



## DOG WALKING ETIQUETTE

What I'm about to tell you, will help you to have a much more enjoyable and safe time with your dog throughout his/her life, and also enable your dog to fit into human society in Jersey. It will also mean you avoid the majority of difficult situations with other dog walkers!

Here are a few facts:

- Jersey's human population is increasing and is now roughly around 100,000+
- As the human population increases, so does the dog population
- As an island, Jersey is a finite size: 'The middle of no where' no longer exists, in Jersey
- People, dogs and other animals are being pushed into ever-closer proximity

But... Not all dogs want to meet other dogs, for many reasons.

**If a dog is on-lead, you should not let your dog go up to that dog.**

There are many reasons why a dog might be on-lead, but generally it is because the owner is being responsible.

A dog might be on-lead because:

- **S/he is aggressive or nervous (towards people or other dogs).**
- **S/he is in season.**
- **S/he is recovering from surgery.**
- **S/he is old, frail, deaf, blind or infirm.**
- **S/he is contagious.**
- **S/he is being trained.**

Just as we don't all go up and hug every stranger we pass in the street, so it is not realistic to expect your dog to be allowed to greet every dog you pass.

It is partly for your own dog's safety that you should not let them approach dogs on lead: You don't want your dog to have an encounter with an aggressive dog. Aggression is 'catching' because the biggest cause of aggression is fear. If your dog has a scary experience with an aggressive dog, *your* dog may well start to become aggressive as well.

Aggressive dogs are set back greatly in their owner's efforts to rehabilitate them, when other dogs come up to them. It really doesn't matter if your dog is 'friendly', it is making someone else's behavioural problem worse to allow your dog to approach.

Of course, many dogs are probably on lead because their owners can't train a reliable recall. They may be 'none of the above'. That's unfortunate, but you have to treat all dogs on lead the same way. You simply can't tell the reason they are on lead, until it's too late.

- 1) **If a dog is on-lead, do not let your dog approach that dog. Recall your dog, if you see them heading towards an on-lead dog.**
- 2) **If you are unable to recall your dog, then YOUR dog should not be off-lead. Keep your dog on a long-line until you have a reliable recall and work with a trainer.**

You should be able to recall your dog back, before s/he has reached another dog. Before s/he has reached a child. Before s/he has started chasing a horse on the beach.

If you can't achieve this, then your dog should not be off-lead. **You wouldn't drive a car without any brakes!** So don't let your dog off a long-line, without a recall.

### **The bigger picture?**

If dogs in Jersey continue chasing horses on the beach; running up to small children; initiating aggressive responses from other dogs; and otherwise being out of control, there will be a growing number of people lobbying for ALL dogs to be on lead in a public place. This suggestion is already being made on social media. In US towns and cities, this is already how things are.

This would be a small tragedy. Provided they are well-socialised:

Dogs need to be off-lead, **to receive sufficient exercise**. Kept on-lead, more behaviour problems will result because of excess energy. Insufficient exercise is correlated with a greater incidence of almost every behaviour problem.

Dogs need to be off-lead **to communicate properly with each other**, using a full range of body language. Kept on-lead, more behaviour problems will result because the dog population will not know how to 'be a dog' and will not learn a complex range of communicative signals in interaction with each other.

Dogs need to be off-lead so they grow up **taking other dogs for granted**. Kept on-lead, they will see contact with other dogs as 'rare', and either become afraid of them, or desperately want to meet members of the same species (leading to barking and straining to reach them).

Dogs need to be off-lead **to train in various dog sports** (competitive obedience; working trials; gundog work). Dogs in Jersey would be unable to train for these dog sports, if they had to be on-lead and we would lose trainers with these skills.

As a dog owner, you should know that it is NOT acceptable if someone allows their dog to run up to yours, when yours is on lead. Please help by **expressing your displeasure** at this. It's only if people get these responses from others, that they are likely to reconsider the idea of letting their dog run up to everyone.

That's all. It's pretty simple! If we can all abide by this, then most dog-incidents would be averted and Jersey will be a safer place for all!

Of course, if you need any help training a reliable recall, then please get in touch.