

Preventing a Dog Fight

If you encounter a dog off-leash, please do the following:

1. The first and most important when off-leash dogs are approaching is to remain calm.
2. Practicing situational awareness always.
3. If you have time and enough distance, turn in the other direction. Grab a treat if needed to get the dog to focus on you and not the other dog coming towards you.
4. Ask the guardian to leash their dogs. If the guardian says they do not have a leash wait until dog is secured before turning in the other direction or passing. You always want to keep an eye on off-leash dog, especially if they are close.
5. If a dog is approaching tell the dog to “go” in a firm voice or see if you can get the dog in an alternative behaviour such as ‘sit.’
6. If the dog keeps on approaching divert the dogs attention by tossing a handful of treats towards the them (preferably in grass), so you can escape or safely direct the dog your walking away. This is most important when you have a reactive dog.

Note: Just because a guardian says their dog is friendly their dog can become aggressive if your dog acts defensively.

What if a fight happens?

Get familiar with this body languages below that may indicate a behaviour may escalate.

- High, stiff tail wags
- Lips pulled forward (instead of gaping mouths)
- Tight, controlled, efficient movement (instead of bouncy play movement)
- Forward weight with staring eyes at a distance
- Lunging towards the face or neck

1. Try and make a loud noise (air horn or clapping your hands). If they break contact move your dog away.
2. If they do not respond to that, stop. Take a deep breath. Assess whether one current has a bite on the other.
3. Last resort is the wheelbarrow technique when you grab both legs and walk backwards. The guardian will have to do the same and you may need to instruct them.
4. Once they break apart assess dog for injuries and report to DCC upon return.

