



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

## Creating a Safe Environment for a GDB Puppy

A puppy's natural instinct to explore can place it in dangerous situations. Some accidents are unavoidable; however careful supervision can go a long way. If an emergency occurs, a raiser should seek vet attention first and then inform the leader of the situation. The leader will then contact the area CFR.

### Ingestion of Foreign Bodies

Foreign objects that are swallowed (such as toys, socks or rocks) can cause obstructions in the stomach or intestines that must be surgically removed. Raisers should consult with the leader and the CFR if the puppy tends to pick up, chew or swallow other than its food or approved toys.

### Poisoning

There are many things that are poisonous to dogs. Poisons can cause injury to internal organs that may result in serious illness, or even death. In the case of a possible poisoning, raiser should consult a veterinarian immediately. Different poisons require specific treatments, and many times the speed of the response will make a huge difference in outcome. After the puppy is stabilized, the veterinarian should contact a GDB veterinarian to determine what further treatment should be provided. It is vital that a home be proofed to ensure that a puppy does not get into anything that will harm it.

Common substances that can be poisonous to dogs if ingested:

- Antifreeze
- Chocolate
- Fertilizers
- Grapes
- Medications
- Peach pits
- Potato "eyes"
- Raisins
- Raw fish
- Raw onions
- Tomato plants
- Xylitol
- Houseplants - this list contains only the most common types of poisonous plants. If the puppy eats any type of plant, raiser should call veterinarian.
  - Japanese Yew
  - Mistletoe
  - Oleander bushes
  - Philodendrons
  - Poinsettias
  - Sago Palm

Here are some excellent additional references regarding poisons:

- [aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control](http://aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control)
- [petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/](http://petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/)

## **Being Hit By a Car**

Puppies should be kept on leash not only out in public, but wherever there are moving vehicles. Often it is the raiser's own car or the car of a friend on their own property that causes injury. Puppies hit by cars, even if they are not killed outright or severely injured, may have residual concern about cars and be unable to function as a guide dog.

## **Drowning**

Puppies should never be left unattended in an area with access to a swimming pool or near any open body of water. The puppy should be controlled with a long-line or leash when around dangerous settings. Pools, ponds etc. on the raisers' property must be fenced to keep the puppy out of the area when not directly supervised.

## **Interactions with Other Pets and Livestock**

Puppies should not be allowed to pester other dogs and cats in the home. Introductions should be slow and positive with the animals separated by barriers at first. Rough-housing with other pets could lead to injury and is to be discouraged. See the document "Dog to Dog Interaction" for more information. The puppy should be kept at a good distance from livestock and rewarded for staying calm. Over time, the pup may be allowed closer but should always be on leash around other animals. Horses and other livestock may inadvertently step on a puppy causing injury. Puppies may become over-stimulated by poultry and small animals, triggering prey drive. All exposures should be done carefully with food rewards to keep the puppy calm and under control.

## **Tips for Keeping a GDB Pup Safe**

- Guide Dog puppies must wear the GDB identification collar at all times.
- The puppy should always be on leash when in an unenclosed area, even in remote or rural areas. A long line or retractable leash should be used to exercise the puppy in unfenced or unsecured areas.
- Dog parks are counter-productive and dangerous and should be avoided.
- A leash should always be used when taking the puppy to the run, car or in any unfenced area.
- Gates and doors to outside exits should always be checked before letting the pup out.
- A chain with a snap bolt should be used to secure kennel gates and fence gates whenever possible. This extra step ensures that the enclosure is secure.
- Whenever possible, gates which are not regularly used and could lead to escape should be padlocked. Young children or visitors might not be as aware of the rules and may inadvertently let the puppy escape.
- Good latches which close securely should be provided and checked regularly.
- Extra precautions should be taken when friends, relatives and workers are visiting. The puppy should be kept on leash, crated or in kennel run if there is a lot of activity and the pup cannot be supervised.
- The pup should be trained to wait at doors, gates, and when exiting vehicles.
- Regular and frequent inspections of fence perimeters and runs should be undertaken. Holes or weak areas should be checked for and repaired immediately.

## **LOST PUPPY PROCEDURES**

There are few situations more frightening than losing a puppy. Incidents of lost puppies often occur when the raiser is traveling and staying with friends or relatives. Extra care should be taken when the puppy is away from its home area.

### **Steps to follow when a guide dog puppy is lost**

Immediately call Guide Dogs for the Blind at (800) 295-4050. If calling after business hours, follow the voice prompts to reach the kennel staff. If someone has found the puppy, chances are they will call the (800) phone number located on the puppy's identification tag.

- Immediately call the club leader
- Start searching immediately
- Recruit other club members to help search; get a detailed map of the area and organize search teams by area.
- Post on social media venues
- Place an advertisement in local paper.

- Put signs with photos on local telephone poles, in stores, at veterinary clinics, etc. and on vehicles in the neighborhood.
- Go to local animal shelter, rather than calling. The shelter receptionist may not be aware that the puppy is there.
- Be very accurate in giving any descriptions of the puppy (show photos if possible).
- When talking to people, stress that the lost dog is a Guide Dog for the Blind puppy.
- Drive around the neighborhood as often as possible.
- Check with neighborhood children. They may be aware of a new dog in the neighborhood.
- The puppy may be attracted to places where people or children gather, so check at schools or shopping centers.
- If the puppy is missing for longer than 24 hours, please contact GDB's Marketing Department at [marketing@guidedogs.com](mailto:marketing@guidedogs.com) to potentially collaborate on outreach to the media. Please do not reach out to the media on your own.