

CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Dogs love to be outside, especially if you are out there with them. Keep your dog safe by following a few simple guidelines, and make outdoor time fun for both of you.

Before They Go Out

Just like you, your dog should always have some form of identification with her whenever she goes out. Options include:

- 1) **Identification tags** – Dogs wearing ID tags are immediately recognized as owned by someone, rather than thought of as strays. Dogs should wear a flat, buckle collar at all times with ID tag, city license, and rabies tag attached. Petco carries several types of ID tags, including tags that can be engraved.
- 2) **Microchip** – A tiny “chip,” the size and shape of a grain of rice, is injected under your dog’s skin between the shoulder blades. The number carried by the chip is then registered with the manufacturer, local animal control, a nation-wide registry, or all three agencies. A chip cannot be lost like a collar. Shelters and vets have scanners that read the number on the chip, and then call the registry or manufacturer to get the name and number of the owner. Be sure to change your registration information if you move.
- 3) **Tattoo** – Not used as often since the development of microchips, your dog can also be tattooed and registered. Guide Dogs for the Blind puts a tattoo in each ear of their dogs. Tattoos can also be placed on the inside of the dog’s rear leg. The drawback to this identification method is that shelter workers or strangers are unlikely to roll the dog over or examine her closely for fear of being bitten. Different registries use various types of numbering systems and often don’t cross register. Numbering systems include: the dog’s AKC registration number, owner’s social security number, a phone number, or a number given by the registry.

The Fenced Yard

A securely fenced yard is the best option for outside confinement. Walk along your fence line and look at it through a dog’s eyes. Attach wire mesh fencing to the bottom of the fence if there are spaces where she will be tempted to dig out. Burying wire mesh fencing several inches deep will help discourage digging. Repair any loose boards or chain link sections. Move doghouses or storage sheds out from the fence, to prevent escape by climbing.

Use a clip on gate latches to remind others to secure the gate when they leave. Attach a small reminder. Some dogs even learn how to flip up a latch on their own.

Do you have a swimming pool? Either fence the dog away from the pool, or teach her how to get out. Go in the pool with her and teach her where the steps are, and be sure she can get out on her own. If you have a pool cover, a dog can get trapped underneath it and drown.

Is there shade? Hot summer days can cause heatstroke in dogs as well as people. Be sure to leave lots of water in a cool place.

Pick up the kids’ toys to prevent destruction and chewing. Smaller toys can be swallowed and cause intestinal obstruction requiring surgery. If your dog is likely to chew, remove garden hoses and protect wiring from the air conditioner or heater. Remove garden tools and always lock up chemicals.

A dog door so she can go in and out as she pleases offers the best of all worlds when you can’t be home. Your dog won’t feel so isolated when she can come inside and sleep in her favorite places.

Before you leave a new dog in the back yard all day, leave her out there alone for an hour or so, and see what she does. Some dogs are used to being alone while their owners are at work, others are stressed in a new situation, and need to be introduced to the back yard routine gradually.

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Other Confinement Options

DOG RUN: A chain link kennel with a roof or shade screen on it is a good alternative when you can't have a fence, or if the dog is a fence jumper. It also is a good solution if you have a pool. Be sure the kennel has shade, water, and protection from rain and snow. Get your dog used to it gradually, and be sure she isn't sitting out there barking all day while you are gone. Don't leave a dog in a run 24 hours a day, she needs company, exercise, and mental stimulation that she can't get in a dog run.

TIE-OUT: This is recommended as a temporary containment method only. Leaving a dog tied out promotes barking and aggression. She sees everything happening around her, yet she can't join in. She also can't escape, and if threatened, may bite to protect herself from real or imagined danger. Dogs that are tied out can learn to pull on the leash when walked. They are used to the tension of the chain and pull against it. A chain might get tangled and prevent your dog from getting to water or shade. She could also get tangled in the chain and be injured.

ELECTRONIC FENCE: This is a wire buried underground. Your dog wears a collar that gives her a mild correction if she goes over the wire boundary. If your dog is properly trained to understand the boundaries and why she is getting corrected, this method can work very well. The downside is that you **MUST** be sure the batteries in the collar don't go dead, and that the underground wire connection is working. Other animals can still get onto your property, which means your dog isn't protected from intruders, including possible dog thieves.

GARAGE: A dog run in the garage with a pet door to the outside provides shelter and access for your dog to relieve herself. **BUT**, leaving your dog in the garage can be a fatal decision. Dogs are attracted to the smell of anti-freeze and some poisons (both are often stored in the garage), and may even knock over shelves to get to it. Dog-proofing your garage is a big job, but necessary. Aerosol cans, fertilizers, tools, and chemicals are all potential dangers.

Also, summer temperatures can go well over 100 degrees in an airless, closed-up garage. The heat can be worse than outdoors because there is no air circulation. Check the temperature in your garage at midday on a hot day before leaving your dog shut inside.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.