

# GET INTO THE SWIM OF SUMMER

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Sunny summer days are the perfect opportunity for a fun beach excursion with your favorite canine companion! The only county park with beach access for our four-legged friends, Brohard Beach Paw Park has plenty of canine-friendly amenities: a boardwalk leading directly to the pets' own public beach and a restricted area on the shoreline where pets can frolic in the waves. The park's play yard has separate fenced spaces for large and small canines, several watering stations, and a "penalty box" in case a dog needs a "time-out," plus nearby benches and covered picnic tables for pet parents.

Before you go, familiarize yourself with the county's requirements. To begin, your pet's vaccinations and licenses must all be current, and his collar, complete with proper ID, should be visible. Pets are required to be on their best beach behavior, so it's not recommended to bring canines that need or are attending obedience training; that bark excessively; that may be in heat; or that can be aggressive or overly inquisitive with people or other pets. For safety reasons, it's advised to wait until puppies are older to schedule their first foray to the beach. Pet parents are also responsible for filling in any holes their furry friend makes in the sand and for cleaning up after their dogs, so be sure to bring pet waste bags or to use the ones provided.

As you pack, bring all the necessities you'll need. For instance, doggie lifejackets are recommended for dogs with shorter legs. Add in some fun extras such as a travel bowl; lots of fresh water; tasty treats; floating toys; doggie sunscreen; paw protection cream; a pet first aid kit; and possibly a sun shade just for your pooch. Before you go, log on to [VisitBeaches.org](http://VisitBeaches.org) for information about the local water conditions, including temperature, types of marine life present, and surf height.

When you hit the sand, give your dog a break from the heat by choosing a location with easy access to a shady spot under a beach umbrella, nearby tree or picnic bench. Stretch out a beach blanket or towel just for your pooch so he can cool his paws if need be, and provide him with plenty of fresh drinking water.

Before letting your dog explore, do a visual sweep for sharp shells, broken glass or similar objects. Supervise whenever your furry friend is in or near the water and, since seawater can irritate your dog's gastrointestinal tract, be prepared to grab your pooch if he starts to sip at the waves.

Monitor how your dog is handling the sun exposure. Watch for signs of overheating such as excessive or rapid panting and drooling; difficulty with coordination; vomiting; diarrhea; physically collapsing; and loss of consciousness. For flat-faced (brachycephalic), short-muzzled breeds like Boston terriers, English bulldogs, pugs and shih tzus, which tend to be more prone to heat-related issues, this is especially important.

Before heading home, rinse your dog off with fresh water and line your dog's spot in the car with a thick blanket or towel, then let him cozy up and enjoy the ride home!

*The advice provided in this article is general in nature, and may need to be adapted for your specific situation. Always consult your veterinarian.*