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Beaches, Boats & Lake K9 Safety

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Q *My family loves spending time at the beach and in our boat. We would love to have our newly adopted dog join us. He is about one and is friendly and well-behaved.*

● Arden Moore ● Steve Brooks

CONGRATULATIONS ON ADOPTING YOUR NEW CANINE PAL!

Many dogs love swimming, fetching tennis balls tossed in lakes and hopping on board for boat rides. But go slow and steady so your dog feels safe as he develops his “sea legs.”

Priority No. 1: condition your dog to wear a pet safety vest that includes an easy-to-grip handle on top and in an easy-to-spot bright color. Introduce this life jacket inside your home, then your back yard and finally to the beach. Heap on small treats each time your dog shows signs of acceptance in wearing this protective gear.

Next, head for a dog-welcoming beach in the off-hours when it is not crowded. Test your dog's acceptance to getting his paws, legs and body splashed by the water along the shoreline. Tether his harness to a long clothes line or rope to give him space to jump in the waves while you still maintain control. Encourage him to walk into the water by tossing a tennis ball or floatable treats about three to four feet from shore.

Wade into the water and call him to swim toward you. Be calm and confident and dole out lots of praise to encourage him and to build his swimming prowess. Maintain holding on to that long lead.

Time to introduce him to your boat. Let him sniff and explore the boat while it is docked. Let him have time to adjust to the rocking movement, the smell of the fuel and sound of the motor. Bring his favorite chew toy and treats. Hang out to help him feel at ease.

With your dog wearing his vest, motor your boat just beyond the dock at a slow idle. Pay attention for any signs of stress such as lip licking or pacing or whining that warrant a trip back to the dock. The goal is to gradually build up his acceptance of being on your boat so you can extend the time he spends with each outing.

Finally, remember that dogs are very astute at reading our emotions. So, keep confident and encouraging and your four-legged pal may soon become your first mate. Dog ahoy! 🐾

ARDEN MOORE hosts the *Oh Behave* weekly radio show on *Pet Life Radio.com* and is founder of the *Pet First Aid 4U*. Learn more at www.ardenmoore.com.

MOST PUPS LOVE TO GO TO THE BEACH ... Before you go, consider your dog's experience in water, listening skills, breed, age, and health when taking them for a water adventure. Not all dogs swim naturally ... some have webbed feet—perfect for a swim—while K9's with short snouts (brachycephalic) are not the best swimmers. Lots of dogs really don't like to swim, while others are so excited they swim to exhaustion!

As a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, I advise that before taking your dog to the beach, teach a solid recall and stay. I highly recommend that every pet owner learn K9 First Aid & CPR and watch for signs of heat stroke or hypothermia. A doggie visor is a good idea for light colored dogs with pink noses and fine hair because they are sensitive to harmful UV rays.

BROOKS' DOGGIE WATER ADVENTURE SAFETY TIPS:

- Check leash laws regarding dogs at State and local beaches.
- Never been off-leash? Use a 20-30-ft. (non-retractable) leash to test the waters.
- Always bring fresh water and bowl.
- Bring *doggie* sunscreen, an umbrella and even doggie sunglasses.
- Carry a First Aid kit with saline solution (rinse sand if it gets in the eyes).
- Teach your pup to wear booties... *If the sand is too hot for you, it's too hot for Fido.*
- Cool to warm (65-80°) water temps are best.
- Rinse your dog off after swimming and check paws and coat for foreign objects.
- Use a properly fitting doggie life jacket with handles on top for easy lifting.
- Talk to your Vet about sea-sick pills.
- Give Fido a potty break before boarding a boat and bring a pee pad for emergencies.

Casting a fishing line...? Beware of sharp hooks. I once had a dog dive for the bobber on the end of my line (thinking it was a fun toy). Luckily, his “come” command was so good that he flipped a U-turn and swam safely to shore.

Remember to have fun but never force your dog into the water.

Keep Fido away from ingesting blue-green algae or drinking lake, pond or stagnant water to avoid exposure to parasites and amoebas. Don't let your dog eat raw fish or crabs that wash up onshore or drink salt water as excessive amounts can make them sick. Beware of riptides or fast-moving water. Watch for wildlife, mosquitos and fleas and ticks too!

Gradual exposure to water is always best ... just like kids, canines should never be unsupervised near water. 🐾

STEVE BROOKS (CPDT-KA), Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT/Ka), Canine Behavioral Expert and author of *DOG BITES* with STEVE BROOKS, shares 20 years of training techniques using “dog bites” as rewards for good behavior. SteveBrooksK9U.com

EzyDog's DFD (Dog Flotation Device) provides up to 50% more foam than other life vests, strategically placed to allow dogs to maintain their natural swim pattern and keep even the heaviest of dogs afloat. Other safety features include reflective piping, neoprene-padded straps, and a sturdy handle for guiding dogs in and out of the water. Ezydog.com

