



# How to Be a Responsible Dog Owner in Denver

Colorado isn't known for an overwhelming number of dog-bite injuries, which may seem surprising considering how many Coloradans own and enjoy the companionship of dogs. In fact, Colorado and Denver consistently rank high on lists of most dog-friendly states and cities.

Even with abundant resources and positive attitudes, however, accidents still happen and people do occasionally get hurt by dogs. An owner's misconduct or negligence is far more likely to prompt a dog bite or attack, which is why it's critical for Denver dog owners to understand local and state ordinances, as well as practical guidelines for owning a dog.

Every year, 4.5 million dog bites are recorded throughout the U.S., and many of these dog bites could have been avoided had the dog owner simply followed the law.

## The Denver Dog Owner's Checklist



Before you buy/adopt/acquire a dog, ask yourself: Do I have the time and resources available to care for a dog? Too often this simple question is ignored, and when dog owners neglect their responsibilities the actions taken by the dog, whether in retaliation, upon instinct, or otherwise, can be serious.

**YES** **NO** I have the time and/or means to ensure my dog is properly socialized and will enjoy regularly physical activity. Dogs without proper socialization or irregular physical activity may act out in unforeseen ways, especially when put in new situations.

**YES** **NO** I will keep my dog on a leash at all times in Denver, unless the dog is contained on personal property or visiting a designated off-leash dog park. An off-leash dog in Denver is an easy way to get a fine or ticket; it's also negligent behavior that could result in a lawsuit should the dog bite someone or damage another's personal property.

**YES** **NO** I understand and acknowledge that Denver enforces "strict liability" laws, which may require that I compensate victims for economic damages. Denver practices "strict liability" for dog-bite cases, which means a dog's owner can be held responsible for injuries or damages even if the dog never displayed a propensity for violence prior to the incident.

**YES** **NO** I understand and acknowledge that dog waste must be immediately removed from a common thoroughfare, street, sidewalk, play area, park, or private property when permission of the owner or tenant of the property has not been obtained. In other words, if your dog poops anywhere other than your personal property, you're required to pick it up directly. Denver statute also stipulates that dog excrement is to be placed in plastic bags before discarded in the trash.

**YES** **NO** I will ensure my dog is vaccinated for rabies by a licensed Colorado veterinarian and maintained before the appropriate anniversary date of the original vaccination. All dogs in Denver must be vaccinated for rabies and display the appropriate license at all times.

**YES** **NO** I understand and acknowledge that all dogs 6-months-old and older must be spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian. In Denver, it is illegal to have an adult dog that has not been spayed or neutered; there are a few exceptions for breeders and in rare instances in which the surgery would be fatal to the dog. There are fines associated with such exceptions.

**YES** **NO** I will not own more than 5 domestic animals total on my property; I will have no more than 3 dogs total on my property. The Denver Zoning Code regulates how many household pets can be part of a home residence. Violations occur when the number of household pets exceeds 3 dogs, 5 cats, 2 rabbits, or 25 pigeons, or 5 total dogs and cats or 2 domestic honey bee hives.

**YES** **NO** I understand (without exception) it is my responsibility to provide adequate care, food, water, and shelter to an owned dog. The Denver Animal Shelter has the authority to impound a dog that shows signs of neglect, which include malnutrition, abuse, dehydration, etc.

**If you answered YES to ALL questions, CONGRATULATIONS!  
You're ready to become a responsible dog owner in Denver!**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR FRIENDS AT

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**USE THIS CHECKLIST TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE PREPARED  
TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR DOG IN DENVER.**