

Relieving

Goal Behavior – by the time the puppy returns to GDB for Breeder Evaluation or Training

The puppy readily leash-relieves on cement or other hard surface when offered regularly scheduled opportunities and in response to the “Do Your Business” (DYB) cue. The puppy is prompt in its response to the cue, relieving in less than three minutes. The puppy will wait for an offered relieving opportunity and will not indiscriminately relieve on walks, outings or other socialization experiences. The puppy is comfortable with the handler physically close during relieving and is relieved in front of the raiser. The puppy does not relieve in the house, demonstrating self-control over urinating and defecating (waits for offered relieving). Although waiting for offered relieving times is ideal, indicating a necessity to relieve when in the home is preferable to having accidents. The puppy is able to walk briskly for 1 mile without the need to relieve.

Handling Tips

- The handler may need to repeat the “Do Your Business” cue to get the puppy back on track if at any time the pup becomes distracted or loses interest in the activity of relieving.
- Sniffing is a preliminary behavior to relieving. Handlers should be careful to watch for scavenging in young puppies, however, it is permissible for the puppy to sniff the ground in preparation to relieve.
- Preventing the pup from sniffing may accidentally prevent the puppy from relieving.

Teaching the Puppy Not to Relieve Indiscriminately On Leash

As well as learning to relieve on command, the puppy also needs to learn to not relieve indiscriminately.

- Ideally the puppy should only be relieved at home, on-leash, in the same spot, according to its regular biological schedule.
- The process of teaching the puppy this concept starts by relieving the puppy only in the designated relieving spot and taking note of the puppy’s biological schedule.
- The puppy should always be fully relieved before setting out for a walk or socialization event. The raiser should never take a “loaded” puppy away from home! If the puppy does not relieve when given the opportunity offered, the walk/outing must be delayed until the pup has relieved or the puppy must stay home.
- Neighborhood walks should never be used as a relieving opportunity. Allowing a puppy to relieve on a walk (even if the jacket is removed)

creates a negative pattern of relieving at will. This leads to confusion and relieving in harness.

Accidents on Walks

It is vital that a GDB puppy learn to relieve on cue when offered an opportunity and also learn that it is not appropriate to relieve in the absence of the cue. An accident is defined as anytime a puppy makes an unplanned attempt to relieve without the DYB cue, regardless of whether the puppy is in a building/store or outside. This applies whether the puppy is in or out of jacket.

- The puppy should always be relieved at home prior to any walks or socialization outings. The puppy should be left at home if it refuses to relieve when given the opportunity in its regular relieving spot.
- Raisers should be aware of how an individual puppy indicates the desire to relieve. Some puppies slow down, balk or pull to the side.
- If the puppy indicates the desire to relieve on a walk or outing, the handler should verbally interrupt the pup and place it quickly into a sit for several minutes. This attempts to interrupt the urge to relieve and changes the puppy's focus. As the handler resumes the walk (heading for home or the car) it can often be helpful to focus on rewarding for loose leash walking, or other desirable behaviors, to help redirect the puppy's attention from relieving.
- Raisers should never follow up an indication from the puppy of a need to relieve by immediately moving several feet and providing an opportunity for the pup to relieve on cue.
- The puppy should be taken home, if possible, to complete relieving with the DYB cue in its regular relieving spot. Most puppies can hold themselves for the car ride home or at least to another designated relieving area. The time between the puppy indicating a desire to relieve, and being given the opportunity, will teach it that it must sometimes hold itself. Once home, the puppy should be praised and played with when it relieves on cue in the designated relieving area.
- If the puppy is unstoppable in a relieving accident, the handler should ignore the pup while it completes relieving and while cleaning up the accident. The handler should determine to be more vigilant in observing the puppy for warning signals in the future.
- Many puppies need to have two bowel movements before they are truly empty; should the puppy be taken on an outing before it is empty it may produce the second stool when it becomes stimulated. These puppies need to be praised for the first bowel movement then immediately cast out again and prompted to finish relieving. If the raiser knows the pup has not completed relieving it should not go on the outing.