

**REVISED STATEMENT OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR ON-LEASH  
DOG ACCESS TO THE MADISON PARK SYSTEM**

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Madison Board of Park Commissioners is the approving authority for policies governing the Madison Park system. This policy is intended to guide the Parks Division regarding access to Madison Parks for on-leash dogs.

This policy is intended to achieve the following:

- Provide access for Madison dog owners to the Madison Park system which balances the needs of other park users and management goals.
- Provide rules and restrictions to define responsible dog access to parks.
- Assure that the use of City parks by dog owners respects other park users.

**GUIDELINES FOR ALLOWING ON-LEASH DOG ACCESS TO MADISON PARKS**

1. In parks where dogs are allowed, the following rules apply:
  - Dogs must be under the immediate physical control of a person at all times.
  - Dogs must be on a leash that is no more than 6 feet long, non-retractable, and held by a person at all times.
  - Dogs must be licensed and must have an up-to-date rabies vaccination.
  - Dogs must have a dog park permit.
  - Dog handlers are required to pick up waste and have bags or scoops when in the park.
  - Dogs must not dig, chase or harm wildlife, damage park property, or interfere with other Park users.
2. In general, dogs are allowed in all Madison parks except for the following park classifications/areas/uses:
  - Conservation parks
  - Burial mounds
  - City of Madison Golf Courses (during the golf season)
  - Olbrich Botanical Gardens
  - Playgrounds and areas within 20 feet of a playground surface
  - Splash parks, fenced areas(s) surrounding a splash park, and areas within 20 feet of the splash park surface
  - Goodman Pool and Breese Stevens Field (except for special events where dogs are specifically invited)
  - Programmed sports fields and facilities that are enclosed or substantially enclosed by a fence, whether in use or not

- Programmed, non-fenced sports fields such as soccer, ultimate fields or softball/baseball diamonds while they are in use for programmed activities
  - Inside of shelters or other buildings
  - Groomed cross-country ski trails
  - In the water or on the beach at designated beach locations
  - Park special events except where the sponsor has requested to allow dogs, with the Park Superintendent's approval
3. City Park Rangers may issue bans under the Parks Behavioral Policy to dog owners who repeatedly violate this policy. The Parks Superintendent can issue a temporary ban to make a park dog-free for up to 90 days.

Policy Implementation:

- Staff will work with the City Attorney's office to revise MGO 8.19 in accordance with the approved policy.
- Park signage to communicate where dogs are not permitted will be shared with the Board of Park Commissioners.
- Information regarding the policy will be distributed to inform purchasers of dog licenses and dog park permits regarding the expectations of dog owners in parks.