr, Urbana, IL 61801.

For immediate emergency assistance, call 217-333-8911

For Urbana Police Department non-emergency, call 217-384-2320

For concerns/comments about the Dog Park, call 217-344-9583

For membership information call, 217-367-1544

Doggie Etiquette

- **Leashed vs. Unleashed:** Mixing leashed and unleashed dogs creates tension and often causes trouble. Use a leash only as a temporary form of control in the dog park. Your dog must be leashed while traveling to/from the entrance. Once through the gated area, you can let your dog off the leash.
- **Off leash does NOT mean out of control:** One rule at the dog park is that owners must have control of their dogs at all times. Train your dog in basic obedience. Important commands include "leave it" and "come". Many dog-training instructors teach with positive reinforcement methods that make training enjoyable for both you and your dog. Start now to help your dog to become dog-park-ready.
- **Remember not all dogs are party dogs:** Some are shy, some are older; some may have physical limitations, some just prefer to be alone. Please respect the needs of all dogs and discourage your dog from behaviors that commonly trigger conflict, such as charging, ambushing and stalking; bullying; mounting (humping); and incessant barking and pestering. Charging, ambushing and stalking are predatory behaviors. They are always provocative and may be especially threatening to an unfamiliar dog. Please call off your dog in these situations. Do not allow your dogs to crowd the entrance areas of the dog park. This will help to avoid setting the stage for problems to occur.
- **Bullying, incessant barking and pestering are behaviors that trigger conflict:** Some dogs like to bully other dogs. If your dog is one of these types, leash up and move to another area in the park. Remember, our dog park has plenty of room. If your dog persists in bullying other dogs, leave the dog park. Sooner or later your dog will learn this behavior ends the outing and spoils the fun. Incessant barking and pestering of other dogs is rude. This kind of attention-getting behavior can make the other dog or dogs become annoyed or anxious. This can escalate to a more serious encounter. Always call off your dog and move away.
- **Rambunctious play:** Many dogs enjoy rambunctious play, but some do not. Learn how to tell the difference. If your pooch keeps going back for more, it is probably play.
 - Common social behaviors include wrestling, chasing and pouncing. Bouncy, inefficient, joyous movement distinguishes these play behaviors from the corresponding 'lock and load' predatory behavior.
 - Growling and mouthing are also common. Growling or snapping usually occurs when another dog is pushy or violates personal space by getting too close too fast. This is a normal and often justified reaction to a rude or persistent dog.
 - Herding behaviors: By nature herding breeds are neck, heel, or butt 'biters'. The biting behavior is nippy and mischievous in nature but rarely harmful but please be aware of teeth to skin play which can escalate to aggressive behavior.
 - Rambunctious play should be stopped if it is threatening or annoying to another dog or owner. Learn to read your dog and avoid situations that are stressful. Keep moving. In general, we encourage you to try not to overreact to rambunctious play, but do not be afraid to speak up if you are concerned. Some dog park users suggest saying: "This isn't working for me and my dog. Please call your dog away."

- **Humping (Mounting):** This is a common and normal dog behavior that is unrelated to sex or mating, but is an instinctive behavior for establishing rank. Humping is generally unacceptable at the dog park because it often escalates into more combative interactions. If your dog is the humper, calmly call it off and move to another location. If your dog is the one being mounted, do not overreact. Simply ask the other dog owner to call their dog off. If the other owner does not respond, calmly approach the dogs, clap your hands, and make noise or body block until the other dog stops. Leash your dog and move to another area of the park.
- **Fetch:** Playing fetch with your dog at the dog park can create competition for space and toys. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect other people and dogs to work around you. Favorite toys brought from home often pose a particular problem. (This is MY toy.) Please limit playing fetch to places or times when the dog park is not crowded, or simply leave this game at home.
- **Dog hierarchies:** Remember that, by nature, dogs tend to create hierarchies in social situations. At the dog park, these hierarchies change with every new dog and every new day. Some days you are up and some days you are down. Dogs know this, so do not be overly protective. Sometimes it can be hard to tell the difference between normal social behaviors and something more serious or potentially problematic. But if your pooch keeps going back for more, it is probably play.
- **Dog Fights:** Even the best-trained dogs are not always on perfect behavior. Because they are on “neutral territory” in a park, dogs have less to fight about. Even territorial dogs become friendlier when off their home turf. Though serious fights are uncommon, they do happen. (see above) Dogs that have the most fun at parks are those that are well socialized at an early age. Above all, always take responsibility for the actions of your dog!
- **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

- **Self-Policing.** All park users are required to follow park rules. We encourage members to talk to one another and approach those who are not following the rules. The district is not responsible for dog/owner incidents. Call the police (333-8911) when threatened or harmed by aggressive dog behavior. Courteous behavior is expected from all.
- **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 six are not allowed in the Dog Park. This is because young children may become frightened by a friendly dog, or could get knocked down and hurt accidentally.

Questions or Concerns?

Membership Evaluation: In April, through the Dog Park e-newsletter, members will receive a web link to a membership evaluation form. The park district values members input. Please take time to complete the survey.

Reporting a Dog Park Incident: If you are concerned that someone is not following the posted rules and they or their dog are presenting a problem for others (even after receiving considerate requests from others to comply) please contact the park district to make a report and local authorities in an emergency situation. Do not confront combative or argumentative individuals. The following information is helpful:

- Incident date and time
- Dog information: breed, color, sex, name
- Owner information: name, sex, car (make, model, license plate, color)
- Witnesses: name, contact information
- Incident details and occurrence

**Contact the Urbana Park District 217-344-9583 Monday through Friday 8am - 4 p.m.
For immediate emergency assistance call local authorities at 217-333-8911.**

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why aren't children allowed in the park?** Young children are at higher risk of injury at a dog park. They can be easily knocked down, jumped on or even bitten. See page 5 above for further explanation.
- **Why can't I bring my puppy to the park?** Dogs under four months have not received all the necessary vaccinations to keep them safe from disease. Please talk to your vet about vaccination for your puppy.
- **Who do I call if my dog is bitten by another dog?** Call 217-333-8911 and make a report with the authorities. (See page 6 for more information about dog fights.)
- **Why aren't there lights in the park?** During the park planning process and subsequent dog park management meetings, the installation of lights for evening park use was strongly discouraged by several other dog park managers and by the local police department due to safety concerns – not having a clear view of the entire park. Though the sun sets earlier in the winter, during the summer the park is open for use until late in the evening. It costs a great amount to add lighting, pay for the electricity and maintenance for outdoor lighting.
- **Why aren't there trash cans on the far side of the park?** To ensure the safety of both dogs and the care of the park grounds, driving a vehicle across the dog park regularly is not recommended. Garbage cans are placed at the entrance gates and west side maintenance entrance – this enables staff efficient and safe access to cans and minimal disruption for park users. It also minimizes any physical injury hauling heavy cans filled with dog waste may cause.
- **Why isn't there water all year?** The water service at the Dog Park is turned off and winterized around October 15 each year. Water service resumes mid-April or whenever the severe winter freeze cycle is over. The water and dog wash stations are not heated and therefore, need to be protected from the harsh winter climate. The winterization date is determined by the water company and annual freeze dates. Please be sure to bring drinking water for your animals if needed. Also, be aware that the freeze thaw cycles can make the Dog Park muddy at various times. Be sure to bring towels or use other methods to keep your animals clean. If you have questions, please call the Planning and Operations Office at 217-344-9583.
- **What should I do if I know someone at the Dog Park is NOT a member?** Daily passes are not offered anymore. Instead, interested members may purchase a monthly trial visitor pass for \$10 plus the \$10 fob fee. If in that month, the patron wishes to purchase a year's membership, their trial pass fee will be applied toward an annual membership fee. All rules and membership requirements are expected.

If this person enters the gate with the assistance of a member using a fob, please notify the park district as soon as possible. Information such as the member's name, dog breed and name are helpful.

- **What do I do if there is an incident at the park?** If the incident is threatening to people or dogs call 217-333-8911 immediately. Also make a report to the park district by calling 217-344-9583. See pages 6 & 9 for more details about reporting an incident.

- **What is going on behind the locked fence area in the park?** The Perkins Road site is one of several district parks under restoration. The site is being restored with native trees and other plants. The district offers volunteer opportunities at the site where you may both investigate more about the restoration activities and help out. Dogs are not allowed in this sensitive area. Call 217-384-4062 for upcoming hikes and workdays dates and for more information about park plans.
- **Why doesn't the park district remove the tall grass and "weeds"?** Some areas of the dog park are wetter than other. The district manages these areas with native wetland grasses and plants so as to decrease soil compaction and mud. These areas may be mowed a few times a year to manage for quality native habitats and decrease less desirable plants.
- **Why don't small dogs stay in the small dog area?** The dog park has two fenced areas. Both fenced areas are available for use to all members, regardless of dog size. The smaller fenced areas allows dog owners a more restricted location for a variety reasons some of which include space: for a timid dog or a first time user; if they want easier access to their dog or to work on dog behavior... Small and large dog are permitted in either fenced area.
- **Why do I have to pay the non-resident fee?** Residents living within the boundaries of the Park District regularly support park facilities and programs through property taxes. People living within the boundaries of the Urbana and Champaign Park District pay the resident (R) fees. The Urbana Park District has established a nonresident fee system in order to equalize payments by individuals residing outside of the Park District boundaries, so they will contribute to the overall financing of the park system on an equitable basis with residents. These individuals pay 1.5 times the resident fee. For other non-resident options, call 367-1544.
- **Why can't I bring treats/food to the park?** Food invites problems. Though the district recognizes that treats are often used when training a dog, at the dog park treats are a distraction and may cause dog aggression. The dog park is a place for dogs to play first. Training is best reserved for some place other than the dog park.
- **Who do I call if I notice vandalism, something broken or have questions about park maintenance?** Please call the district's Planning and Operations office: 217-344-9583. The district appreciates your assistance and notification of problems.
- **Who do I call if I have a question about membership or an idea for a dog park event?** Call 217-367-1544, and staff will redirect your call to the appropriate staff.

