



# From Shelter to Service Dog Manual

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## Safety Tip Reminders

- Please remove all equipment, other than a buckle collar when the dog is in the home.
- Do not let your dog sit on your lap while driving the car. If your vehicle has passenger side air bags, your dog should ride in the back. Air bags can cause serious damage if deployed.
- **Never put your dog in the back of an open truck.** While it may seem to be lots of fun for your dog, this could be an extremely dangerous situation for your dog if you were involved in an accident or had to stop suddenly. Your dog can easily be thrown from the vehicle. Even if you use a tie down, your dog can lose its footing and slip over the edge and choke or break their neck if unattended.
- Prepare for an emergency or natural disaster. It is important to put together a kit or backpack of food, water, first aid kit, towel or blanket, leash, extra ID tag, copy of rabies. Please contact our shelter partner and Dogs for Better Lives at the earliest convenience to let us know that you and your dog are safe.
- Do not let your dog get close to escalators or moving walkways! Your dog's toenails could get stuck in the edge, and they might lose a toenail. When you come across escalators or moving walkways, either pick your dog up or use an elevator or stairs.
- **NEVER** leave your dog alone in the car unattended no matter what the temperature is outside. Dog theft is always a possibility.
- When driving, **NEVER** allow your dog to stick their head out the window. Items might fly into the dog's eye and cause injury or infection.
- Always supervise children when they are around your dog.
- If you have a swimming pool or are near one, be certain your dog knows how to swim out of the pool, or the dog may drown. Do not leave your dog near a pool unattended.
- Should you have a recliner chair in your home, be careful when lowering the footrest. We have had some dogs trapped under the footrest so, before lowering your footrest, look for your dog!
- Never leave your dog alone with soft squeaky toys. The dog may swallow a piece of the toy without your knowledge.
- Remember always have plenty of water available for your dog.
- When out in public, *a/ways* have your dog on leash unless in a securely fenced area, **no exceptions**.
- Be sure to secure all electrical cords in your home. A dog may chew a cord and be electrocuted. Your dog may also get tangled in a cord and pull electrical devices down on top of themselves.

- Please remember that certain events may frighten your dog or make them nervous. Often the sounds at sporting events (such as basketball games), concerts, and parades are very loud and can frighten dogs. When you attend these events, watch your dog carefully. How is your dog reacting to these sounds? Does the dog appear to be nervous? Shaking? Tail tucked? Ears down? Panting when it is not hot? If your dog is uncomfortable, you should leave the event. You may contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer and ask for advice on how to deal with these situations.
- *Do not* take your dog to firework displays, Halloween parties or zoos.

**If you have questions reach out to the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer.**

## Basics of Training

At Dogs for Better Lives, we train all our dogs using positive reinforcement. We utilize rewards such as treats, toys, play, and other things the dog will work to earn, to reinforce their good behavior.

Reinforcing a dog for good behavior teaches them what we like and what behaviors we want to see more of. Rewarding good behavior teaches the dog that working with us pays off and helps the dog enjoy and become a willing participant in the work. When you get a new dog, it is always good practice to recognize the good behaviors and choices your dog makes and acknowledge and reinforce them as much as possible.

To prevent unwanted behaviors from forming, you will want to set your dog up for success and manage their environment so that they do not have the opportunity to practice unwanted behaviors, and they have plenty of opportunity to engage in good choices that you can reinforce.

## Types of Reinforcement

Food and treats are the easiest and most common reward and can be carried around with you in a fanny pack or treat pouch for easy access when you need them.

Some dogs prefer toys and play, and the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer can show you how to implement toys as rewards in training.

Some dogs enjoy petting and praise and it's a great tool to have when you are wanting to use less food and toy rewards, or if those rewards aren't available when you need to reinforce your dog. Each dog is different when it comes to what they enjoy, so experimenting with your touch and tone when interacting with them will help you find what they enjoy most.

Another way to reinforce our dogs for their good behavior is to utilize what we call Life Rewards. Life Rewards are things the dog does in everyday life that can be used to reinforce obedience behaviors. Things like getting to go outside, eating their dinner, and getting to go sniff. Each of these things can be used to reinforce behaviors. e.g., Have dog sit and wait

before being let outside. Have dog go to place before being released to eat their dinner. Heel nicely and then allow dog to sniff to reinforce the nice heeling.

## Behavior Problems

DBL's training philosophy is reinforcement based, therefore we do not resort to physical punishment, because there are better, more effective ways to deal with behavior problems.

Whether it is the dog not responding to a command, or misbehaving, there is always a reason, or something reinforcing the problem behavior.

How we suggest dealing with a behavior problem depends on the issue and what is safest and most effective. Please contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer for help dealing with behavior problems.

## Why is My Dog Not Listening to Me?

Dogs are not stubborn. They just do what works for them. Utilizing positive reinforcement properly will prevent your dog from displaying behaviors that may be labeled as stubborn. Dogs are learning to work with us throughout their lives, so situations may pop up where your dog is just confused or can't handle it. That just means they have more learning to do in those situations. It does not mean that they are defying you or not listening just to get their way.

**Some reasons why a dog may not be listening to you are.**

- They may be stressed, anxious, tired, or fearful.
- The behavior is not generalized well enough, and the dog is confused in that environment.
- There are too many or too difficult distractions in the environment. They are over-stimulated.
- The bank account for that behavior is empty. It does not pay to do that behavior.
- They may have physical discomfort, pain, or illness. (If a dog's behavior changes suddenly, always contact our shelter partner's vet for a physical exam before proceeding on with training through the behavior problem.)
- Over-excitement about something in the environment.
- Something punishing happened previously when performing that behavior.

## Boundaries

A boundary is an imaginary line your dog cannot cross without your permission. You should teach your dog to hold boundaries at places he could escape from such as outside doors, gates, and car doors. These boundaries are important for the safety of your dog, to prevent them from running out the door and possibly getting hit by a car.

The command "wait" can be used but is not necessary for boundaries. The training process teaches your dog that they cannot move forward through a doorway (or gate, etc.) until they

are given the release command, “free.” The training process will require a lot of repetition, so be patient with your dog as they are learning.

Have your dog on a leash at the door and put your hand on the doorknob. If they move forward at all, take your hand off the doorknob to indicate that is not what you want. Repeat until they don’t move forward when you put your hand on the doorknob. Praise your dog for not moving forward and start to open the door. Gradually open the door and if they stay in place, praise, and reward them. If they move forward, shut the door. Repeat until you can fully open the door without your dog trying to move through it. Give them praise and a treat for holding the boundary. When you are ready give them the release command “free” and let them pass through the door.

When you want your dog to pass through the boundary, give the command “free.” Remember to always give this release command before your dog walks through a boundary.

If your dog crosses the boundary without permission, bring your dog back and try again. Holding to your training criteria is the only way to have this behavior be reliable.

Every new distraction at doorways and boundaries will provide a new training opportunity. Be prepared to work through the boundary training several times to show your dog that even if friends are outside or the delivery guy is here, boundaries are an expectation.

Additionally, you can use the command “Wait” to signal for the dog to not cross a boundary. Always release the dog with Free once they are allowed to cross the boundary.

## Separation

Dogs for Better Lives recommends planning some time, every week, when your dog can have some time alone. There are two reasons for this suggestion.

First, having some time home alone allows the dog to get some much needed “time off” from their job. Having time separate from you provides an opportunity for your dog to rest “off the clock.”

Second, having time away from your dog on a regular basis helps the dog understand that separation is something that will occur and helps them learn to cope with being alone on occasion. This is important to help prevent the dog from becoming anxious if a situation comes up when you must leave them home alone for any reason.

The Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer will discuss in more detail how to practice separation with your dog.

**Contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer with any questions or concerns.**

## Crate Training

All dogs are to be crate trained during their time in foster. Crate training should always be positive. By teaching your dog to accept and enjoy the crate, it can become a very valuable tool. There is no reason not to crate train your dog. The crate becomes a comfortable, secure spot for your dog no matter where you are, and it should never be used as punishment.

### **Crates can be used:**

- For housetraining
- To keep pets safe while traveling in a vehicle
- When you must leave your pet in a hotel or unfamiliar place unattended
- At the veterinarian's clinic or at the groomer (By teaching your pet to accept and enjoy the crate, you will alleviate an enormous amount of stress for them during those times.)
- When they are home alone to prevent unwanted behaviors
- To prevent them from becoming confused when a sound occurs, and no one is home to alert
- To give your foster dog a place for some alone/rest time

It is important to remember that crates are to be used for short-term confinement. The only things that should be in there are the dog's bed or blanket, a Nylabone, and hollow toys stuffed with goodies to occupy their mind. If your dog is prone to shred or ingest soft toys or bedding, do not leave them unaccompanied with those items in their crate.

Crates are supposed to be enjoyable places for your dog. Never use them as a source of punishment. They also require adequate exercise before and after being crated. Going into the crate and being released from the crate should be calm, relaxed, and unemotional. All hellos and goodbyes should be even keel and not emotionally charged.

If you are having problems with crate training your dog, **ask the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer** for assistance. When done properly, crate training is a positive experience for you and your dog.

## Barking

There are many reasons why dogs bark. It is unrealistic to expect a dog to never bark. Barking can be the result of built-up energy that needs to be released through exercise and mental stimulation or can be due to fear. Do not yell at your dog when they bark.

Try to identify what your dog is barking at, and then contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer. The sooner you begin working on the problem the easier it will be to solve.

## Staying Off Counters and Out of the Garbage

The only method 100% effective for dealing with these problems is to prevent your dog from having access to the areas when you are not present to control the situation.

- Remove trash cans and put them somewhere the dog cannot get into them.
- Remove tempting items from tables, counters, etc.
- Use baby gates and close doors to prevent access.
- Crating your dog is an option.

**For more specific ideas on how to work these issues with your dog please contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer.**

## Jumping On People

Dogs jump on people to gain attention or when excited. Whether it's positive or negative attention, the dog will continually receive reinforcement when someone tries to push them off or speaks to them.

When your dog is doing a behavior that isn't acceptable such as jumping on people, it is best to approach the problem by preventing it from happening and then creating a plan to teach the dog what to do instead. (e.g., teach the dog to sit and stay seated when people approach instead of jumping up.)

This behavior is best dealt with gradually and in practice sessions, with the help of friends/helpers that will listen to your instructions.

The first step is to prevent the jumping from happening. Don't allow the dog to greet people if you know they might practice poor behavior. Utilize distance, management, or incompatible behaviors to prevent unwanted jumping. Once your dog gains more control, you can then gradually allow the dog to interact more with unknown people.

### **Jumping on people in the house – off leash:**

If your dog's jumping problem is due to over-excitement when people enter the house, you can teach your dog an incompatible behavior such as Place when visitors enter.

This alternative behavior should first be taught in a non-distracting environment, then gradually be introduced in more distracting and difficult situations e.g. First teach go to and stay on Place with no distractions, then introduce practice sessions where a helper enters and exits the house in different manners and your dog stays on Place, then eventually practicing someone approaching, knocking, and doing the whole visitor routine.

Once the dog is solid in practice sessions, start using the behavior when strangers come to the house. Remember to always be consistent and if your dog gets up from their Place or breaks their other incompatible behavior, put them back into position.



## **Jumping on people in public – on leash:**

If your problem is that your dog gets too excited when people pet them in public, you can refuse to allow petting, or you can teach your dog an incompatible behavior such as staying in a sit or down while being pet. Either way, you will need to refuse petting until you are confident your dog can stay in position.

To teach them an incompatible behavior such as sitting when greeted, you will need to coordinate training sessions with helpers.

Start with your helper at a distance where your dog can sit and remain in a sit. Have your helper approach and reward the dog for staying in a sit as they approach. Each time you mark and reward your dog, the helper should retreat to begin a new repetition.

If at any point your dog gets up or moves towards the helper, ask the helper to walk away (It's a good idea to instruct the helper to turn around and walk away if they see the dog move out of position, and also when you mark and reward the dog). Get your dog back into a sit and try again, this time rewarding your dog a little sooner, before they get out of position.

After each successful repetition, the helper can approach and get a little bit closer the next rep. The goal is that you are rewarding the sit before the dog has a chance to get up.

If you are constantly having to reset because the dog got up, your helper is coming too close for your dog in that session, make it easier.

Eventually the helper will be able to come right up to the dog and pet them in different manners and your dog will stay sitting. Once you have worked through this with multiple helpers, you can then start to allow the public to greet if you want. Making sure that your dog is successful and asking them to stop petting if your dog gets out of position.

**Contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer with any questions.**

## **Leave It and Sniffing While Heeling**

Ongoing sniffing and/or going for food or other items on the ground while heeling is unacceptable. **The first few things you should do are:**

- Make sure food is given to your dog in their bowl or from your hand.
- Prevent your dog from lunging at food or items on the floor. Steer their head away if necessary.
- Make sure your dog knows the "LEAVE IT" command.

Be proactive and keep a lookout for things in the environment that may distract your dog or catch their attention. Utilize Leave it if you notice a distraction and are sure you can prevent your dog from getting to it or are certain they will listen to the Leave it command. Be careful not to use the Leave it command if your dog is going to end up ignoring the command and enjoying the distraction or food they were supposed to be leaving alone. If



you and your dog notice a distraction and your dog ignores it or leaves it alone, praise and reward your dog for their good behavior. The more they are rewarded for this, the more they will choose to leave things alone without you asking for it.

**If you are struggling with distractions with your dog, here are some steps to work on it.**

**Teach Leave it (Eye Contact):**

Step 1—Place food in an open hand and hold it out and away from the dog. When the dog gives you eye contact, praise and reward your dog.

Step 2—Increase criteria by placing your open hand closer to the dog's nose. When the dog makes eye contact, praise and reward. If dog moves towards the food, move your hand away from the dog, or close your fist.

Step 3—When dog is consistently making eye contact at the sight of food in your hand, start placing the food on the ground a few feet in front of the dog. Praise and reward eye contact. If the dog lunges at the food, cover it and wait for the dog to offer eye contact, praise, and reward. As the dog is successful, start dropping or tossing the food in front of them. Careful not to allow the dog to obtain the food.

Step 4—Once the dog is successful on steps 1-3 with food, repeat steps 1-3 with toys and other objects.

Step 5—When the dog is offering eye contact consistently at the sight of a distraction, begin to add the command of Leave it as you present the distraction, praising and rewarding successful repetitions.

\*Dogs should not be reliant on a command to ignore a distraction. The sight of food or objects on the ground should start becoming a cue for your dog to leave it and look to you. Always reward them when they choose to ignore distractions on their own.

Step 6—Generalize the behavior. Start heeling past distractions on the ground and rewarding the dog for ignoring them and giving you eye contact. If your dog goes for the food, don't go quite as close to it until they reliably leave it from a few steps away. Gradually get closer and closer as they improve.

Use Leave it when your dog is looking at something and praise and reward them for turning back to you for eye contact. Use in gradually more distracting situations.

Continue working with your dog on the command Leave it with all sorts of distraction, foods, wrappers, people, dogs and objects, in many different environments. Be sure to always watch your dog! If your dog just looks at the distraction and then looks back at you, praise and reward your dog.

Remember that consistency is the key, and with practice, you should be able to accomplish this. Prevent them from practicing the scavenging/sniffing behavior as much as possible and reward them for doing the correct thing. Your dog did not learn this bad habit overnight; it will not change overnight.

This training can also be useful if your dog is distracted by other dogs or people. Rewarding eye contact in the presence of other dogs/people can be immensely helpful in teaching your dog what behavior to do instead of staring or lunging at dogs and people.

If you have any questions or if you are still having problems after working through this protocol, contact **the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer** for help.

**Determine why your dog may not be listening and contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or trainer for assistance.**

How they recommend working through “not listening” will depend on a variety of factors.

- If this is a new behavior for your dog, a vet check is the first thing to do to make sure there are no health concerns affecting their behavior.
- Figure out why your dog isn't listening, what is the cause?
- What can be changed to achieve success?

## **Dealing with Unwanted Behaviors.**

**Some of our solutions may include:**

**Ignoring the problem behavior** – Most problem behaviors are a continuous problem because they are getting reinforced somehow. Ignoring certain behaviors can lead to the behavior decreasing, and eventually fading away. Ignoring is only applied if it is safe to do so, and the factor that is reinforcing the behavior is your attention. If ignoring the behavior doesn't make it decrease after a few sessions, a different technique will need to be applied.

e.g., Your dog is trying to get your attention by whining and staring at you, and they have no reason besides being bored to be trying to get your attention. Ignoring this behavior will let them know that whining and staring are not the correct behaviors to do when they are bored. Adding in reinforcement for the correct behavior (settling and laying down) will make ignoring the poor choices even more effective.

**Environmental management** – Managing your dog's environment is the surest way to prevent them from doing something you don't want. Prevent them from practicing the problem behavior by restricting access to the thing causing the behavior.

e.g., Put away items you don't want them to play with, gate them off from rooms you don't want them in, crate them when you are away to prevent poor choices.

**Verbal Interrupter “Nope”** – Utilizing Nope to interrupt behavior and tell the dog that what they are doing is incorrect. Nope should always be followed by redirecting and showing the dog what you do want them to be doing and reinforcing that good behavior.

At Dogs for Better Lives, we **DO NOT** allow our dogs to be trained using physical punishment such as electronic shock collars, prong collars or physical corrections.

**If you are having trouble with a behavior problem, please contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer for advice before the problem gets out of control.**

## Housetraining

When your new dog comes home, keep an eye on them. The dogs from our shelter partners may or may not be housebroken. When you pick up your dog, more detailed information will be provided, if we have it. You will need to learn your dog's schedule and mannerisms that indicate they need to go outside. Some dogs pace back and forth, some whine, some sniff around in circles and corners of the house, some stop and stare at you, and others will go and sit by a door. If you notice irregular behavior, then take them outside.

Be sure to take your dog outside regularly to avoid accidents. It is best to take your dog out every couple of hours until you learn their schedule. Keep track of how often your dog relieves itself, and gradually increase the amount of time between outings.

Once inside, watch them carefully, and if you see them start to go to the bathroom in the house, make a noise to distract them (hand clap, "ah ah") and carry or lead them outside. Stay outside with them until they go to the bathroom and praise them for going outside.

If you find an accident, but did not catch your dog in the act, **do not scold them**. Your dog won't understand why they are being scolded, if they are punished after the fact. Punishment may cause them to be afraid of pottying in front of you when you need them to outside. Clean the mess with a product that will eliminate the scent. Many dogs will continue to go to the bathroom where they smell previous scents.

Be sure to stay outside with your dog on potty breaks until they are completely potty trained. You need to know for certain that they have gone outside so that you know there is less chance of an accident in the house, and you will have the opportunity to praise and reward them for going in the correct place.

### **If your dog is not yet housetrained, you will need to take your dog outside:**

- The first thing in the morning, every morning. By first thing, we mean before you do anything else.
- Approximately ½ an hour after they eat.
- Immediately after they awaken from a nap.
- The last thing before going to bed at night.
- Before you leave them alone for any length of time.
- When you first return home.

If your dog is unable to sleep through the night without going to the bathroom, consider limiting water intake a few hours before bed. Limit access to other areas of your home utilizing baby gates.

If your dog was housetrained, and then starts to go to the bathroom in the house, you should consider the following possibilities:

- Is your dog ill? You should consult with our shelter partner to make a veterinary appointment for an examination.
- Was there a change in diet? This could upset their stomach.
- Was there a change in the household? New pets, new people, new home? These could be causing your dog stress and he may need some special attention.

**If your dog is continually eliminating in the house, and you are unable to correct it with conventional housetraining methods, consult the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer ASAP for further instruction.**

## Summary

- Watch your dog.
- Learn your dog's potty schedule and potty cues.
- Be consistent. Pay attention.

## Fear, Stress, and Body Language

***If your dog shows a fear of something, contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer for advice.***

### Fear

At some moment in time, an incident may occur where you notice that your dog is afraid. Look around. It is important to determine what your dog is afraid of. Is it someone approaching, someone wearing a hat, or is it a specific area, or a string of events? You need to determine what caused the fear in your dog so that you can be prepared to deal with your dog's reaction in the future.

How **you** react to your dog during these times is most important. By showing your dog a calm, positive demeanor, this will help your dog relax and overcome fear and anxiety. Your dog depends on your reactions. If you are calm and cool and laugh the situation away, then your dog will feel that, and it may help them overcome their fear. If you are tense or show fear, your dog will also feel that, and it may escalate their fear.

It is best not to force your dog to face their fears as this may do the opposite and increase their avoidance or cause fear reactions. Allowing your dog to move away from the thing that they are fearful of and not forcing them or luring them to face it will help them learn to trust you. Knowing they are in control can be empowering for your dog and help them overcome fears and challenges quicker.

Signs your dog may be fearful include them moving away from or avoiding something or someone, lowering their body posture, tucking their tail, showing their teeth, or growling. This is not aggression. Fearful behavior and aggressive behavior look similar, but the underlying

emotion is what differentiates it. Most dogs showing signs that look like aggression are most often actually fearful and just want to escape, and not confront what is causing their concern.

Never punish or ignore your dog for showing you fear or stress signs. Doing so may cause your dog to escalate their reaction.

**If your dog is showing a consistent fear of something, contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer for advice.**

## **Stress**

There are many things in your dog's daily life that they may find stressful.

Like humans, dogs can tolerate some stress in their lives, but also like humans, once one too many stressful events happen in a certain period of time, the dog may become overly stressed and react in ways that are outside of their normal behavior.

Each dog has their own stress tolerance, so it is your job to pay attention to your dog and their environment, to determine if they need a break. Stressed dogs show it in many different ways. Some dogs become shut down. Other dogs may growl, bark, or even bite if overly stressed or afraid.

**Here are some signs your dog may be fearful, stressed or something else is wrong:**

- Loss of appetite
- Appeasement signals: Yawning, licking, exposing belly, tucked tail
- Lowered body posture
- Mouthing/hard mouth when taking treats
- Excessive panting when not hot
- Excessive shedding
- Digestive disturbances
- Increased sleeping
- Sweaty paws
- Increased sniffing
- Destructive behavior
- Hyperactivity
- Constantly pinned back ears
- Potty accidents
- Clinging
- Excessive vocalization
- Displacement behaviors
- Avoidance
- Excessive grooming
- Physical symptoms
- Unable to focus on handler, avoiding eye contact

## Stress Management

We ask a lot of our dogs when we take them out into public and to unfamiliar places and expect them to be always on their best behavior. It is your job to make sure your dog is not stressed or overwhelmed, and to manage it as much as possible.

### **Some ways to reduce stress in our dogs are:**

- Keep things predictable as much as possible.
- Be clear in what you want and don't want from your dog.
- Focus more on rewarding what you like instead of punishing what you don't like. Set the dog up for success.
- Vet checks, if needed, to address any health issues the dog may have.
- Feed a nutritious diet and always have fresh water available to them.
- Provide regular enrichment such as puzzle toys, play and sniffing on fun walks.
- Practice separation and alone time often to reduce the chance of separation anxiety.

### **Here are some ways to help your dog destress everyday:**

- Regular Exercise and play – Time to be a dog by running, sniffing, and exploring, tires them out and releases endorphins to ease stress. For most dogs, scenting and sniffing is the most beneficial piece of a walk. Allowing your dog a harness walk where they are allowed to sniff and explore or allowing your dog to have access to new fenced areas to explore, is a great way to destress and calm your dog's mind.
- Allow some alone time – Have a space with a bed or crate where the dog can go to if they need some down time or alone time. Most dogs need an average of 12 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period so allowing the dog to be able to rest can help them tolerate stress.
- Time off from stressful events – After a stressful event, it can take up to 2 days for stress levels to return to normal. If your dog experiences an incredibly stressful event, or a series of stressful events, allow them some time to recover by keeping them on a routine with as little stress as possible.
- Enrichment such as puzzle toys, stuffed Kongs, and new toys, can give your dog some variety in their day and allow them to engage in behaviors that are natural to them, in ways that we humans find appropriate. Mental stimulation is just as important as physical exercise for dogs.

## Body Language

Paying attention to your foster dog's body language will help you be more in tune with your dog and their state of mind. Knowing what they look and act like when they are comfortable will help you notice more easily if they are anxious, fearful, stressed, and even if they are in pain.

# CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

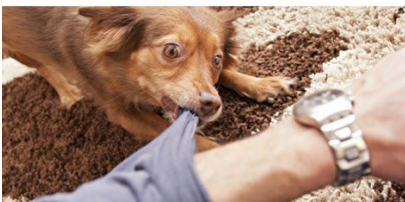
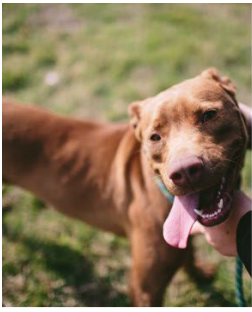


## DOGS AREN'T HUMANS

- Dogs communicate between themselves differently than humans do between each other
- No spoken language between dogs
- Dogs must utilize their body language to get a message across
- Dogs make decisions based on what is safe versus what's not safe
  - No moral decision making
  - Based on 'what works?'







## RELAXED/PLAYFUL DOG

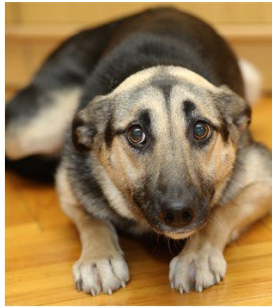
- Mouth open, tail lolling to one side
  - Play bow
- Leaning into contact
- Loose wagging tail
  - Soft eyes
  - Relaxed ears
  - Wiggling body



## OVER-AROUSSED DOG

- Jumping up
- Perked up ears
- Hard staring
- Mouthing at leash, clothing, hands, etc.
  - Barking
  - High tail
- Fast tail wagging
  - Hackles
- Pacing/spinning
- Mounting





## DOG STRESS/CALMING SIGNALS

- Yawning (out of context)
- Tense face (eyebrows furrowed)
- Lip licking/tongue flicking
  - Head turn
  - Ears pushed back
  - Low tail
  - Panting
  - Paw raise
  - Shake off
  - Low body position
- Scratching (out of context/excessive)



## FEARFUL DOG

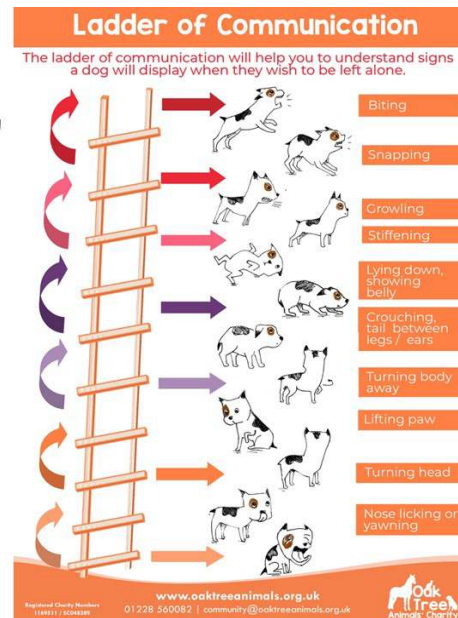
- Avoidance
- Low body position
- Ears pushed back
- Tucked tail
- Panting
- Shaking
- Whale eye
- Submissive Urination
- Cowering





# EXTREMELY FEARFUL DOG

- Logical thought is gone.
  - fight, flight, freeze.
- There is a ladder of escalation or communication for dogs
  - Tense body language, freeze, teeth display, growl, air snap, inhibited bite, non-inhibited bite
- If you notice and acknowledge the earlier warning signs, there's no reason it'll ever escalate past that



## KEY POINTS FOR A FULL PICTURE

- Take in the whole picture of the dog WITH context whenever possible
  - Consider the dogs ears, eyes, mouth, back, tail, and body position
    - Frequency
    - Environment
- The more you know a dog, the more you will understand their quirks and ways they express themselves
- Recognize how your dog is communicating with you and respect their response





## EXAMPLE

- Open mouth
- Soft eyes
- Loose tail
- Ears relaxed
- Moving towards object/person



## EXAMPLE

- Lowered ears
- Body position pushed backwards
- Tail low/tucked
- Mouth/jaw tight
- Eye focused on stimulus



## EXAMPLE

- Low tail
- Lowered body position
- Whale eye
- Watching/focused



- Acknowledge the emotion
  - Remember, we can't control how something feels to another living being
  - Rational vs. irrational
- Provide distance/leave the environment if possible
- Evaluate
  - Is the reaction consistent or an extreme response?
- Reach out to your field representative!

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Take a look at the graphic below, looking at these different body parts, to see what they could mean. Consider the whole picture when trying to determine how a dog is feeling.

# DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



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*lili*



## Summary

- Learn your dog's unique body language signals and what they are communicating to you.
- Keep in mind your dog's comfort and stress level when taking it to unfamiliar places.
- If your dog is fearful or stressed, attempt to determine what the cause of their distress is and contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer.
- Overcome your dog's fear at their pace. Do not rush your dog to overcome their fear instantly.
- Your reaction is critical.

**Contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer** if you notice fear in your dog. Your trainer can help you come up with a specific plan for dealing with some common fears.

## Dog-Dog Interactions and Play

Dogs for Better Lives and our shelter partners do not allow our dogs to be taken into off-leash dog parks. There are too many unknown factors that could harm your dog including risk of disease and unfriendly dogs.

### Meeting a New Dog

Most of our dogs enjoy playing with other dogs, so having playtime with dogs and owners you know and trust can be beneficial.

Your dog may be excited about playing with every dog they meet, they may be happy playing with specific dogs, or they may only be comfortable hanging around other dogs, but not playing. It is best to not force your dog to interact with other dogs if they don't want to. Doing so can cause fear or frustration.

When meeting a new dog, make sure that the other dog is healthy and is known to be friendly with other dogs. Make sure you have a way to interrupt and separate the dogs if things are too much.

Meeting off leash in a small, fenced area will be safest, and having each dog drag their leash is a good idea if you are unsure how they will react to each other.

### Playtime

All dogs are individuals, and each has their own personality, interests and play style.

Play with other dogs can be a terrific way for your dog to get some energy out and decompress, but only if the play match is equal. Unequal play can cause frustration and



possibly aggression in one or both dogs. If your dog or the other dog seems overwhelmed, it is best to interrupt the play session and give the dogs a break.

**Here are some ways to know if it is appropriate, equal play or if it's unequal and someone is avoiding or trying to stop the play:**

A dog who is enjoying play will generally exhibit relaxed body posture and continue going back for more instead of trying to get away. If it appears that one dog is trying to get away, you can interrupt the other dog momentarily to see if both dogs try to re-engage. If so, then they are both consenting to the play, but if one dog uses that time to escape the situation, then you can assume they are probably not enjoying the play.

**Appropriate play consists of:**

- Taking turns – role switching
- Matched energy level
- Bouncy and fluid movement
- Inhibited biting
- Mutually respected breaks

**Inappropriate play consists of:**

- Body slamming
- Snapping or other attempts to tell the instigator to back off
- Hard biting
- Increased vocalizations
- Pestering of the uninterested dog – one dog running and hiding

## Summary

- Do not take your dog to public dog parks.
- During play, watch all dogs to make sure they are comfortable and happy to be there.
- Watch for signs a dog is trying to escape and allow them a break if they need.
- Not all dogs want to play with other dogs. And not all dogs have matching play styles.

## Aggression

**Any signs of aggression need to be reported to the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer**

This training tip is designed with questions and answers to help you better understand and identify certain aspects of aggression. Not all barking or growling is aggression. Always contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer for advice. We hope you find this a helpful guide.

Q: *My dog has never shown signs of aggression until now. What is the first thing I should do?*

A: Contact our shelter partner to take your dog to the vet. You will need to rule out any medical condition that could be causing the behavior your dog is exhibiting. Report the incident and vet findings to the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer immediately.

Q: *Should I correct my dog if he growls or if I think he's growling based on body posture, etc.?*

A: If you hear your dog growl at something, DO NOT correct them or punish them. The growl lets you know that your dog is stressed about a certain situation.

If you punish your dog for growling, you will not only add more stress to your dog, but you may also teach them to not growl, and therefore they may bite without any warning.

What you *should do* is move the dog away and distract them from what is causing the growl. Get their attention on you. Relax. Do not add stress to the situation. One form of distracting your dog is to give them obedience commands. This provides them with something else to focus on. If they cannot focus, move further away from what is upsetting them. Praise them happily for watching and listening to you. If your dog will do anything for a treat, use it to have them watch you. Be careful that you are only rewarding your dog when they are responding to you.

Q: *My dog has only growled at one person. Do I still need to report this to the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer?*

A: Yes. Even one aggressive response should be reported. It may never happen again, or it may escalate into further incidents. Be prepared to give the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer a detailed description of your dog's reaction and the situation that occurred.

Q: *My dog pulls on the leash and barks when they see other dogs. What do I do?*

A: There could be several reasons why your dog is barking. Contact the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer to evaluate the circumstances more closely. In any case, do not allow your dog to continue to pull on the leash and bark. Give your dog more distance from other dogs. Do not approach head-on - curve off to the side. Begin to distract your dog away from other dogs with attention work. Put your dog through some obedience such as sits, downs and heeling. Keep them busy paying attention to your commands and reward good behavior with praise and treats. If you cannot get your dog's attention, increase the distance from the other dogs until you can.

Q: *Should I try to correct my dog's aggression problem(s) alone?*

A: **NO.** Once the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer is provided with a detailed description of the problem, they will provide you with a program to control the aggression.

## Nutrition and Diet

All the dogs from the program will come with food provided by our shelter partners. We recommend they stay on that diet unless their needs change. You and **the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer** can find the correct portion of food that keeps your dog at a healthy weight. We do not recommend, in most cases, feeding what the back of the food bag recommends. Doing so usually creates an obese dog.

If you find it necessary to change your dog's food after placement, contact **the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or Trainer** or **our shelter partner's** veterinary team.

Because of the importance of the job these dogs are trained to do, DBL does require they are fed a premium diet and not fed a lot of extra human food, as this may cause gastric problems or food allergies. Treats should be carefully considered as they add in extra calories and may not be necessary as most of our dogs like working for their kibbles.

Kibble should always be stored indoors in an air-tight container. It will go bad if you are not storing it properly.

The amount of food varies and will decrease as your dog ages. Just like us, metabolism slows with age. We recommend feeding twice a day, and at the same times if possible. Measure the food, remove the amount you will use for training for the day, place the meal in a bowl, add water if desired, and give them 15 minutes to eat. If your dog skips a meal or slows their eating, reduce the amount of food. If it continues consult with your veterinarian.

Some recommended treat brands:

- **Zukes**
- **Charlee Bears**
- **Pet Botanics**

Human Food that can be added as a treat in VERY small amounts:

- **Cooked Potato, Eggs**
- **Plain cooked meats (Beef, Chicken, Fish, etc.)**
- **Carrots, Broccoli, Cantaloupe, Squash, Green Beans**

**NOT** recommended:

- NO grapes, NO macadamia Nuts, NO chocolate, NO xylitol, NO cooked bones, NO grapes/raisins, NO alcohol, NO onions, NO candy, and citrus fruit is not recommended.

**These are just a few recommendations. If you have questions ask the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator, Trainer, or our shelter partner's veterinarian.**

## Identification and Licensing

DBL requires all dogs to wear a collar with an ID tag whenever they are out of your home. This tag should have your contact information on it in case your dog is lost, and will be provided to you by DBL.

## Health and Wellness

### Exercise

All dogs benefit from exercise, an average goal is an hour of exercise a day. This can be split into two 30-minute walks, 20 minutes of playing ball, swimming, training, or running. More exercise can be beneficial unless you notice your dog is too tired to do its work. Then an adjustment may be necessary. Or if they are gaining weight, more exercise may be necessary.

If the weather is a concern (hot/cold) you can often walk your dog inside of a mall or play in a hallway. You can also look for options to access indoor pools or help train your dog to use a treadmill.

### Veterinary Care

This foster dog will have all its veterinary care provided by our shelter partner. For any emergencies or veterinary concerns please follow our shelter partner's foster guidelines.

### Preventatives

**Heartworm preventative is REQUIRED unless your veterinarian does not recommend it and you do not travel.**

Heartworm Preventatives are given monthly and are most often a tablet or soft treat. There are many brands that are effective, and some are topical liquids. Discuss options with your veterinarian.

Heartworm preventatives generally protect your dog from whip worms, round worms, and hook worms.

Flea/tick preventatives can also be included or separate and can be pills or topical ointment. And will vary by area. These are usually monthly as well, discuss with your veterinarian.

\*DBL does not recommend Flea/Tick collars or spray.

### Other Parasites

Tape Worms are transmitted by ingesting flea eggs and can be seen in dogs' stool as pieces of wiggly rice. Consult with our shelter partner's veterinarian if you see them.

Giardia and Coccidia will cause diarrhea in dogs and if you are concerned consult with your veterinarian.

## Skin Infections

Skin issues can be parasites (fleas) fungal, bacterial, or even allergies. Always ask our shelter partner's veterinarian and do not attempt to diagnose on your own if your dog's skin is red and/or itchy, or they have hair loss.

## Ear Infections

Ear infections can be yeast infections (most common) or bacterial, or mites (most rare). Always ask our shelter partner's veterinarian before treating ears.

## Diarrhea or Soft Stools

Most often this is caused by simple gastric upset. (Eating something they shouldn't) We recommend you fast your dog for 12 hours and see if they go back to normal. You can also add 2 tablespoons of pumpkin to their food for a few days to see if it helps. Then please consult with a veterinarian or follow our shelter partner's emergency veterinary guidelines if they start vomiting, are lethargic, or have bloody stool.

## Vomiting

This is usually caused by a dog eating something it should not, and as long as there are no other symptoms, we recommend fasting your dog for 12 hours and then offering them a few smaller meals to get everything back to normal - always consult with the our shelter partner's veterinarian if there is any blood, or if it is persistent, or any other symptoms.

## Eye or Nasal Discharge

This is the commonly allergies. If it is clear and there are no other symptoms it should go away on its own within a few days or a week. You can safely also give 1-2 Benadryl tablets (1 kg per lb.) to help with seasonal pollen. Any color or redness/swelling or squinting you need to consult with our shelter partner's veterinarian.

## Limping

As long as there are no visible injuries or swelling. You should generally rest your dog for a few days and consult with our shelter partner's veterinarian if it persists, gets worse, or if your dog is not walking or has any other symptoms.

## Bug Bites and Bee Stings

Generally clean areas with peroxide, then observe your dog for any redness or swelling. You can give Benadryl at 1 kg per lb. safely. And follow our shelter partner's emergency veterinary guidelines immediately if you observe facial swelling or trouble breathing, or any other symptoms.

## **FOLLOW OUR SHELTER PARTNER'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE PROTOCOL FOR:**

- Open wounds
- Bleeding that does not stop or is excessive
- Vomiting that does not stop or is with diarrhea
- Straining to vomit or pass stool
- Not able to bear weight on a limb
- Any eye injuries that result in swelling and/or squinting
- Seizures
- Unable to hold down food for 24 hours
- Unable to hold down water
- Lethargy that is severe or with other symptoms
- Heat exhaustion
- Head trauma

## **Traveling With Your Foster Dog**

### **Lodging**

The foster dog in training you are not granted any special public access. You do need to stay in a dog-friendly hotel. If you have travel planned and are interested in bringing your foster dog in training, you will need to get approval from the Shelter Dog Program Coordinator or trainer before travel.

If you have travel planned and do not want to bring your foster dog in training or travel has not been approved, DBL will work to find a temporary foster for the dog while you are away.

# Annex

## Poisoning

### **What to Do in the Event Poisoning or Suspected Poisoning**

- **Follow our shelter partner's Foster veterinary protocols.**
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center 1-888-426-4435
  - There is a \$65 charge; but in many cases the ER veterinarian will need to call anyway and will charge you for the call and their time, so is usually less expensive for you to call
- Be ready to give the following information:
  - Species
  - Breed
  - Sex
  - Age
  - Weight
  - Number of animals involved
  - Symptoms
  - Agent exposed to (if known)
- Collect material(s) involved – take any/all containers with you to the vet, take any chewed material and any vomit you find.
- Seek medical assistance immediately if you suspect toxic ingestion – many signs/symptoms do not show up immediately.

### **Have a First Aid Kit with the Following:**

- Fresh bottle of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide (to induce vomiting)
- Method to administer the Hydrogen Peroxide (syringe or turkey baster)
- Saline eye solution
- Artificial tear gel
- Mild, grease-cutting dishwashing liquid (for skin contamination)
- Tweezers (insect stingers)
- Soft muzzle



- Can of preferred wet food
- Collar & leash/carrier
- Benadryl (1/2 to 2 mg per pound of dog)
- Fecalizer (ask your vet)
- Sterile UA cup (ask your vet)

## Toxic Substances

### Human Medications/Drugs/Vitamins

**NEVER to be administered to pets:**

<u>Drug</u>	<u>Symptom</u>
Acetaminophen	Vomiting, pain, dark urine
Amphetamines	Heart rate or rhythm change, seizures
Tricyclic Antidepressants	Vomiting, behavior changes, disorientation
Imodium A/D, Ex-Lax	Depression, heart rate/respiratory depression
Ibuprofen/Naproxen Sodium	Diarrhea (maybe bloody), staggering, listless, seizures
Tobacco	Vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, staggering, seizures, dilated pupils, drooling, hyperactivity

**Medications to be given under Veterinarian Direction Only:**

<u>Drug</u>	<u>Symptom of Overdose</u>
Antihistamine/Decongestants	Vomiting, hyperactive, seizures
Aspirin	Vomiting, stomach pain, depression, Increased respiration, coma
Pepto Bismol	Vomiting, pain, depression, increased respiration, coma
Iron	Vomiting, diarrhea (possible bloody), dark urine
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs)	Vomiting, diarrhea, pain, staggering, shock
Fleet Enema	Vomiting, diarrhea, staggering, seizures
Vitamin D	Vomiting, diarrhea, increased thirst, and urine

## Human Foods

### Never Feed for Any Reason:

#### Food

Alcoholic Beverage

Avocado (fruit, pit, plant)

Chocolate

Coffee/Caffeinated Beverages

Macadamia Nuts

Moldy/Spoiled Food (esp. dairy)

Onion/Powder

Grapes/Raisins

Yeast Dough

Xylitol (sweetener)

Raw Fish

Salmon (raw)

#### Symptoms that May Be Seen

Drunk behavior, coma

Difficulty breathing

Vomiting, diarrhea, excitability, increase heart rate, staggering, seizures, muscle tremors

Vomiting, diarrhea, increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, muscle tremors, seizures

Vomiting, lethargy, pale gums, staggering, tremors, paralysis

Vomiting, diarrhea (puss/bloody), fever, shock, seizures

Vomiting, diarrhea, bloody urine, weakness

Vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, lethargy

Gas, pain, GI rupture

Vomiting, weakness, staggering, seizures

Reduced appetite, seizures

Vomiting, diarrhea, fever, weakness

### Large Amounts Need to Be Ingested for Toxic Effect:

Garlic/Powder

Vomiting, diarrhea, bloody urine, weakness

Salt

Vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, seizures

Pepper

GI upset

Nutmeg/Mace

Vomiting, stomach pain, excitability

Spices

Skin irritation, GI irritation

Broccoli

Vomiting, diarrhea, stomach upset/pain, staggering, seizures

Pits from Apples, Cherries, Peaches

Plums, Almonds, Apricots

Abnormal behavior, excitement, seizures, bright red mucus membranes

## Household Products

Seek medical attention **immediately** if any exposure is suspected.

Toxin	Products Found In	Symptoms That May Be Seen
Ethylene Glycol	Antifreeze	Vomiting, diarrhea, staggering, drooling, seizures, hyperactivity
Propylene Glycol	Antifreeze	Incoordination, seizures
Methanol	Antifreeze	GI upset, seizures
Arsenic	Insecticides, herbicides, insulation	Vomiting, restless, drooling, staggering, pain
Borate, Boric Acid, Boron	Bait, cleaning compounds, lens & denture cleansers	Vomiting, diarrhea, coma, bloody urine, seizures
Bleach		Vomiting, coughing, burns to skin, mucus membranes
Batteries		Vomiting, drooling, burns, pain
Acids		Burns to affected areas
Citrus Oil Extract	Dip, spray, shampoo	Drooling, drop in body temp, staggering, falling
Detergent	Laundry/dish soap, shampoo	Vomiting, diarrhea, GI Upset, irritation of eyes by mucus membranes
Fabric Softener, Sanitizers, Disinfectants		Vomiting, collapse, burns
Isopropyl Alcohol	Lotions, perfumes, solvents, window cleaner	“Drunk” appearance/behavior, vomiting, Coma
Kerosene/Gasoline		Vomiting, diarrhea, coma, drooling, staggering, difficulty breathing
Metaldehyde	Slug & snail bait, Rodenticides, eating poisoned animal	Staggering, over-reaction to stimulus, tremors, seizures, drooling
Naphthalene	Mothballs	Vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, lethargy, seizures, stomach pain

Organophosphates	Rose food, older flea products (over the counter)	Diarrhea, drooling, pinpoint pupils, slow heart rate
Warfarin	Rodenticide	Bleeding from eyes, ears, mucus membranes, rectum
Cholecalciferol	Rodenticide	Increased water consumption, increased urine output, depression
Strychnine	Rodenticide	Convulsions, seizures, paralysis, oversensitive to stimulus

## Toxic Plants

The following appendix provides some of the signs/symptoms that may result from ingesting some types of plants. This section is intended to be a source of information to enable better communication with the veterinarian should a toxicity occur.

Most people have many of these plants in their home and/or yard and never have any problems. If your dog tends to be a chewer or gets into things, more management may be required.

Please contact your trainer if you have any concerns and/or questions.

### **Plants that cause mainly vomiting, irritation/burning of the mouth/ tongue/lips, drooling and difficulty swallowing:**

Caladium	Lacy Tree
Calla Lily	Marble Queen
Ceriman	Mexican Bread Fruit
Charming Dieffenbachia	Mother-in-Law
Chinese Evergreen	Nephthytis
Chrysanthemum	Panda
Creeping Fig	Peace Lily
Cordatum	Philodendron Pertusum
Devils Ivy	Poinsettia
Dumbcane	Pot Mum
Elephant Ears	Red Princess
Fiddle Leaf Philodendron	Saddle Leaf Philodendron
Flamingo Plant	Satin Pathos
Fruit Salad Plant	Schefflera

Gold Dieffenbachia	Spider Mum
Golden Pathos	Swiss Cheese Plant
Green Gold Nephthysis	Taro Vine
Heart Leaf Philodendron	Variable Dieffenbachia
Horse Leaf Philodendron	Variegated Philodendron
Hurricane Plant	

**Plants that cause various symptoms, including more serious ones like CNS depression, seizures, coma, cardiovascular collapse, hallucinogens, convulsions, hypersensitivity to stimulus, delirium/behavior changes, respiratory congestion or failure, shock, and death:**

Loco Weed	Periwinkle	Heavenly Bamboo
Yew	Peyote	Coriaria
Jerusalem Cherry	Moonweed	Lily of the Valley
Nux Vomica	Mistletoe	Hemlock
Morning Glory	Andromeda Japonica	Narcissus
Autumn Crocus	Oleander	Azalea
Precatory Bean	Buckeye	Rhododendron
Castor Bean	Sago Palm	Chinaberry Tree (berries)
Christmas Rose	Yucca	Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow
Cycads	Daffodil	Foxglove
Glacier Ivy		

**Plants causing a variety of symptoms, including but not limited to vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, muscle spasms, salivation, lethargy, anorexia, stomach, body pain, drooling, weakness, incoordination, dermatitis, increased heart rate, hyperthermia, stiffness, and dilated pupils:**

Angels Trumpet	Cornstalk Plant	Buttercup
Cyclamen	Dologeton	Florida Beauty
Jasmine	Gladiolas	Jimson Weed
Glory Lily	Lupine	Gold Dust Dracaena
Holly	Matrimony Vine	Dutchman's Breeches
Hyacinth	May Apple	Hydrangea
Mescal Bean	Iris	Mushrooms

Kalanchoe	Pig Weed	Madagascar Dragon Tree
Aloe	Dracaena ( <i>most types</i> )	Asparagus Fern
Tulip	Bird of Paradise	Plumosa Fern
All Types of Ivy	Bittersweet	Emerald Feather/Fern
Buddist Pine	Clematis	Austrian Nut
Amaryllis		

## Emergency/Disaster Evacuation Kit Suggestions

- Crate and blanket
- Several days' supply of dog food
- A supply of water
- Dog bowls
- Copy of medical and vaccination records
- Medications (if needed)
- Collar and leash
- First aid kit
- Current picture of dog