

Dogs in the Workplace Guidelines



Leader Dogs for the Blind, as an organization that promotes and celebrates the human-animal bond, recognizes the many benefits of having dogs in the workplace: increase in staff morale, worker productivity, and camaraderie among employees. As such, Leader Dog permits each employee the privilege of bringing their personal dog(s) to work with them on a regular basis subject to the following guidelines:

- The dog has no history of demonstrated aggression toward humans or other dogs
- The dog is house-trained
- The dog does not disturb others (no barking, roaming or running)
- The dog is spayed or neutered (unless kept in tact for breeding or showing purposes)
- The dog's collar should be consistent with tools used and supported by Leader Dog (buckle, martingale, slip or gentle leader collars). No prong or electric collars are to be used
- The dog has a current license tag, worn on a collar with current identification
- The dog is up to date on vaccinations, fecal and heartworm tests and has no known communicable diseases
- The dog is free of fleas and does not have an offensive odor, is properly and regularly groomed
- The dog, all bedding, and supplies are kept clean
- The dog is kept under control at all times. Specifically to the Administration Building, the dog doesn't disrupt the office environment during business hours, specifically:
 - The dog is kept within workspace via a gate or tie down
 - The dog is escorted with a leash when being parked or walked around the property
 - The dog does not play around with other dogs
 - The dog or dogs do not get on the furniture

Employee Responsibilities:

Additional Requirements:

The responsibility for the care of employees' dogs lies with employees, not with Leader Dog or other employees, including:

- Introducing new dogs properly to other dogs in the workplace (**see Introduction Techniques on next page**)
- Cleaning up after their dog, indoors and out

- Reporting any dog bite incident - involving humans or another animal, no matter how trivial - that takes place on Leader Dog property immediately to Human Resources
- Keeping the dogs from the following areas: residence area (specifically past the carpeted area).
- Maintaining control of the dog and its behavior

Complaints or Concern regarding Canine Well-Being

Complaints can be directed to your supervisor, or to Human Resources. Complaints will be investigated, and attempts will be made to resolve concerns in a positive manner that will benefit all parties involved.

Introduction Techniques

Relationships between canines can be pretty complex, beginning with the very first meeting. Like most animals who live in groups, dogs establish their own social structure, sometimes called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members.

- **Choose A Neutral Location** Introduce the dogs in a neutral location so that the current dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder. Ideally, this is a place neither dog has ever been before, preferably outside. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. With both dogs on leashes¹, begin the introductions.
- **Use Positive Reinforcement** From the first meeting, help both dogs experience "good things" when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other briefly, which is normal canine greeting behavior. As they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice; never use a threatening tone. (Don't allow them to investigate and sniff each other for too long, however, as this may escalate to an aggressive response.) After a short time, get the attention of both dogs and give each a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as "sit" or "stay." Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with the "happy talk," food rewards, and simple commands.
- **Be Aware of Body Postures** One body posture that indicates things are going well is a "play-bow." One dog will crouch with her front legs on the ground and her hind end in the air. This is an invitation to play, and a posture that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hair standing up on one dog's back,

¹ Use four foot leashes so corrections can be given if necessary. Do not use a retractable leash.

teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff-legged gait, or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by a strong “NO”, along with calmly getting each dog interested in something else. For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down. The dog should know you are not pleased with that behavior. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other. You may reward each with a treat at this point. The dogs' interest in the treats should prevent the situation from escalating into aggression, but be careful not to use the treat as a distraction from bad behavior. It is also recommended that the dogs should try to meet with the other owner right away as well too. Keep in mind that if an owner is stressed, their dog will pick on this as well, so try to be as relaxed as possible to encourage a successful introduction.