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Safety Rules and Guidelines for Water Training Workshops

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Read This Caution

Some dogs can become so stimulated by our water play and chase games that out of excitement or frustration they quickly become a menace to their handler or to other participants. Past participants have been accidentally injured by excited dogs. We assess no shame or blame for a dog who becomes highly aroused, but we do expect handlers to be observant and respond to their dog's stress level and lack of self-control. A handler who will not or who physically cannot immediately turn and guide a rude or overly excited dog away to a place where the dog can clam down and demonstrate cooperative behavior should not attend our group workshops.

About Our Training Programs

Canine Water Sports workshops & camps provide water loving dogs and their owners an opportunity to learn useful and fun water behaviors. They are open to any non-aggressive dog who finds water a source of pleasure and enjoys swimming. To keep water play safe, dogs are required to wear a life jacket or a harness and to have all throat collars removed before entering the water. We teach and encourage handler's to learn how to gain canine attention and cooperation without the use of force or leash compulsion. We shamelessly applaud and advocate rewarding appropriate canine behavior with lots of treats, toys, play, affection and praise.

Our workshop goal is to foster greater awareness and appreciation for each dog's unique abilities while teaching handlers how to shape happy, confident and able working water dogs. Our workshops include long rest periods between short training sessions to help the dogs relax and process the information they just learned. We consider these lap or nap periods vital to expediting learning, minimizing negative stress & fatigue and reducing injury risks.

We hope that while attending our workshops you remember:

- value progress over perfection
- the greatest gift you give your dog is your time and attention
- maintaining a history of trust & safety is priceless

- Be prepared for weather conditions that include hot sun, cold wind, rain. Pack for heat, wind and rain protection at the training site.
- Crates and pens offer dogs a safe haven to rest - make sure confinement is supervised and continues to provide protection and comfort.
- Guarantee you will be welcomed back at hotels, use crates, cover up room furniture with your own coverings, don't leave your dog unattended in a room if it barks, and always clean up after your dog. There is no excuse for not carrying an enzyme cleaner for elimination errors, vomit or blood.
- Bath products are a good idea to pack especially if your dog wanders into or rolls in a less than pleasant smelling place. Be sure to include grooming equipment like a comb or brush, nail cutters, tick removing device and scissors too.
- Don't forget the insect & tick repellent.
- In case of emergencies add a first aid kit with a first aid booklet, a lighter, a flashlight, road flares or beacons, a blanket and extra leashes into the vehicle.
- Consider packing pain relief and anti diarrhea products for you and your dog.
- Travel with a cell phone. Leave a note at home or with a friend with your route plan, destination, expected day/ hour of return, who will be with you (dogs & humans), emergency phone numbers and how you can be contacted. Even if you only expect to be training for a short time near home - leave a note for family and/or tell someone of your plans. (They don't call it an accident cause you planned for it to happen!)

Water Equipment

- Dogs working in the water shall wear a water safety device. This shall be either a canine life jacket or a water sports harness. While CWS recommends our CWS Water Sports Harness by TugNHug, a simple nylon tracking style (nonrestrictive) harness is acceptable. The harness and the life jacket must be able to support the dog's weight in case there is need for an emergency lift from the water. K9 Life jackets are required for participation in a CWS training event and are strongly recommended for: puppies, seniors, dogs recovering from an injury or illness, learning to swim, learning to jump from a platform, riding on a boat, swimming in cold water, swim conditioning, confidence building, dogs with a poor buoyancy factor (lung capacity plus fat to muscle ratio) or for any dog who has not been in the water for a long period of time. Dogs are permitted to wear life jacket during CWS water tests. (See: K9 Float Coat by Ruffwear.com)
- Handlers may attach a short floating lead to the dog's harness or life jacket for the purpose of safety and flight prevention. Handlers are encouraged to use means, other than a leash, to gain canine attention and cooperation in the water. Water safety leads are to be made from floating line, no longer than 4.5 ft long, be able to snap or tie to the harness or life jacket and be made without a loop handle. CWS does not recommend long lines or lines/leashes that sink. They can be difficult to manage and can tangle around the handler, the dog or other objects. (CWS recommends the CWS Water Safety Lead).
- Handlers shall wear an active, full body support, government approved life jacket (i.e. a USCG Type III life jacket) when in the water or on a boat. Handlers shall also wear water durable water shoes that protect the feet from sharp objects. Wet suits are not required, but are good to have for a variety of water conditions and to provide skin protection. CWS recommends that all handlers wear protective clothing over

shoulders and thighs to prevent injury from canine nails, sand burns and excessive sun exposure. Tee shirts and shorts are acceptable.

- Handlers are required to have a whistle, pealess style recommended, when participating in a CWS event. The main purpose of the whistle requirement is safety; however, trainers may find using a whistle to signal their working dog an advantage in open water. In an emergency the whistle can be used to summons help. For safety reasons the whistle should be attached to the handler's lifejacket by a clip or a short cord. If a neck lanyard is used it should be tucked inside the life jacket. Keep in mind that anything hung around the neck can become a means to strangulation or invite a swimming dog to do a paw wrap.
- Handlers are required to keep their dog under their control at all times. A regular leash or a water safety lead for land work and social situations is recommend and is mandatory in some Municipal & State Parks. Land leashes shall be six feet or less in length. While flexi leads are fun to use in open fields, for safety reasons they are not to be used during a workshop, camp or CWS testing event. Remember, under your control, whether on leash or off, means your dog will drop into a down-stay or return to your side immediately when signaled or guided, under all conditions.

Travel Tips

- The safest place for your dog is belted or crated in the middle of your vehicle. Remember to lock down crates to prevent them from flipping or rolling over in the car.
- Avoid putting loose or crated dogs next to the rear hatch gate of a van or SUV - rear end collisions can cause injury to and trap your dog if she is too close to the rear hatch. Be conscious of air bag placement if you belt your dog in the front seat. Activated air bags can cause injury or death to a dog.
- Secure luggage and travel items. Loose car items can become projectiles in the event of an accident or during sudden braking.
- Bring fresh water from home - changes in water can upset canine tummies.
- Bring canine clean up bags - be prepared to pick up after your dogs!
- Place a recent canine health certificate and proof of rabies vaccination into your car glove box, especially when traveling out of your home state.
- Place emergency instructions for the care of your pets inside your glove box or with your vehicle registration papers. Should you be injured and taken away from the scene of a motor vehicle accident police/fire officials will check your glove box or visor for identification.
- Leave a spare slip lead next to the driver's seat or attached to your dog's crate in case you need to leave the car in an emergency or rescue workers need to remove your dog from the car without you.

of the following: unresponsiveness to handler's voice or touch, food or toy refusal, barking, whining, growling, jumping, lunging and pulling on the leash, spinning, stiff or slow body posturing with intense hard eye contact, or bristling upright hair on the back.

Manners and safety at the water's edge:

- Teach your dog to wait before entering the water from shore, dock or boat. Practice and condition a sit-before-water entry as a polite way for your dog to ask permission to enter the water.
- Teach your dog to wait before entering a boat from shore, a dock or between boats. Practice and condition a sit-before-boarding as a polite way for your dog to ask permission to "boat up".

General Safety Rules

- Do not bring vicious or aggressive dogs to any social, training or testing event. Dogs with antisocial behavior issues are best trained by behavior experts in private.
- Remove all throat collars and articles of clothing from your dog's neck before your dog enters the water. Dogs must wear either a K9 Life Jacket or a Harness when in the water.
- Keep your dog on leash in high traffic areas and during group training sessions. Polite dogs respect a leash and remain within its radius without pulling, jumping or barking. Do not move forward if your dog is pulling you or is unresponsive to your communications.
- Handlers are responsible for knowing and obeying park and beach rules.
- Dogs are not to be tied out and left unattended. Use crates or pens to keep dogs safe and comfortable during down time.
- Dog training is an act of love and respect. Harsh handling of dogs will not be tolerated. Any person who is deemed by an instructor to be abusing or neglecting an animal shall be subject to expulsion from the workshop.
- Be an advocate for your dog! Remove your dog from any training situation if you feel your dog is injured, sick, fatigued or out of control. Do not wait for an instructor to excuse you. Do not continue to swim your dog if your dog appears tired or repeatedly heads for land when swimming. Dogs who are overweight, less than 14 months old, seniors, not properly conditioned for sports, working in cold water, or recovering from an illness or injury should be closely monitored. Swimming is significantly more exhausting than running on land. Pace your dog's activities so that she gets the rest she needs to continue learning and remain injury free.

- Handlers may exercise their dogs in the water, at their own risk, during training breaks. Caution should be given to traffic and objects being tossed at the same time. Please establish a respectful fetching system so dogs are not competing for the same toy or getting hit by flying objects. Handlers are encouraged to take turns tossing toys and should give space and time to swimming dogs.
- Use appropriate dog toys for fetch games! Sticks you find on the ground are not safe dog toys. Dogs have been severely injured and even died as a result of sticks penetrating eyes, mouths and throats. Multiple dogs chasing a stick escalates the danger. Be safe, walk your dog away from stick chasing games. See: www.collicorner.com/stick-to-toys/ for documented cases of injury during stick play.
- There shall be at least two adults present when a dog or person is in the water.
- No smoking during any CWS event or on the immediate grounds. Tobacco is toxic to canines.
- Glass containers are not permitted on beaches or near the water. Pick up broken glass immediately. Please discard empty glass bottles promptly.
- CWS Boats are for the sole use of dogs and handlers practicing water work under the direction an instructor. Handlers are required to: gain permission before using a boat; wear lifejackets; avoid standing on work platform, keep dogs on the work platform unless the boat interior has been made slip resistant for the dog.
- Avoid letting your dog jump from a platform into shallow water. Abruptly hitting the bottom can cause pain or injury.
- Polite handlers never let their dog rush toward another dog. Get permission before letting dogs go nose to nose. On leash greetings can be very stressful for some dogs and can provoke aggression. If you know your dog doesn't like surprises or rude dogs - step in front of your dog and protect her from unwanted advances. Whether your dog is on leash or off you are responsible for her behavior. A dog, leashed or not, who is permitted to rush at another animal or person uninvited is not under proper control. You shall be held accountable for any unpleasant results if you cannot, or do not, immediately take control and bring your dog to your side or place her into a "down-stay".
- Keep a respectful distance between you and other teams. Over stimulated and aroused dogs can cause injuries to their handler or others. Immediately remove your dog from the stimulation when she becomes agitated or over active, even if you think she is just being happy!
- Reward attention and focus during training sessions.
- An attentive dog will not disturb other working teams or seek attention through disruptive behavior. An attentive dog will choose to work with you and will ignore all the wonderful distractions around you. So reward attention (eye contact, a calm sit or down at your side) like it was the most important behavior in teamwork, cause it is!
- If your dog becomes agitated or overly excited during training immediately guide her away from the activity and keep walking away until she responds to your voice and is demonstrating calm self control. Don't be afraid to ask for help. The instructor will stop the training program if you can't or fail to reduce your dog's anxiety. When the dog is behaving calmly you can move back toward your original activity. Stop or back up if she is not attentive to you. Let her know she can only move when she is calm and listens to you. Signs of excessive stress and arousal may be one or more

Canine and Owner Etiquette

- Clean up after your dog. Do not let your male dog inappropriately lift his leg. Be responsible for your dogs and be kind enough to pick up after someone who wasn't responsible - it promotes public approval for dogs in public places.
- Excessive barking is rude and disruptive. Remember to bring toys and chew items to distract or redirect anxiety barkers.
- Please put cell phones on vibrate during the workshop.
- Join Dogs Against Trainers Under the Influence! If an instructor feels a handler is in possession of or under the influence of an alcoholic beverage and or drugs the handler will not be allowed to participate further in the workshop.
- Well mannered dogs do not jump on or beg for food from other people, nor do they encroach upon another dog's space, or steal another dog's toys.
- Get permission before offering another handler's dog any treats. Ask permission before allowing your dog to greet another dog. Practice a sit-before-greet routine to encourage calm behavior and canine self control.
- A bitch in season is a very unfair distraction for the other dogs - leave bitches in season at home.
- Unfortunately glass, fishing gear, and a sundry of natural and man made sharp objects are common at water sites. Please be kind and dispose of these sharp objects.
- At the end of the workshop be a responsible and honorable person. Clean up and take out all that you brought in to the workshop. Then offer assistance to others and help clean up.

Health

- Avoid letting your dog swim in water that is unfit for human swimming.
- Physically check your dog for strength and health before water training. Feel her whole body with your hands, particularly check her eyes, ears, paws and mouth for signs of health. You want your dog to be well rested, slightly hungry, looking healthy and exhibiting a healthy happy attitude.
- Trim nails to prevent broken toenails in the field and to give your dog a better foot hold during platform jumping, and boarding boats.
- Tie up hair/coat that falls over your dogs eyes so that she can better see articles and targets and avoid injury.
- Ear wash is recommended before and after swimming to help prevent ear infections. Pat dry the ear opening after cleaning.
- After swimming rinse away irritating sand and mud from your dog's coat. Towel dry your dog and check her entire body. Look for clear eyes and ears. Watch for soreness and lack of flexibility. Check for imbedded plant material, insects or other small objects in skin and paws.
- Signs of fatigue during swimming may include, heavy panting - deep chest & stomach heaving, trembling, confusion or unresponsiveness to direction, swimming slower than usual, swimming lower in the water than usual, hesitating or refusing to go in the water, returning to the boat or shore without completing the designated task, or an unwillingness to carry or tow objects.
- Check your dog's gums to learn what they normally look like when healthy. The mucous membrane color can tell you if enough oxygen is making it into the dog's blood stream.

- Lift your dog's upper lip and observe the color. Healthy dogs should have good pink color (dogs with black mouth pigmentation can be checked inside their eyelid). If the color is blue, pale pink, white, brick red or brown get the dog to a vet. Check capillary refill time after checking color. Press lightly on the gums or inner lip and release. Observe the color as it turns white to pink again. Normal refill time is one to two seconds, less than one second or more than three seconds indicates an emergency. (Ref. Pet First Aid, by Bobbie Mammato, DVM,MPH)

- Signs of Hypothermia (cold) include,

- Shivering
- Weak pulse
- Decreased heart rate (normal for a med - large breed is 60-100 beats per minute - more for small dogs and puppies)
- Low body temperature (normal is 100 - 102 degrees)
- Mucous membranes are pale or blue
- Stupor, unconsciousness (Ref. Pet First Aid, by Bobbie Mammato, DVM,MPH)

- Signs of Hyperthermia (heat stroke) include,

- Excessive panting or difficulty breathing,
- High body temperature (normal is 101 -102 degrees),
- Depression, acting drunk
- Salivating
- Seizures
- Bloody diarrhea, vomiting
- Fast capillary refill time
- Increased heart rate, (normal for a med - large breed is 60-100 beats per minute - more for small dogs and puppies)
- Increased respiratory rate (normal is 10-30 breaths per min. / 200 pants per minute)
- Collapse (Ref. Pet First Aid, by Bobbie Mammato, DVM,MPH)

- Tail sprain, also called swimmers tail or limp tail, can occur after water activity. The tail will look limp and it will appear as if the dog is unable to raise her to an alert position.

The dog may whimper in pain, be unable to sit, repeatedly look at or lick her tail. Tail injuries occur during swimming and jumping, especially into cold water. This type of injury can be very painful. Dogs who are young or out of condition for swimming appear to be the most commonly affected. Depending on the severity of the injury the dog should recover within one to five days. (Home remedy: REST - no swimming, Homeopathic Arnica and the enzyme bromelain fed on an empty stomach for pain and inflammation.)

- Stings & insect bites can be very uncomfortable for dogs, especially if the dog associates the pain of multiple stings with water work or a particular location, like your training area. Bees, wasps, flies, fleas, ticks and mosquitoes can be a real nuisance around the water. Insect repellent may protect you and your dog from bites. CWS recommends QuantumHerbalProducts.com Their Herbal Coat Conditioner (unofficially) repels flying and biting parasites. Homeopathic remedies Ledum palustre and Apis mellifica are commonly used to treat insect bites that cause swelling. Aloe Vera gel is comforting to bites as is, apple cider vinegar or medicinal grade Lavender oil, which is used to relieve pain from bites and helps to prevent infection. Apple Cider Vinegar will also soothe the burn caused by jellyfish stings.

- Dogs do get sun burn! Dogs, especially with white or thin coats and pink skin, are vulnerable to sun damage and burn pain. A dog's nose and eyes are also sensitive to sun rays. Keep your dog out of the sun as much as possible. Be cautious about using UV lotions on your dog as ingesting it, and they will, may not be very healthy. Don't forget sun protection, skin lotion, towels, a chair and beverages to keep you rested and hydrated! Chilled Aloe Vera gel is very comforting on burns and helps to take the sting out. Medicinal grade Lavender oil is also used to relieve pain and speed healing.