

## **Criteria for Selection of Appropriate Off-Leash Dog Sites**

### **Basic Principles**

1. Safety and public health concerns will take precedence in determining suitability of parks for use of parks for use as off-leash areas.
2. Economic impacts resulting from exceptional maintenance will be a consideration.
3. Wildlife values will take precedence in area where dogs may cause environmental damage.

### **Criteria**

1. The size of a park or open space area.  
A small park is less capable of absorbing much use from dogs on a regular basis. Damage to surfaces, pollution and overcrowding all result from overuse of areas of limited size.
2. Active and Passive Recreational Areas  
Open grassy area, less well maintained are more appropriate for unstructured activities such as dog walking and general relaxation. Active space, such as playing fields and playgrounds are likely to produce conflicts between users and dogs. Some playing fields are not acceptable, especially sand based fields in which holes can be dug easily resulting in risk of injury, and field recovery time is long. Older, more established playing surfaces and passive use surfaces are required for dog use.
3. Intensity of Use  
As the intensity of use increases the potential for user conflicts rises. The amount of activity at a park needs to be assessed.
4. Public Health Concerns  
Public health concerns are usually not significant but may warrant consideration around swimming areas, drinking water, children's wading pools etc.
5. Composition of User Groups  
The composition of users may impact selection of a site. Dogs may not be suitable in areas used by large numbers of children.
6. Types of Facilities  
Types of facilities can determine the suitability of dogs in an area. Areas of organized sports, pools, flowerbeds, running tracks, golf courses are not generally acceptable.
7. Specialized Park Sites  
Restrictions on dogs are appropriate where a park serves a particular function. Day cares, children's wading pools, etc.