

# Backgrounder on Saanich's new Animals Bylaw



For the next few months, we will be in an education and transition period — giving both Saanich staff and CRD enforcement officers time to inform park visitors about the recent changes relating to dogs in parks. During this transition period, people will begin to see updated signage in Saanich parks, and periodic updates posted to the Saanich website and on social media channels.

We ask that people be patient and kind to others as we all learn and navigate the new rules. Eventually we want those who wish to run their dogs in leash-optional parks to be able to do so freely. We also want those who do not enjoy dogs, or those who have reactive dogs, to be able to visit on-leash parks safely and not encounter an off-leash dog.

A reminder that regardless of the park, all dogs must be 'under control' which has been defined as: in direct and continuous charge and within a clear line of sight of a person who has control over the dog and immediate return of the dog to the person upon recall or signal.

Here is a detailed outline of the new Animals Bylaw, which passed fourth and final reading on November 6, 2023.

- 'Leash' means a non-extendable fixed leash of not more than 2.4m (8') in length.
- In leash-optional parks, dogs are not required to be on leash, but people are welcome to use leashes. If dogs are off leash, they must remain under control which means "in direct and continuous charge and within a clear line of sight of a person who has control over the dog and immediate return of the dog to the person upon recall or signal."
- In all leash-optional areas, there is no requirement to be on "Leash", therefore, these areas would permit training leashes and retractable leashes.
- Dogs will continue to be required to be on leash within 10 metres of a playground and are now prohibited from entering the playground surface area surrounding the play equipment.
- 56 parks will remain as leash-optional as noted in Schedule D of the Animals Bylaw.
- 43 additional parks will allow leash-optional activity between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. as noted in Schedule C of the Animals bylaw. Outside of these hours, dogs will be required to be on-leash in those parks.
- Dogs are now required to be on-leash at all times in all parks that are zoned as P5 conservation areas and P4N natural parks, unless otherwise posted.
- Dogs will be required to be on-leash at PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park) except in select areas as shown in Schedule F in the Animals Bylaw (Glendenning trail to the summit at PKOLS and the Glendenning, Whittaker, Maddock trail loop). Select areas of fencing to protect natural areas will be installed as funding and staff resources allow.
- Dogs are required to be on-leash in Cuthbert Holmes Park except for the berm along the highway as indicated in Schedule E of the Animals Bylaw.
- All beaches outside of the Victoria Migratory Bird Sanctuary will remain leash-optional with the same seasonal restrictions that currently exist:
  - Dogs are prohibited during the months of May through August at:
    - Cordova Bay Beach between Walema Avenue right-of-way to Cordova Bay Park EXCEPT before 9:00 a.m.

- Whitehead Park
  - PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park) beach
- Dogs will continue to be required to be on-leash at Cedar Hill Park, but will no longer be allowed in the active golf course areas as shown in Schedule I of the Animals Bylaw.
- Dogs will still be prohibited from entering any artificial turf fields, but this rule has been extended to all other hard surface courts including sports, lacrosse, tennis, pickleball, skateboard, hockey, and basketball courts.
- Dogs will be required to be on-leash in all of Saanich's community gardens.
- When attending a public space, including parks, with a domestic animal other than a dog, a person must keep the animal on-leash and under control.