

GUIDELINES FOR DOG OWNERS



Thank you for joining Zoomies! Zoomies is a volunteer initiative dedicated to offering support for dog owners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please **read this guidelines document in its entirety** and ensure that you understand all its components. If there is anything you are uncomfortable with or unclear about, please do not hesitate to reach out to a Zoomies team member. We are here to support you!

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

HEALTH:

If you are currently experiencing or have experienced any of the following symptoms within the last 14 days, you **MUST** disclose this to both Zoomies and to your volunteer.

- Fever;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- Fatigue;
- Flu-like symptoms;
- Upper respiratory symptoms;
- Loss of taste and/or smell;
- You have had close contact with someone in self-isolation or who is experiencing any of the above health symptoms in the last 14 days;
- You have had close contact with someone who is awaiting test results or has otherwise been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

If at any point while you are registered with Zoomies you begin to experience any of the above symptoms or have close contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, you **must** disclose this to your matched volunteer and to Zoomies immediately.

TRAVEL:

If any of the following apply to you, you **MUST** disclose this to both Zoomies and your volunteer.

- You have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days;
- You have had close contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days;
- You have been in a gathering of 10+ people, with whom you do not reside, within the last 14 days.

If at any point while you are registered with Zoomies any of the above applies to you, you **must** disclose this to your matched volunteer and to Zoomies immediately.



BECOMING MATCHED WITH A VOLUNTEER

Zoomies will do its best to match you with a volunteer dog walker based on your responses in the [Dog Owner Registration Form](#) . This process may take some time as matches are also dependent on volunteer registration in your area, so please be patient.

Once you have been matched with a volunteer, a member of our team will contact you to provide the volunteer's information. At this time, we ask that the volunteer contact you to introduce themselves and coordinate ongoing dog walking. **Zoomies does not enforce a dog walking schedule. This is to be mutually decided upon between the volunteer and the owner.** Some details you may want to discuss with the volunteer include:

- How often they plan to walk the dog(s) and what days of the week/times of day
- The average length of a walk
- Where they plan to walk the dog(s)
- The plan for days with inclement weather
- Any instructions and/or behavioural information regarding the dog(s) they should be aware of

Once you have discussed a plan with the volunteer, they may begin walking your dog(s). Volunteers have been asked to adhere to a strict list of safety guidelines which include social distancing measures, hygiene standards, and responsible dog-handling protocols.

Please respect the volunteer's privacy. Direct owner-volunteer communication is only to be had as it pertains to walking the owner's dog(s). Volunteers are not to solicit you for any payment or payment in kind for their services. Please report such behaviour if they do.

If at any time you become uncomfortable with the arrangement, please get in touch with a Zoomies team member. **You are never obligated to remain matched with a volunteer you are uncomfortable with or unsure about.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

It is important that both dog owners and volunteers adhere to our Health and Safety Guidelines to minimize the risk involved for both parties. Please familiarize yourself with the following list of precautionary guidelines for dog owners:

- You are encouraged to wear a facial covering while exchanging the dog(s) with the volunteer. If you do not own a mask, you may choose to make your own facial covering using materials around your home, such as a scarf or bandana.
- Try to maintain a distance of two metres (or six feet) while exchanging the dog(s) with the volunteer.
- At no point should you make physical contact with the volunteer, nor should they enter your home.
- If you have a spare leash, consider lending it to the volunteer to keep in order to avoid handling the same leash.

- Once the dog(s) is returned, wash its paws in a bowl of warm, soapy water before bringing it in the house. If possible, consider bathing the dog(s) completely in warm, soapy water before letting it loose in the house. Wash your hands immediately after with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- DO NOT USE disinfectant sprays or wipes on your dog's paws or fur as this is very harmful for dogs (and all pets).
- Launder the dog's collar/harness/leash frequently.

DOG SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Be as thorough as possible when providing information about your dog(s) to your volunteer. Include information about behavioural tendencies, commands they know, and stimuli they are nervous of or reactive to.
- Make sure the volunteer can contact you in the event of an emergency.
- Consider providing the volunteer with your dog's favourite treats so they may use them as needed.
- Ensure that your dog's identification information is up-to-date (e.g. contact information on the dog's ID tags and associated with their microchip and/or tattoo).
- Always attach the leash to the collar or harness loop, not the ID tag ring. Show this to the volunteer as well.
- Ensure that your dog's collar or harness is tight enough that it cannot be slipped out of, but not so tight that it impedes breathing or causes skin irritation.
- Frequently check your dog's leash and collar/harness for signs of wear. Replace these items if they become worn to the point where they may break under force.

TIPS FOR SUMMER

Summer weather comes along with a few extra considerations when it comes to responsible dog care:

- It is important to remain vigilant as to the temperature of the ground when walking a dog. Asphalt, for instance, can begin to cause damage to dogs' paws when the air temperature is just 25 degrees Celsius.
 - A quick rule of thumb when testing ground temperature is to hold the back of your hand to the ground for ten seconds. If the ground is too hot for you, it is too hot for your dog(s). Your volunteer will be responsible for taking the necessary precautions to protect your dog's paws while on their walk, such as sticking to sidewalks and grass as much as possible.
 - On particularly hot days, consider asking your volunteer if they might be able to walk your dog(s) in the early morning or evening if possible, when the temperature is cooler.



- Keep alert for signs of pain, such as whimpering, whining, and lifting or licking their paws. If concerned, check for blistering and redness.
- Consider purchasing protective booties for your dog if you live somewhere with lots of pavement around.
- Dogs are more likely than humans to overheat, so it's important to keep an eye out for signs of heatstroke:
 - excessive panting
 - dark or bright red tongue and gums
 - sticky or dry tongue and gums
 - staggering or appearing to be in a stupor
 - rapid heart rate
 - bloody diarrhea
 - vomiting
 - seizures

If you think your dog may have heat stroke, seek veterinary attention immediately. Your volunteer will also be provided with information regarding these symptoms so they may monitor your dog while on their walk.

- If your dog appears to be overheating, cool them down by:
 - bringing them to a cool spot
 - providing them with cool water (not ice water, which will constrict blood vessels and impede cooling)
 - spraying them with cool water
 - placing cool, damp towels on their head, neck, chest, and paws
- Ask your volunteer to bring water along for your dog on longer walks. If you have one, you should provide a collapsible dog bowl (or other alternative).
- Summer is also the season for fleas, ticks, and heartworms.
 - It is recommended that you contact your vet if possible to discuss prevention options. While treatment protocols during this time vary from clinic to clinic, most clinics should be able to address your inquiries and offer a solution. If you are unable to pick up these medications from your vet, email us at zoomieswalksdogs@gmail.com and we will see if we can arrange for assistance with this matter.
 - It is also important to regularly check your pets' fur for signs of these pests.

CONTACT

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email us at zoomieswalksdogs@gmail.com or call (437) 888-5561.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

