

Why keep your dog on a leash? Protect your pup, wildlife and our community.

We get it—watching your dog run and explore off-leash feels like a gift to their happiness. But there's more at stake than meets the eye. Keeping your furry friend leashed isn't just a rule—it's a responsibility. Here are some *real reasons* why leash ordinances matter.

1. Mange is on the move: Mange, caused by mites, is more than just an itch; it's a health hazard. These mites thrive in places coyotes frequent and can live off a host for 24 hours. Off-leash dogs exploring these areas are at risk of bringing home an unwelcome infestation.

Recently, mange has been spotted at Community Park. It can be treated by veterinarians, so if your dog begins to display serious itching, be sure to have it checked out.

2. Coyotes aren't just howling. This season, coyotes are busy marking territory for breeding. To them, an off-leash dog might seem like a rival, which could lead to dangerous confrontations.

3. Small critters have a big impact: Small creatures like rabbits and voles are tiny but essential to our ecosystem. Off-leash dogs can disrupt this balance by hunting or scaring away this important wildlife.

4. Dog poop isn't just gross—it's harmful: Dog poop doesn't break down quickly and can grow harmful bacteria that can seep into water systems. Off-leash dogs are more likely to "go" where owners don't notice, leaving behind more than just paw prints

5. Off-leash dogs can cause anxiety: Some people and pets feel uneasy around off-leash dogs, no matter how friendly they are. Keeping your dog leashed is a courteous way to ensure everyone feels safe and comfortable on our pathways and trails.

The bottom line? Leashing your dog keeps them safe, protects our local wildlife, and ensures open spaces remain a joy for everyone. Don't forget, there are two dog parks in town where your dog can enjoy off-leash fun: Autrey Park Dog Park (1830 Honey Creek Drive) and Central Park Dog Park (2560 Central Park Way). Let's all be responsible pet owners!