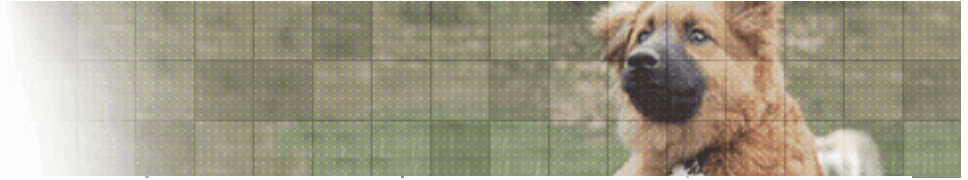




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Do You Chain Your Dog?

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There are a variety of reasons why people chain their dogs outside. Many people believe that dogs *should* live outside, and they keep the dog tied up because he or she escapes the yard or digs in the garden. Or maybe the dog has grown too large to be inside, or has developed a behavior problem that the owner is unable to deal with, so the dog stays in the yard. Or perhaps the dog is kept outside to protect the home.

Dangers of Chaining Change Minds

Whatever the reasons, fewer dog owners seem to be keeping their dogs tied up outside. And many communities have passed laws against long-term chaining of

dogs.

Why?

First, more people are learning that continuous tethering is bad for dogs. As pack animals, dogs have been bred for thousands of years to form a strong attachment to a human family. An otherwise friendly and happy dog, when kept continually chained and isolated, often becomes neurotic, unhappy, anxious, and aggressive. In fact, studies show that chained dogs are much more likely to bite than unchained dogs.

In addition, chained dogs may unintentionally hang themselves if they are tethered too close to a fence and attempt to jump it. Chained dogs are also subject to attacks by other animals and cruel humans.

Getting Your Dog Off the Chain

The second reason for the tougher stance on chaining is that many dog owners have learned to solve the problems that caused them to tie their dogs outside in the first place. If you would like to provide your dog with an alternative to a rope or chain, consider these suggestions:

- Install a fence if your property does not already have one. Or consider installing a large chain-link dog run. If you install a dog run, make sure it meets these minimum space requirements. Be sure to allow extra space for a doghouse.



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- If you have a fence and your dog can jump over it, install a 45-degree inward extension to the top of your existing fence. Many home improvement stores sell these extensions.
- If your dog digs under the fence to escape your yard, bury chicken wire to a depth of one foot below where the fence meets the ground (be sure to bend in the sharp edges). Or place large rocks at the base of the fence.
- If the two previous options don't work for your "escape artist," consider using a cable runner or electronic fencing. These options are not perfect, but they will give your dog more freedom. Be sure to use these options only if you also have a fence that protects your dog from people and other animals.
- If your dog digs where you don't want him to (such as in a garden or flower bed), consider putting plastic garden fencing or a similar barrier around the area. Or provide your dog with his own sandbox. Bury toys in the sandbox and use positive reinforcement to teach your dog that it is okay to dig there.
- Enroll your dog in an obedience class—especially if his behavior is the main reason you keep your dog outside.
- Spay or neuter your dog if you haven't already done so. A neutered dog is less likely to roam and more content to stay at home. These are safe procedures that have many health and behavioral benefits. Ask your veterinarian for more information.
- Remember that behavior problems such as barking, chewing, and digging are often the result of a lack of stimulation. By providing your dog with proper toys, exercise, "people time," and positive reinforcement, you may alter undesirable behaviors and teach acceptable house manners. In addition, a dog who is inside the house is much more likely to deter an intruder than a dog chained in the yard.

Giving Your Dog Proper Shelter

In addition to safe confinement, dogs need adequate shelter from the elements. Dogs kept outside may be unintentionally exposed to bitter cold temperatures in the winter and scorching heat in the summer. To protect your dog from harsh weather, provide a well-constructed doghouse. However, keep in mind that some breeds with very long or short coats cannot tolerate extreme outside temperatures even when provided with proper shelter. Also remember that if you have more than one dog, you need to provide a doghouse for each one.

To provide your dog with a comfortable doghouse, consider these suggestions:

- The house should be large enough to allow the dog to stand up and turn around comfortably, but small enough to enable the dog to retain body heat.
- The house should have a slanted, waterproof roof to allow rainwater to run off.
- If the doghouse is made of wood, it should be raised off the ground at least two inches to prevent the floor from rotting.
- The door should be just large enough for your dog to enter easily.
- During the winter months, to protect your dog from cold wind, the door

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should be covered by a flexible plastic flap—such as a floor runner that doesn't have spikes on one side. A piece of carpet can work in a pinch, but it can get wet and freeze.

- Clean, dry bedding such as hay, straw, or cedar shavings should be provided. The bedding should be changed weekly to prevent mold and to keep the doghouse sanitary.
- In warmer months, the dog should also be provided with shade such as a tree or tarp. A doghouse in direct sun becomes an oven and will not keep a dog cool.
- Finally, anytime your dog is kept outside, be sure to provide fresh water in a tip-proof bowl or large bucket. Make sure the water doesn't freeze during colder months.

Spreading the Word

Want to pass this information along to others? Make a positive impact in your neighborhood by educating people about the dangers of tethering and the needs of dogs who spend time tied up outdoors. For just \$1, you can purchase 50 copies of our *Do You Chain Your Dog?* flyer, which contains the information presented above. Simply send your request, with a check made payable to The HSUS, to:

HSUS Dept: Tethering Flyer
2100 L St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20037-1598

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