

Tails On The Trails – Pathway Etiquette

Kirsten January 16, 2012 <http://caninemindsandmanners.ca/tails-on-the-trails-pathway-etiquette/> <http://caninemindsandmanners.ca/contact-us/>

Calgarians are privy to miles and miles of pathways and beautiful parks and many of us choose to use these areas to exercise our dogs. This is a wonderful way to spend time in the outdoors and with your canine friend. Sometimes however, dog owners come in conflict with non-dog owners who are also using the pathways. Here are few tips to keep things positive for all path users:

Keep your dog leash, not longer than 2 metres, at all times when in an area not designated at offleash by The City of Calgary, even if he is very well behaved and will stick to you like glue. You just never know when that crafty rabbit, or very enticing person will be a distraction for your dog.

This should go without saying, but please pick up after your dog and more than that, after picking up please deposit your packages in the appropriate receptacles. I know that most people have full intention of picking up their full bags on the way back, but I also know that many people simply forget and so the bags sit there until another good citizen picks them up or The City of Calgary employees, or worse they break open and cause a mess.

When other people with or without children, strollers and/or dogs are approaching you, a great idea is to move off of the path in a curved motion, let them go have a sniff as you come off the path or move off of the path and have your dog sit and focus on you, but remember to reward them for doing this. It's pretty hard to focus on one person when all this other fun stuff and distraction is happening, so reward your dog for doing it. I recommend this because some people are very uncomfortable with dogs and so to be kind to them moving away is a good idea. They may also in their discomfort, tense up or become vocal unintentionally, causing your dog to be uncomfortable and perhaps acting in a way he normally would not have done, had the person not tensed up.

Additionally, people with small children probably don't want a strange dog poking it's nose into their strollers.

Lastly, moving off of the path when approaching another dog especially in a curve, creates the more natural way of dogs approaching one another, rather than straight on. This will make both dogs more comfortable and really dogs do not need to be meeting one another on leash in any event. It is much better that they meet off leash, in play dates, daycares or even in off leash parks at non busy times.

In the City of Calgary, dogs must not be left tethered while unattended. Many people leave their dogs tethered outside stores while they run in to do some quick shopping. This is dangerous for your dog and for people who may approach your dog. Even friendly, well socialized dogs, when left alone and tethered can quickly become anxious and fearful, a perfect storm for a potential bite. Your dog could get loose and run off. These are just a

few reasons why it is not a good idea to tether, but again, it is also in violation of City Bylaws.

Have fun on the pathways, enjoy our beautiful city, but be safe, be aware, take care of your dog and look out for the safety and comfort of other path users.

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