

You spoke,
we listened

Volunteers
making a difference

GUIDE
DOGS



Covid-19 Boarder Information

Essential Dog Care Handbook





Essential Dog Care

Contents

Welcome	3
Preparations to make prior to boarding	4
Home and garden security	5
Preparing family members and friends	7
Feeding	7
Spending (relief)	9
Grooming	12
Environment enrichment	14
Dog health	17
Dealing with an emergency	18
What is an emergency?	19
Taking the dog to the vet	20
Reporting incidents and accidents	21



Essential Dog Care

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to emergency board one of our dogs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are truly grateful for your support at this time. We hope you will gain genuine pleasure from the experience this brings to you and your family. Your role as an emergency boarder provides critical support to mobility services staff in meeting the care and welfare needs of our dogs at this time. This will support Guide Dogs going forward in achieving our goal to enable increasing numbers of blind and partially sighted people to travel independently once this crisis is over.

Guide Dogs is committed to supporting you fully during this time.

All our dogs go on to fulfil unique roles –either to enrich the life of a future blind or partially sighted owner or to become breeding stock. Our success comes from years of experience and ensuring consistency in everything we do. Your role as an emergency boarder and how you care for our dogs will be a vital component in our continued success. From a dog-care perspective, the most valuable service our boarders provide to Guide Dogs is a structured, calm and caring environment for our dogs.

We will provide you with all the support you need when placing a dog with you. All we ask from you is that all the training and advice provided is followed.

This handbook provides information and techniques on how to care for the dog that you board.

It is important to remember that all dogs are individuals and that if you have any questions or concerns, you must discuss them with the dog's handler. Problems can often be resolved quickly the sooner they are highlighted and we are here to help you every step of the way.



Essential Dog Care

Preparations to make prior to boarding

As part of planning to welcome one of our dogs into your home, it is essential that you begin to make some initial preparations and checks before the dog arrives. This will be discussed with you in detail as part of your interview and assessment process, and will be checked before a dog is placed with you to ensure that all the necessary preparations are in place.

The following notes are provided to assist you with ensuring that all the necessary checks and actions have been considered. As always, if you have any queries or concerns, please discuss this with your dog's named handler.

Bedding area – all dogs require a quiet, calm area to sleep in. It should be draft-free but adequately ventilated and the dog should also have access to fresh water at all times. A kitchen or hallway can be ideal. Guide Dogs stock are not allowed to sleep in the bedroom as this may not be what a service user would want. Equally we do not recommend allowing the dog to sleep in the lounge areas if avoidable, as most dogs will quickly learn to sleep on the settee in preference to their own bed area. This will be discussed during your home visit and again when the dog is placed with you.

Please ensure that any blankets/bedding used is in good condition. If bedding is torn this may encourage the dog to further destroy, chew or eat it. Please also discourage this behaviour if you observe it.

Relief area – an area that you are happy for the dog to relieve itself (spend) in, and that we deem suitable for this purpose, needs to be identified within your garden. A small area of concrete or paving allows for a spending area which can easily be cleaned and disinfected, and the majority of our dogs will spend on this surface. Your own garden design and composition as well as the dog's current and future status will also be considered when advising you on a suitable area. This will be discussed further during your home visit.

Disposal facilities – all dog waste will need to be disposed of correctly. Dog waste can be bagged up and put out with the general rubbish. If using this method of disposal please 'double bag' any waste. It can also be disposed of directly into the sewage outlet system. Dog loos are not generally recommended as these do not drain properly in the majority of soils. Concrete relief areas should be hosed off and suitably disinfected on a weekly basis. Equipment for picking up dog waste e.g. a shovel or trowel will also require regular cleaning.



Essential Dog Care

Home and garden security

It is important that your home and garden are safe places for a dog to have access to. All dogs require adequate supervision when in the house or garden, as they will explore a new environment thoroughly. The following information is provided to ensure that there are no unidentified risks to the dog when it comes into your home. Please also bear in mind that the same risks need to be considered when visiting friends or relatives.

Outside the home

The following garden features need to be considered if they are present in your garden. If you require further advice, please speak to the dog's handler or boarder contact.

Fences and walls – check these to ensure that fencing is secure and that there are no holes or damaged sections which will allow the dog to escape. Dogs can often squeeze through/under gaps in fences which do not appear big enough to accommodate a Labrador-sized body! Dogs can also get stuck in narrow gaps which could injure or panic the dog.

Gates – check that garden gates close fully and cannot be opened by an inquisitive dog. Fitting a bolt and/or return spring on all gates is recommended. Gates must be sufficiently high enough to prevent the dog jumping over, and low enough to prevent the dog from squeezing underneath.

Ponds and streams – ensure that the dog does not have access to any water features.

Garden chemicals, treatments and pest control - check that any products used in the garden are pet-safe and that these are stored correctly. Ensure that the dog does not have access to the area in which they are stored.

Slug pellets and rodent poison are both extremely dangerous to dogs; ensure that these are not used in areas your dog has access to. Remember that your own garden may be fully dog-proof but if you are visiting a friend's house, please check that their garden is dog-friendly too.

Certain garden plants and bulbs are poisonous to dogs. The effects on a dog can range from mild sickness to more extreme allergic reactions. Ensure that dogs are supervised in gardens at all times and discourage any digging of flower beds or chewing on garden foliage to minimise this risk further. If you become suspicious at any time that the dog may have consumed either of these items, please contact the vet immediately for advice.



Essential Dog Care

Inside the home

External doors – ensure that there is no risk of the dog running outside when you answer the door. As part of your training, you will be shown how to control your dog when greeting visitors and the dog's handler will agree a procedure with you about how best to manage this situation in your own home. This may include putting the dog on a lead or into another room when you answer the door.

Floors – check that floors are not damaged in any way which could cause an injury to the dog. Some dogs find laminate flooring slippery to walk on. If rugs are placed on laminate or tiled floors consider fitting an anti-slip rug mesh underneath.

Medicines and cleaning products - keep all tablets, medicines and household cleaning products out of reach of the dog.

Food and bins – dogs are natural scavengers and will seek out any item of food (and sometimes non-food) to eat. Bins throughout the areas of the house to which the dog has access should have suitable secure lids fitted to them, be lifted up onto a higher surface or removed. Ensure that you have identified a safe and secure storage area for the dog's own food supplies which is inaccessible to them.

Please do not to leave cups and plates on low tables or the floor where the dog can help itself or leave food unattended on worktops.

Remove possible chew objects – Chewing is normal dog behaviour and is an activity enjoyed by all dogs. It is an activity which a dog can also use as a known stress reliever which is why dogs who are unsettled or anxious will often chew if they are left. Dogs do not always recognise which objects they can, and cannot, chew and to a dog all items are possible chew objects. Of particular interest are items which are heavily impregnated with the scent of the handler e.g. shoes, handbags, toys, books, tea towels etc. Prior to accepting a new dog into your home, make sure that you have removed any accessible potential chew items from the floor and low surfaces.

Please be mindful of the need for appropriate supervision of our dogs at all times to prevent inappropriate chewing behaviour. Guide Dogs public liability insurance does not cover general property damage claims caused by the dog at the boarder's property and Guide Dogs can only consider making payments from charitable funds in special circumstances, for example where it is determined that better management or control of the puppy or dog could not have prevented damage occurring.



Essential Dog Care

Preparing family members and friends

All family members need to understand the importance of social behaviour rules before the dog arrives. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all parties, they should also understand that the dog must be supervised at all times when in the same room as young children.

Additionally, we request that the dog is not left during the first 48 hours and that where possible during this time visitors are kept to an absolute minimum.

For further information please refer to the section 'The first 48 hours' in the Essential Dog Handling handbook.

The following sections provide general information on how to care and look after the dogs you board. All of this information will be covered during your training. Specific information for the dog you are boarding is contained in the dog information form which will be given to you when the dog is placed. Additionally, Guide Dogs provide ongoing support for all boarders. If you have any questions or concerns about the care of the dog you are boarding, please speak to the dog's handler.

Feeding

Our dogs are fed on premium 'complete' diets, which are designed to meet all their nutritional requirements as it is essential that our dogs are healthy and alert if they are to be relied upon as guides for blind and partially sighted people.

Overfeeding a dog can cause short-term dietary upset and in the longer term causes obesity. Both can lead to more serious health implications for the dog in question. Guide Dogs take the issue of obesity very seriously. Please ensure that you feed and exercise the dog as you have been advised.

The Dog may come with a small supply of food, however Guide Dogs will supply you with the relevant information on how to order more food for the dog in your care and will also provide clear instructions about feeding on the dog information form. Please adhere to these instructions as a change of feeding pattern may result in problems with the dog's health or spending routine. This in turn can affect the dog's work and training.



Essential Dog Care

Titbits

Please do not allow Guide Dogs stock to scavenge, beg for food from people or to be fed titbits or food directly from your plate. This encourages scavenging behaviour which can be difficult for the guide dog owner to manage in the home and, more seriously, causes distraction whilst working as the dog begins to target food sources outside the home. This can be very dangerous for the guide dog owner as the dog's ability to concentrate can be severely affected if it is looking for food. Feeding treats and titbits can also lead to obesity. Please report all incidents of scavenging behaviour to the dog's handler and if necessary, put the dog in another room when you are having a meal.

Never give a dog fresh or cooked bones as these can splinter or cause health problems. The dog's handler will advise on suitable toys and chews which can be used as part of the dog's environment enrichment activities, but you should always check before giving the dog anything other than their normal food.

Ordering dog food

You will be advised of the procedure for ordering dog food by your local team. Please ensure that you do not run out of food by allowing sufficient time for the order to be placed and delivered. We recommend a minimum of 10 working days. The food is paid for by Guide Dogs and you are not required to pay for any food yourself. If you know you will run out of food before the new order has arrived, please speak to the dog's handler.

Feeding procedures

All of our dogs are fed using a set obedience routine at feeding time. This routine is used to ensure the safety of the dog and handler, to develop self-control in the dog around feeding activities and to develop the dog's recall by making a positive association between the whistle and food. Please ensure that you follow the procedures below at every meal time:

- use the commands 'sit' and 'wait'
- when the dog is sitting and waiting, place the bowl in front of the dog
- give three short blasts on the whistle and allow the dog to eat
- once the dog has finished and moved away from the bowl, pick the bowl up, even if the dog has not finished all the food, discard any left overs, and wash the bowl

If you have a pet dog, please feed it separately to the dog you are boarding to avoid any potential conflict.

Please do not touch the dog whilst it is eating. However, please observe the dog and report any unusual behaviour. These may include (but are not limited to) leaving food, eating more slowly than normal or showing disinterest in their food.

To prevent the possibility of serious health conditions developing such as gastric torsion/ gastric dilation, it is essential not to exercise the dog one hour prior to, or after feeding. Fresh water should be available for the dog at all times.



Essential Dog Care

Spending (relief)

Establishing a spending routine for a dog when it is in a new home is one of the most important tasks during the first few days. The dog needs to know where it can spend, and it needs to feel comfortable using that area. If a spending routine is not established, then it is likely that the dog will begin to relieve itself on walks. This can become habit-forming, making it more difficult to get the dog used to using the identified allocated spending area at home. It can also affect the dog's ability to learn during training sessions, as its concentration is overshadowed by its need to relieve itself. The member of staff responsible for the dog you are boarding will support you in developing this all-important routine.

By the end of guide dog training, it is our aim that all working guide dogs are clean in the house as well as when working in harness and that the dog has developed a predictable and achievable spending routine. All dogs should spend to the specific vocal prompt "busy-busy" on the surface identified. We teach our dogs to spend when prompted to help establish appropriate spending routines, therefore ensuring that spending does not occur in social environments or when a dog is working.

Throughout the dog's training from puppy walks onwards, it is crucial we try to ensure that our dogs' spending routines are in line with this ultimate goal and you will play an important role in achieving this goal.

Spending routine

The dog information form provides details of the anticipated spending routine for the dog you are boarding. The dog's handler will support and advise you further where required. In general, the dog should be given the opportunity to spend at the following times:

- first thing in the morning
- immediately after meals
- before and after exercise
- when necessary throughout the day (at 2 hour intervals)
- last thing at night

In a new environment, it is quite common for a dog not to relieve itself for some time until it is settled. It is also possible that an occasional accident may occur, especially when the dog is still settling into a new environment, home and spending area. Please report any incidents of spending in the home to the dog's handler immediately.

If the dog spends within the house, the area should be cleaned thoroughly to prevent further scent marking. Using a biological washing powder or specific cleaning product for pet accidents is more effective than using a disinfectant as these products will remove the odour and help to prevent the dog from returning to that area again.



Essential Dog Care

If you observe the dog spending in the home, quickly encourage the dog outside to the allocated spending area. Whether or not you witness the dog spending in the home, you must never reprimand the dog, as it will not be able to associate your words with a past action. Please let the dog's handler know of any incident of spending in the home.

The “busy-busy” prompt

The words “busy-busy” are used by all volunteers, staff and guide dog owners to encourage our dogs to spend. The consistent use of this prompt by all handlers ensures that there is no confusion or concern for the dog as well as improving the dog's understanding.

The tone in which this prompt is used is generally relaxed and positive. The two syllables in each word ensure that the sound is longer than usual obedience commands and is therefore perceived as pleasant. It is important to remember that the same command is used to encourage both urination and defecation.

Patience and timing are everything in achieving a relaxed dog that responds to the ‘busy’ command. It is very important to keep yourself relaxed when asking the dog to spend, as a dog can easily pick up upon your impatience and be too stressed to spend.

Timing your command to encourage the dog to spend is often easier said than done. When you release the dog into the spending area you can tell it to ‘busy-busy’. However do not overuse this word, as repeatedly using the command when the dog is not ready to spend will break down the association between the word and the action required. Rather watch the dog as it sniffs around and if it starts to circle then gently use the command ‘busy-busy’, as you are now fairly sure the dog is about to spend. By doing this you will reinforce the dog's association with the command and thereby help us with its training.

If your dog has not spent after five minutes, then bring the dog back inside and try again later.

Spending on different surfaces and/or on a lead

You will be advised which surface the dog you are boarding should spend on. It is imperative that you keep to this surface at all times to ensure that the dog's spending behaviour is consistent.

If you are asked to keep the dog on a lead to spend, ensure that the lead is as long as possible to give the dog room to turn around. However, do not allow excessive sniffing, scavenging or pulling on the lead, as this may undermine your control.



Essential Dog Care

Factors which may affect spending

There are many factors which may impact on a dog's spending routine. If the dog is unwilling to spend in the designated area, or if there are any changes to the dog's spending pattern, please inform the dog's handler who will advise you further. Some common reasons which may affect the dog's spending routine include:

- distraction – the presence of other dogs, food, children etc. can affect the dog's willingness to spend
- excitability and anticipation of leaving home for a walk or free run
- lack of appropriate reinforcement - praise for a successful spend
- inconsistency in handling, use of commands and routines – be consistent
- handler stress and anxiety – try not to show any urgency or frustration in your voice as this passes on to the dog and reduces the likelihood of success
- dog's health – if the dog is sick or on certain medications the spending routine may be affected

Hygiene and safety

Please adhere to the following hygiene measures when caring for the dog you are boarding:

- wash your hands with an antibacterial soap after any contact with the dog and after clearing and disposing of faecal matter. Advise others who have contact with the dog to do the same
- always 'pick up' after your dog spends. Faecal matter should be bagged, and the bag tied and placed in a suitable waste receptacle
- ensure that any instruments that you use to clean away faecal matter are cleaned after use and with an appropriate pet-safe disinfectant. These are available from your local pet store
- the spending area must be cleaned with an appropriate pet-safe disinfectant on a weekly basis. Please ensure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions on use to avoid any potential reaction from the dog being exposed to the product
- only safe and appropriate environments must be used for the purposes of spending. In particular, if you have been asked to leash relief the dog you are boarding in the gutter, please be aware of the dangers presented by traffic

Problems with spending behaviours and routines must be highlighted to the dog's handler as soon as possible.



Essential Dog Care

Grooming

Grooming is an excellent way of getting to know the dog you are boarding and should be enjoyable for you both. It is also vital to maintain the dog's comfort and hygiene and ensures that any health problems can be detected and treated promptly. Finally, it helps maintain the positive relationship Guide Dogs has with the public by ensuring that our dogs are happy and healthy and are comfortable with being handled and examined by others e.g. the vet.

Grooming is an ideal exercise to help build the bond between you and the dog, but the time spent on the exercise should be built up slowly so the dog has time to get used to you, and to settle in your home.

It is important to remember that whilst this should be a pleasant procedure for the dog you are boarding, the dog should also be under control at all times.

Please ensure that the dog follows your commands e.g. sit, stand, turn around etc. Dogs should also be discouraged from picking up any grooming equipment.

Guide Dogs will provide you with all the necessary equipment for grooming, and request that you only use the equipment provided.

If whilst grooming the dog, you identify any health concerns such as runny eyes, dirty ears, wounds, lumps, bad breath etc. please notify the dog's handler. Similarly if at any time you feel the dog is unhappy being groomed, please stop the activity and inform the dog's handler of your concerns.

Finally always remember to wash your hands before and after grooming your dog.

The following section describes the usual process for grooming a dog. Some dogs require a slightly different grooming procedure. Please follow any specific grooming advice you are given.



Essential Dog Care

Grooming procedure

- using fingertips (not nails) rub/run your fingers through the coat, working from the tail to the dog's head, against the lay of the coat. This helps to loosen dead hair and dirt, stimulates hair follicles to promote growth of a healthy coat, stimulates the skin and keeps muscles supple. A Zoom Groom may be provided which has the same effect and can be used against the lay of the coat.
- next, use the bristle brush against the lay of the coat from the tail to the head, not forgetting to concentrate on the inside of the front / back legs as this loosens dead hair
- if the dog has long hair, comb from ears to tail, then concentrate on the chest, sides, tail and legs. The comb must be angled at approximately 25 degrees with the lie of the coat, being very careful not to dig the comb into the dog's skin
- extra care must be taken when working on the feathers and tail for longhaired breeds to ensure that all the knots are removed. Some dogs can be unsure of their tail and back end being worked on, so be sensitive to the dog's behaviour and give more vocal reassurance. Stop if the dog appears distressed
- brush from head to tail as this removes the loosened dead hair. Include the legs and underneath the dog
- if you have been provided with a chamois leather cloth, dampen the cloth and wipe over the back of the head and then along the body. This removes the final bits of loose hair and gives the coat a shine
- once the grooming is completed, the equipment should be cleaned by removing any hair and residue. Grooming equipment should also be washed regularly with a suitable pet-safe disinfectant
- please ensure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions on use to avoid any potential reaction caused by the dog being exposed to the product



Essential Dog Care

Environment enrichment

Research has indicated that boredom in an environment can lead to animals experiencing stress. Guide Dogs recognise that this increase in stress could be detrimental to our dogs' welfare, and impede their ability to learn. We understand that best practice within animal husbandry has identified that allowing and encouraging our dogs to display natural behaviours can reduce stress levels and ensure that our dogs are more able and willing to learn and work. This understanding also supports Guide Dog's adherence to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 by ensuring our dogs have:

"Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and standard working practices to allow appropriate human and dog interaction, thus enabling the dog to freely express behaviours outside of the working environment within the boundaries of the role of the guide dog". (Ref www.legislation.gov.uk/)

Any dog you board will benefit from variety and interaction with you, for however long the dog is in your care. This interaction will help stimulate the dog's mind and improve its mental agility. The dog's handler will be able to advise you on which environment enrichment is suitable for that individual dog. All dogs are different and the activities which are enjoyable, safe and appropriate will vary from dog to dog. It is quite possible that they may also change throughout the time you board the dog and we will provide direction as to when to try something new.

Many activities can only be undertaken with supervision, so please ensure that the dog is not left with certain toys or bones as they may be dangerous if the dog swallows or chews them. You will be given direction on what is safe to leave down for your dog whilst you are out.

Whilst toys and play are a very important opportunity for our dogs to display natural behaviours and relieve some stress, it must be remembered that the future role of the dog may be to work with a person who is blind or has a visual impairment. It is for this reason that there are some toys or games that are not acceptable for our dogs to use or play.

Toys need to be safe for larger dogs and not easy to destroy or swallow. For many dogs a good game involves completely destroying the toy, so it is best to avoid soft or rubber squeaky toys if the dog has a tendency to destroy them. The dog's handler will provide you with further advice regarding suitable toys for specific dogs.



Essential Dog Care

In particular we do not use balls with our dogs as this can exacerbate their natural chase instinct, making it very difficult for the dog to concentrate whilst, for instance, walking through a park.

Sticks should never be thrown for dogs as they can cause serious injury to the mouth and throat. They can also damage the dog's mouth, gums and digestive tract if a splinter becomes lodged in the dog's mouth or gut.

The dog must learn to differentiate between its own toys and the belongings of others, so keep your own possessions such as shoes, gloves, socks on the radiator etc. and children's toys out of the way as much as possible. If the dog tries to pick up or chew items that do not belong to him, quietly remove them from him and exchange for a dog toy.

Please ensure that any children's toys are washed well before allowing the child to play with them if the dog does pick them up.

We aspire for our dogs to be happy to give up a toy easily when asked. However all dogs are individuals and will respond and behave differently. To help a dog to be more accepting about giving toys up, play with the dog on your terms and stop the game whenever you wish. If the dog appears reluctant to give up a toy, try swapping it for something else of equal value. Children should be supervised at all times in any interactions with the dog. For further information please refer to the Essential Dog Handling handbook.

The dog's handler will give you more details on how to achieve the best responses from the individual dog you are boarding, but if you come across any problems or have any concerns it is very important that these are reported.

The table on the next page gives some generic ideas for environment enrichment activities that you could try with your dog. It is not an exhaustive list and simply gives some pointers for the types of activities we might suggest for the dog you are boarding. You will be given direction on what activities the dog you are boarding might enjoy and also when and how to try them.

Please ensure that you follow the advice of the dog's handler when deciding which environmental activities to enjoy with the individual dog. This will ensure that your, and the dog's, wellbeing are met and the dog's training requirements are not compromised.



Essential Dog Care

Category of activity	Activity objective
Mental exercise	<p>Interactive Toys - Provide the dog with interactive toys to promote self-discovery and problem solving. Examples: Kongs (various designs) - need to be the right size for the dog; Wubbas; food release toys</p>
Physical exercise	<p>Use of Tug Games - Opportunity to release physical energy and interact with handler Examples: Riggers, Rubber pull toys</p> <p>Free Run (1:1) - Opportunity to release physical energy, meet other dogs and provide a variety of environments for the dog to discover and enjoy</p>
Relaxation	<p>Gnawing - An exercise for all dogs, including those who have illustrated inappropriate chewing behaviour and require an alternative and appropriate outlet Examples: Nylabones (various designs) - need to be the right size for the dog; raw hide chews – cigar shaped</p> <p>Touch Exercise - To relax the dog and promote a positive association with physical contact.</p> <p>Chill out area - Provide suitable environment for the dog to feel relaxed/secure/comfortable.</p> <p>Playing of classical music/spoken word /easy listening - Within home/car environment.</p>
Social interaction	<p>Human Companionship - To provide opportunity for social interaction with a person/people.</p> <p>Individual Play session - Provide opportunity for 1:1 interactive / quality time Examples: Hide and seek, tug.</p> <p>Change of Environment - Provide a temporary change of environment to encourage a positive outcome.</p>



Essential Dog Care

Dog health

Dogs like people can develop health conditions, become injured or unwell and it is not always easy to recognise the symptoms. The following list provides some common signs which may indicate an underlying health problem or that the dog is unwell;

Common indicators that a dog may be unwell.

- stiffness when getting up or reluctance to climb up or down stairs/jump in or out of a car
- coughing, frequent panting, reduced tolerance of exercise
- general lethargy or tiredness
- excessive drinking or changes to urination
- appetite changes, sudden weight loss or gain, loss of body condition
- change in spending habits-e.g. diarrhoea, constipation or excessive straining when trying to pass faeces
- dry or cloudy eyes
- discharge from eye or nose
- smelly breath or excessive drooling
- dry, itchy skin, lumps, sores or head shaking
- vomiting
- any other behaviour which is not typical for the individual dog

If the dog is exhibiting any of the above indicators please refer to the table in the section 'what is an emergency' to identify whether veterinary attention is required.

Local veterinary practice details

You will be advised of the details of the veterinary practice which Guide Dogs require you to use for any veterinary treatment needed for the dog you are boarding. The assigned veterinary practice will be known to us and familiar with Guide Dogs protocols and procedures, enabling a high standard of care for our dogs. Please note that this may not be the veterinary practice which you use for your own pets. Details of your assigned veterinary practice are recorded on the dog information form.



Essential Dog Care

Dealing with an emergency

It is unlikely that you will be required to take the dog to the vet for any routine treatment as these visits are usually undertaken by staff during working hours. You may however be required to take the dog to the vet because it is injured or has become unwell.

In the event that the dog becomes seriously injured or unwell please:

- remember that frightened, injured dogs are more likely to bite
- don't take any risks with your own safety
- remain calm
- check it is safe to approach the dog before doing so
- approach the dog slowly but confidently whilst talking to them
- if the dog tries to bite, avoid moving it without assistance unless absolutely necessary

Providing first aid

If the dog is badly injured or very unwell, it may be necessary to provide first aid to the dog before veterinary treatment is available.

Always seek veterinary advice following any situation that may put the dog's health or welfare at immediate risk so that the veterinary surgeon may advise you appropriately.

The contact details for your assigned veterinary practice are recorded on the dog information form.

What is an emergency?

The following table identifies some examples of health situations which can occur with dogs. We hope that you will never come across any of the more serious conditions. The table is included to help you decide which action you should take and how quickly. Please also remember to contact Guide Dogs as soon as possible to inform us of the situation.



Essential Dog Care

Situation	Action required
Unconsciousness Collapse and difficulty breathing Severe bleeding Burns Ingestion of potential toxic/poisonous substances or medication Snake bites Heat stroke Bloating abdomen Choking Road Traffic Accident	Veterinary assistance required immediately
Fractures Severe sudden lameness Bleeding Gaping wounds Inability to pass urine Seizures Severe vomiting and diarrhoea Insect stings around mouth/neck causing swelling	Veterinary assistance required promptly
Insect stings (excluding where swelling occurs around mouth/neck) Minor wounds Abscesses Slight lameness Blood in urine Minor vomiting and diarrhoea	Minor emergencies, seek veterinary advice



Essential Dog Care

Taking the dog to the vet

Please seek further advice from the dog's handler or the out-of-hour's duty manager before taking the dog to the vet except in the event of a genuine emergency.

When visiting the veterinary practice, please take the dog information form with you as this document holds all the relevant information which may be required by the veterinary surgeon including how to seek authorisation from Guide Dogs before proceeding with non-routine treatments.

During the visit

The veterinary surgeon is required to contact Guide Dogs for authorisation before undertaking any non-routine procedures such as laboratory tests, general anaesthetic, treating of wounds or illness etc. The only exception to this is in an emergency, when emergency treatment should be administered and then Guide Dogs contacted at the first opportunity.

Payment for veterinary treatment

Guide Dogs have a direct invoicing process whereby the veterinary practices registered with us send invoices directly to us for payment.

If the veterinary surgeon has any queries relating to payment, please refer them to the guide dog training school or mobility team.

If you are in a situation where you are required to seek emergency treatment and are asked for payment at the time of the consultation, please contact the out-of-hours emergency number **0345 143 0217** and speak to a member of staff who will advise you further.



Essential Dog Care

Reporting incidents and accidents

If the dog is involved in an incident that causes an injury to you, itself, or any other person or animal, (including damage or injury to any member of the public's property or animal) it must be reported to the dog's handler or another member of Guide Dogs staff as soon as possible. Failure to do this may invalidate our insurance.

If the dog is involved in an accident please follow these instructions;

Do not admit to the Third Party that the accident was your (or the dog's) fault.

Advise the Third Party that Guide Dogs will report the incident to the Association's insurers.

Take as much information from the other party as possible, including their name, address, contact telephone number and any other information that is relevant. This allows Guide Dogs to follow up the incident with the Third Party.

Record details of any witnesses to the accident and pass them onto your local site, as soon as possible, so that a member of staff may complete a Guide Dogs Incident Investigation Form.

If the Third Party advises you that they intend to make a claim, ask them to put their intention in writing to the address below and advise Guide Dogs that this is their intention:

The Insurance Department

Guide Dogs
Central office
Hillfields
Burghfield Common
Reading RG7 3YG

Tel: **0118 983 5555**

Email: **InsuranceGeneral@guidedogs.org.uk**

In the event that you receive any correspondence from a third party relating to the incident, please forward the correspondence unanswered and without delay to the insurance department as outlined above.

You spoke,
we listened

Volunteers
making a difference



T: 0118 9835555

E: guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk

W: www.guidedogs.org.uk

Guide Dogs is a working name of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Registered Office: Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3YG. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (291646) and a charity registered in England and Wales (209617) and Scotland (SC038979). 7923 03/18