

**Paxton Dog Park**  
***Members Manual***  
**Guidelines, Rules, & Information**

**Hours**

The Dog Park is open daily from dawn to dusk and it located off of Summer St. between Fall and Stockholm. For security and safety of dogs and owners, the park will not be open after dark.

**Location**

The Paxton Dog Park is located at the Paxton Park District's Coady Park. It is located just east of the tennis courts and just north of the skate park.

**Features**

- Six-foot high perimeter fencing with a double-gated entrance.
- Open area grassland with plenty of mature trees for shade.
- Watering station that will be accessible April-October.
- Benches/seating.
- Waste bag dispensers and garbage cans to properly dispose of waste.
- Separate fenced in area for small dogs.
- Parking lot.

**Use**

Use of the Paxton Dog Park is free. All dogs who would like to enjoy the Dog Park are required to have a Dog Park tag. A tag can be obtained at the Paxton Park District, at the Animal House, or Designer Dog Salon.

*Paxton Park District  
601 S. Fall St.  
Paxton, IL 60957  
217.379.4203*

**Requirements on How to Become a Member**

A dog can become a member at any time. Owners must show proof of rabies vaccination via county and/or city tags AND current vaccination records from a veterinarian for proof of distemper vaccination. **THESE ARE REQUIRED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A DOG PARK TAG.**

**Requirements on How to Become a Member Continued**

Memberships are free, but yearly renewals are required. A tag acquired in 2016 will not be valid in 2017. Dog Park tags must be visibly attached to the dog's collar.

### **Rules and Regulations**

- The dog owner agrees to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages, or loss connected with or associated with the use of the Paxton 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.
- Membership is good only for the year that they are purchased.
- All dogs must be current with required vaccination and be registered with the county.
- Registered member dogs must wear both the Paxton Dog Park tag and county registration tag when in the park. Dog owners must carry a photo ID with them and present it upon request.
- Dogs must be leashed while entering and exiting the park. Do not remove a leash until you are inside the gate and the gate is closed. Owner must have leash at all times. Pinch, prong, or spike collars are not allowed in the park.
- Dogs may not be left unattended or out of sight range or voice command range.
- Individuals under the age of 16 must have a member 16 years of age or older present when attending the park.
- Children must be at least 6 years old and accompanied by a parent or guardian to enter the park. Some dogs may exhibit unpredictable behavior around small children. Small children can be easily knocked over or trampled by active dogs. Children under the age of 6 are not allowed inside the park but are more than welcome to visit the playground.
- Dogs with a history of exhibiting vicious, fierce, aggressive, or any dangerous behavior are not permitted in the Dog Park. If a dog becomes unruly or aggressive towards other dogs/members, the owner must leash the dog and leave immediately.
- Excessive barking is strongly discouraged and if it becomes a habit, the member will be asked to leave.
- Female dogs in heat are not permitted.
- Dogs must be at least 4 months old to enter the park. Puppies younger than 4 months are prohibited.
- Cooperation between members is expected and required.
  - Members must immediately pick up and properly dispose of their dogs' waste.
  - All food (people food, dog food/treats) is not allowed in the park.
  - Smoking is not permitted inside the Dog Park.
  - Members are limited to three (3) dogs per visit.

### **Rules and Regulations Continued**

- Maintenance needs of the site will vary depending on use, weather, schedule, etc. Members may be asked to leave the park during required maintenance work.
- Dogs, owners, and users creating a disturbance or violating posted rules must leave the park if requested by law enforcement, Park District personnel, or their designated agents.
- Failure to adhere to any of these rules can result in a temporary, prolonged, or permanent ban from the dog park as handed down by the Park District Director and/or the Park District Board of Commissioners.

***The Paxton Dog Park is located in a neighborhood park. BE GOOD NEIGHBORS. All members are expected to follow the rules and regulations while being courteous and respectful to all other users, the property, and the surrounding property.***

### **Recommendations**

- 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 and flea/tick prevention treatment.
- Have drinking water readily accessible for your dog, especially on hot, humid days.
- All dogs benefit from guidance and structure. Basic obedience is vital for a well-socialized and happy dog.

### **Risks**

The Paxton Community Dog Park strives to be a fun, safe, and beneficial environment for you and your dog. By using this facility however, you agree that you understand and assume all responsibility and liability for the risks associated with unleashing your dog in the park.

Potential risks include, but are not limited to:

- Infectious diseases
- Dog theft or unlawful capture
- Dog escapes through, over, or under fences
- Vegetation that may be harmful if swallowed or contacted
- Insects that may be present
- Dog fights, dog bites, and injuries to humans and other dogs
- Wild animals in the park that could harm, injure, or infect your dog

*While it is always easier to be a passive observer, the Paxton Park District implores that the members of the Paxton Community Dog Park take an active role in making sure all patrons (dogs and humans) are following rules and regulations properly. The park will be a much more rewarding experience for everyone if rules are followed and members expect rules to be followed. Use of the Dog Park is not a right. It is a privilege. Do not allow unacceptable, irresponsible, lackadaisical, or potentially dangerous behavior ruin the fun for others.*

### **Know Your Dog**

#### **Play or Fight?**

Before use of the Dog Park, be aware that different dogs have different styles of play, temperaments, and mannerisms. Many dogs love rambunctious play while others may seem more timid and detached. Aggressive dogs have the ability to overpower or stress less aggressive dogs. If you see your dog is visibly stressing another dog, please intervene and take your dog to another part of the park. Do not wait for someone to ask, be proactive and respond effectively in order to lessen the possibility of a dangerous situation. Always remember, the success of the dog park relies heavily on the people who use it.

### **Prevent a Dog Fight Before it Happens**

\***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 be alert for the body language of other dogs.

\***Packing** – More than two or three dogs packed together can sometimes lead to trouble.

\***Possession** – Whether it’s you, a ball/toy, or a treat that shouldn’t have been brought in, most dogs will protect what is theirs.

\***Provoking** – If your dog is continuously annoying another dog, or demanding another dog’s attention, it’s time to remove your dog from the situation.

\***Pay close attention to your dog** and be aware of where he/she is and what they are doing at all times. Stay close enough to control or protect your dog if an issue arises. Keep a collar on your dog at all times so you have something to grab, if needed. It is recommended that you do not bring dog toys to the Dog Park as they may provoke unnecessary or aggressive conduct. When all else fails, just leave the park. Just like their owners, dogs are bound to have a bad day every now and then. Go home and try again the next day.

### **What You Can Do if a Fight Occurs**

\*Never reach your hands into the middle of a dogfight.

\*Try to distract the dogs and divert their attention long enough to separate them.

\*If you see a fight among other dogs, secure your dog to make sure he/she does not join in.

\*Maintain a cool head. Getting upset and yelling will only add to the frenzy.

\*When warranted, exchange contact information with the other dog’s owner.

- Try to remain calm. Even though witnessing your dog in a fight might be an emotional experience, being angry and belligerent yourself will not help matters.
- 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 started it, etc.
- Just like in a fender bender, exchange names, addresses, phone numbers with other parties.
- In the case of a serious incident, one in which a dog is injured or one where a dog or owner has exhibited obvious aggressive or dangerous behavior, report the incident immediately. Call your local authorities AND the Paxton Park District (217-379-4203). If after office hours, please leave a message.

### **YOUR DOG IS YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY! YOU ARE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGE OR INJURY CAUSED BY YOUR DOG!**

#### **What to Do if a Dog Bite Occurs**

- Call the Paxton Police Department at 217-379-4315.
- Call the Paxton Park District at 217-379-4203.
- In order for the bite to be defined as a bite, it must break the skin and must have been caused by oral contact.
- Immediately secure the biting dog and the victim dog. Leash them and keep them separated.
- Any wounds should be washed immediately with clean water.
- Owners of dogs should exchange contact information.
- Owners should take their dog home and schedule a veterinarian appointment for necessary medical care.

### **Canine Etiquette**

- Your dog must be leashed as you enter and exit the park.
- Your dog must be controllable at all times. Yes, they will be running around free from their lease once inside the park, but that does not mean they should be running out of control. Dogs should be capable of adhering to basic commands of “come”, “drop it”, etc.
- Yes, your dog may make new doggy friends, but know that each dog has their own unique personality and may not get along with every dog. Just like humans, we cannot expect every dog to be best friends with every other dog.
- Mounting (humping): This is a common and normal dog behavior that is unrelated to sex or mating, but is an instinctive behavior for establishing rank. While instinctive, it should also be regarded as unacceptable behavior in the dog park as it often escalates into more combative behavior. If you see an incident of mounting, calmly call off your dog with commands or clapping and remove yourselves from the situation.
- Fetch: Playing fetch with your dog at the dog park can create competition for space and toys that can lead to dog fights. It is unfair to expect other dogs not to want to play with “your” toy. Please limit playing fetch to places or times when the dog park is not crowded.
- It is extremely important for your dog to have up-to-date vaccinations. Likewise, do not bring your dog if they are not feeling well.

### **Human Etiquette**

- Scoop the poop! This is ALWAYS the responsibility of the owner. Bags and trash can are made available to make this necessary task easier. Your rights to utilize the dog park may be threatened if you disregard this rule.
- Do you have an overly friendly dog? If you have kids, is it polite to let your child run up to strangers and kiss the repeatedly? The same can be said with dogs. While it’s nice to meet new people and new dogs, do not let your dog make your friends for you.
- Supervise children closely. Children under 6 are not allowed in the dog park under any circumstance. Children older than 6 years old still need to be supervised as much, if not more, than your dog.
- Do not be afraid to encourage other dog park users to follow the dog park rules.
- First time users should ease their dog into the dog park atmosphere.
- Always keep a leash in your possession.
- Allow your dog to meet and greet other dogs in order to establish a relationship and feel comfortable with one another.
- Keep dogs away from the gates. They may intimidate newly arriving dogs or run out of the gate unleashed.

### **Questions or Concerns?**

If you are concerned that someone is not following the posted rules and is presenting a problem for others (even after receiving considerate requests to comply) please contact the Park District to make a report at 217-379-4203 or [paxtonparkdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:paxtonparkdistrict@gmail.com)