

SAFETY TIPS FOR DOG WALKERS

Dog walking can be great fun and an excellent way to stay fit and healthy. Many dog owners really enjoy taking their dog out on long walks and exploring different areas. However, it is important to keep yourself safe while out on dog walks. Don't make yourself vulnerable or get into difficult situations. Here are some tips to help you to stay safe while out walking your dog.

Don't walk on your own in the dark

In the winter when the days are shorter and it gets darker earlier it can be tempting to walk your dog in the dark, but take extra care, you cannot rely on your dog to protect you. If you can, avoid dog walking at night but if you must, try to take someone with you and wear something bright. Fluorescent or lit collars are also a good idea, so that you and your dog can be easily seen by other pedestrians and road users.

Be aware of your surroundings

Don't get distracted while you are out walking. Stay alert and always keep an eye on your surroundings. Be aware of people around you and pay attention to cars driving by. Walk with confidence and keep your wits about you. Concentrate when walking and be aware of the type of terrain you are walking on.

Keep your hands free

Don't use your mobile phone while you are walking your dog. It's the one time in the day when they have your complete attention. You may also need your hands to defend yourself and having an expensive mobile phone on display could attract unwanted attention. Don't try and carry too much, put things in your pockets or carry a bag.

Take care near busy roads

Take extra care and attention when walking near busy roads. Don't get distracted and keep your dog on the lead and under control.

Take your mobile phone

Take your mobile phone with you in case you need to phone for help. You might get lost, hurt yourself or be in need of assistance. You don't want to be out in the middle of nowhere with no mobile phone. Make sure it is fully charged before you go out.

Vary your route

A lot of dog walkers like to walk exactly the same route every day. This can become very predictable and if anyone is watching you, they will know exactly where you will be at any given time. Vary the length, location and time of your walks where possible.

Walk where there are other people

Never take the shortcut where there are no people about, it's just not worth it. Go on dog walks where you know there will be other people around. This will make you feel a lot safer.

Extract (with additions) taken from <https://www.timeforpaws.co.uk/s/a-complete-guide-to-walking-your-dog>