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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Pet and Citizen Safety in Norfolk City Parks

The winter blues are fading away and signs of summer are showing more every day. Though people enjoy exercising on the City's trails year-round, the summer months are particularly busy. Pat Mrsny, City of Norfolk Park Superintendent, has a few reminders for both pet and citizen safety in City parks.

When enjoying a walk with your four-legged friend in a City park or along a trail, pets must be kept on a leash at all times and all waste must be properly disposed of.

"People have a responsibility when they use City resources. Our parks are for the use of all citizens so people need to be prepared to pick up after their dogs - whether in the dog-park, or in any City park, and have a leash on their dog at all times, said Mrsny.

"Animal waste must be picked up and properly disposed of, not only to ensure the safety of citizens and other animals, but also to help keep the storm sewer system clean. The wastes may contain harmful organisms and parasites including E. coli, tapeworm, and roundworm. Dog stations containing bags for pet waste, and receptacles for disposal, are available in Ta-Ha-Zouka Park and Skyview Park," he added.

Why is it so important for your dog to be kept on a leash? Here are the top 10 reasons:

1. It's the law in Norfolk with a fine of up to \$500
2. Off-leash dogs can easily get in a walker or runner's way and cause an accident or injuries
3. Off-leash dogs can run away and get lost
4. An encounter with an off-leash dog can be terrifying for many people, especially children
5. Off-leash dogs can cause fights with leashed dogs. Each year, the City of Norfolk receives numerous reports of problem encounters, several resulting in dog bites or injuries
6. If an off-leash dog causes a serious issue, the owner could be held liable. This could equal criminal charges, lawsuits or even the loss of a pet
7. Pet owners are unable to find and dispose of their dog's wastes when not on a leash. This creates a health hazard for park users
8. When off-leash, dogs can quickly eat something it should not – or get trapped in tall weeds, water or traffic
9. The City of Norfolk offers a dog park at Ta-Ha-Zouka Park for dogs to run and play freely
10. Pet owners love their dogs and want to keep them safe

For more information about pets in City Parks call the Park Division at 402-844-2180.