

PET WELLNESS

SASKATOON
STARPHOENIX

MAY 2022

Expert tips for an enjoyable
dog park experience.

Page 11

What to do if your pet has
a seizure?

Page 20

PET LICENSING

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Early's Farm & Garden Centre
2615 Lorne Avenue

Early's Farm & Garden Centre
502 51st Street E.

Erindale Animal Hospital
#11 - 410 Ludlow Street

Pet-I-Coat Junction & Barkery
110 Wedge Road, Unit 6

Pet Planet
40 - 1519 8th Street

Saskatoon Animal Control Agency
1925 Avenue B N.

Saskatoon SPCA 5028
Clarence Avenue S.

PET LICENSING FEES

DOG

Spayed/Neutered	\$31
Not Spayed or Neutered	\$62
Juvenile (Under 1 Year)	\$31
Replacement Tag	\$10

CAT

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Juvenile (Under 1 Year)	\$19
Replacement Tag	\$10



DOG DAY OF SUMMER

FREE END OF SEASON
LICENSED POOCH SWIM

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For updates please visit
saskatoon.ca/dogdayofsummer

Saskatoon's Top Pet Names 2021

Male Dog	Female Dog	Male Cat	Female Cat
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Max	Bella	Oliver	Kitty
Charlie	Maggie	Buddy	Molly
Bear	Sadie	Tigger	Bella
Jake	Daisy	Charlie	Missy



PET WELLNESS

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Pets like to ROAM. A license gets them HOME.

Annual pet licenses as low as \$19/year. saskatoon.ca/petlicensing





Revenue from dog and cat licenses helps develop and maintain the City of Saskatoon’s 11 off-leash dog parks in Saskatoon. (SUPPLIED)

What’s new for you and your *furry pal* at Animal Services?

BY JEANNIE ARMSTRONG

One of the best resources pet owners can rely on is the City of Saskatoon’s Animal Services web pages.

By visiting this handy online portal, Saskatoon residents can purchase or renew a license for their dog or cat online, as well as learn great tips to help them be responsible pet owners.

The website is also a great way to stay informed about what’s new for pet owners, including announcements of pet-friendly events, changes to bylaws

and the addition of new off-leash dog parks, says Melissa Meacham, Open Space Consultant, Animal Services, with the City of Saskatoon.

PET LICENSE PORTAL

Meacham says that the number of pet owners utilizing the City’s online pet licensing service continues to increase. “In the past year, we did see quite an increase in online registration for dog and cat licenses. People appreciate the convenience of

using their mobile devices and laptops to purchase or renew pet licenses. The animal’s license information is uploaded within 24 hours into the system.”

Pet licenses can also be purchased in person at City Hall, or at one of eight pet license vendors located across Saskatoon. (See page 2 for a complete list of pet license vendors)

All dogs and cats over the age of four months require a valid pet license. Meacham notes there has been a slight

PET LICENSING – What Your License Pays For

- Bylaw enforcement
- Pound services
- City-wide pet events
- Subsidized Spay and Neuter Program (SSNP)
- Dog park programming and development



increase in rates for 2022 over the previous year. The annual license fee for a spayed/neutered dog has increased by just \$1 to \$31. If the dog has not been spayed or neutered, the annual license fee is \$62.

A license for a spayed/neutered cat is \$19; a license for an unaltered cat is \$42.

“The main benefit of having a license is pet identification. If your dog or cat ends up being at large and gets picked up by the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA), they will see a direct return home,” says Meacham.

If your dog or cat has been microchipped, this information can also be easily linked to your animal’s license, speeding up the identification process. SACA officers are equipped with scanners which can read the microchip and obtain information registered on the animal’s pet license application.

PAL PERK

Pet owners who license their dog or cat can take advantage of a valuable benefit: the Pet-At-Large (PAL) Perk, which is like a “get out of jail free” provision redeemable once during the pet’s lifetime. When the PAL Perk is applied, owners do not have to pay the \$100 at-large fine when their cat or dog is returned. Impound fees applied by the Saskatoon SPCA will also be waived.

When SACA officers pick up an unlicensed dog or cat that is running at large, they are required to issue a \$250 ticket to the owner.

PET-FRIENDLY EVENTS

Not only do revenues raised through the sale of pet licenses support the enforcement of the Animal Control and Dangerous Animal Bylaws by the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency, they also fund other programs delivered by the City’s Animal Services team. These include fun, pet-friendly events such as the Dog Day of Summer. The annual pool party for licensed dogs is scheduled to take place this year on Tuesday, August 23 at Mayfair Pool.

The event is open to well-socialized dogs with a valid license and up-to-date vaccinations. Different sessions are offered, beginning at 11 a.m. through to 7 p.m. “People can register their dogs to attend

on our website, at the end of July through early August. Watch for details on our social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram,” says Meacham.

Animal Services also invites pet owners to participate in the Scoop the Poop events that take place in the majority of off-leash dog parks. “We try to organize these twice a year, in the spring after the snow has melted, and in the fall. It’s a way to bring the dog park community together. There are little giveaways, snacks and fun things like that,” says Meacham.

Pet license revenue also supports the Subsidized Spay and Neuter Program (SSNP). This beneficial initiative of the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Academy of Veterinary Practitioners and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine helps provide low-income pet owners with affordable access to spay/neuter veterinary services.

DOG PARK NEWS

The Animal Services team also uses license revenue to help develop and maintain the

City’s numerous off-leash dog parks. There are currently 11 off-leash dog parks in Saskatoon, ranging in size from small urban parks such as Hyde Park and Caswell, to large, rural spaces such as Chief Whitecap and the Sutherland Beach dog park.

Two new dog parks are currently in development by the City of Saskatoon, exclusively for smaller breeds of dogs. “One will be developed on the east side of the city; one on the west side. The locations we are proposing is the Charlottetown Park which will be located behind the Cosmo Civic Centre, as well as an extension on the north side of the Hyde Park off-leash space in Rosewood,” says Meacham.

Following a review of an engagement study conducted in April, a final report is anticipated to be presented to City Council in June. “If that is approved, we will look to start construction this summer or in early fall. We hope to have at least one off-leash park designated for small dogs open in late fall, before the snow flies, if all goes as planned,” she adds.

An amendment was also made to the



The annual Dog Day of Summer pool party for licensed dogs returns to Mayfair Pool on Tuesday, August 23. The event is open to well-socialized dogs with a valid license and up-to-date vaccinations. (SUPPLIED)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Pets like to ROAM. A license gets them HOME.

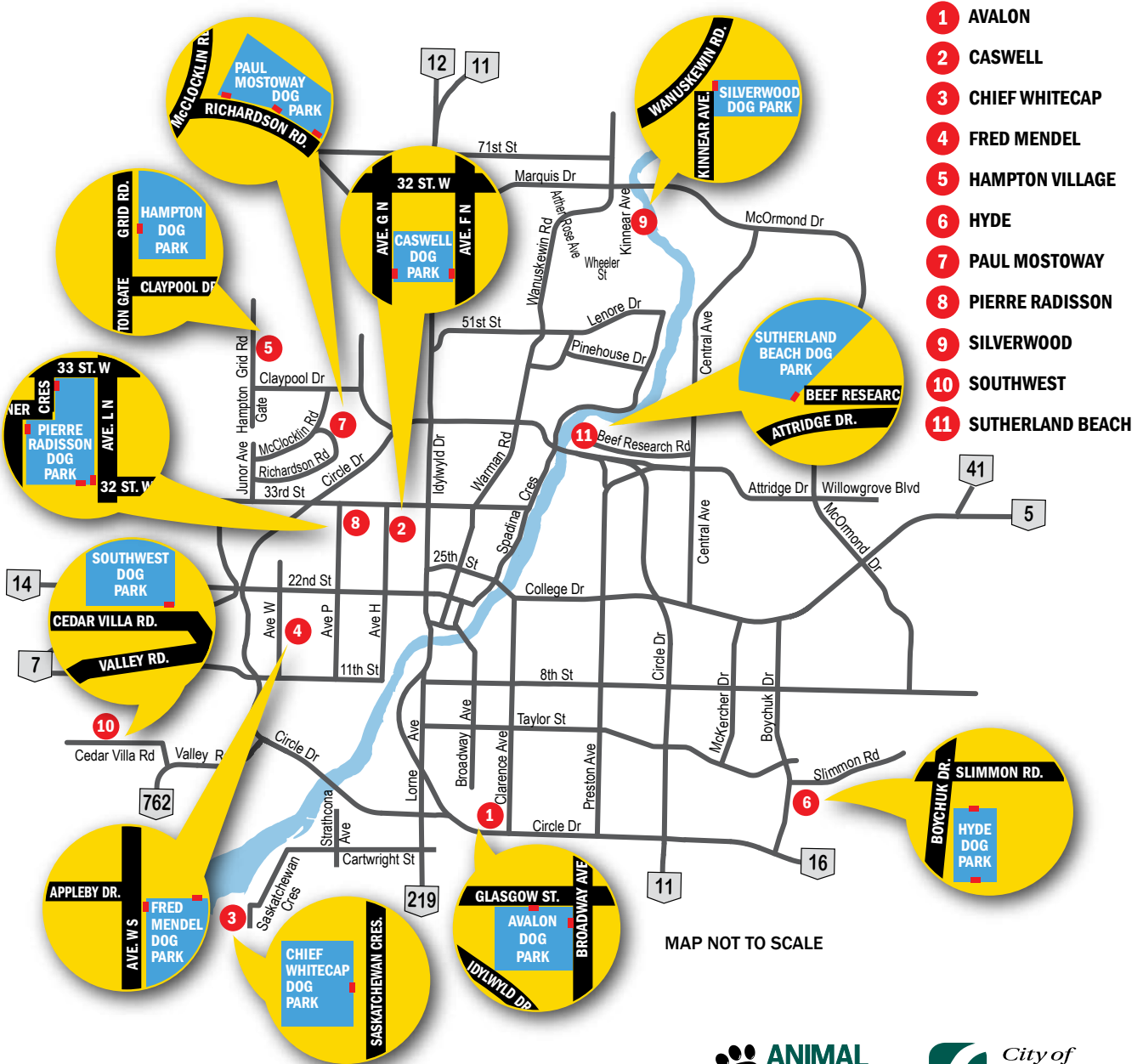
Purchase or Renew your license online. saskatoon.ca/petlicensing

A photograph of a dog, possibly a golden retriever, wearing sunglasses and a colorful lei. The dog is sitting on a blue suitcase. The background is a solid blue color.

DOG PARKS

All dogs must have a current pet license to access the dog parks.

For more information on Dog Park openings & closures, visit saskatoon.ca/dogparks.



MAP NOT TO SCALE



DOG PARK ETIQUETTE

- Your pet license is like an all-access pass to Saskatoon’s Dog Parks. Only licensed dogs are invited to play!
- Be a good buddy and interact with your dog, keeping him or her within sight at all times. Off-leash doesn’t mean unattended.
- Scoop your dog’s poop. Bring a few extra baggies, just in case.
- Play nice! Your dog should know and obey basic commands of come, sit and stay before visiting a Dog Park.
- If you take a toy to the park, expect other dogs to play with it. Better yet, leave the toys at home.
- Is your dog hot to trot? The mere presence of a female dog in heat can cause a frenzy among potential four-legged Romeos. It’s best to have your dog spayed or neutered before planning a Dog Park visit.
- If you have concerns about the behaviour of a dog or its owner while at the park, contact the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency at 306-385-PETS (7387).
- Have fun! When dogs and owners play by the rules, everyone has a good time!

Animal Control Bylaw relating to off-leash parks. In 2020, a change was made limiting the number of dogs that one individual can take into an off-leash park to four dogs.

An exception was made to the bylaw for commercial dog walkers. A permit program was developed that allows a qualified dog walker to exercise between five to eight licensed dogs at the same time. This exception only applies to the Chief Whitecap, Hampton, Southwest and Sutherland Beach dog parks.

The dog walker must apply for a permit and pass a 'road test' conducted by a SACA officer in one of the dog parks.

"We've had a few businesses take advantage of that permit program. It was a successful first year and we've had those businesses renew for 2022 as well," says Meacham.

PETS IN THE PARK

Pet lovers will also appreciate the bylaw amendment that was approved by City Council in October, 2021, which allows on-leash licensed dogs and cats to visit Kiwanis Memorial Park (north and south sides) with their owners.

"In 2019, the executive directors of Downtown YXE and the Downtown Business Improvement District requested that Council consider amending the bylaw which prohibited people from bringing their dogs and cats into Kiwanis Park. The amendment was noted as an opportunity to provide downtown residents and pet owners access to their neighbourhood green space and to help attract pet owners to live downtown," says Meacham.

"The feedback we received from the public, as well as external and internal stakeholders, showed support for permitting licensed, on-leash pets within Kiwanis Memorial Park. Eighty per cent were in support of allowing

pets to be on leash in the park. Based on that feedback, we recommended amending the bylaw and Council approved it. The amendment took effect on Dec. 10, 2021."

The City of Saskatoon is always working to make our community more pet-friendly, notes Meacham.

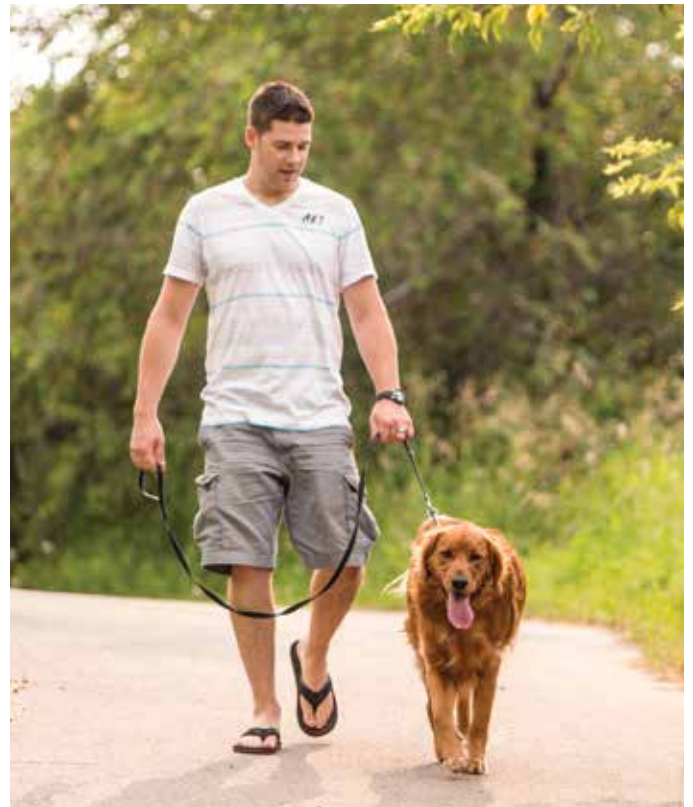
"Pets are part of the family, so increasing opportunities to take them out in public — whether to a special event, a local business or visiting an outdoor patio, is not only enjoyable for the pet owner, it helps the pet feel more connected to its owner and get the mental stimulation that they need."

BYLAW REVIEW

Every two years, the Animal Control and Dangerous Animal Bylaws are reviewed by the Animal Services Working Group, which includes representation from organizations such as the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency and Saskatoon SPCA, as well as City of Saskatoon administration. "These reviews take place to ensure our bylaws are kept up to date as different things occur. We also look to other municipalities to see what changes they have made.

There will be some changes to the bylaws that will be going to City Council this summer. One thing that will be included will be updates to the Prohibited Animals list, due in part to changes being made at the provincial government level. If approved by City Council, there will be some adjustments to the animals that people will be allowed to own. These changes mostly include different reptiles, particularly snakes," says Meacham.

To ensure you and your pet are up to date, go to Saskatoon.ca, click on "Services for Residents" and click again on "Pet Licensing & Animal Services." You can also go to the quick link at Saskatoon.ca/animalservices.



A bylaw amendment approved by City Council in October, 2021, now allows on-leash licensed dogs and cats to visit Kiwanis Memorial Park with their owners. (SUPPLIED)

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Responsible *pet* ownership:

How can your pet enjoy the great outdoors safely?

BY ELIZABETH IRELAND

Spending outdoor time with your pet is not only fun, it's also important to their well-being — an opportunity for exercise, fresh air and mental stimulation.

Professional dog trainer Christina Chandler is the founder and owner of Align Canine Training in Saskatoon. Chandler has some thoughts on how pets and their owners can safely enjoy the great outdoors together.

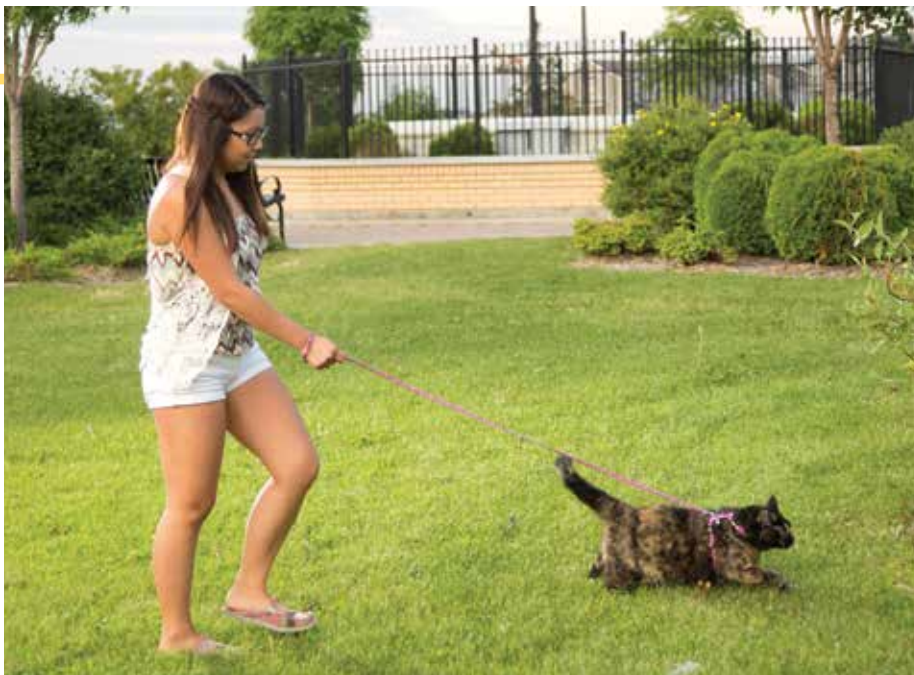
A professional member of the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP), Chandler has worked with dogs for nearly two decades. Her work focuses on behaviour modification, addressing aggression and reactivity issues, loose leash walking, confidence building and communications, as well as foundation-building training for puppies.

“Over my career I've enjoyed owning many different breeds and types of dogs. I appreciate each for their unique characteristics and personalities,” says Chandler.

Dog owners need to know that their dog will be well-behaved around other pets and people before sharing an outdoor space. All dogs should know and obey the basic commands of come, sit and stay. “My number one rule is that a dog's behaviour should not be allowed to negatively affect anyone else — whether that's humans, other pets or wildlife,” says Chandler.

“It is my opinion that almost all training tools have meaningful applications and, since Saskatoon is lucky not to have any restrictions regarding tools, I'm in favour of whatever type of collar works for an individual and their dog. That said, I'm definitely a leash snob and prefer a four to six foot leather leash that allows me to keep my dog close and maintain a high level of control. Additionally, leather is very easy to grip, doesn't hurt your hands and lasts for years. The only real downside is that dogs like leather for chewing purposes,” she adds.

“It's good to remember that collars, leashes or other training tools are all inanimate objects and efficacy depends on the user.



Training your cat to walk on a leash is a safe way for your feline to enjoy the outdoors. (SUPPLIED)

The education a person receives regarding a specific tool and its application are going to be what's key. Dogs benefit from clear and consistent feedback from their owners; they want good management and a leader that they can trust and have fun with. Handing out free passes for inappropriate behaviour — even when our intentions are good — only creates more stress and uncertainty.”

For dog owners that adopt rescues, and perhaps do not know much about their dog's early life or genetics, Chandler suggests that new owners “try not to speculate on possible abuse or neglect in the dog's past and avoid focusing on the negative. Since dogs don't understand pity or sympathy, it's better to dedicate yourself to providing your new dog with a safe and happy home rather than worrying about what might have happened before they became part of your family.”

The City of Saskatoon offers off-leash dog parks for public enjoyment. However, it's important that owners don't allow their dog to become a nuisance to other people or animals. If a dog interferes with others, the owner must immediately restrain the dog by putting the

dog on a leash, not exceeding two metres (approximately six and half feet) in length. If the issue continues, the dog should leave the off-leash area.

As the birds start chirping, we can't forget about our feline friends. Cats can safely experience the great outdoors too, without running at large. One suggestion for cat owners is to buy or build an outdoor pet enclosure called a 'catio.' This way, cats can be out in the sunshine without being put at-risk by wildlife or wandering away and becoming one of the city's many stray cats.

Chandler, who is also a cat owner, says that catios provide “the best option for safety, as well as the opportunity to be outside.”

A harness and tether in an enclosed backyard seem to be another option that some cats enjoy. Spaying and neutering remain an important tool in reducing the city's stray cat population.

Align Canine Training offers a foundation-building starter pack for puppies, private lessons for adult dogs, and a variety of group classes. Learn more at aligncaninetraining.com.

Discover Hampton Village Dog Park

BY JENNY GABRUCH

Brandi Roberts is among a growing number of residents who enjoy strolling the Hampton Village Dog Park.

She and her rescue dog Wilson are regular visitors, often in the early morning.

“My favourite time at the park is very early morning, even though I am not a morning person,” she says. “There’s something about being there all alone, just me and my dog, peace and quiet with the sunrise.”

Major upgrades in recent years have boosted the off-leash park’s appeal. Among them: expanding the parking lot from four to 25 stalls, additional wildlife-proof garbage receptacles, new walking paths and four-foot page wire fencing along the eastern edge by the roadside.

Being among several dog walkers with mobility issues, Roberts says she shared a concern over seating along the pathways. Last summer, the City of Saskatoon Parks Department placed large boulders throughout the 80-acre park to serve as natural rest spots for dog walkers.

“That little break allows some people to stay so much longer to enjoy the park,” she says. “During the summer it is quite mobility friendly, so people even with walkers are able to utilize the park.”

Another issue was the lack of options for shorter walks. Three pathways were mowed within the park last summer to address this.

“These were really enjoyed by all, and added many more options for routes,” she says.

Peak times at the park are Saturday and Sunday, as well as at the end of the workday. In 2021, patron counters installed at the park recorded more than 33,000 visitors between April and November.

Located just outside Hampton Village, along Junor Avenue next to the airport, the expansive park features paths around the entire perimeter, with several crisscrossing through it. The terrain is mostly flat, with grass and shrubs throughout its center and a wooded area in one corner.

“It’s always best to be mindful that you are out in the countryside, as there’s a good

chance you are sharing the park with the local wildlife at any given time,” says Roberts.

DOG PARK AMBASSADORS

Roberts not only frequents the Hampton off-leash park but also serves as its ambassador, part of a city volunteer program designed to assist Animal Services in monitoring conditions of Saskatoon’s 11 off-leash dog parks and providing input for improvements.

“They act like the eyes and ears for bringing concerns and issues around the park, be it safety, clean up, mowing, garbage — anything that affects the usage,” she says.

“The other part of the role is encouraging responsible pet ownership at the parks,” says Roberts. This includes ensuring dogs are always within sight and in control, picking up after them and making sure the dog is not aggressive toward others.

While the Hampton Village Dog Park is located within city limits, it has a feeling of a rural adventure — a prime getaway for Roberts and pooch Wilson.

“It’s a good way to start a day — and a good way to forget that I live so close to several hundred thousand other people,” she says.

If you would like to become a dog park ambassador or help out as a volunteer at your local dog park, visit Saskatoon.ca/dogparks or email animal.services@saskatoon.ca for more information.



Brandi Roberts’ dog Wilson enjoys exploring the Hampton Village Dog Park. (SUPPLIED)

Pet Loss Support

The death of a pet can be one of the most devastating experiences an individual or family has to face. If you are having difficulty coping with the loss of a beloved pet or are dealing with an end of life decision, you are invited to gather with other animal lovers, like yourself, in a safe, supportive and informal environment to share your experiences, feelings, stories and pictures.

The Pet Loss Support Group

meets the first & third Sunday of every month at 2pm 210A 33rd Street East, Saskatoon. (There’s no cost to participate and no obligation to attend on a regular basis). For more information or to receive bereavement resource material, we invite you to call

Family Pet - 306-343-5322

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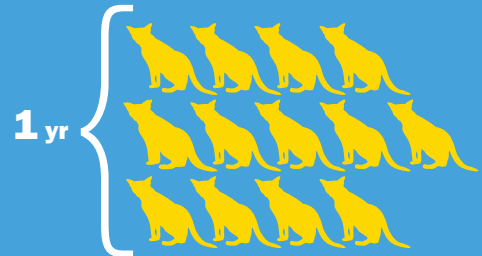


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saskatoon.ca/communitycats



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- Wide eyes
- Tail tucked
- Ears lowered
- Avoiding eye contact

saskatoon.ca/gooddogsbitetoo



Expert tips for an enjoyable *dog park* experience

BY PAUL SINKEWICZ

Christina Chandler would like to get two things straight: not all dogs are cut out for the off-leash dog park (and that's okay) and all dogs can benefit from training, no matter their age.

The owner of Align Canine Training estimates she has dealt with more than 7,000 dogs over her 17 years as a professional dog trainer.

She has some tips for dog owners who want to ensure they have an enjoyable time at the off-leash dog park, and some of them are surprising. Aside from the common sense etiquette of always picking up after your dog and bringing a leash along on the walk, here are some takeaways from somebody who knows dogs:

MANAGE YOUR DOG'S EXCITEMENT LEVEL

A set daily routine can be a great tool, but in some dogs, it could be the cause of some of your grief. You come home from work, grab a snack and then suit up for the daily walk.

Guess what? Your dog can become highly attuned to your routine, and in their way, know exactly what time it is. Chandler says mixing up the routine a little can ease the anticipation.

Another helpful tip is to engage with your dog both mentally and physically at home. Tire your dog out before going to the park. Don't save up your dog's energy for the big outing. It can cause big problems, she says.

"I know that this is really contradictory to what a lot of people think, but it's actually way better to tire your dog out before you go," Chandler said. "Not necessarily physically. Mentally tiring your dog out right before you go to the dog park is going to help them be able to deal with the high stimulation of the park in a more appropriate way so that they're not going to be too over stimulated the second they show up."

A few minutes of refresher training, a short leash walk that involves some focus work, scent detection or other brain games — it all helps.

GET TO KNOW YOUR DOG

Whether you are a new dog owner, or an old hand, whether you have a puppy or have adopted a rescue dog, keep learning. Learn about general dog behaviour by reading up on your dog's breed, take a class or two from a professional, and above all, be observant.

Chandler says it's her goal to help owners and dogs really enjoy each other, and part of that is gaining familiarity with a dog's needs and individual personality.

"Body language for the most part is fairly universal, and if we can make sure that we're paying attention to those things and we've learned how to read those things that's going to be a really key component to whether or not a dog park experience is a good one."

Chandler says it's important to pay attention to how your dog interacts with people and other animals and catalogue the clues it conveys.

"So, when my dog is stressed, what do they look like? Where is their tail? How are their ears? When my dog's really happy, what do they look like? When my dog doesn't like something, what happens next?"

Chandler thinks it's a big part of dog park etiquette to be aware of who your dog is as an individual and what kind of personality they have.

"Do I have a dog that has five different very clear warnings that they give, or do I have a dog that gives one, maybe two, and then it's done? So, really getting to know your dog's communication style and what those things look like."

GOOD RECALL SKILLS

"I think that a really important part of long-term preparation for dog parks is teaching a solid recall," Chandler said. "Making that recall actually something that your dog anticipates and looks forward to, as opposed to a recall where it's like 'Oh man, every time my people call me it means that we have to go home, and the fun is over.'"

Instead, change your dog's perception of what recall is and build a foundation of them



A leash walk prior to visiting a dog park will help manage your dog's excitement level, says professional dog trainer Christina Chandler. (PHOTO: ROGUE PET PHOTOGRAPHY)

wanting to come back to you. Your attention is what dogs live for, and calling them back every so often to reward them with a quick bit of play or praise, will do wonders.

On that point, Chandler says the dog park is not a time for scrolling through your phone or chatting exclusively with a friend; it's a time to engage with your dog.

"I really want to teach people when they come to classes with me, or when I do private lessons, to work on building engagement and value in the relationship between the person and the dog." For more helpful tips, visit aligncaninetraining.com.

Pet-friendly *places* in and around Saskatoon

If you're an animal lover, Saskatoon caters to the four-legged pet set.

BY JENNY GABRUCH

From outdoor patios and hotel accommodations to retail stores and craft breweries, more places in Saskatoon are welcoming the four-legged pet set.

Pets are part of the family, and these days, many furry friends have become accustomed to spending more time with their two-legged companions, given the growing trend of working from home. So, the next time you step out for a frothy pint or cappuccino, or do some

shopping, why not bring Fido along to join the fun?

CANINES AND CRAFT BREWS

There are several spots where you can enjoy a cool brew or two with your canine companion.

Prairie Sun Brewery on Broadway Avenue welcomes doggies on its pet-friendly patio — a great place to relax with friends, furry or not.

While enjoying a selection of craft beer on tap, Fido can lap up its own pub potion: H2O on tap (water bowls supplied).

Head out of town to Crossmount Cider Company, a place that panders to pooches. Its entire patio is dog-friendly, where visitors are welcome to have their dog sit beside them while they enjoy a selection of apple ciders.

There is a tasting room where customers can sample a flight of ciders, and each dog accompanying them receives a branded bandana. Water bowls, treats and poop bags are complimentary. And, with more than 400 acres of land and walking trails, there is plenty of space to roam.

In the summer, the cidery features a Cider & Yoga program which assists Saskatoon charities, including New Hope Dog Rescue and the Saskatoon SPCA. It also sets up a dog maze in October for people to explore with their pets.

POOCHES AND PATIOS

Don't leave your best friend behind when it comes to enjoying some al fresco time — several places allow Fido to join you on their outdoor patio when the weather warms up.

Along with Prairie Sun Brewery, popular pet-friendly patios include Hudsons, JT's Bar and Grill, Leopold's Tavern, Cohen's Beer Republic, Homestead Ice Cream, Bus Stop Refreshments and Beppi's Gelato.

Many coffee shops welcome pets outdoors,



James Grummett and canine companion Jasper stroll the pet food aisle at Early's Farm & Garden Centre. (PHOTO: BEN SOY)



All pets must be on a leash unless in a designated off-leash area.

such as Museo Coffee on Broadway Avenue and City Perks Coffeehouse in City Park.

Dogs are also welcome outdoors at The Berry Barn, a short drive outside Saskatoon. They can stroll the scenic grounds by the riverbank on-leash. Note that there are two free-roaming Bernese Mountain dogs on the premises.

As well, if you head out to the A&W in Martensville, your pooch is sure to be offered a treat when spotted in the drive-thru.

PAWS AWHILE

Doggies need vacations too, and there are numerous hotels in Saskatoon where they can park their paws. Some top spots include Alt Hotel, Delta Bessborough, Holiday Inn, Comfort Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Country Inn and Suites by Radisson, Best Western and Towneplace Suites by Marriott.

Many provide designated relief areas, waste bags, comfy doggie beds and special treats.

Alternatively, some Airbnb and short-stay rentals will host furry friends, which may be more appealing, especially if there's access to a back yard.

Keep in mind the pet policies of the various accommodations. Some may have weight restrictions or charge a pet fee. Two handy websites offer information on pet-friendly accommodations: BringFido.com and PetsWelcome.com. TourismSaskatoon.com has a helpful blog on pet-friendly hotels.

SHOP WITH FIDO

Businesses in and around Saskatoon are becoming increasingly accommodating to

pets, from big retailers to small independents.

Early's Farm & Garden Centre is a long-standing favourite with the pet set, and always has treats behind the counter for visiting four-legged friends.

Other pet supply stores in Saskatoon, naturally, welcome furry companions inside, such as PetSmart, Pet Planet, Pet Valu, Petland, Critters and Bone & Biscuit.

Many garden centers are pet-friendly, including Wilson's Lifestyle Centre, Floral Acres and Dutch Growers.

A growing number of home and hardware stores have pet-friendly policies, including Canadian Tire, Peavy Mart, RONA, Home Hardware, HomeSense and Urban Barn.

There's an ever-expanding — and eclectic — list of smaller retail shops that welcome pets, ranging from clothing stores and bike shops to shoe repair. Among them: Doug's Spoke 'N Sport, Soul Paper, Broadway Shoe Repair, Hazelwood Clothing Company, Bike Universe, The Better Good and Hardpressed Print Studio.

Visit BringFido.com and PetsWelcome.com for a list of other pet-friendly businesses.

PARKS AND TRAILS

Along with the city's numerous off-leash dog parks, there are many popular on-leash trails and nature spaces that are a hit.

Meewasin Valley is always animated with people and their pets, offering numerous walking trails and scenic river valley pathways to explore.

Cranberry Flats Conservation Area is another popular place to hang with your dog,



Rebecca Soy with her furry pal Gouda at Prairie Sun Brewery, which welcomes dogs on its outdoor patio. (PHOTO: BEN SOY)

located just outside the city. It features wide-open spaces and sandy beaches to romp and relax.

While taking your dog out and about with you can be fun, it comes with responsibility. Make sure to mind the pet policies, and ensure your dog is on a leash, in control and prepared to experience new places.



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Anthony, a Saskatoon Animal Control Agency officer, reunites Buddy with his happy owner. (SUPPLIED)

All in a **DAY'S** work:

Lost or injured pets a priority for SACA team members

BY JEANNIE ARMSTRONG

No two days are alike for the team members of the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA). “Every day is different,” says SACA president Eva Alexandrovici.

The Saskatoon Animal Control Agency is contracted by the City of Saskatoon to enforce the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw, as well as to provide animal control services. Pound services are provided by the Saskatoon SPCA. These services are supported through revenues collected through the issuing of dog and cat licenses by the City of Saskatoon.

For SACA officers, the day starts with a check of their vehicle, to ensure they're ready to respond quickly to calls that come into the agency's phone lines. Officers then complete any necessary paperwork awaiting their attention. “There are all kinds of follow-up complaints that we have waiting in the office before the officer heads out for the shift. These include reviewing witness statements we've received regarding animals being at large, barking complaints and feces accumulation

complaints,” says Alexandrovici.

SACA's phone lines open at 7 a.m., with after-hour calls forwarded to a cell phone that is regularly checked by a designated animal control officer. “Most of the calls we receive are either about dogs that are running at large, or confined cats that are waiting to be picked up. We deal with a lot of confined cats. The numbers are just increasing every year and it's becoming a major issue,” says Alexandrovici.

The SACA dispatcher answers the calls and determines the priority of the call. “If a call comes in that needs to be attended to right away, the dispatcher notifies the officer on duty. The officers work on a priority basis: A dog that is running loose is a priority over a cat that is contained. The highest priority type of call is a dangerous animal call, if the animal, usually a dog, is attacking a person or another animal,” says Alexandrovici.

The officers have to be flexible and ready to pivot at a moment's notice to answer a priority call. “You could have an officer

heading to a confined cat call when a call comes in about a dog attack, an animal that just got hit by a vehicle and is injured, or a dog that's running at large. Sometimes we get calls from the off-leash dog parks that there is somebody with a dog that is out of control. The dispatchers and officers know how to prioritize those calls.”

The most common calls that SACA officers respond to are from city residents who have caught and confined cats that have strayed onto their property. “We get calls about at-large cats all the time. We ask the callers to confine them in some way — either in a cat carrier, a cat trap or in their homes. Last year, we picked up 1,599 confined cats, and 1,473 of those cats went to the SPCA. Only 126 cats were returned to their owners,” says Alexandrovici.

In comparison, last year SACA officers took in 680 dogs with 394 impounded at the SPCA because they were not licensed and did not have any identification. Alexandrovici says that 286 dogs were returned to their owners.



“There’s a big difference in attitude over dogs and cats,” she notes sadly. “It’s unfortunate that some people don’t care as much about cats as they do about dogs. Many of these cats

“ Last year, we picked up 1,599 confined cats, and 1,473 of those cats went to the SPCA. Only 126 cats were returned to their owners. ”

Eva Alexandrovici, president, Saskatoon Animal Control Agency.

no longer have homes; they’ve gotten lost or their owners moved and left them behind. The cats who have not been spayed end up having kittens and then you have the baby cats to worry about. There are lots of cats out there roaming the streets. It’s something we definitely struggle with.”

By far, the favourite part of a SACA officer’s day is the opportunity to reunite a lost dog or cat with their owner.

In 2021, SACA officers returned 412 dogs and cats to their owners (286 dogs and 126 cats). “We were able to return the animals because they had been licensed by the City of Saskatoon, or microchipped, or had some type of identification of them. If the owner calls in a lost report, that can also help,” says Alexandrovici.

When a dog or a cat is caught running at large, the SACA officer has to issue a \$100 fine to the owner. If the animal is not licensed, a \$250 ticket for noncompliance to license must also be issued.

Responsible pet owners who license their pets can take advantage of the City of Saskatoon’s Pet-At-Large (PAL) Perk.

The PAL Perk can be applied once during the lifetime of the animal, to waive the \$100 fine for running at large. The SACA officer can return the animal to its owner at no cost.

If the animal’s owner can’t be contacted immediately, the dog or cat may be impounded

at the Saskatoon SPCA. The PAL Perk also means that pound fees would be waived.

In between priority calls, SACA officers follow up on the many complaints the agency receives. “These follow-ups include barking complaints, feces complaints, at large complaints where the officer has to obtain a witness statement, animal bites that we’re investigating — and sometimes we even have to go and investigate complaints about prohibited animals, like chickens, farm animals or prohibited exotic animals,” says Alexandrovici.

“We have different procedures for different types of situations,” says Alexandrovici. “If a dog has bitten a person, we will go out and speak with the dog owner regardless of whether we have a witness statement or not, because we have to report on the animal’s rabies vaccine status to Public Health.

“With any other dangerous animal type complaints, we need a statement before we can actually follow up on the complaint. A lot of people don’t realize that if the officer didn’t witness the incident, we don’t have the authority to follow up with the owner without a statement. So it’s essential that people submit their statements to us.”

If complainants want to pursue a dangerous animal charge and sign a complaint form, after investigation, the SACA officer then submits the file to the City Solicitor’s office. “The prosecutor’s office would summon the pet owner to court, and if needed, would subpoena all of the witnesses,” says Alexandrovici.

The Dangerous Animal Bylaw provides for a number of different outcomes that the dog’s owner may be instructed to comply with by the court. These can include having the dog spayed or neutered, muzzling the dog, posting dangerous animals signs on the property and keeping the animal in a secure enclosure.

“It’s the SACA officer’s job to make sure that the pet owner is complying with the court’s requirements. We work with the owners and the animals to help them along. If they are not, then we have to report back to the City to let them know and the owner may be charged



Thanks to a valid pet license, SACA officer Jasmine was able to give Obsidian a safe return home. (SUPPLIED)

with failing to comply with a court order,” says Alexandrovici.

If the animal’s owner continues to refuse to comply with the court orders, a warrant may be issued to seize the animal. “That’s part of our job as well,” says Alexandrovici. “Our priority is public safety. If we think there’s a risk to public safety, we have to step in and take action.”

SACA officers are also called upon to educate pet owners and mediate complaints between pet owners and their neighbours.

“For example, when we receive a complaint about a barking dog, we try to provide some recommendations to the pet owner to help improve the situation. We have some really wonderful education pamphlets that we hand out. We try to educate as well as provide enforcement when necessary,” she says.

What motivates Alexandrovici and her team to fulfill these vital roles in our community? “We are always concerned about animals and their well-being. We all have pets and love animals; we want to see them being treated well and do everything we can to promote responsible pet ownership,” she replies.

To learn more about the Animal Control Bylaw and Dangerous Animal Bylaw, visit the City of Saskatoon’s Animal Services website at Saskatoon.ca. You can also call the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency at (306) 385-7387.

IT’S YOUR DOODY!

Dog feces do not fertilize the ground and have negative effects on grass and plants. Be a good neighbour and clean up after your pet.



Make *vacation* a fun time for you and your pet

BY RAY PENNER

Want to take a vacation, but feeling guilty about leaving Sparky behind? Do it right, and you can be sure your furry best friend will not spend the time grieving your absence. More likely, Sparky will enjoy the experience, with all those new smells, new friends, regular feeding and exercise. But don't worry; he'll still love you when you return. It's just that, well, dogs — like all pets — live for the moment.

Most dogs don't even need their favourite blanket or toy when they're away, and Jocelyn Davey-Hawreliuk, founder and owner of Furbaby Pet Care, discourages it. At her facility, dogs are grouped together in separate free-roaming areas according to their temperament. A favourite toy or blanket is not allowed when the dog is with other dogs, as it could lead to fights. "If absolutely necessary, the item will be allowed only when the dog is isolated," she points out.

The idea of having Sparky mixed in with a group of other dogs might seem unsettling to some, but, as Davey-Hawreliuk points out, dogs are social animals. They know how to be part of a pack. "Some of the dogs who are regulars will get together with other dogs they have met before, but even if all the other dogs are new, they soon learn their place and get along."

But is it the right environment for your dog? To find out, you need to plan ahead. Boarding your pet for any period of time should not be a last-minute decision unless in an emergency. Otherwise, you might not get a reservation, but most importantly, you should get your pet used to the surroundings, starting with a brief visit on one occasion, then an overnight trial run, before having them experience a longer-term stay.

Rick Kimakowich, co-owner of Riverside Resort: Pets on Vacation, agrees with that approach, adding that you also need to ensure your dog has all the required shots for admission, as listed on Riverside's website.



It's important to plan ahead and find the right boarding environment for your pet, advises Jocelyn Davey-Hawreliuk, owner of Furbaby. A day or overnight visit is suggested prior to a longer-term stay. (SUPPLIED)

As for dogs that pine for their owners and refuse to eat, Kimakowich says it happens at his kennels "maybe once every three years", and when it does, their staff will stay with it and "feed it, one kibble at a time. Usually, after a day-and-a-half, the dog is happy where

they are." In a worst-case scenario, owners who leave their dog at Riverside need to provide emergency contact information, and are encouraged to connect via email once a week for updates.

Kimakowich also emphasizes booking

as soon as you know when you're going to be away. At Riverside Resort, they take bookings up to six months in advance. "When we open up for Christmas bookings on July 2, we'll be fully booked the next day," he says, adding that it's always good to at least inquire and be put on a waiting list, as sometimes cancellations do occur.

Taking your dog to a reputable facility like Riverside or Furbaby can be much healthier than leaving them alone at home and having a neighbour or friend checking in once or twice a day. "A bored dog can become a problem dog," Kimakowich points out. "Besides, your friend may have the best of intentions, but things might come up where they can't do what they promised, and that can leave you in a quandary."

Another benefit is often the additional training and conditioning your dog might receive. Riverside staff insist on the dog following "good manners" such as sit and stay, for safety reasons. "We don't want

dogs jumping up on our staff, and possible clawing their faces," says Kimakowich. Owners might also want to discuss additional training services, as well as grooming services, that are offered.

Cat owners also need to understand what's best for their pets. "Cats can deteriorate quickly if left alone too long," says Davey-Hawreluik. "It is not a good idea to think you can just leave a cat alone, and just check in on them every two days. When looking after cats at home, Furbaby will come in daily, check the water and food, but just as importantly, spend time socializing with the cat."

As for which facility you should choose for your pet's well-being, Kimakowich recommends asking your veterinarian and other pet owners for referrals. By making a confident choice and taking the right steps, you can be sure your pet will enjoy their vacation while you, worry-free, enjoy yours.



A stay at a pet resort is a time for your dog to enjoy socializing and exercising with other dogs, says Rick Kimakowich, co-owner of Riverside Resort: Pets on Vacation. (SUPPLIED)

Ever wonder how pets and humans benefit each other?



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How often should your pet *visit* the vet?

BY ELIZABETH IRELAND

Your veterinarian is a big part of your pet's team throughout its life.

Dr. Dayle Borchardt is an instructor and clinical associate with the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN), University of Saskatchewan. Her professional focus is wellness and preventive medicine for small animals.

Borchardt earned both her agriculture and veterinary degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. She also worked for several years at a mixed animal practice in rural Saskatchewan. She has one cat and one dog of her own. "The cat rules the roost," she jokes about the hierarchy most cat owners experience.



Vaccinations are an important part of pet ownership. Recommended vaccines include rabies, canine distemper, parvovirus and infectious canine hepatitis.

(PHOTO: CHRISTINA WEESE)

An annual visit to your veterinarian does not actually need to take place during a specific time of year. Kittens and puppies need about four to six visits in the first year of their lives for vaccines, deworming and spaying or neutering. Borchardt recommends that senior

cats and dogs (approximately 10 years old and older) visit the veterinarian twice a year.

"There are currently two preventable epidemics with pets in North America — obesity and dental disease. A veterinarian can help recognize if your pet is overweight and at risk for diabetes and other diseases. We also see kidney or liver disease and arthritis frequently in older pets. We highly recommend regular wellness visits because they can prevent expensive and stressful emergency visits later on," says Borchardt.

The WCVN Veterinary Medical Centre in Saskatoon is the largest of its kind in the province. The centre has three main areas of care: preventative medicine, emergency services and specialty referral services.

Your veterinarian can also help with emergency care and ongoing health issues. The WCVN offers 24/7 small animal emergency services for seriously ill or injured pets. That said, while owners might think that the only option is an immediate visit to the veterinary hospital, many cases don't need emergent care and booking a regular appointment is probably a better option.

Borchardt describes a few instances when an emergency visit is necessary: bleeding from the mouth, any eye injury, or vomiting and an upset stomach that lasts for multiple days. It is a concern if a puppy eats something not intended as food (say, a sock). Also, if a well-trained cat has an accident outside of its litter box, that can be a sign of severe stress or a more serious health issue.

Vaccinations are an important part of pet ownership. The vaccines recommended for dogs are canine distemper, parvovirus and infectious canine hepatitis, as well as rabies.



Dr. Dayle Borchardt

Borchardt notes that the rates of both canine distemper and parvovirus (typically seen as acute gastrointestinal trouble in puppies) are high in Saskatchewan.

Canine distemper can affect dogs of all ages and is caused by a paramyxovirus that's closely related to the measles virus. Spread through sneezing or coughing, other members of the dog family (coyotes, wolves and foxes) as well as skunks, ferrets, weasels and raccoons are all at risk.

Heartworm is a parasite transmitted by some types of mosquitoes. Luckily, Saskatchewan winters are too cold for the mosquitoes that spread heartworm. However, if your pet travels outside of the province, taking heartworm medication is a good idea.

For cats, the recommended vaccines are feline herpes virus, calicivirus and panleukopenia, plus rabies. With regards to rabies, Borchardt emphasizes the need to keep humans safe. Rabies poses a particularly



**Pets can't ADD
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serious threat to public health because it can be transferred between humans and animals.

According to Borchardt, rabies transmission through bats is an issue in Saskatchewan. The rabies virus is usually spread by a bite or scratch from an infected animal and it ultimately infects the brain causing death. Kittens and puppies as young as three months old can receive the rabies vaccine, with a booster shot one year later. While a rabies vaccine for a cat or dog is relatively inexpensive, the treatment for rabies exposure in humans is “not pleasant” and costly.

Cats and kittens in Saskatchewan are often rescued as strays or adopted from an animal shelter. In these cases, feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) are potential issues. She advises that cats and kittens with unknown origins need to be screened.

“I’d like to emphasize that pet owners should take advantage of their vet’s expertise and to work together as a team for a healthy and happy pet. An annual exam has many benefits besides regular vaccinations,” says Borchardt.

The WCVM also has an avian, exotic and wildlife medicine team available to treat less common pets like guinea pigs, hedgehogs, rabbits and snakes. Find out more at umc.usask.ca.

Keep your pet’s dental health top-of-mind

Dental health can have a big impact on your pet’s well-being. What’s involved in proper dental care of your dog or cat and why is it important?

“Humans brush their teeth and don’t eat off the floor and we still have tooth problems and get dental disease,” says Dr. Dayle Borchardt, a small animal veterinarian with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

If a pet’s teeth are neglected, owners should watch out for symptoms that slowly progress, such as drooling and eating less. According to Borchardt, larger dogs tend to be more prone to tooth trauma. “A broken tooth can be as painful as a broken leg for a dog,” says Borchardt.

While it is less an issue of the actual dog breed, she notes that smaller dogs with smaller jaws are more prone to crowded teeth. Unfortunately, dental disease progresses faster when the teeth are crowded. Detritus and long hair around the mouth can be other risk factors for dental disease.

“There is often a lack of understanding of

pet dental care. Daily tooth brushing is ideal. And while it’s time-consuming, brushing your cat or dog’s teeth every day will promote good oral health and prevent potentially expensive dental surgeries down the road.”

Costs for pet dental work tend to be higher than expected for owners because the animal usually goes under general anesthesia during procedures. This allows your veterinarian to make a more accurate diagnosis and reduces the chance of complications, plus it is less stressful for the animal.

“Dental neglect can have several results. Unhealthy teeth die and it becomes a place for infection to start. Abscesses and pain are an issue because pets can’t easily tell us when they are in pain. Eventually dental neglect can impact the pet’s quality of life and become a welfare concern,” says Borchardt.

“And, because we show our pets love by giving them treats they learn that food equals love, which can make it hard to tell if a pet has a sore mouth because they will eat, even with pain, because we are feeding them.”

Puppy pressures?

If your new puppy or kitten has some behaviour challenges, the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre’s new animal behaviour service can help your pet and your family.

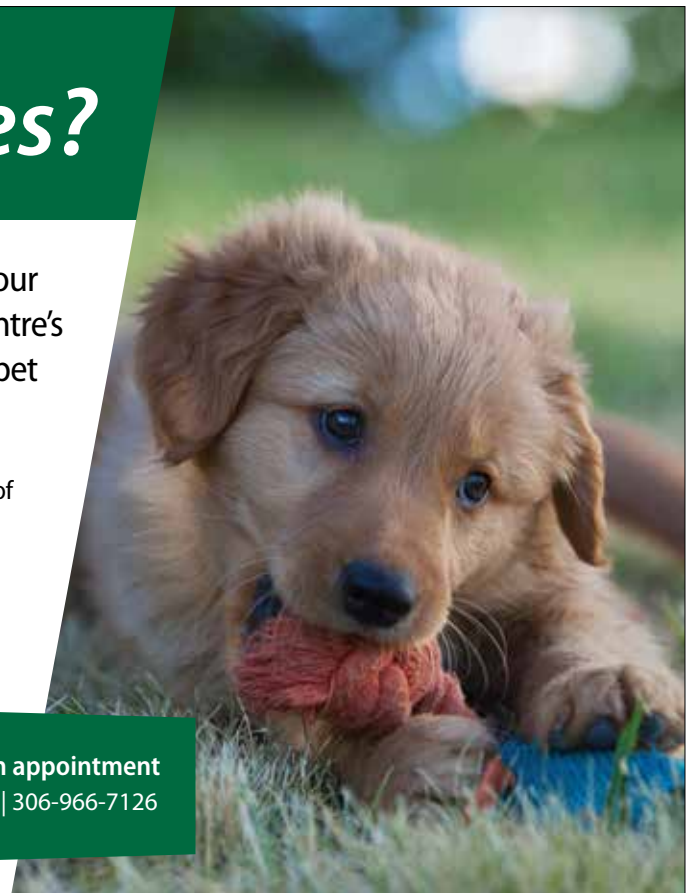
Dr. Karen Machin is a veterinarian and resident in clinical behaviour as well as a lifelong animal owner and a founder of New Hope Dog Rescue in Saskatoon, Sask.

Dr. Machin works with animal owners to find solutions for a wide array of behavioural issues — from separation distress and anxiety to aggression and house-soiling. Learn how to help your beloved pet with Dr. Machin’s guidance.



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What to do if *your pet* has a seizure?

BY JENNIFER JACOBY-SMITH

It can from nowhere. Your dog suddenly collapses or seems to have involuntary movements. One of the scariest moments as a pet owner is knowing your furbaby is sick and not knowing why or what to do about it.

Seizures, defined as increased electrical activity in the brain, can take many forms, according to Dr. Karen Sheehan with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Medical Centre. "Ultimately, a seizure is any involuntary behaviour or movement of the body," explains Sheehan. "The most common type of seizure is a generalized or grand mal seizure."

A grand mal seizure will typically cause the animal to lose consciousness, collapse, stiffen, then start to have involuntary movements. Animals may urinate or defecate involuntarily during the seizure.

This state can last minutes or even hours. The longer the seizure lasts, the more potential there is for complications during recovery. After the seizure, the animal will have a period of time where they will seem disoriented and may even appear blind.

Another type of seizure is called a focal seizure (also called partial motor seizure). This type of seizure involves the involuntary movement of one body part. An example of a focal seizure is a "chewing gum" seizure where the pet's mouth is the only part affected.

A psychomotor seizure is still basically a focal seizure, but instead of one body part moving involuntarily, the dog or cat exhibits abnormal behaviour. The behaviour can take the form of chasing their tail or seeing things that aren't there.

Seizures are relatively common in

dogs. According to Sheehan, statistics are anywhere from .5 to six per cent of the dog population. Dogs can develop idiopathic epilepsy — that is seizures with no underlying cause. Dogs with these types of seizures can live long and happy lives with long-term medical management using anti-convulsant medication. It's important to maintain regular check-ups with your vet.

In cats, seizures generally indicate an underlying medical issue, and the prevalence is about two per cent of the population.

Seizures can be caused by disease or abnormalities with the brain itself. Canine distemper, neospora and toxoplasmosis are three diseases that can cause seizures. A vaccine for canine distemper is part of routine vaccinations for dogs.

Other medical reasons for seizures include hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), electrolyte changes and low calcium. For dogs or cats left in hot cars, heat stroke can also result in seizures.

Toxins are a common cause of seizures. As most dog owners are acutely aware, dogs are indiscriminate and likely to eat things they shouldn't. Seizure-causing toxins include caffeine, chocolate, xylitol (an artificial sweetener frequently found in chewing gums), amphetamines, cocaine, human and veterinary medications, mycotoxins (compost) and rodenticides.

Cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids can also trigger seizures and should be kept in a safe place where cats or dogs won't get too curious and ingest something they shouldn't.

It's important to remain calm and be cautious. Your animal may not be conscious or have control over their movement. As a



A dog or cat that experiences a seizure should ideally see a veterinarian immediately for treatment and to identify the underlying cause. (PHOTO: WCVM/CHRISTINA WEESE)

result, owners can get bitten attempting to move their pet to safe place.

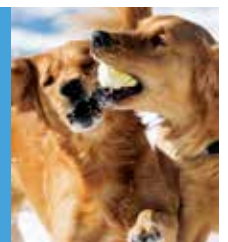
All seizures should be considered a medical emergency and a reason to seek out treatment as soon as possible.

"Ideally, pets should be taken to a veterinarian immediately for treatment and to identify the underlying cause. Let the veterinarian know about any possible exposure to toxins, medications or drugs as open communication allows for proper treatment," says Sheehan.

Keeping up with regular vet visits and vaccinations for your pet can help prevent seizures. Whatever the reason for your pet's seizure, it's important to get them assessed by a veterinarian and follow their advice. Treatment of underlying causes can get your pet back to their happy normal selves more quickly.

PLAY NICE!

Dog parks are a great place for socialization and exercise. Ensure you and your dog are ready for the off-leash experience. Your dog should know and obey basic commands of come, sit and stay before visiting a dog park. Consider taking obedience classes or hiring a qualified dog trainer.



Grooming vital to your pet's well-being

BY HILARY KLASSEN

While grooming ensures that your pets look their best, even more importantly, regular grooming helps to ensure their health and well-being.

“Regular grooming can help prevent ear infections and maintain healthy skin and coat on your animal,” says Lisa Olson, owner of Pet-i-Coat Junction & Barkery in Saskatoon. Olson says grooming frequency really depends on the breed. She suggests every six to eight weeks on average, but pet owners should check the needs of their particular breed with their groomer. Nail clipping is part of regular grooming and helps prevent crippling or arthritis in the feet.

Grooming frequency also depends on what the pet owner wants to do with the animal's coat. Some like to grow the fur on breeds such as Havanese, Shih Tzu or Yorkie down to the ground. “If you want to maintain a long coat you have to keep up on grooming,” Olson says. There are some cautions. “If they go out in the snow, the fur will mat to the skin. And once it mats to the skin, you're not going to be able to do a long cut on it. Or it's not humane for the animal.”

Different animals have different types and quantities of fur. Double-coated breeds have both fur and an undercoat of hair which helps insulate them. Double-coated dogs shed their undercoat twice a year. “You'll get a lot of molting which indicates its definitely time for grooming.”

Most cat breeds are known to shed. In the canine category, poodles are a popular non-shedding breed. Bichon Frises, Shih Tzus, and Maltese are also low-shedders. Olson says Terriers, Huskies and Rottweilers are

among the higher shedding breeds. For health reasons, grooming is recommended regardless of breed.

Yeast infections are very common in dogs and something pet owners should be aware of. Yeast infections can be food and allergy driven. Alternatively, if your pet's coat is extra thick, a lack of proper drying after bathing can cause a yeast infection. “We do a mineral bath, and we'd recommend doing that every six weeks if it's a bad yeast infection,” Olson notes.

Pet-i-Coat Junction has noticed an upsurge in the amount of ticks in the region over the last few years. “They are getting worse and worse, and people are unaware of them,” Olson observes. Ticks can be discovered through grooming. If you're having trouble determining if a raised bump is a wart or a tick, schedule a visit with your groomer.

Flea season strikes in spring and can last into summer. The incidence and severity of fleas may depend on your dog's living environment. “Household dogs are different than farm dogs. Farm dogs seem to have them more frequently,” Olson says. Fleas may linger past the season. If your dog is itchy, they may be doing more than just idle scratching. Grooming and attending to home cleanliness can help manage fleas.

Grooming can reveal masses or lumps on the skin that pet owners may not be aware of. “This may not necessarily be a deadly thing. It can be just fat build-up,” Olson says. If it is a health hazard, the next step is a trip to the veterinarian.

The best time to start grooming pets is when they're young. “Do it on a regular



Regular grooming sessions for your pet aren't just about looking good, they are essential to your pet's well-being. (GETTY IMAGES)

basis, not every two or three years. We see some that come in and they're just like packed cotton,” says Olson. Regular, gentle grooming helps your pet ease into the safety of appropriate care. You may also spend less time with the vacuum cleaner.



It's Your Doody



Animal **rescue** stories that will warm your heart

BY RAY PENNER

KITTENS WHO LEARNED TO LOVE WATER

There they were: nine motherless, dirty and undernourished kittens who had been abandoned in a plastic tub. It's an all-too-familiar scenario for Nikki Gorguchuk, president of Street Cat Rescue (SCAT) in Saskatoon.

Gorguchuk travelled with SCAT vice president Madelaine Fast to the Wadena area to rescue the kittens. "There were five of us working on them, feeding them with a syringe and keeping them warm," says Gorguchuk. Because of digestive problems, the kittens often soiled themselves, requiring frequent baths.

One kitten named "Ceenie" was in bad shape and didn't look like she was going to make it. Around midnight, Gorguchuk and Fast rushed Ceenie to the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre, never expecting to see her again. To their surprise, the kitten fought to survive and continued to improve in stages. Sadly, one of the older kittens did not make it.

Over the next few months, the remaining eight kittens returned to good health. As is SCAT's policy, all kittens were then spayed or neutered and had a microchip implant before being put up for adoption. That is standard practice for all reputable animal rescue organizations, including the SPCA and New Hope Dog Rescue.

Today, Ceenie and the other kittens are flourishing in their permanent homes — and have one very unusual trait. "Because they needed baths all the time as kittens, they now will jump in the shower with their adopters," explains Gorguchuk.

BORN AT THE SPCA

It happens too often: "Betty" was found running at large in late 2021 and turned into the SPCA. Shortly after, she gave birth to five pups. Jemma Omidian, partnership development coordinator at the SPCA, decided to provide foster care for the mother and pups until they were ready for adoption.

"I firmly believe that every pup has its own distinct personality," says Omidian. "Janet is the liveliest and very keen to learn. On the other hand, Pete is a little cuddle-bug who doesn't need much exercise." The other three fit somewhere within that range of personalities.

A pup's personality, though, can change significantly, depending on who adopts it. The key is an adopter's willingness to provide the training and conditioning to end up with a dog they love. Omidian is adamant that only positive reinforcement should be used in training — rather than punishing a dog when it does something wrong. If the adopters have young children, the children, too, need to be taught how to behave around a dog and respect its boundaries.

Rather than a puppy, an older dog might be a much better fit. Contrary to the old adage about teaching an old dog new tricks, a mature dog can actually be easier to train. Adult dogs, though, are not "a clean slate" like a puppy, so behavioural factors need to be considered. The SPCA can help determine the best match.

As for Cathy, the mother dog, she has already found a new home. Happily, she will never have another litter. Hopefully, she will never again be running at large.

NEW HOPE FOR PRINCE

Unlike adorable puppies that get adopted quickly, Prince was already grown when he came to New Hope Dog Rescue in January. "He came to us from another organization in rural Saskatchewan as a transfer because they don't have a foster care program," explains Tami Vangool, the recently retired executive director of New Hope Dog Rescue.

New Hope relies entirely on its network of foster care homes to shelter rescue dogs and assess their temperament. Placement of the dogs depends on how much is known about the animal when it comes in, and the skill and experience of the foster person providing the care.

"Shortly after a dog comes in, you'd know if it had any behavioural issues," says Vangool. "It

does happen, unfortunately. Not every foster home is good with leash-resistant animals, or dogs that don't get along with other animals."

Vangool is quick to point out that foster homes include those with years of experience to those who are brand new to fostering, and all are very welcome to join New Hope, even if they can help for only certain times of the year.

To help ensure successful adoptions, New Hope conducts a one-week, one-month, and one-year follow-ups with every adoption. "If there are any problems, we can recommend a trainer or send support documents which are also available on-line," says Vangool.

Fortunately for Prince, finding a good home is easier for a dog who, according to Vangool, "likes lots of belly rubs and head scratches. His foster home has done an amazing job with him."



This puppy is one of five born to "Betty" at the Saskatoon SPCA. Betty was found running at large and was brought to the shelter in late 2021. She gave birth shortly after arriving at the SPCA. (PHOTO: SASKATOON SPCA)

City of Saskatoon considers new off-leash parks for *small dogs*

BY JENNY GABRUCH

Small dogs could soon have their very own off-leash parks to romp and roam.

The City of Saskatoon's Animal Services team is working towards developing two off-leash areas dedicated to smaller-size dogs.

"A small dog-only off-leash area provides a safe environment and opportunity for small dogs to exercise and socialize with other breeds their similar size," says Melissa Meacham, open space consultant with Animal Services.

One off-leash park is being proposed for Charlottetown Park, located behind the Cosmo Civic Centre. The second small dog park is being considered for development in a separate expansion north of the Hyde Park off-leash area. Following approval by City Council, construction would begin in late summer or early fall, with plans to open at least one location in 2022.

A small dog off-leash area was identified as a priority in a 2018 City of Saskatoon survey, with funding for additional off-leash areas approved in the 2022 capital budget. The two parks are pending City Council approval in June.

Having a separate area for dogs of similar size and ability level would help ease the minds of dog owners, as it reduces the risk of injuries or fights. In parks where all sizes mingle, a large dog may try to play a little too rough with one a fraction of its size. A little dog, too, despite its stature, can ramp up its canine courage and challenge a dog many times its size.

"In the 2018 Customer Satisfaction Survey, 46 per cent of the respondents indicated they were concerned their dog would have an altercation with another dog and would be more comfortable going to a designated small-dog park, if available," says Meacham.

The City is recommending that entrance to the small dog-only off-leash parks be reserved for dogs weighing 20 pounds or less, with a maximum height of 16 inches at the shoulder.

"Animal Services conducted initial research of small dog park criteria of other municipalities and presented this to the Animal Services Working Group, which is made up of City administration and members working in the animal industry. The Working Group recommended that a combination of height and weight would be the criteria indicating which dogs would be able to enter the small-dog off-leash area," she says.

The proposed off-leash parks could range from around a half-acre to one acre in size if approved, with a variety of amenities for petite pooches and their two-legged pals.

"Animal Services anticipates that these off-leash areas will be destination locations and will include fencing and a paved parking area as well as our standard level of service such as information kiosks, garbage receptacles, dog waste bag dispensers and dog waste bags," says Meacham.

To find out more about the proposed park locations, visit the Dog Park for Small Dogs page on [Saskatoon.ca/engage](https://saskatoon.ca/engage).



Two small dog-only off-leash parks are being considered for development in Saskatoon. (SUPPLIED)



BECOME A DOG PARK AMBASSADOR!

Volunteer at your local dog park.

saskatoon.ca/dogparks



Animal Control

The Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA) is responsible for the enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw and is contracted by the City of Saskatoon to provide animal control services including:

- Reporting of animals at large
- Reporting barking and howling
- Reporting dog bites
- Complaints regarding defecation
- Reporting of dangerous animals

SACA Hotline: 306-385-7387 (available 24/7)



Responsible Pet Ownership

Make sure your pet is a positive addition to the community

- Keep them licensed – All dogs and cats (indoor and outdoor) over four months require a valid license.
- Keep them from roaming – All pets must be on-leash (no longer than 2m in length) when off private property.
- Scoop the Poop – Owners must clean up after their pets.

Be considerate and courteous to other people and children enjoying the outdoors and keep in mind that not everyone is comfortable around pets, even friendly ones.

