

The Law: Chapter 117 Article II

The Town of Sudbury requires all dogs when outside the premises of the owner, be accompanied by a person who shall have the dog under control by holding it firmly on a leash no greater than six feet in length.

Common Misunderstandings

Why are dogs a problem for birds? They can fly.

Many birds, such as bobolink and killdeer, build nests, incubate eggs, and hatch chicks on the ground. Many waterfowl feed and breed along the shoreline. If these birds are disturbed, they leave their young unprotected from predation for extended periods. Stress to adults reduces their ability to forage and feed their young.

My dog comes when called. This does not apply.

The law is not applied based on individual situations. It is in place to protect public safety and ensure that wildlife and people alike can safely enjoy nature.

My dog is friendly and should be off-leash.

Your dog may be friendly, but not everyone, or every dog, appreciates an unfamiliar dog approaching them.

Help Make Our Trails Safe For All

Our conservation lands are home to many species that depend on these habitats for food, shelter, and raising their young. Even friendly and well-trained dogs can unintentionally disturb wildlife.

Leashing your dog helps protect sensitive habitats and ensures that wildlife can safely live and raise their young in these shared spaces.

Trail Etiquette to Protect Wildlife

- Keep dogs leashed and under control.
- Stay on marked trails to avoid disturbing habitat.
- Observe wildlife from a distance
- Keep noise levels low to reduce stress on wildlife.
- Pack out all trash and pet waste.
- Do not disturb nests, dens, or burrows.
- Avoid trampling vegetation or leaving the trail for shortcuts.
- Respect seasonal trail closures that protect breeding or migration.
- Leave natural objects where you find them — rocks, plants, and wood provide habitat.

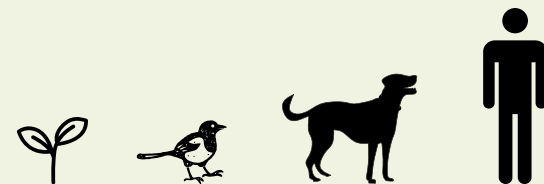


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Be a Leader Use Your Leash!

A simple leash makes a big difference.



IT'S THE LAW

Protect Wildlife

- **Wildlife see dogs as natural predators. Even a brief encounter can cause animals significant stress, interrupt feeding or breeding, and trigger panic responses that may lead to injury or death.**
- **Dog urine “marks” territory, which can make areas undesirable or uninhabitable for wildlife.**
- **Dogs can disturb nesting areas and damage sensitive wildlife habitat. Ground-nesting birds are especially vulnerable.**
- **Dogs may chase, injure, or kill wildlife.**
- **Dog traffic, digging, and waste can erode slopes and prevent young trees and ground-layer plants from growing, leaving bare soil where invasive plants can take hold, degrading habitat.**
- **Dog fur and paws can carry seeds, helping spread invasive plant species into natural areas.**
- **Dog waste can contaminate groundwater and nearby water bodies.**



Protect Your Dog

Letting your dog roam alone exposes them to a variety of hazards, including:

- **Transmission of diseases including canine distemper and rabies**
- **Increased risk of contracting tick-borne diseases including Lyme Disease, Anaplasmosis and others**
- **Running into sharp objects, hidden holes or struck by vehicle**
- **Developing skin irritation from nettles and burrs or having contact with poison ivy and transferring rash-causing oils to people**
- **Digestive illness or infection from contaminated water, hazardous waste, toxic plants or fungi**
- **Picking up parasites from plants, wildlife, other dogs, or animal waste**
- **Being attacked by wildlife, such as coyote**
- **Being harmed by other dogs or people**

Protect People

Using a leash keeps trails safe for everyone.

- **Reassures those who may be fearful, allergic, have health concerns or simply prefer space.**
- **Protects young children and reduces the risk of knocks, scratches, or bites.**
- **Reduces the risk of injury from jumping or sudden movements, particularly for seniors, individuals with mobility challenges and those who rely on service animals or assistive devices.**
- **Reduces the risk of bites. Even friendly dogs can react unpredictably in unfamiliar situations or when startled.**
- **Reduces the chance of collisions with cyclists, runners, or hikers.**
- **Allows owners to respond quickly in emergencies. A leash ensures a dog can be immediately guided away from hazards or crowded areas.**
- **Encourages dog owners to notice and properly pick up their dog's waste, protecting our drinking water.**

