DO YOU WALK YOUR DOG IN PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS?

You might be surprised to hear that...

→ Only 60 to 70% of dog owners pick up after their pets in public spaces.
→ About half of dog owners leave pet waste in their own backyards.
→ On average, one dog produces about 274 pounds of waste each year.

Pet waste left in the environment does not simply disappear. Stormwater runoff—including rainwater and snowmelt—washes dog poop (and many other contaminants) off lawns, sidewalks, and other surfaces. Runoff flows untreated into nearby surface waters. Waste left atop the ice sinks right into lakes, creeks, and wetlands.

→ Bacteria and parasites found in pet waste pose a threat to the health of people and wildlife.
→ Decaying pet waste also adds nutrients to the water, feeding bacteria that consume oxygen needed by aquatic plants and animals.

You can make a big difference by always bagging your pet’s pet waste and depositing it in a proper trash receptacle. Picking up after your pet protects our environment—but it is also the neighborly thing to do, making our community healthier and more beautiful.

THE ETIQUETTE OF PETS AND PARKS

Be aware of and follow leash laws in your community.

In general, leash your dog:
- in parking lots
- whenever you’re on or within 15 feet of a paved or gravel trail
- on mowed grass
- near picnic areas
- near playground areas

Always pick up your pet’s waste when you walk in public spaces.

Some cities install bag stations for your convenience. But it’s smart to carry a few bags of your own, just in case.

Properly dispose of pet waste in the trash can.

Have questions?
Contact your local city government or watershed district.