

# Connecting With Your Community





# Responsible Dog Ownership

Just as your dog is a much loved member of your household, she is also an important part of the community you live in. Part of your responsibility in owning a dog is allowing her to enjoy her place in the community through walks and playtime, all the while respecting your neighbours, their pets and their property. Being a responsible dog owner and making real connections between you, your dog and your community will have positive outcomes for all involved.

## The Importance of Socialization

Being properly socialized with other dogs and people is one of the cornerstones of responsible dog ownership. But it is also lots of fun! It involves introducing and familiarizing your dog to new experiences, people, places, other animals, dogs and objects.

A well-socialized dog won't react aggressively when a cyclist zooms past. Nor will he react fearfully when a group of kids run by. A well-socialized dog knows how to interact with dogs of all temperaments. If another dog is acting

aggressively, he knows how to get out of the situation without a conflict erupting. If another dog is more submissive, he knows how to play more gently.

A primary reason for aggression in dogs is improper socialization. To prevent aggression from occurring, start right away! Whether you have a puppy or an older dog, socialization is key.

Take your dog with you everywhere that is reasonable, but be careful not to overwhelm her. You want to watch your dog carefully to make sure each interaction is a positive one. If your dog is shy or overly self-possessed, you'll want to introduce him more slowly to new experiences. Don't force anything. One of the most common reasons for dogs to bite is out of fear from a perceived threat. If they haven't been exposed to something before, they could become scared and react. Take it at their pace. Treats work well as a form of praise and encouragement!

# Why is Dog Training Important?

Participating in dog training or obedience classes is a fun family activity. It will improve and deepen your relationship with your dog by developing a common language to communicate with. It will help you understand how dogs think and how your behaviours are interpreted by dogs. You will learn how to motivate your dog to repeat behaviours you like, and most importantly, you'll learn what is reasonable to expect.

Your dog will enjoy the mental stimulation from training and will gain confidence and a sense of security from clear, consistent commands. He will understand what's expected of him and how to meet those expectations. The more effort you put in, the better canine citizen you'll have.





# Characteristics of a Good Trainer

Look for a trainer that uses positive-reinforcement techniques that are effective and fun. Treats and praise are great rewards for the behaviour you're looking for and are the cornerstones of a training program. Good trainers are patient and flexible, have a great respect and love for all breeds or mixes of dogs, a gentle touch and a great sense of humour. In class, trainers should give clear instructions and explanations, demonstrate each exercise and give individual feedback.

## Characteristics of a Great Class

In order to find the right fit for you and your dog, ask if you can observe a class before making a decision.

Both the dogs and the owners should be enjoying themselves. The class should be structured and organized.

## How do You Find a Dog Trainer or an Obedience Class?

- Contact the Canadian Kennel Club at [information@ckc.ca](mailto:information@ckc.ca). They will be able to give you information on Clubs who will be able to offer advice on training facilities and trainers in your area.



# Behaviour for Dogs and Their Owners

## Responding to Commands

To be a welcomed member of the community, it is important that your dog is under your control. To best make that happen, it is desirable to train your dog to respond to basic commands including “Sit,” “Stay,” “Come,” “Heel,” “Down” and “Leave it.”

“Sit” and “Stay” will keep your dog out of harm’s way while waiting at a traffic light or when letting a person pass by on a narrow path. A recall command like “Come” will ensure a return if she managed to slip her collar. Though walking nicely on a loose leash is fine most of the time, there will be situations when you’ll want your dog in the “Heel” position for a bit more control at your side. “Leave it” will divert your dog’s attention from garbage, food scraps, joggers, and the like to safer rewards and pursuits. “Down” could save his life if he is heading for the road or in other danger.

## The Walk

A walk is a great social outing for both of you. It’s also a wonderful way to work on training your dog to listen when there are lots of distractions. It is a delightful source of smells and mental stimulation for your dog, and it is part of your dog’s daily exercise. Dogs benefit from at least 20 minutes of exercise three times per day, depending on the breed.



## Walking Tools

Regardless of their training and reliability, dogs must be contained by leash or in a crate at all times when not on the owner's property, except in designated off-leash areas. Even in off-leash parks, your dog must be under your control at all times. These rules are in place to protect both the dog and the community at large.

Walking politely on leash can be one of the most challenging behaviours to teach a dog – and one of the most important as a member of a community.

A great walking tool will help interrupt and manage your dog's pulling. Positive reinforcement like praise and treats can then be used to train and reward appropriate behaviour. To help you get a handle on your dog's pulling, here is a guide to some of the walking tools available:

**Head halters** – When your dog begins to pull, the head halter causes the dog's nose to be turned down and back towards you which makes it physically difficult for her to continue pulling. This device works well for dogs who pull or are overly concerned with stimuli when off of their property.

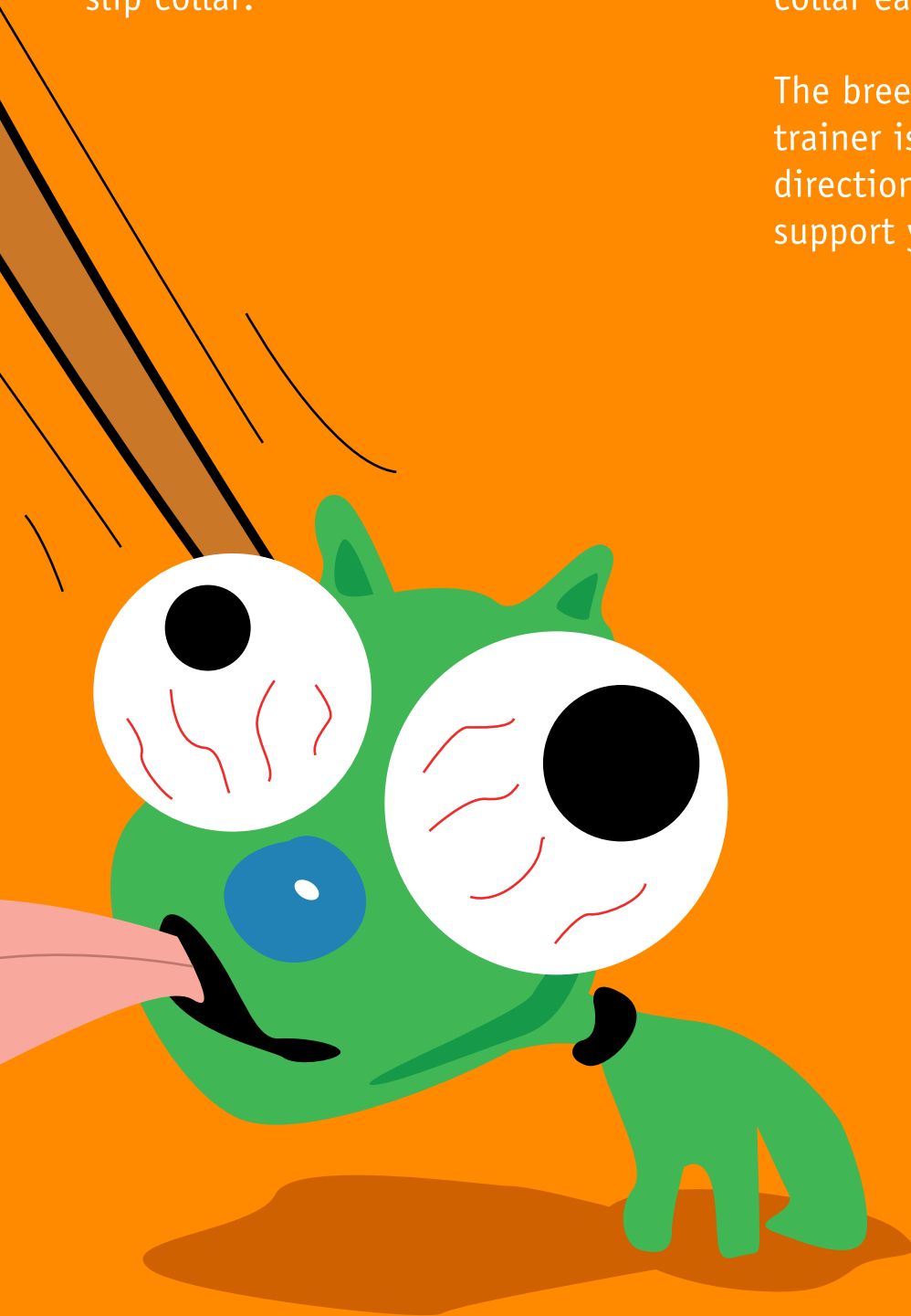
**Flat collars** – For dogs that don't have issues with pulling, a regular flat collar with a buckle or clip may be fine for a very safe environment. It is not recommended as a safe walking tool in most areas. Regardless of the nature of your dog, situations can occur that are threatening or dangerous and all dogs can pull out of a flat collar.



**Pressure harnesses** – These discourage pulling by tightening on the chest or under the forelegs when your dog tugs forward. The best ones have a cushion on the tightening cords. They are a good tool for many dog owners – particularly those with smaller dogs and those with dogs that for one reason or another can't wear a slip collar.

**Limited slip collars** – With a two loop design, the leash is attached to the smaller loop and is engineered to tighten the larger loop when more control is needed without actually constricting around the dog's neck. The collar is designed to gently discourage pulling. This is a safe device and the dog cannot slip this type of collar easily.

The breeder of your dog or your trainer is able to point you in the direction of the tool that will best support your pet.



# Leash Etiquette

While on a leash, your dog should be under control at all times. This means the dog is sitting, standing or walking beside the owner with a loose leash. The dog is not straining at the leash, lunging, pawing or jumping.

When walking the dog, don't assume that everyone loves her. Other people may not like dogs, so respect that. Keep your dog on a short leash and move to the side if on a narrow path. If you see someone who looks nervous or apprehensive, put your dog in a "Sit/Stay" and let the person walk by. Do not let your dog approach unless the other person asks or initiates. People have the right to walk without interference from another person or another dog.

Retractable leashes should be used with caution in areas with other people. They give the owner less control and the thin rope is hard for joggers and cyclists to see.

If your dog sees something that it has too much interest in, re-direct it by turning and going the other way to focus the attention back to heeling. Once heeling properly, you can turn around and go back in the direction you were going.

Proper leash etiquette shows your respect for your dog, and your dog's respect for you. As such, it is up to you where you go on a walk, never your dog's decision.



# Meeting Other People or Other Dogs

Always ask permission first! As a dog owner, you should always ask if it is okay for your dog to say hello – and wait for permission. The same holds true if you see a dog and its owner out in the community – you should always ask permission to approach their dog.

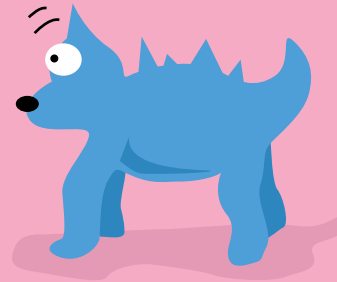
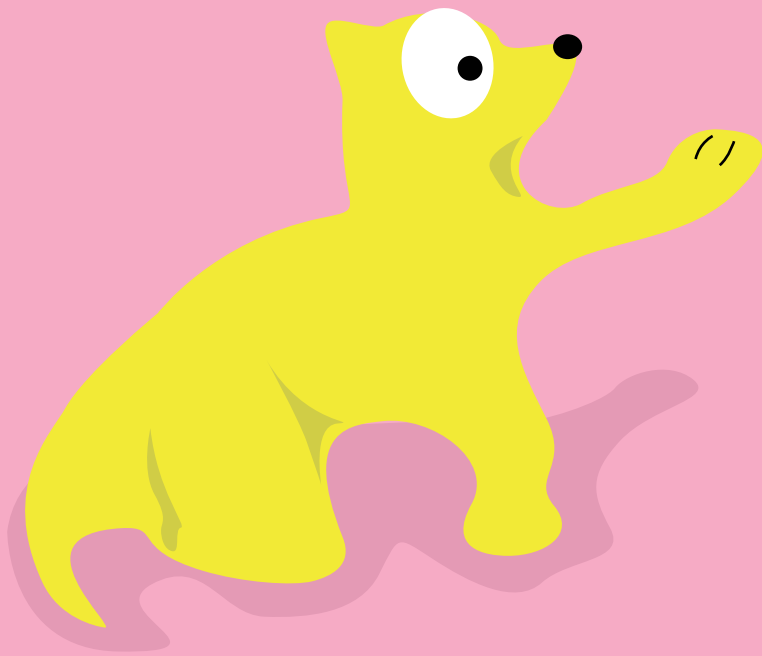
Can you imagine if a stranger ran up to you and gave you a hug? What do you think your reaction would be? Unfortunately, this happens to dogs all the time.

Your dog doesn't need to meet every person or dog you pass. It is important for your dog to learn how to walk past other people and dogs respectfully and reliably while remaining in a heel position.

When a dog meets a new person, the greeting should be controlled – no jumping, bouncing or grabbing – even if it is done in the spirit of friendliness. When meeting another dog, your dog should also stay beside you calmly and quietly.

A lot of dogs have problems meeting other dogs on leash. Dogs have two options in an uncomfortable situation: fight or flight. But when dogs are on leash, they only have the fight option if they become scared or nervous. So, when dogs meet on leash, quick visits of about five seconds are often best because the dogs don't have time to determine who is boss. It's also important to keep leashes loose when meeting other dogs – dogs meet best when not restrained.





# Off Leash

Dogs are very social animals, so many have a great time romping around off leash with their other canine friends. Off-leash dog parks are one way to keep your dog socialized if other options are not available to you – dogs get to meet people and other dogs at each visit, and learn how to interact appropriately with them. Dogs can learn to control their own behaviour around others, under your vigilant supervision.

Remember that off-leash areas are not always just for dogs – if it is park land, everyone can use this area. To ensure that this area is safe for you, your dog, and others, remember these general rules:

- When off leash, stay within the designated areas.
- Your dog must be under control at all times.
- Your dog must come to you when called.
- You must be able to see your dog at all times.
- Your dog must not bother people or other dogs.
- Always carry your dog's leash with you.
- Stoop and scoop your dog's waste immediately.
- Aggressive dogs and, in some cases, puppies under three months old are not allowed in off leash areas
- You do not know the other dogs in the area so your care and attention cannot waver.



# Clean-Up

Pick up after your dog.  
Every time.  
Without exception.

Always carry a bag or two with you.  
After scooping up the waste, knot the  
end of the bag and dispose of it in a  
waste receptacle if available. Other-  
wise, carry it home with you.

A great idea is to train your dog to  
eliminate on your property before  
leaving on the walk. The walk makes a  
great reward for your dog, and not  
having to “Stoop & Scoop” is a great  
reward for you.

If you are out and about when the  
urge strikes, be considerate of others.  
Dogs shouldn't be marking territory  
on storefronts, doors, etc. Don't allow  
your dog to defecate on private prop-  
erty, or on public property commonly  
used for recreation like sports fields  
or playgrounds. Try to find unused  
public areas like the grassy strip  
between the sidewalk and the street.

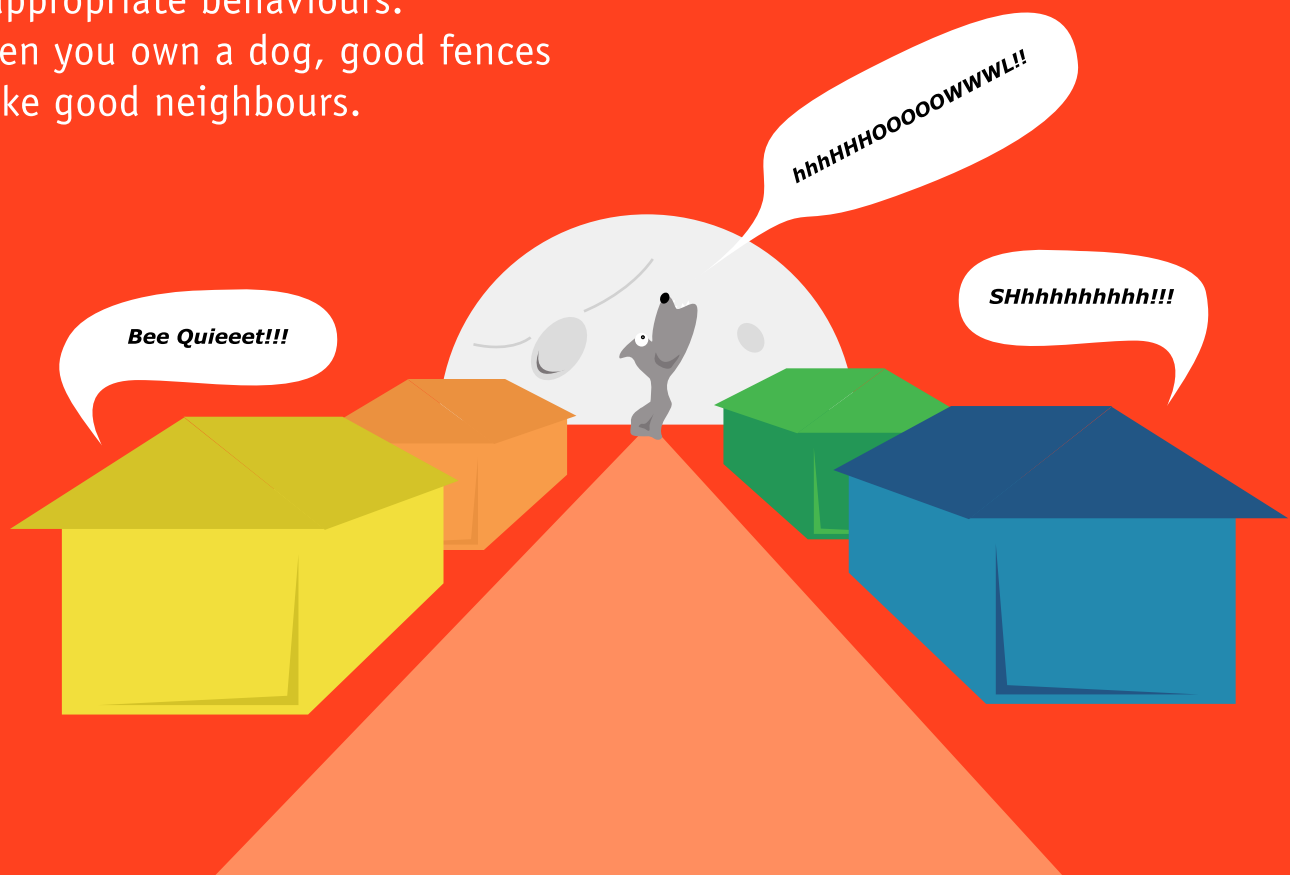
# Happy Neighbours

Keeping your neighbours happy and your dog safe is an important part of responsible dog ownership.

A happy dog generally means happy neighbours. Problem behaviours like barking, jumping, growling, digging, etc. can make neighbours unhappy.

Here are a few steps to follow to foster or maintain a respectful relationship with your neighbours:

- Take measures to correct your dog's inappropriate behaviours.
- When you own a dog, good fences make good neighbours.
- Ensure your dog doesn't bark or howl excessively and bring her in if she is vocal.
- Not everyone likes dogs, so don't allow your dog to approach other people or visit other people's property unless invited to do so.
- Keep your dog under control at all times.
- Stoop and scoop immediately, every time.
- Keep your dog on a leash while out and about, unless in a designated off-leash area.



# Out & About in the Community – Where is My Dog Allowed?

Before you head out to run errands with your pooch, consider the weather and which places allow dogs. You should never leave your dog tied outside, and leaving a dog in a car for any length of time can be dangerous. If you cannot sit in the car comfortably for ten minutes with the windows slightly open, your dog cannot do it either.



Stores, restaurants, malls, etc. – Other than food establishments, it is up to the proprietor whether they will allow dogs in their establishment. Most malls don't allow dogs, unless they are service dogs. When considering taking your dog somewhere, think about his temperament. If your dog is nervous in crowded places, you shouldn't take your dog. Every outing should be successful. Some chain stores, including several large building supply warehouses, welcome well-behaved dogs. These are great opportunities to socialize your pet while shopping.

Public transportation like buses, subways, trains, etc – Each jurisdiction has its own rules. Before you travel, check that your dog will be welcome in the hotels, public transportation, etc., that you are counting on using.

# Aggression

Dogs can act aggressively for a number of reasons. When any dog snarls or growls and bares its teeth, regardless of breed, age, size and sex, this behaviour should be taken seriously. It can mean a variety of things from a health issue that is causing the dog pain to a perceived threat by the dog that could lead to a bite. Aggressive temperaments should be dealt with as soon as they appear by taking your dog to a behaviourist or a dog trainer.

The two most problematic forms of aggression are fear aggression and dominance aggression, and both are almost always due to improper socialization.

**Fear Aggression:** Dogs that tend to be nervous, insecure or frightened will react to almost any disturbance, such as a ringing telephone or a person approaching. When a fearful dog barks, growls, bares teeth, snaps or bites, this is the dog's way of saying that he is not comfortable with the situation. It's important that owners recognize the seriousness of this kind of aggression and work on desensitizing their dogs to those things that cause them anxiety.

**Dominance Aggression:** A dominant dog has assertive tendencies, but is usually friendly. A dominant aggressive dog may act aggressively towards a person or another dog because it has learned that intimidation through threats like barking, growling or even biting gets the reaction it is looking for. Owners of dominant aggressive dogs need to be the leaders of the pack, and be clear and consistent about what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable in their dog.





## Signs of Aggression

It's not always obvious when a dog intends to be aggressive, but warning signs to watch for are:

- Whining, barking, growling, snarling or biting.
- Standing extremely still.
- Glaring or staring directly at a person or other dog.
- Stiff legs; tail high and moving in a stiff wag.
- Ears pointing forwards.
- Hair on back raised.
- Straining against the leash to reach the other animal
- Chasing a person while barking
- Appearing very, very submissive
- Rolling onto back
- Slinking
- Licking lips



Don't put your dog in a position where the dog has to make the decision to react or not.

Know your dog. Know what kind of temperament it has. Know what makes your dog uncomfortable. It is up to you to control the situation.

### **If your dog is aggressive/reactive, you can:**

Take your dog to dog training classes. These classes will help provide some great socialization, and teach you how to teach your dog proper social skills. The teacher will be able to help you identify problem areas and help you with those. Take your dog before a problem develops, if possible.

Consult a behaviourist as soon as possible – the sooner you can start working on the aggression, the better.

Always have your dog on lead. This gives you the control you need to remove your dog immediately if you observe any signs of aggression. Your best tool is a good leash and collar.

If you know your dog could potentially be an issue, don't put it in a position where it could get into trouble.

# Canine Good Neighbour Program

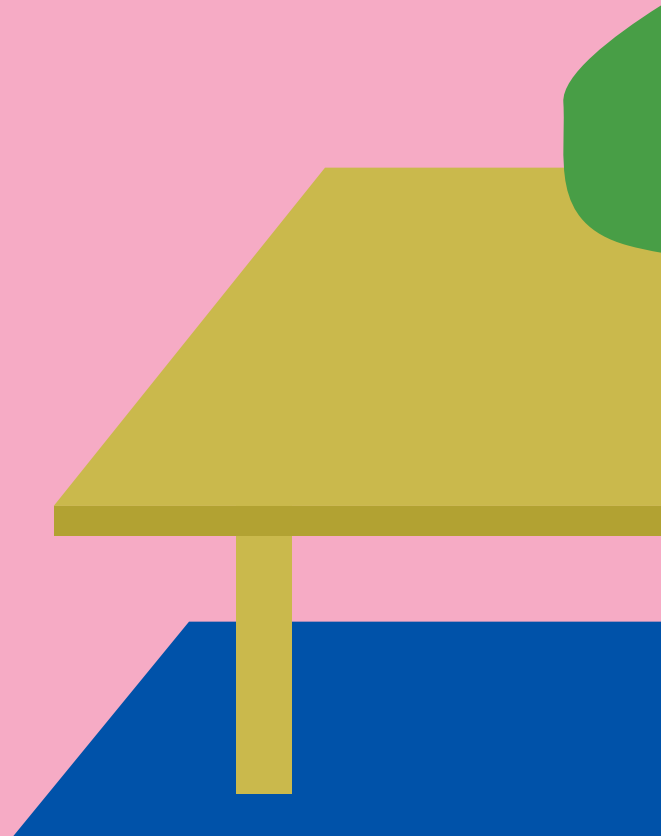
## Good Dogs Make Good Neighbours...

As one of our favourite companions, it's important that dogs are welcome and respected members of our communities. Canine Good Neighbours are well-behaved at home, in public places and in the presence of other dogs.

The Canadian Kennel Club's Canine Good Neighbour Program is a fun, rewarding and useful training program that encourages owners to have a better and richer relationship with their dogs. A non-competitive test allows the dog and owner to demonstrate their relationship through confidence and control. Dogs are evaluated on their ability to perform basic exercises as well as their ability to demonstrate good manners in everyday situations.

## Do you want your dog to be a Canine Good Neighbour?

For more information contact a dog club in your area, visit [www.ckc.ca](http://www.ckc.ca), email **information@ckc.ca** or call **Client Services (416)674-3699**.



# Resources

Canadian Kennel Club

Ontario SPCA

British Columbia SPCA

Good Pooch.com

City of Calgary

Halifax Regional Municipality

American Society for the  
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals





[www.ckc.ca](http://www.ckc.ca)

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