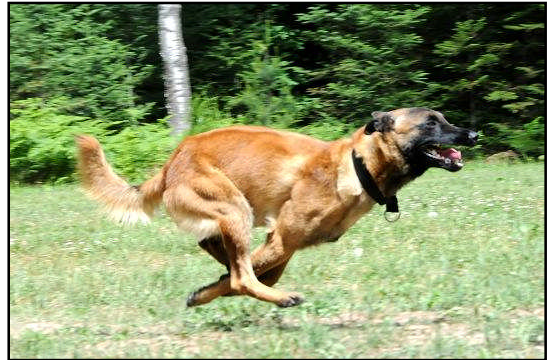


Off Leash Policy + Separation Anxiety + handling multiple dogs

Most dog camps have leash policies. Some have certain areas where you are allowed off leash, but you are expected to be on leash most of the time. A lot of people come to dog scout camp thinking that they will spend a week enjoying off leash freedom with their dog. And this will actually be true for some people. I've had people say that they've never had their dog off leash before, until they came to camp, and were so happy to be able to enjoy the freedom of having their dog off leash, and to have their dog allowed to accompany them everywhere in camp.

This needs some clarification.

I don't know what some people have in mind when they hear others make these remarks. If you are imagining that you can just show up, unclip your leash, and have your dog run with wild abandon, inspecting other dogs, chasing wildlife, and otherwise being out of control, let me squash that idea right now! The off leash freedom is for the dogs



and handlers that have earned it through training and learning management skills. They verbally restrain their dogs and do not allow their dogs to interfere with other campers' dogs or their enjoyment of camp. If you're picturing showing up at camp, and never having to reel in your dog, or hang onto his leash, or put him in a crate so that he doesn't bother your roommates' dogs when you're in the shower, and just letting him roam free while you go through the lunch line, so that you can have both hands to fill your plate, then you have the wrong idea. You will not be the only one in camp, and others do not want your dog rushing up to theirs and starting a free-for-all.

Yes, you are more than welcome to have your dog off leash, as long as you have very reliable verbal control over your dog. If your dog is headed into the woods or toward another dog at top speed, you should be able to call him back instantly with your voice. Your dog can have as much freedom as his or her good training will allow and as your observational skills dictate. Your dog should pay attention to you, and do as requested, and you should be very aware of your dog's surroundings and be proactive about preventing issues before they start. This video is an excellent example of the amount of control we recommend for off-leash dogs and why: http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5338&Itemid=2215

Some dogs have separation anxiety, and will bark when the owner is out of sight. Some camps anticipate this and have special areas where you can tether your dogs outside during meals and things where they can bark to their hearts' content. We do not allow tethering of dogs at our camp, as we feel it frustrates them, and it also allows them to become "protective" of their staked out territory. Our rule at Dog Scout Camp is that you are not to tie your dog to anything other than yourself—not something that could fall on him (like a shelf), not something that could chase him across the dining hall (like a chair), and not something that he could guard possessively, like a post, tree, tie-out, automobile, or anything else. If you need to "park" your dog for a while and give him some down time, you should do this in his crate in your room, and you should be able to do so with the confidence that he will be comfortable enough in there to rest and not stress out, if you leave for a while. Otherwise, you should not leave your dog crated alone in your room (meaning you might need to miss out on some of the fun while you stay in the room while your dog gets some rest.)

If you have never bothered to crate train your dog, your options are very limited. You would have to either have your dog with you every moment of the day, put your dog in your car in the shade, or use lodging that is not inside the main lodge, and hope that the dog doesn't wreck a door or something that you will have to replace if he goes nuts in there alone.

If you have to spend the entire week tethered to your dog, this will lead to high stress for both you and your dog. What will you do when he needs a rest? Dogs are used to sleeping most of the day on a usual week. Camp will be extraordinarily tiring for a dog that is not used to this level of play, activity and stimulation. If you can't even tuck him away in his "safe place," while you take a shower, what kind of a week is that going to be for your dog?

Of course, all of this concern is doubled if you plan to bring a second dog to camp. If the dogs are not able to be left in the room, because they are not crate trained, or because they bark in their crates, you will have to have them with you all of the time. How will you go through the food line? How will you eat with a leash in each hand? What will you do with the one dog while you work with the other dog?

For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you only bring ONE dog with you to camp. Many dog camps have a strict rule of only one dog allowed. If you own two dogs and can't choose to leave one behind, then you can bring the extra dog, but there is an extra dog fee, and it is really more to discourage people from bringing multiple dogs, than it is to defray actual costs. If you must bring additional dogs, there will be a \$50.00 charge for each additional dog. If you have two dogs and choose instead to bring one to one camp and the other to another camp in the same year, you will receive a double discount. You will get \$100.00 off for being a repeat camper, and another \$100.00 off for coming to a second camp in the same calendar year. We really, really feel that all of us will have more fun if everyone only had to worry about one dog (you'll only get 50% of the stated discounts on a mini-camp).