Dog Walking
Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Assists busy pet owners by ensuring their dogs are walked even during work hours. | Encourages socialization with other dogs, promoting positive behavioral development. | Ensures pets receive fresh air and outdoor exploration, supporting overall well-being. | Helps prevent obesity-related health issues through regular movement and activity. | Provides pets with necessary exercise, improving physical health and mental stimulation. | Reduces anxiety and destructive behaviors by alleviating boredom and excess energy.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Dog consuming harmful objects	Ingestion of toxic plants, discarded food, sharp objects causing choking or poisoning	Encourages natural curiosity while reinforcing safe behaviors through training.	Keep dogs on a short leash in areas where harmful items might be present. Train the "leave it" and "drop it" commands. Monitor dogs closely to prevent ingestion of toxic plants, discarded food, or sharp objects. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Dog escaping from leash or enclosure	Dog running into traffic, getting lost, injury, dog aggression	Provides opportunities for off-leash exercise in designated safe spaces while ensuring security.	Use a properly fitted collar or harness to prevent slipping out. Check for secure fastening before walks. Train reliable recall commands and have an emergency plan in case the dog escapes. Avoid off-leash areas unless fully secure. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Exposure to toxic substances	Dog poisoning from antifreeze, pesticides, discarded food, toxic plants	Allows dogs to explore their environment under supervision, promoting natural behaviors.	Stay vigilant for potential hazards such as antifreeze spills, pesticides, or discarded food. Prevent dogs from ingesting unknown items by using commands like "leave it." Familiarize yourself with common toxic plants and substances in your area. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Extreme weather conditions	Heat exhaustion, hypothermia, paw pad injuries, dehydration	Ensures dogs receive consistent exercise while building resilience to varying weather conditions.	Monitor weather forecasts and adjust walking schedules accordingly. In hot weather, walk during cooler parts of the day, provide water, and avoid hot pavements. In cold conditions, consider protective clothing for the dog and limit exposure time. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Heatstroke	Overheating, dehydration, potential fatality	Maintains the dog's exercise routine while preventing heat-related illnesses.	Schedule walks during cooler times of the day in hot weather. Carry water and offer it to the dog regularly. Be vigilant for signs of overheating, such as excessive panting or lethargy, and seek shade or air-conditioned environments promptly. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Interaction with aggressive dogs	Dog fights, bites, injuries to walker or other pets	Teaches dogs socialization skills and how to remain calm in the presence of other animals.	Maintain a safe distance from unfamiliar dogs. If approached, position yourself between the dogs and use a firm command to deter interaction. Carry deterrents, such as a pet-safe spray, and be prepared to use them if necessary. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog, bystanders	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Legal responsibility for dog behavior	Liability for injuries, fines for leash law violations, legal disputes	Provides legal protection while ensuring responsible handling of dogs in public areas.	Understand local leash laws and dog walking regulations. Carry necessary permits if required. Ensure dogs are under control at all times and avoid liability risks by securing pet insurance coverage. **(ALL)**	Dog walker	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Lost dog	Dog running away, getting lost, difficulty in retrieval	Provides dogs with freedom to explore within safe boundaries, enhancing their walking experience.	Ensure all dogs are microchipped and wear identification tags with current contact information. Use GPS-enabled collars for real-time tracking. Regularly check equipment, such as leashes and collars, for wear and tear to prevent accidental release. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Medical emergencies	Sudden illness, injury, allergic reactions, heatstroke	Ensures quick and effective responses to emergencies, keeping dogs safe.	Carry a basic canine first aid kit. Learn canine CPR and emergency response procedures. Maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list, including the owner's veterinarian. Monitor dogs for signs of distress and seek medical help when needed. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Sudden dog reactivity	Lunging, barking, aggressive responses, risk of injury	Helps dogs build confidence and reduces anxiety in social settings.	Understand each dog's triggers and avoid high-stimulation environments if necessary. Train desensitization techniques to reduce reactivity. Carry a distraction tool such as treats or a toy to redirect attention when needed. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog, bystanders	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Traffic exposure	Dog running into the road, being hit by a vehicle, near misses causing panic or injury	Provides urban dogs with necessary exercise and acclimatization to city environments.	Always use sidewalks where available and cross streets at designated pedestrian crossings. Keep dogs on a short leash near roads and remain vigilant for oncoming vehicles. Equip dogs with reflective gear during low-light conditions to increase visibility. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Water hazards	Drowning, toxic water ingestion, algae poisoning	Provides opportunities for exercise and cooling off, especially for water-loving breeds.	Supervise dogs closely around bodies of water. Use flotation devices for dogs that are not strong swimmers. Be aware of strong currents, algae blooms, or contaminated water sources, and prevent dogs from drinking or swimming in unsafe areas. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Allergic reactions	Dog suffering from allergies to plants, insect stings, or environmental factors	Allows dogs to enjoy outdoor activities while managing their health conditions.	Obtain a detailed history of the dog's known allergies from the owner. Avoid areas with known allergens, such as specific plants or grasses. Carry an emergency kit, including antihistamines, and know the location of the nearest veterinary clinic. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Bites or scratches from the dog	Injury to walker, infection risk, legal liability	Encourages trust and better handling of the dog by the walker.	Handle dogs with care and respect their comfort levels. Avoid reaching for a dog's face unexpectedly. Train positive reinforcement techniques to prevent defensive reactions. Seek professional training for known behavioral issues. **(ALL)**	Dog walker	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Dehydration	Lack of water intake leading to fatigue, dizziness, and heat exhaustion	Ensures the dog's hydration needs are met, promoting overall health during exercise.	Carry a portable water bowl and fresh water on all walks. Offer water breaks every 15-20 minutes, especially during vigorous activity or in warm weather. Monitor the dog's hydration status by checking for signs like dry gums or excessive panting. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Dog developing anxiety or stress	Increased fear, avoidance behaviors, potential long-term behavioral issues	Supports emotional well-being while helping dogs build confidence.	Recognize signs of stress such as excessive panting, whining, or avoidance. Avoid forcing interactions or new environments on nervous dogs. Implement gradual exposure techniques and allow decompression time after walks. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Dog pulling excessively	Loss of control, injury to walker, dog straining muscles or joints	Helps dogs develop leash manners and controlled movement during walks.	Use a no-pull harness or training techniques to discourage pulling. Reinforce calm walking behavior with positive reinforcement. Avoid retractable leashes in high-traffic areas where sudden pulling can cause injury. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Dog refusing to walk	Inability to complete walk, potential underlying health issue	Allows walkers to adapt to individual dog needs while maintaining their comfort.	Determine the reason for refusal (injury, fear, fatigue). Use positive reinforcement to encourage movement. Avoid forcing the dog and instead offer breaks or an alternative route. Communicate with owners about ongoing behavioral concerns. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Dog-to-dog play injuries	Bites, scratches, sprains from rough play	Provides valuable socialization while maintaining safety.	Supervise all interactions between dogs closely. Introduce new dogs gradually in neutral spaces. Stop play if it becomes too rough, and separate dogs before tensions escalate. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Encountering wildlife	Dog chasing wildlife, risk of injury from wild animals, ticks or other parasites	Provides mental stimulation and satisfies dogs' natural curiosity.	Keep dogs on a leash in areas known for wildlife activity. Train dogs to respond reliably to recall commands. Be aware of local wildlife and their active times to plan walks accordingly. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Equipment failure	Collar breaking, leash snapping, harness failure leading to dog escaping or injury	Ensures walks remain safe and enjoyable without unexpected disruptions.	Regularly inspect collars, leashes, and harnesses for wear and tear. Replace damaged gear immediately. Use sturdy, high-quality equipment suitable for the dog's size and strength. Keep a backup leash available for emergencies. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Getting locked out of home or vehicle	Dog left unattended, disruption of schedule, owner inconvenience	Ensures uninterrupted dog care and prevents unnecessary stress for the dog.	Carry a spare key or confirm alternative access arrangements with the owner. Always check for secure key storage before leaving. Have a backup contact in case of accidental lockout. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Injury from lifting or handling dogs	Back strain, muscle injury, accidental dog injury	Prevents long-term injuries for dog walkers while ensuring safe dog handling.	Use proper lifting techniques when assisting dogs in and out of vehicles. Avoid lifting large dogs alone—use ramps or ask for assistance. Maintain good posture and avoid excessive strain when handling dogs. **(ALL)**	Dog walker	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Interaction with children	Dog biting or knocking over a child, fear reactions in children	Promotes positive relationships between dogs and children, enhancing socialization.	Educate children on appropriate behavior around dogs, such as not approaching unfamiliar dogs without permission. Ensure dogs are socialized and comfortable around children. Supervise all interactions to prevent accidental injuries. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog, children	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Leash entanglement	Leash tangling, potential injury to dog or walker, loss of control	Encourages better leash behavior while allowing dogs controlled movement.	Use an appropriate leash length based on the walking environment. Train dogs to walk calmly without excessive pulling. Avoid walking multiple dogs with long leads in tight spaces to minimize the risk of tangling. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Overexertion	Fatigue, muscle strain, risk of heat exhaustion	Allows dogs to build endurance gradually while maintaining overall health and fitness.	Tailor the length and intensity of walks to the dog's age, breed, and fitness level. Monitor for signs of fatigue, such as lagging behind or heavy panting, and provide rest breaks as needed. Consult with the owner regarding any health concerns that might affect the dog's stamina. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Parasite exposure	Ticks, fleas, worms, or infections from contaminated areas	Enables dogs to enjoy natural environments while minimizing health risks.	Keep dogs up-to-date on flea, tick, and worm preventatives as recommended by a veterinarian. Avoid areas with high parasite prevalence, such as tall grasses or stagnant water. Perform thorough checks for ticks and other parasites after each walk. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Paw injuries	Cuts from sharp objects, burns from hot pavements, frostbite in cold weather	Allows dogs to traverse various terrains safely, enriching their walking experience.	Inspect walking routes for sharp objects, hot surfaces, or rough terrain. Use protective booties if necessary, especially in extreme temperatures or hazardous areas. Regularly check the dog's paws for cuts, abrasions, or foreign objects. **(ALL)**	Dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Slips, trips, and falls	Walker tripping on uneven ground, slipping on wet surfaces, dog pulling walker over	Allows dogs to experience diverse environments, enhancing their physical health and mental stimulation.	Conduct a pre-walk assessment to identify uneven terrain, wet surfaces, or obstacles. Choose routes with well-maintained paths and inform clients of any potential hazards. Ensure both handler and dog wear appropriate footwear and gear to navigate the terrain safely. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Unexpected loud noises	Dog bolting, leash slipping, panic-induced injury	Builds resilience and helps dogs adapt to different environments.	Choose routes that avoid construction sites or high-traffic areas if the dog is noise-sensitive. Gradually desensitize dogs to loud noises using controlled exposure. Keep a firm grip on the leash in case of sudden reactions. **(ALL)**	Dog walker, dog	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Unpredicted risks	Illness, injury, death		Continuous risk monitoring conducted by all staff. Any unforeseen hazards must be reported promptly to supervisors or management, with immediate corrective action taken as necessary. **(ALL)**	All	**N/A**

NOTES

Extra notes & activity evaluation:

Completed by	Reviewed/Approved by	Risk Assessment Date	Review Required Date