



# APDWS Code of Practice

## Dog Walkers Training

Ideally all dog walkers should be trained for the safety and welfare of the walker, dog and the general public. There are a number training avenues available and we would recommend City & Guilds as these are the most recognised in the field. All dog walkers should be over the age of 16 unless accompanied by an adult.

## Walking Dogs Alone

If you walk dogs alone you need to take extra care and avoid areas where you feel you might be at risk, make sure somebody knows where you will be at any given time. We would recommend that you avoid working alone at night. If you drive to an area to walk the dogs make sure you have breakdown cover and someone knows where you are going.

Always carry a mobile phone with you and also a battery pack to ensure you can charge your phone, we would also recommend using trackers for your car and person.

## Transporting Dogs

Transporting dogs is essential for the majority of dog walkers and care must be taken when doing so. The dog's health and wellbeing is paramount and precautions and safeguards must be in place prior to any transport.

1. All vehicles should be fitted out with suitable cages or containment devices and these must be used to protect and secure the dogs and avoid distractions whilst being transported. When transporting 2 dogs or more the safety of the dogs must be ensured and without risk of injury or harm.
2. The vehicle must have suitable ventilation at all times and have some sort of temperature control for example air conditioning. You should also carry water and suitable receptacles for the dogs to drink from.
3. Dogs must not be left on their own for long periods of time, for dropping off other dogs on your route this fine as long as it is kept to the minimum (a few minutes) and keep the vehicle locked while unattended.

4. When transporting dogs during periods of hot weather you should keep the travelling distance to the minimum, dogs can suffer from heatstroke very quickly and can prove to be fatal.
5. If the dogs you are walking have fleas, mites, worms, ticks or any other type of infection these will be readily transmitted in the vehicle. You should ensure that all dogs are free from any type of infection / disease before transporting.
6. The vehicle must be able to be easily cleaned and cleaned on a regular basis to avoid transmission of any unknown infections and or disease.
7. All transportation of dogs should be subject to the **Welfare of Animals 2006**.

## Walking Dogs in Groups (2 or more)

When walking dogs in groups we believe that this should be kept to a maximum of 4, however your insurance provider may have their own restrictions and, in this event, would take precedent. When walking dogs in groups the following must be observed.

1. All dogs must be free of disease and or infections of any kind and regular checks should be made with the owner to ensure that all worming and flea control measures are in place. The dog walker should be observant of any changes in character of the dogs or signs of scratching, skin ailments or other signs of infection.
2. When walking dogs in groups the welfare of the dogs is paramount and as such should be suitable for walking together, if any of the dogs show any kind of stress or unusual behaviour you should terminate the walk. You may have to contact the owner to either arrange solo walks with you or try walking with different or smaller groups of dogs.
3. All dogs must be kept under control at all times. The dog walker should ensure that they have sufficient and suitable leads and collars, it would be advisable to keep a couple of spare leads and collars.

## Getting acquainted

It is paramount that you know as much about the dogs you are going to walk as possible; the Association of Professional Dog Walkers & Sitters has provided the dog information sheet and the client registration form which will assist you in this endeavor.

1. Meet the dog in its home environment so you can see how the dog behaves when he or she is relaxed. Take the dog for a walk and assess the dog's needs.

2. Talk to the owner find out if he or she has any special requirements. Does the dog have any allergies (essential if you're giving them treats or feeding them)? Does the dog have any medical conditions that require treatment such as medication and or dressings? You should not administer any medications and or dressings unless you are trained to do so. Any needs or requirements of the dog should be recorded and incorporated into the contract.
3. Can the dog be aggressive towards other dogs, animals or humans? If the dog does have any aggressive tendencies then he or she should only be walked by someone who is trained to walk dogs with such tendencies and should be walked alone. When walking aggressive dogs, you should avoid public places and or areas with other dogs or animals. You must not let these dogs off their leads at any time. It may also be appropriate to use an approved muzzle.
4. All walks should take into consideration the age, health and fitness of the dog.
5. You must take in the needs and or requirements of the owner and follow appropriate instructions provided they don't conflict with the code of practice. Any special requirements must be recorded and implemented and incorporated into the contract with the owner. If you have to deviate from the agreed contract for any reason, this must be agreed by all parties (unless it is an emergency).
6. The dog walker must obtain contact details from the owner including a secondary number should the owner not be contactable. The owner must provide details of their **Veterinary** practice in case of emergency and agree that the dog walker can give any appropriate consent.
7. Finally, before asking the owner to sign any contract, you must let them have the time consider it in full. Check to make sure you have obtained all the information you need about the dog and requirements of the owner. If you don't see the owner on a regular basis, make a point of contacting them to ensure you are aware of any changes in need of the owner or dog

## In an Emergency

In the event a dog gets injured or sick on a walk, the walker must contact the owner as soon as practically possible. If the dog requires urgent care then the walker should:

1. Take the dog to the veterinary practice requested by the owner, if this is not possible due to the condition of the dog you must take him or her to the nearest practice.
2. The dog walker should carry a canine first aid kit and be trained to use it.

## Poop and Poop disposal

All dog walkers must properly dispose of dog poop caused by dogs in their care, this should be disposed of in an appropriate poop bin provided by the council or a refuse bin.

Dog walkers should carry enough poop bags for the length of walk and number of dogs being walked.

## Other Considerations

Some people are afraid or dislike dogs, so consideration should be made where you walk the dogs, for example avoiding public areas especially if you are walking groups of dogs or those with aggressive tendencies. You should avoid walking around schools, playgrounds or where children congregate.

People should always have the right of way and you should avoid crowded areas.

You should be aware that some parks and local councils have their own restrictions and bylaws and you should make sure your actions do not conflict with these.

## Complying with the Law

Professional dog walkers are expected to comply with the law, as with any other profession and are expected to:

1. Be courteous and professional at all times.
2. Ensure the needs and welfare of the dog(s) are considered over and above any commercial interest of the business or entity.
3. The dog walker must have adequate public liability insurance and business car insurance if transporting dogs. The dog walker should also seek insurance to cover emergency treatment (veterinary Fees) should the dogs become injured, unless a prior agreement is made with the owner and forms part of the contract.
4. The dog walker must not exceed the number of dogs that can be walked as outlined in their insurance and in any event no more than four dogs to comply with our code of practice.
5. Dogs must be kept on a lead in public areas or put on a lead by if instructed to by an authorised officer.
6. If you lose a dog in your care you must notify the owner immediately and the local dog warden.

7. If a dog gets involved in an incident with another dog (in your group or not) then you must document the incident and notify the owner.
8. You must be familiar with and observe your local council laws and regulations and obtain advice if required.
9. All dogs must be microchipped by law and wear a collar with an identity tag with the owners name and address.