



for Taking Your DOG to WORK

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Thinking of taking your dog to the office? First decide if he's a good candidate. A dog that is shy and fearful around visitors and other dogs is better left at home. Master basic commands such as "come", "stay", "leave" or "go to bed" before you bring him to work and make sure he can ignore distractions. Then check out the following tips to keep it a "paws-itive" experience and to make sure you don't get dogged by colleagues for your poor pooch etiquette.

- 1 Always keep your dog on lead in public areas.** Ask your co-workers to do the same. Keeping all dogs on lead helps you manage the situation and control any interactions. Don't assume all dogs will be well-mannered and friendly.
- 2 Remember to bring your own water and food bowls.** No one wants to see you filling up the office popcorn bowl at the water cooler. Set up all supplies in advance so you don't have to juggle them while bringing in your dog.
- 3 Keep a dog bed or blanket and toys in your office or area.** Bringing your dog's bedding will help him relax and feel more at home. While it's a good idea to have puzzle toys or chew toys to keep your dog entertained, remove them when other dogs are around to prevent scuffles over coveted items. Consider using a baby gate or a crate to confine your dog to your area.
- 4 Take the stairs.** Multiple dogs, or even one dog, in an enclosed space like an elevator can quickly become a stressful situation for humans and canines alike; get some exercise and take the stairs, even if there are no other dogs or people in the elevator when you arrive.
- 5 Be prepared to clean up after your dog.** Get the OK for your dog to eliminate in the area surrounding your building, and bring the necessary supplies to pick up any mess. With lots of dogs in the same area, marking indoors can be a potential problem—it's best to have carpet cleaning and odour minimising supplies on hand.
- 6 Respect your colleagues' space.** Remember that not all people like or are comfortable with dogs. Let others approach your dog, not the other way around.
- 7 Don't force your dog to "make friends" with other dogs.** It's fine to let them sniff each other out if they want, but watch the dogs as they interact for any signs of aggression—growling, staring, stiff body posture. Never leave your dog alone with other dogs at work.
- 8 If a scuffle occurs, don't physically intervene.** This could result in your getting bitten and will only escalate the problem. Instead, throw one of the dogs' blankets over the heads of the fighting dogs, or use a water bottle to squirt them with water. This may confuse and distract the feisty pooches long enough for you to defuse the situation.
- 9 Get permission in advance to leave early if necessary.** If your dog becomes too stressed, overexcited or inhibited, it's best to just take him home. Don't ever leave him in a parked, hot vehicle, where brain and organ damage can occur very quickly.
- 10 Have fun and let your dog help you climb the corporate ladder!** A study by a Michigan USA University found that when dogs are present in a group, employees are more likely to trust each other and collaborate more effectively in the office. Not to mention that a dog can be a great icebreaker to start up conversations with co-workers you may not know very well.

Remember, good behaviour in public starts at home! The key to a safe and successful experience is to prepare yourself and your dog in advance. The privilege to take your dog to work depends on you to demonstrate reasonable, consistent leadership and to set boundaries for your dog's behaviour.

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