



# The Dog Guardian

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## Prevent Bites over the Holidays

By Joan Orr and Teresa Lewin

The holidays are especially stressful for dogs due to changes in routine and the comings and goings of visitors. Many dog bites happen at this time of year. When visiting a house with a dog, children should be taught not to approach the dog (even if the dog has been friendly on other occasions). If the dog comes to them they should stand still like a tree and let the dog sniff. Only if the dog is wagging and panting and coming to them for attention and parent and dog owners are supervising and have given permission, should a child touch the dog. Dog owners should gauge their dog's reaction to visitors. If the dog is overly excited, barking or growling, cowering away, trying to hide or otherwise showing signs of anxiety or aggression, the dog should be kept separate from visiting children for the ENTIRE DURATION of the child's visit. The dog should have its own place in a crate or another room with toys, a bone to chew on and its special bed or blanket so that it can be happy and comfortable and away from guests. Even dogs that seem happy with visitors should never be alone in the room with visiting children.

No preschooler, toddler or baby should be allowed to be near your dog unless you personally have your hands on the dog and can prevent face to face contact between child and dog and can prevent the child from hugging or otherwise bothering the dog.



Dogs should not be allowed to greet visitors at the door. This is for the safety of the dog and the visitors. Keep the dog in a separate room or crate until the visitors are settled and then allow the dog to say hello if appropriate. If you are not sure about your dog, then leave him confined or keep him on a leash. Make sure that the dog associates visitors with something good for the dog, such as special treats or a stuffed bone.

If you do perceive a problem between your dog and visiting children, **this is not the time to work on it.** It is not reasonable to use visiting children to help train your dog. Take preventative measures to ensure that your dog does not have the opportunity to bite and once the holiday season is over seek the help of a behaviour specialist who uses positive reinforcement methods to solve the dog's problem.

### Summary of Doggone Safe's family gathering tips:

Family gatherings at a relative's house are the source of fond memories for many. The relative's dog may not enjoy these events as much as the rest of the family. Noise, confusion and changes in routine are stressful for dogs. Even a normally calm and docile pet may become agitated enough to bite under the extreme circumstances of a boisterous family celebration. Supervision may be lax if each adult thinks that another is watching the children. Children are the most likely victims of dog bites in this situation.

- ✓ Put the dog in his crate with a favorite chew toy, at least during the most hectic times – guests arriving and leaving as well as dinner preparation and serving;
- ✓ Assign one adult to be in charge of the dog, to watch for signs of stress and protect from unwanted attention from children. See [http://www.doggonesafe.com/Speak\\_Dog](http://www.doggonesafe.com/Speak_Dog) to learn about the subtle signs of stress to watch for;
- ✓ Assign one adult to supervise each baby or toddler with no other tasks expected;
- ✓ If you have multiple dogs, consider kenneling them, crating them or keeping them in another room during large gatherings; and
- ✓ Supervise at all times.

## Holiday Hazards are Plentiful



While Poinsettias are not likely to cause anything more than a tummy upset, there are holiday plants that are toxic and sometimes fatal if ingested. Some of the more common holiday

flora that can create problems include Christmas Roses, Mistletoe, Holly, and Lilies.

Festive foods that are plentiful and toxic in most homes during the holidays include chocolate. The toxic compounds in chocolate are Theobromine and Caffeine. Symptoms of chocolate poisoning include vomiting and diarrhea, seizures, increased heart rate and respirations, tremors, and hyperactivity. Some types of chocolate are not as harmful as others and the severity of the reaction from ingested chocolate depends largely on the size of the pet and the type of chocolate eaten. White chocolate is the least harmful and dark chocolate and cocoa are the most toxic.

The Interactive Chocolate Chart on the National Geographic website has excellent information regarding chocolate poisoning, see <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/10/pets/chocolate-chart-interactive>. You may wish to bookmark this site in case of a chocolate emergency.

Another treat that is harmful to dogs is Xylitol, an ingredient often found in candies and gum, particularly sugar-free brands. Symptoms of Xylitol poisoning include vomiting, weakness, ataxia, depression, seizures, coma, and death.

Other poisonous foods include alcohol, cherry or peach pits, onions, coffee, garlic, grapes, raisins, raw yeast and macadamia nuts.

### Non-Food Hazards

Remember dogs, especially puppies, will eat almost anything that is within reach. Holiday lights and extension cords can cause severe electrical burns and/or electrocution. The chemicals inside lights can also cause serious chemical burns and noxious reactions.

Christmas ornaments can cause lacerations if broken and tinsel and ribbons can become lodged in intestines if swallowed causing life-threatening blockages. Keep potpourris out of reach as well as some may contain traces of strychnine.

Prevention is the best way to ensure you and your pet have a safe and happy holiday. Be sure to keep noxious plants out of reach and keep toxic foods in sealed containers. Most of all, ensure that your pet is supervised when around Christmas lights.

If your pet does ingest food or items that can cause harm, call your vet immediately. A good resource for additional information is the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website at [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org) (control key + click to follow link) or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control at 888.426.4435.

## Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Prep Course and Tests (Ottawa, ON)



The next Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Preparation Course at Forever Friends Dog Training will commence Thursday, January 13, 2011. For more information or to

register, contact Forever Friends at 613.727-HEEL.

The 2011 Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Test Schedule is as follows:

February 6	April 3	June 12
August 7	October 16	December 4

The CCGC™ Test scheduled for October 16, 2011 will be offered free to rescue dogs that are awaiting adoption. Any rescue interested in testing one or more of their rescue dogs should contact RDOC at [ccgc@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:ccgc@responsibledogowners.ca) to reserve a time. All dogs must have a vaccination certificate or titer test results indicating appropriate levels of antibodies. If the dog is successful, a certificate will be issued when the dog is adopted and the owner provides proof of licensing.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada has CCGC™ Evaluators in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. A list of CCGC™ Evaluators is available at <http://www.responsibledogowners.ca/ccgct.html>. RDOC is recruiting new Evaluators in all provinces and encourages those interested to contact us at [ccgc@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:ccgc@responsibledogowners.ca).

A list of all CCGC™ Tests scheduled across Canada is posted on the RDOC website at <http://www.responsibledogowners.ca/ccgct.html>.

## Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Graduates

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is pleased to congratulate recent Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ graduates from Ottawa, Ontario.

Amy Whitfield and Zeus

Donna Rafalski and Solstys

Soshi Stulberg and Rory

Tippy (Collie Rescue Network)\*

Thursten (Hopeful Hearts Rescue)\*

\* *Tippy, a Smooth Collie is currently in a foster home and is waiting for her forever home. For information on adopting Tippy, see <http://www.collierescuenetwork.com/>.*

Special thanks go to Forever Friends Dog Training for the use of the school, Donna Rafalski and Finola Pitcher, CCGC™ Evaluators, volunteers Lorraine and Caitlin Green and Teddy, our greet dog.

## Congratulations!

## Selecting a Good Dog Trainer or Behaviorist

For most professional fields, there is usually a governing body that awards accreditation. Not so in the field of dog trainers and behaviorists. So where does a dog owner begin when looking for the right trainer or behaviorist?



Selecting a good trainer or behaviorist is akin to choosing a personal fitness trainer for you. You want someone who has good communication skills, someone who uses tools and training techniques that you are comfortable with, and you would like someone who motivates you. Ultimately, you want someone who will help you achieve the end-result you are seeking, e.g. a well-trained dog with good social skills.

As difficult as it might seem to find the right professional, there are some simple guidelines that may help you select a trainer or behaviorist and a training technique that is best suited to you and your canine companion.

A skilled and competent instructor will:

1. Allow and encourage you to observe a class prior to making the decision to enroll;
2. Encourage all family members and others who interact with the dog to attend class;
3. Provide a clear explanation of each lesson and provide written handouts on how to teach the desired behavior(s);
4. Demonstrate the behavior(s) that students will be teaching their dogs and allow ample time in class to begin practicing the day's lesson;
5. Assist students individually with proper implementation of techniques; and
6. Encourage dialogue and be courteous to both canine and human clients alike.

Every person and every dog is unique and so it may take a little effort to find the right trainer. You will know you have the right trainer if you are comfortable with the training tools and methods used. An experienced trainer employs humane training methods which are not harmful to the dog and/or handler. We do not recommend any trainer that advocates the practices of hanging, beating, kicking, shocking or similar procedures/devices that could cause the dog pain or distress or have the potential to cause physical injury. Remember that you, as the dog owner, have the absolute right to stop any trainer or other animal care professional that, in your opinion, is causing your dog undue harm or distress.

A conscientious trainer stays informed about innovations in dog training and behavior modification. It is always a good idea to check the trainer's affiliation to any educational organizations such as the Canadian Association

of Professional Pet Dog Trainers, Association of Pet Dog Trainers, and/or Professional Animal Behavior Associates, Inc. Ask if he/she pursues ongoing educational opportunities.

A good instructor will take care to protect your dog's health in a classroom or group setting. Ask if dogs and puppies are required to be vaccinated prior to class and, if so, which vaccines are mandatory. Make sure you and your veterinarian are comfortable with the vaccination requirements. If not, ask if titers (\*) are acceptable.

Current clients are a valuable source of information for you. Attending a group class gives you the opportunity to ask clients how they feel about their experience, i.e. are they enjoying the class and are their training needs and goals being met.

Because of variables in dog breeding/temperament and owner commitment/experience, a trainer cannot and should not guarantee the results of his/her training. However, an instructor should be willing to ensure client satisfaction with his/her professional services.

Finally, training your dog is an important part of being a responsible owner/guardian. It will help you to understand and communicate with your dog. It will help your dog understand what you expect. And, it will strengthen the bond you and your dog share. But most of all, it should be fun for you and your dog.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada recommends trainers that promote positive, motivational training techniques and can provide a list of trainers that meet that standard.

*(\*) Titers are blood tests that determine the presence and strength of a dog's immunological response to a viral disease.*

## Pet First Aid Course – March 26 & 27, 2011 (Ottawa, ON)



A certified pet first aid course could mean the difference between life and death!

You are at home or on vacation and your pet suddenly exhibits signs of illness or injury. An emergency can happen any time or any place. Your veterinarian is not available or hours away. Would you know what to do?

First aid is the primary step in any emergency situation for people and pets alike and having first aid knowledge could mean the difference between life and death.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada will host its second internationally recognized Pet First Aid Course on March 26 & 27, 2011, instructed by Dawn O'Leary, a certified pet first aid instructor with Walks 'N' Wags. The course will be held at Forever Friends Dog Training School, 17 Grenfell Crescent, Ottawa, ON.

The course will cover important topics such as immediate steps to take in an emergency, how to handle bleeding wounds and bone injuries, how to perform Artificial Respiration and CPR and what to do for poisoning and heat/cold injuries. Other subjects in the course include how to recognize signs of numerous illnesses and parasites, with an emphasis on methods of preventing illness and injury for both dogs and cats.

The price per student is \$225, which includes all course materials, exam, certificate, beverages and snacks and a lunch on Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>.

As only 16 students will be accepted for this course, pet owners are encouraged to register early. If you are interested in registering for this comprehensive pet first aid course, please contact Responsible Dog Owners of Canada at [info@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:info@responsibledogowners.ca) or call 613.228.7764.



We wish to extend our sincere and deepest sympathy to Cheryl Smith of Kemptville, Ontario in the loss of beloved heart dog, Chica and Sharon McKeil and Peter Finnie of Ottawa, Ontario for the loss of their precious Leia.

## The Cat has Crossed Rainbow Bridge

by MariLyse Dumas

Note: *This story is about a cat but it could easily be a dog or any pet.*



*Thousands of pets are abandoned by the side of the road or dropped off at a shelter because their*

*families don't have time, they aren't "cute" anymore or they are sick. It is a very sad situation and it happens every day in your neighbourhood in your city, in your country. The "lucky" are rescued; the unlucky ones and there are millions are euthanized or meet their demise in a less humane way.*

The phone rings. It is a neighbor asking if I have seen The Cat, a ginger tabby. I reply that I haven't seen him for over a week when he came to get his food, water and, of course, some hugs.

A feeling of gloom comes over me. If the neighbor is calling, it is because The Cat has not been home, a term I use lightly, because The Cat basically lives outside, going from house to house for food and affection.

A few months ago, when I saw The Cat, he had a bad injury on his forehead near his eye, an open wound that did not close. I took him in and let him spend the night in the garage. I checked the wound, cleaned it out. His fur was matted, I brushed him and took some of the mats out. He was very thin so I gave him lots of food and water.

I was on the war path. How could anyone not take care of his or her cat? As cats and dogs are considered "property" I thought I'd better cover all bases. I talked to the owner. The Cat was 17 or 18, was taken in every night (Hmmm!), had been taken to the vet (Hmm!) and was used to living this way.

I called contacts as I thought: "The best thing is to send him to a sanctuary" and was told that at his age, the cat would be miserable and would not be able to adapt. The best I could do was to continue feed him and check him out when he

came over which I did with great pleasure. Every time I opened the door and hoped to have his face looking at me and a big meow saying "I'm hungry, please feed me". Last week, when he came over, he looked very scrawny, did not eat much but did request his cuddles.

Today, I know that the cat crossed "Rainbow Bridge". I am saddened when I imagine all the ways he could have died but I am relieved to think that he will no longer have matted fur or open wounds and that he will not need to go door to door to get food and cuddles. I am thankful for having known I will miss him.

### Way to go Andrea!

Last month, Andrea Cormack-Akeson of Dirty Dog Gourmet Bakery (Richmond, Ontario) initiated a campaign to raise funds and purchase pet oxygen masks for the Ottawa Fire Services stations. Today, we are thrilled to report that, with the funds raised, she has purchased 72 pet oxygen mask kits. Ottawa Fire Services will receive 60 kits and the remainder will be distributed to various stations in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta.

The campaign has been so successful that Andrea wants to continue the quest to outfit every fire station in Canada with the life-saving equipment for the pet members of our families.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada wishes to congratulate Andrea in spear-heading this campaign on behalf of all our pets. We also wish to thank Critter Jungle, Ottawa Veterinary Hospital and Gloucester Veterinary Hospital for their assistance in collecting donations. Both Critter Jungle and Gloucester Veterinary Hospital matched donations made at their establishment.

For more information, contact RDOC at [info@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:info@responsibledogowners.ca) or call 613.288.7764. A video of a rescue can be viewed at Help Animals Inc. at <http://www.helpanimalsinc.org/>.

### 2010 AWARE Festival, Ottawa, ON

The 2010 AWARE Festival was held on October 16, 2010 at the Rideau Carleton Raceway and was the best festival yet.

This year, the festival included an all-rescue walkathon which raised approximately \$1300, entertainment by Dominic D'Arcy and his Rising Stars, and an adoption alley.

Next year's AWARE Festival is scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup> and will again be held at the Rideau Carleton Raceway.

A slide presentation of the event, courtesy of MariLyse Dumas, can be viewed at <http://rdoc.smugmug.com/photos/swfpopup.mg?AlbumID=14496145&AlbumKey=HmdK5>.



*Merry Christmas,  
Happy Hanukkah,  
Kwanzaa  
and Winter  
Solstice!*



Whatever you are celebrating during the holidays, we would like to extend season's greetings to all RDOC members and supporters.



May the New Year bring peace, comfort and health to everyone and their families, including the furkids.



### Responsible Dog Owners of Canada (RDOC)

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is a registered non profit organization that promotes responsible dog ownership through education and support, cultivates respect for the rights and privileges of members of the dog-owning and non dog-owning communities, fosters recognition of the contribution that canines make through companionship, service/assistance and therapy and aspires to assemble a strong network of responsible dog owners to ensure the restoration and preservation of a dog-friendly society.

**Responsibility • Respect • Recognition**

#### Contact Information

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