

NSVMA CANINE TETHERING GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

Section (I) Veterinarians and animal behaviorists recognize normal canine behavioral health and socialization are severely compromised by tethering. Pursuant to this the NSVMA recognizes that dogs forced to live at the end of a tether may exhibit or have, but not limited to:

- 1)increased stress;
- 2)inhibited pack instincts and decreased social skills;
- 3)repetitive unwanted behavior, uncorrected by lack of human intervention, which fosters aggressive actions and bite tendencies;
- 4)elevated territorial behavior defending food, water or possessions;
- 5)an inability to escape or "flight" where-in the dog may attack when faced by an intruder;
- 6)opportunity to break free and roam loose presenting injury to itself or other pets or people;
- 7)excessive vocalization from decreased social interaction and restricted activity;
- 8)"overexcitement" or a build- up of energy which can translate into bites as tethered canines often do not know how to deal with or channel unused energy into acceptable behavior.

DEFINITIONS

Section (II)

- 1) Owner - a person, party or group who owns, acts as a guardian for, has custody of or control of a dog.
- 2)Collar - a band of leather or nylon worn around a dog's neck with a primary function of restraint and identification:
 - a) must be such that it has been developed and constructed of materials specifically designed and manufactured for use around the canine neck;
 - b) is of a length when worn that equals a minimum of 1" greater than the neck circumference of the dog;
 - c) may or may not be part of a body harness which must also be properly fitted without causing restricted breathing, discomfort, abnormal body wear or allow the dog to escape;

d) use of a slip, choke, or prong type collar must never be employed.

3) Tether - a chain, rope, leash, cable, or other device which connects a dog's collar or harness to a stationary object or trolley system:

a) must employ a swivel to prevent twisting where i) it is attached to a stationary object or trolley system and ii) where it is attached to the dog's collar;

b) length must be such that it allows for a minimum of 15 feet from end to end or be 5 times the length of the dog from its nose to the base of its tail whichever is greater;

c) must not allow the tethered dog to pass into another person's property, public walkway or road;

d) only one canine attached per tether;

e) weight must not be excessive to burden or impede the dog and must allow it free unencumbered movement;

f) must not exceed 1/10th of the dog's entire body weight.

4) Pen - a) a completely enclosed area of not less than (6' x 15') or 90 square feet per dog;

b) a completely enclosed wind and precipitation free area of not less than 20 square feet per dog to be used only as a temporary holding area for sled dogs during training or competition.

Environment

SECTION (III) Owners must provide adequate shelter and protection from the elements or surroundings when tethering a dog.

1) shelter must be provided which:

a) employs a single flexible entry / exit or doorway which allows ease of passage;

b) is of solid construction and fully enclosed on the roof and 3 sides;

c) prevents wind and precipitation from penetrating the internal compartment;

d) contains sufficient clean dry bedding to maintain the dog's body heat;

e) allows the dog to sit with 3" clear above its head, stand, turn around, lie down and stretch comfortably;

f) be built on or have good drainage from its surroundings.

Use

SECTION (IV)

A) No owner or representative in their absence shall leave a dog tethered such that:

- 1) it may be placed in unsafe conditions whereby undue injury to the dog may occur;
- 2) it allows the dog to be entangled with another object causing strangulation and thereby undue harm or serious injury;
- 3) it is placed in unsanitary conditions of foul smell, noxious odors, dirty water, urine or fecal contamination;
- 4) the canine may be taunted, hit, harassed or subjected to teasing by people;
- 5) it is open to attack by other dogs or wildlife;
- 6) it is left abandoned;
- 7) the duration of time does not exceed 4 hours during a 24 hour period;
- 8) it restricts the dog from ready access to food, water or shelter;
- 9) it may be exposed to excessive i) cold (< -5 absolute degrees Celsius) or ii) heat (>30 degrees Celsius) sufficient to cause serious injury to health or endanger life;
- 10) the intent of tethering is to be the dog's primary means of permanent containment ;
- 11) the dog is sick , injured or less than 6 months of age.

B) Tethering shall not be for more than is necessary for the dog's owner to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be physically restrained for a reasonable period (as per IVA7). If a longer restraint period is required then the dog must be housed indoors or in a pen securely attached to a shelter as per section III(1).

Exceptions

SECTION (V) Exceptions to IV (A)(7), IV (B) and section III may be made in cases where sled dogs are being handled for training or competition under direct supervision of the owner ;

- 1) with direct supervision meaning in natural unobstructed sight of the sled dog(s) and constant social interaction with the dog(s) by the owner;
- 2) with a pen as per section II (4)(b) being provided;
- 3) all other guidelines above in effect.