



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department

Ruff Notes – June 2021

Summer Socialization

Summer offers many opportunities to socialize puppies in a variety of settings as many of us take advantage of the nice weather. Spending more time outdoors and traveling offers wonderful opportunities to socialize puppies in new, exciting ways. This document provides guidelines and safety tips for summer adventures with a GDB puppy.

Hot Weather Reminders

- At home during warm weather, be sure the puppy has access to water to stay hydrated. Ice cubes served in the puppy's bowl, or floated in their water, may entice additional hydration and cooling. Relieving opportunities may need to be increased with additional water consumption.
- Time outings for early in the day, or later in the evening when it cools off as the sun goes down.
- Whenever possible pre-cool a hot vehicle before loading a puppy inside.
- Bring water, and a vessel for the puppy to drink out of, when you head out during warm weather.
- Check the pavement, if it is too hot to keep your flat palm on for 3 seconds, it is too hot for the puppy to walk on.
- Pre-plan opportunities for rest, shade, and/or cooling down indoors during your outing. If these arrangements can't be made, leave the puppy home or ask for a sitter.

Being able to recognize signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke is important. Look for signs of excessive panting, drooling, and/or bloodshot eyes. If you notice these signs, immediately seek ways to cool the puppy and find a way out of the heat. If the puppy shows signs of heat exhaustion, it may need emergency medical care. Should this occur please call your local vet/emergency clinic first then notify your club leader.

Outdoor, Recreational, and Water Activities

One of the most common ways for puppy raisers to take advantage of nice weather with the GDB puppy they are raising is an outdoor adventure. It is important to remember that the expectations of a GDB puppy are the same whether on a walk, hike, or a socialization outing. A puppy should walk on a loose leash on the raiser's left side. Raisers should seek out well-defined paths with good visibility, where there is space to pull off if necessary when passing other dogs. Dog to dog interactions should be avoided. Many pet dogs relieve indiscriminately on walks, and this happens more frequently in areas with a high volume of dog traffic. By keeping the GDB puppy in a "Let's Go" position and not allowing the puppy to sniff or wander, you are more likely to prevent relieving accidents in high traffic areas with enticing smells. At the beach, river, or lake GDB puppies are allowed to participate in supervised water activities including swimming or wading, as long as the puppy raiser is using a leash or a longline. Off-

leash swimming is not permitted. If a puppy shows no interest in water, this should be respected. A puppy should never be forced into water if they show signs of discomfort. It may be beneficial to introduce water in a kiddie pool, or swimming pool in your yard, and make the experience as fun and positive as possible. A life jacket should be used if taking the puppy on an approved watercraft, or if the GDB puppy is not a skilled swimmer.

When walking to swimming areas, remember to keep the puppy in a “Let’s go” position until you reach your destination. Bring a long line, and just prior to attaching it, offer the puppy an opportunity to relieve. Spending time outdoors also offers a great opportunity to practice recalls, general obedience and settling on tie-down.

Please take time to review the guidelines for loose leash walking, and water activities here.

- [Puppy Raising Manual: Watercraft Guidelines](#)
- [Puppy Raising Manual: Swimming and Wading for GDB Puppies](#)
- [Puppy Raising Manual: Loose Leash Walking](#)

Camping

Camping can be a fun way to socialize a GDB puppy. Preparing in advance ensures that it will be positive experience for both raiser and puppy. Prior to embarking on your trip, it is important to check in with your club leader to discuss if the camping trip is appropriate for the GDB puppy. Age, maturity, and temperament will be used to factor puppy readiness. It is a good idea when registering for a campsite, to notify them you will be traveling with a Guide Dog puppy in training. Some campsites may only allow service dogs and restrict pet dogs or puppies in training. If this is the case, you will need to make other arrangements. The puppy should be up to date on all vaccines and current on both heartworm and flea preventative prior to leaving. Make sure you pack for the puppy’s needs as well as your own. Use this list below to ensure you pack for all the puppy’s needs:

- Sufficient dog food and water for duration of the trip, plus a few days extra in case of emergency. (Plan to store securely to avoid attracting bears and other wildlife.)
- Clean bowls for feeding and watering the puppy.
- Towels to dry off the puppy.
- Extra tarp or blanket for the puppy to settle on, to reduce amount of dirt on puppy or in tent.
- Crate for keeping the puppy safe in a quiet space, and/or for sleeping in at night.
- Appropriate toys that are easy to clean upon your return home.
- A spare leash and tie down.
- Grooming supplies. These come in handy while checking for fleas, ticks, and foxtails.
- Basic First Aid supplies
- Information about the closest veterinary and emergency centers to your campsite.

Be prepared to spend some time working with the puppy to teach appropriate settling behavior in this new environment and remember the puppy should be crated, on leash, or tie down at all times during camping to ensure the safety of all. Keep an eye out for wild plants in the area that may be unsafe or poisonous if ingested including foxtails, mushrooms or other poisonous plants. Be aware of low plants and grasses that may hide ticks.

Traveling in an RV

Some raisers may have the opportunity to travel in an RV with a puppy. RV travel can be fun, but it is important to consider the safety of the puppy. Just like in the car, where the puppy rides while the vehicle is in motion is an important consideration. Puppies are safest when traveling in a crate or on a tie down, away from where they may be impacted by airbags. When at the campsite, it is important to take the same considerations you would with tent camping. Remember that when you are in an RV, house rules still apply. The puppy should be encouraged to maintain appropriate behavior regarding furniture and sleeping arrangements. Appropriate outlets for chewing should be provided.

Have fun and be safe!

Enjoy the long days, sunshine, and summer activities with the GDB puppy you are raising, and remember it is important to ensure that each activity is safe and productive for the puppy. Leave puppies home in a safe space or ask for a sitter if you are attending an activity where you cannot ensure the safety of the puppy or follow GDB guidelines.