



Visiting Open Space Lands with Pets

Why keep your pets on a leash?

1. Safety

Dogs or other pets running loose often get injured, hit by vehicles, or become lost. In Open Space areas there are also natural dangers such as cactus or wild animals. There is also a risk of plague, which is transmitted by fleas on rodents and is contagious to people.

2. Sanitation

Pets running free may defecate unnoticed. Animal waste carries disease and chemicals that contribute to weed proliferation and fouled waters.

3. Courtesy

Dogs running loose infringe on the rights and enjoyment of Open Space visitors. Strange dogs running up to people often frighten them. Dogs off leash can get into fights with other dogs that are properly leashed.

4. Wildlife

Bernalillo County Open Space lands are managed as wildlife preserves. Owners that allow their pets to chase, capture or otherwise harass wildlife are subject to a fine.

5. It's the Law

Both the city of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have animal control ordinances that mandate all pets must be on a leash while on public property. From the [Bernalillo County Open Space Management Ordinances \(Sec. 58-57\)](#):

In accordance with sections [6-45](#) and [6-53](#), no person shall allow any animal under his or her ownership or control to run at large in any open space. All animals shall be restrained on a secure leash that does not exceed or is retractable to six feet in length.



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Why pick up after your pet?

1. It prevents the spread of parasites and diseases between pets.

Dog feces are more than just a nuisance - they can pose a serious health hazard. A number of common parasites are transmitted via dog feces. When infected dog feces are left on the ground, the eggs of the parasite can linger in the soil for years. As a result, anyone who comes in contact with the soil also comes in contact with the infected eggs. Parasites include roundworm, hookworm, and whipworm. Parvo virus, giardia and coccidia are also spread through feces.

2. It prevents the spread of disease and parasites to humans, especially children.

When pet waste is disposed of improperly, not only does water quality and pet health suffer, but our health may be at risk too. Pets and children who play in yards or in parks where pets defecate are most at risk for infection from bacteria and parasites.

Diseases that can be passed from pet waste to humans:

- a. *Campylobacteriosis*: a bacterial infection carried by dogs and cats that frequently causes diarrhea in humans.
- b. *Salmonellosis*: the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- c. *Toxocariasis*: roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever, or cough.
- d. *Toxoplasmosis*: a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy and can also harm people with depressed immune systems.

3. It helps keep our river waters safe.

Pet waste left on the ground may wash into storm drains and end up in the Rio Grande. Our river water quality suffers. Pet waste, after being washed into the Rio Grande, uses up oxygen when it begins to decay and contributes excessive nitrogen, causing harm to aquatic organisms and degrading river health.

4. It stinks!

Preservatives in pet food paired with New Mexico's arid environment slow the decay of excrement. Accumulation of pet waste creates smelly trails, not to mention many obstacles.