

---

# TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS

---

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Introduction - 3

Think First - 4

Make the Commitment - 9

Get Ready - 12

Bring Your Dog Home - 15

Keep Your Dog Healthy - 18

Keep Your Dog Safe - 24

Be a Friend - 28

Train Your Dog - 33

Breed Responsibly - 36

Get Involved - 38

Be a Canine Ambassador - 40

Who We Are and What We Do - 44

# INTRODUCTION

---

Among companion animals, dogs are unmatched in their devotion, loyalty and friendship to humankind. Anyone who has ever loved a dog can attest to its hundred-fold return. The excitement your dog shows when you come home, the wagging tail at the sound of the leash being taken from its hook, the delight in the tossing of a tennis ball, and the head nestled in your lap-those are only some of the rewards of being a dog owner.

Owning a dog is not just a right, it is a responsibility. These animals depend on us for, at minimum, food and shelter, and deserve much more. If you are considering taking a dog into your life, you need to think seriously about the commitment that dog ownership entails. If you already have a dog, you need to consider if you are fulfilling all your obligations as its owner.

The AKC is committed to helping dog owners raise happy, healthy dogs. The list below is certainly not exhaustive, but it contains some of the essential ways you can be the best dog owner you can be.

---



*chapter one*  
**THINK FIRST**

# THINK FIRST

---

Dog ownership is not something to be entered into lightly. Owning a dog is a long-term emotional and financial commitment. Before deciding that a certain dog is right for you, you must make an honest assessment as to whether your home is right for any dog.

## EVALUATE YOUR LIFESTYLE

---

If you get a dog, he will become a part of your life. You need to make sure that he's suited for your lifestyle. For example, if you are athletic, you will probably not be happy with a dog that has a low energy level. If you are extremely neat, you will probably want a dog that doesn't shed much. All aspects of your family's life - hobbies, activities, personalities, and schedules - should be evaluated before you get a dog.

## MAKE A LIST

---

Based on your evaluation, determine what qualities you want in a dog. Consider size, energy level, grooming needs, trainability and temperament. Do you want a guard dog or a lap dog? Is it important that your dog get along with children? If you rent your home, are there restrictions on height, weight or breed? Answer these questions now - once you bring a dog home, it can be heartbreaking to realize that you made the wrong choice.

# THINK FIRST

---

## CHOOSE A BREED

---

Once you have made your list of ideal characteristics, do some research to find which breeds fit that profile. Go to your local library, attend a dog show, and visit the AKC website. Narrow your choices to the breed that seems right for you.

### 1. Get a Referral

You have a much better chance of being satisfied if you get your dog from a responsible, ethical breeder whose primary concern is to produce dogs of high quality, good health and stable temperament. The AKC has a Breeder Referral contact for each recognized breed. These individuals can put you in contact with breeders or rescue organizations in your area.

### 2. Make Contact

Get in touch with the breed contacts in your area. Let them know that you are interested in their breed. Be able to demonstrate that you have put thought into your choice. Don't be discouraged if the first breeder you talk to does not have puppies available right away. That person may know another breeder in the region.

### 3. Ask Questions

Ask the breeder any questions you can think of about the breed. When you find a breeder you're comfortable with, ask to visit the kennel and view the dogs on the breeder's premises. Inquire about health problems of the breed, and what can be done to prevent or control them. Find out what kinds of activities, including competition, the breeder's dogs participate in and enjoy. The breeder's dogs are a preview of what your dog will be.

# THINK FIRST

---

## CHOOSE A BREED

---

### 4. Consider an Older Dog

Puppies aren't for everyone. If an older dog better fits your lifestyle, check the AKC website to find a breed Parent Club and/or breed rescue. These organizations rescue purebred dogs that have been lost, abandoned or surrendered due to the death or illness of their owners. Most rescue dogs have been spayed or neutered and are screened for health and temperament problems. Rescue is not only a great source for purebred dogs, it's also a way to save the life of a dog in need.

### 5. Expect Questions

A responsible breeder or rescue contact will ask you extensive questions about the type of home you can offer a dog. These people are as committed as you are to making the right match between you and a dog. Give honest answers to their questions. Remember that, due to their experience in the breed, they know what issues are important in placing one of their dogs.

### 6. Prepare to Wait

Availability varies. Be aware that a puppy or dog of the breed you've decided on may not be easy to find. Responsible breeders do not breed often, and many times the puppies of a planned breeding are already spoken for. Just remember that a good dog is worth waiting for.

# THINK FIRST

---

## CHOOSE A BREED

---

### 7. Skip the Holidays

Many people try to buy puppies as Christmas gifts for children or other family members. Most breeders do not recommend this. You should be prepared to give a new puppy your undivided attention, and that is rarely possible during the busy holiday season. A better idea is to give dog-related gifts - toys, leashes, grooming tools - and then bring your puppy home when all the excitement has died down.







Please print

Signature:

*chapter two*  
**MAKE A  
COMMITMENT**

# *make a* **COMMITMENT**

---

## **PICK YOUR PET**

---

When the time has come to select your pet, consider your options carefully. Respect your breeder's input about which puppy is right for you. If you are rescuing an older dog, ask your contact person for information on its health, temperament, behavior and history.

## **GET IT IN WRITING**

---

Information about the sale or adoption should be in writing. The contract should include, for example, details regarding any fees, spay-neuter agreements, health guarantees, terms of co-ownership, restrictions on breeding, and living arrangements. It should also include instructions on what to do if the dog, despite your best efforts, simply doesn't work out for you or your family. Most responsible breeders will insist that the dog be returned to them.

# *make a* **COMMITMENT**

---

## **GET YOUR PAPERS**

---

Get your AKC registration application from the breeder when you purchase the puppy. Make sure the breeder completes the appropriate sections of the form and signs it. The breeder can also help you fill out your section correctly.

## **REGISTER YOUR DOG**

---

Send the completed, signed registration application to the AKC. Your dog will then become part of the nation's largest registry of purebred dogs and as well as being eligible for a variety of competitive events and can also activate the Complimentary 60-Day Trial of AKC Pet Insurance\*. If you rescue a dog, consider applying for a Purebred Alternative Listing/Indefinite Listing Privilege (PAL/ILP) number. This number will allow your dog to participate in some companion events.



*chapter three*  
**GET READY**

# GET READY

---

## PREPARE YOURSELF

---

Get ready for your new friend before you bring him home, to make sure the transition will be as smooth as possible. Buy food, treats, a collar and leash, toys, grooming tools and other necessities in advance so your dog or puppy will have everything he needs.

## MAKE A SCHEDULE

---

You and your family members should decide who will be responsible for food, water, walking, exercise, clean-up and grooming. Post a schedule of tasks in a visible area of the house to remind everyone of their responsibilities.

## DOG-PROOF YOUR HOME

---

Prepare your home before your new dog arrives. Move breakables or “chewables” to higher ground. Make electrical cords inaccessible to curious paws and noses. Block off any area of the house that you want off-limits to the dog. Put the lid down on your toilet and your shoes up in your closet. Block access to any house or garden plants that may be toxic to dogs.

## SET A CONTAINMENT POLICY

---

It is essential that you have a secure method of keeping your dog on your property. Check your fence for spots vulnerable to chewing or digging. If your yard is not fenced, consider a large dog run or invisible fencing. If your property is not fenced in some way, emphasize to family members that the dog must be leashed at all times when taken outdoors.

# GET READY

---

## GET A COLLAR

---

Your dog should wear a flat leather or nylon collar with a buckle at all times, except when in a crate. (The buckle can catch on the crate and cause injury.) The collar should be tight enough that it will not slide over the dog's ears, but loose enough that you can fit two fingers between the collar and the dog's neck. Check the fit of the collar often, especially if you have a fast-growing puppy.

## MAKE A BED

---

Every dog needs a quiet place to call his own. Create a comfortable area, whether a crate, a mat or a pile of blankets, for your dog to go to when he needs rest or privacy.

## BUY SOME TOYS

---

Provide your dog with a variety of toys to prevent him from playing with your socks and shoes, your morning paper, or your child's favorite doll. Get some toys that you and your dog can play with together, such as balls and plush toys, and some things to keep him busy when he's alone, such as chewies or rope bones. Never leave your dog unattended with any toy that has small, detachable parts.

## FIND A VETERINARIAN

---

You should choose a veterinarian for your dog as soon as possible. Have your dog examined by the vet within a few days of his arrival. Give your vet copies of the dog's health records, and set up a vaccination and check-up schedule.





*chapter four*  
**BRING YOUR  
DOG HOME**



# *bring your dog* **HOME**

---

At last! You've made all the preparations, and it's finally time to bring your new friend home. Give him the best welcome possible. With love, patience and mutual respect, he will feel like part of the family in no time.

## **LET YOUR DOG ADJUST**

---

Give the dog time to adjust to his new home. The dog is bound to feel insecure and frightened by a change in environment, and a pup may be homesick for his mother or littermates. Show him to his crate or bed, and where to find food and water. Then leave him alone to explore the new surroundings.

## **NAME YOUR DOG**

---

Your dog will need a good name. Your breeder may have suggestions or even requirements for his AKC-registered name, but his call or informal name is up to you. Older adopted dogs can adjust quickly to a new name.

## **MAKE INTRODUCTIONS**

---

Introduce your dog to your household slowly. Many pairs of hands petting him at once may overwhelm him. Later, introduce him to neighbors, regular visitors and other family members. Give your dog a sense of who your - and your dog's - friends are.



# *bring your dog* **HOME**

---

## **INTRODUCE OTHER PETS**

---

Other companion animals in your home should also be properly introduced to your new dog or puppy. Don't expect them to get along right away, and don't try to force them to play together. Give them time to adjust to one another.

## **HOUSETRAIN**

---

Whichever method of housetraining you have chosen - crate training, paper training or litter box - make sure that all members of the family enforce it consistently. Accidents happen, so have a procedure for clean-up.

## **SET HOUSE RULES**

---

Teach your dog from the beginning what is and is not appropriate behavior. If something is "OK" today, your puppy will think it's OK forever. Make sure that every member of the family enforces the house rules. Consistency is the key to having a well-behaved pet.



©bodza2/Thinkstock



*chapter five*  
**KEEP YOUR DOG  
HEALTHY**

# *keep your dog* **HEALTHY**

---

## **GO TO THE VETERINARIAN**

---

Set up a schedule for regular check-ups with your veterinarian. Ask the vet questions about your dog's diet, behavior, activity level or other concerns. Contact the veterinarian at once if your dog seems ill or in pain. As a special registration benefit, the AKC has arranged a Complimentary 60-Day Trial of AKC Pet Insurance\* for newly registered puppies. Details about this special complimentary benefit will be sent to you shortly after registration.

## **FEED A GOOD DIET**

---

Work with your veterinarian or breeder to find the food that is best for your dog's age, size and activity level. Keep the diet consistent. Always provide plenty of fresh, clean water.

## **EXERCISE**

---

Dogs need regular exercise to ensure continuing good health. Take your dog for walks, run around in the yard, throw a ball around - anything to get him up and moving. This will benefit his health and could prevent behavior problems.

## **VACCINATE**

---

Dogs should follow a strict schedule of vaccinations to prevent diseases. Keep your dog current on his vaccinations, following the schedule recommended by your veterinarian. Keep a copy of your dog's vaccination records handy.

# *keep your dog* **HEALTHY**

---

## **PREVENT DISEASE**

---

You can take steps to prevent other diseases not covered by the regular series of vaccinations. Depending on the area of the country you live in, your dog could be at risk for diseases such as heartworm and Lyme disease. Ask your veterinarian for advice on prevention.

## **REPEL FLEAS AND TICKS**

---

Aside from discomfort, parasites such as fleas and ticks can cause serious diseases. Keep your dog, his bedding, and your home free from parasites by using the method recommended by your veterinarian.

## **KNOW YOUR DOG'S PATTERNS**

---

You should become familiar with your dog's patterns in terms of eating, drinking, sleeping and relieving himself. Any major variations in these patterns could indicate illness and should be reported to your veterinarian.

## **PROVIDE CHEW TOYS**

---

Dogs never outgrow the need to chew. Protect your possessions by providing a variety of chew toys to satisfy your dog's urges.

# *keep your dog* **HEALTHY**

---

## **BATHE YOUR DOG**

---

A clean dog is a healthy dog. Bathe your dog on a regular basis appropriate to his breed and environment. Overbathing can be harmful to a dog's skin. Use a good shampoo and be sure to rinse well. If bathing your dog is more than you can handle, take him to a groomer or veterinarian for help.

## **GROOM YOUR DOG**

---

All dogs should be groomed regularly for health and best appearance. Some short-coated breeds need just a quick brushing every week, while some longer-coated breeds need daily brushing to prevent matting and to reduce shedding. If your dog requires clipping or sculpting, you may want to consult a professional groomer.

## **CLIP THOSE NAILS**

---

Keeping your dog's nails short will keep him comfortable, prevent injury to his feet, and may save the surface of your floors. If you can hear your dog's nails click on a hard surface, they need to be trimmed. Ask your veterinarian for advice on clipping your dog's nails yourself.

## **CLEAN THOSE TEETH**

---

To prevent tooth decay and gum disease, clean your dog's teeth regularly. Most dogs will accept a "toothbrush" if introduced to it slowly and gently. You can also give your dog products such as hard biscuits, rope bones and nylon chews to keep his teeth clean.

# *keep your dog* **HEALTHY**

---

## **PREVENT OBESITY**

---

Keep your dog healthy by maintaining him at an appropriate weight. Feed him a well-balanced diet and give him plenty of exercise. Don't give in to begging - "people food" is generally bad for dogs.

## **KNOW YOUR BREED'S HEALTH RISKS**

---

You should be aware of common health problems in your breed, how to prevent them, and how to recognize their onset. For example, some giant breeds are prone to bloat, while some short-faced breeds are prone to respiratory problems. Ask your breeder or veterinarian for information about any signs or symptoms you should watch for in your pet.



©AVAVA/Thinkstock

# *keep your dog* **HEALTHY**

---

## **PROTECT FROM POISONS**

---

Make sure that your home and yard are free from poisonous substances, such as antifreeze, which tastes good but can cause serious illness or even death. Keep your veterinarian's number handy in case of accidental ingestion.

## **BE ALERT TO CHANGING NEEDS**

---

As your dog ages, his needs will change. He may require a different diet, need more sleep, and be less active. Do what you can to keep him comfortable. Your dog may not be as "fun" as he once was, but he is the same dog you loved as a puppy. You should do everything you can to pamper him in his final years.

## **END SUFFERING**

---

If, due to illness or old age, your dog reaches a point where his quality of life is severely compromised, arrange to end his life humanely. Letting go is sometimes the kindest thing you can do. Don't prolong the suffering because you fear the pain of losing your dog.





*chapter six*  
**KEEP YOUR DOG  
SAFE**



# *keep your dog* **SAFE**

## **I.D. YOUR DOG**

---

Your dog should wear an identification tag with your name, address and phone number at all times. This will increase the chances of your dog being returned to you if he is lost or runs away.

## **CONSIDER MICROCHIPS OR TATTOOS**

---

Microchips and tattoos are methods of permanently identifying your dog, and can be invaluable in recovering your dog should he become lost. You may wish to enroll your dog in AKC's affiliate, the AKC Reunite service, which is the nation's largest database of microchipped pets.

## **WATCH THE HEAT**

---

Dogs can succumb to heat stress in a matter of minutes. Do not leave your dog in an unventilated vehicle when the temperature is high. When your dog is outside, he should have a shady place to lay down and plenty of fresh, cool water.



# *keep your dog* **SAFE**

---

## **PROVIDE SHELTER**

---

Your dog needs a sheltered area for the time he spends outside. The shelter should provide shade in summer and warmth in winter.

## **TRAVEL SAFELY**

---

Keep your dog safe in the car by using a crate, or by attaching the dog to a seat belt with a harness. Never let your dog ride free in the back of a pickup truck, or allow him to hang his head out of the car window.

## **FIND A PET-SITTER OR BOARDING KENNEL**

---

Make arrangements for your dog's care when you go away. Have a friend or reliable pet-sitter come over to tend to the dog, or find a good kennel for boarding. If you opt for boarding, try to inspect the facilities before you drop your dog off.

# *keep your dog* **SAFE**

---

## **PREPARE FOR DISASTER**

---

Be prepared to care for your dog in the event of a disaster such as fire, flood, hurricane or earthquake. Make an emergency kit with clean water, food, and first aid equipment. Find out in advance if the evacuation shelters in your area allow animals. If not, develop alternatives.

## **ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY CONTACT**

---

Enlist a family member or friend to take care of your dog in the event of a sudden illness, hospitalization or other emergency. This person should ideally be someone your dog has spent some time with and is comfortable with. Leave a list of general care instructions in a safe place.

## **MAKE A WILL**

---

You should make arrangements for the safety and care of your pet in the event of your death. Don't assume that a family member will step in to take care of the dog.

## **TAKE PICTURES**

---

Of course, you will want a picture of your dog to grace your desk or to send as a Christmas card. More importantly, a current photo will be invaluable in the event that your dog is lost.



*chapter seven*  
**BE A FRIEND**

# *be a* **FRIEND**

---

## **PLAY!**

---

Dogs, of course, love to play. Set aside time each day for play sessions. Apart from the obvious benefit of having fun together, play also provides an outlet for your dog's energy.

## **GO ON WALKS**

---

Take your dog on frequent walks. He will enjoy exploring the neighborhood and will benefit from the exercise. Make sure that you have a good strong leash and that you maintain control of the dog at all times.

## **TALK TO YOUR DOG**

---

Your dog won't understand your words, but he will enjoy the sound of your voice. Talking to your dog will make him feel involved. You can also use different voice levels to praise or correct your dog's behavior.

## **GIVE TREATS**

---

Your dog will always appreciate a treat, and treats can be used as a supplement to his regular diet, as well as an excellent training aid.

## **SWITCH OUT TOYS**

---

Keep your dog entertained by rotating his toys. Put "old" toys out of sight for a month or two and then bring them out again - your dog will enjoy them just as much as when they were new.

# *be a* **FRIEND**

---

## **GIVE YOUR TIME**

---

You are the center of your dog's world. You may be tired after a long day at work, but your dog has spent the day anxiously awaiting your return. Reward that loyalty with your time. Pet him, talk to him, play with him, laugh with him. Let your dog know you value his company.

## **FIND THE "SPOT"**

---

Scratch your dog's belly often. If you find the "spot," so much the better.



# *be a* **FRIEND**

---

## **LEAVE THE RADIO ON**

---

Try leaving the radio or television on when you leave your dog alone. The noise will keep him company.

## **PLAN ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR DOG**

---

Include your dog in family activities. Take him to the park or on outings to the beach, or to special activities such as the “Dog Olympics” or dog parades. Your dog will love being out and about with you.

## **GIVE A MASSAGE**

---

Dogs love to be petted, and recent studies have shown that structured massages may be beneficial to your dog’s health and behavior. They may also be very relaxing for you!

## **MAKE THAT TAIL WAG**

---

Your dog’s tail is a barometer of his emotions. Do what you can to keep it happily wagging.

# *be a* **FRIEND**

---

## **GO ON TRIPS**

---

Dogs can add another element of fun to a family vacation. Check ahead for lodging that accepts dogs. If flying, ask about travel accommodations for your dog when you make your reservations.

## **EASE SEPARATION ANXIETY**

---

Your dog will want to be with you at all times, but for most people that simply isn't possible. Help your dog get used to being alone. Leave him each day with a minimum of fuss. When you come home, greet him calmly. This will teach him that your leaving is not something to be concerned about.

## **GET ANOTHER ONE!**

---

Dogs are pack animals by nature and generally enjoy the company of other dogs. Your dog may benefit greatly from having a companion to play with. Be as conscientious about getting a second dog as you were about getting the first; multiple dog ownership isn't for everyone, and some dogs do better as an "only."

## **DON'T LET YOUR DOG DOWN**

---

You aren't a dog owner just at Christmas, or on the weekends, or in the afternoon, or when you have spare time. You aren't a dog owner just when the dog is behaving, or when he's a cute fuzzy puppy, or when he's winning awards. When you bring a dog into your family, that dog is yours for life. If you can't keep that commitment, don't make it. And once you've made it, don't break it. Your dog's life depends on you.





*chapter eight*  
**TRAIN YOUR DOG**

# TRAIN YOUR DOG

---

## TEACH BASIC COMMANDS

---

Teach your dog basic commands such as sit, stay, come and down. Training your dog will not only make your life easier, but will also fulfill your dog's desire to learn and please you.

## SOCIALIZE YOUR DOG

---

Expose your dog to different people and settings regularly. Take him to the park, to the pet store, on a walk through town. Praise him for accepting petting from friendly strangers, and for behaving calmly around other dogs. The more your dog learns of the world, the more comfortable he will be in it.

## GO TO CLASS

---

Obedience classes can be a great experience for you and your dog. You may even discover that your dog has a great talent for learning, and be able to compete in obedience, agility or tracking events.

# TRAIN YOUR DOG

---

## PREVENT NUISANCE BARKING

---

Don't let your dog's incessant barking annoy your neighbors. Teach your dog not to bark without real provocation. If your dog's barking is causing a problems while you're away from home, there are several training options available, consult your veterinarian.

## PRAISE YOUR DOG

---

Because your dog loves you, he wants to please you. Praise him lavishly for obeying commands and behaving well. Using positive, rather than negative, reinforcement will help your dog enjoy learning.

## SUPERVISE PLAY WITH CHILDREN

---

Children and dogs can be great companions, but they also require supervision when playing together. Your dog may be "good with kids," but what if he encounters a kid that is not good with dogs? Very small children should never be left alone with a dog, no matter how stable his temperament.

## GIVE YOUR DOG A JOB

---

Keep your dog active and alert by giving him tasks to do. Teach him to fetch the paper, carry groceries in a pack or empty the dryer. Make him sit before getting a treat or lay down before going outside. Giving your dog a sense of purpose and accomplishment will increase his sense of well-being.



*chapter nine*  
**BREED  
RESPONSIBLY**

# *breed* **RESPONSIBLY**

---

## **BREED TO IMPROVE**

---

Breeding should primarily be done for the advancement of the breed. If you are thinking about breeding your dog, consult your breeder for advice. Consider all the consequences-and expenses-of breeding a litter before you do so. Consult AKC publications for more information as well.

## **FIND A MENTOR**

---

If you plan to breed or show your dog, you will want to find a knowledgeable person in the breed to show you the ropes. A mentor can be an invaluable source of experience and information, and can help make your “novice” days much easier.

## **SPAY OR NEUTER**

---

Spaying/Neutering are major surgeries and the decision to spay or neuter a dog should be made by the dog’s owner in conjunction with their veterinarian. Recent scientific studies demonstrate that spaying/neutering, particularly before a dog is fully mature, may result in detrimental longterm health impacts. In light of this information, AKC encourages breeders, owners and veterinarians to consult on the appropriateness and timing of spaying or neutering an individual dog.

## **CONTAIN FEMALES IN HEAT**

---

If your female dog goes into heat, or season, make sure to keep her properly secured. Males can sense a female in heat up to five miles away.

## **PERFORM GENETIC SCREENING**

---

If you plan to breed your dog, it is very important to test for genetic disorders. While it is impossible to eliminate all genetic disorders, perform all available tests recommended by the Parent Club.





*chapter ten*  
**GET INVOLVED**

# GET INVOLVED

---

## JOIN AN AKC CLUB

---

Your local AKC dog club is a great resource. Many clubs offer educational seminars and health clinics. It's also a good place to start if you plan to compete in competitive events with your dog.

## EARN AN AKC TITLE

---

Explore the sport of dogs by participating in AKC events. The AKC offers titles for accomplishment in a wide variety of competition types and levels. Find an event that's right for your dog, and have fun.

## ENCOURAGE BREED BEHAVIOR

---

All purebred dogs were developed with a purpose in mind. Find activities that will encourage your dog to fulfill her breed's purpose. The AKC offers many performance events geared toward specific breeds.

## INVOLVE THE KIDS

---

Your children can have fun and learn more about dogs and dog care by participating in AKC Junior Showmanship events. Through the National Junior Organization, your child can compete in conformation and performance events, attend seminars, and earn scholarships.



*chapter eleven*  
**BE A CANINE  
AMBASSADOR**



# *be a* **CANINE AMBASSADOR**

---

## **SET A GOOD EXAMPLE**

---

As a dog owner, you are responsible not only for your own dog's well being, but for the status of dogs everywhere. One irresponsible dog owner in town can make life difficult for dog owners all over. Owning a friendly, clean, well-mannered dog reflects positively on the species and may help protect our rights to own companion animals.

## **RESPECT YOUR NEIGHBORS**

---

Not everyone will love your dog as much as you do. Keep your dog on your property. Don't force your dog's company on a neighbor who isn't comfortable with dogs.

## **DON'T LEAVE LEAVINGS**

---

Always carry a plastic baggie or two with you when you walk your dog to pick up any waste it leaves behind, then dispose of the waste properly. Failure to clean up after your dog is disrespectful to your neighbors.

## **RESPECT LOCAL LAWS**

---

Heed the laws regarding dog ownership in your city or county. These may include registration, leash laws and nuisance barking laws. Failure to obey the laws in your area may not only result in the loss of your dogs, but may also infringe upon the rights of others in your area.

*be a*  
**CANINE AMBASSADOR**

---

**FIGHT ANTI-DOG LEGISLATION**

---

Be aware of any legislation developing in your city or state that may compromise the rights of responsible dog owners. Become an active voice against legislation directed against specific breeds. For more information, contact the Government Relations and Public Education departments at the AKC.

**LET YOUR DOG HELP OTHERS**

---

Dogs are invaluable in providing service to humans - visiting the sick, helping the disabled, locating missing persons, and much more. If your dog is of the correct temperament, you and he can reap the rewards of helping others.

**GET A CANINE GOOD CITIZEN® CERTIFICATE**

---

Your dog can become an American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen by passing a test designed to demonstrate good manners and acceptable behavior in everyday situations. The CGC program has become a standard for recognizing obedient dogs and responsible dog owners throughout the country.

**MOST OF ALL ...**

---

Give your dog lots of love, time, and affection and you'll be richly rewarded—he'll be happy to return the favor!

# CONTACT THE AKC

For more information on how to be a  
responsible dog owner,  
contact the American Kennel Club.

# THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

---

*The AKC is a not-for-profit organization and the largest purebred dog registry in the world. We are the sports-governing body for over 22,000 dog events a year, including conformation (dog shows) and exciting sports like agility, obedience, rally, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog, herding trials, among others.*

*But the AKC is so much more. Here are just some of the ways we support and enrich the lives of dogs—purebreds and mixed-breeds alike—and their families.*

[AKC Humane Fund](#), supports breed rescue activities, assists shelters that permit domestic-abuse victims to bring their pets, and educates dog lovers about responsible dog ownership.

[Canine Good Citizen®](#) program : A 10-step test that certifies dogs who have good manners at home and in their community. Over 600,000 dogs across the United States have become Canine Good Citizens , and 42 states have passed resolutions recognizing the program's merit and importance.

[AKC Reunite](#) has brought more than 400,000 lost pets back together with their owners.

The [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#), funds research projects and clinical studies. Since 1995 the AKC has donated over \$24 million to the CHF. (The AKC is the only registry that incorporates health-screening results into its permanent dog records.)

[AKC](#) conducts thousands of kennel inspections annually to monitor care and conditions at kennels across the country and ensure the integrity of the AKC registry.

We offer the largest, most comprehensive set of DNA programs for parentage verification and genetic identity to ensure reliable registration records.

AKC supports one of the world's largest collections of dog-related fine art and artifacts at the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#).

We have the world's largest [dog library](#) at AKC headquarters in New York, both of which are open to the public.