



## *Town of Lexington*

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### **Be a Good Neighbor: Pick up after Your Pet**

**March 30, 2018** - Now that Spring has arrived, it is a great time to remind dog walkers and owners to pick up after their dog. It is important for dog walkers and owners to remember that it is your responsibility to pick up after your dog. As dog populations continue to rise, dog waste has become a bigger concern than it may have been in the past. Stepping in dog waste can be an embarrassing experience for anyone and especially for a child on a playing field or on the way to school.

As a dog walker or owner, be prepared to pick up after your dog whenever you take your dog outside. Excuses such as “*it will eventually go away,*” “*it’s in the woods,*” “*small dog, small waste,*” “*it’s fertilizer,*” and “*it’s too much work,*” are not acceptable. Picking up your dog’s waste is as simple as taking along a common shopping bag from the grocery store. Your local dog supply store may also sell rolls of bio degradable or compostable dog waste disposal bags that can be attached to your dog’s leash. Some are even scented. After you have picked up your dog’s waste, carry it with you until you can dispose of it properly. Never dispose of it in a catch basin since this may lead to other problems such as flooding from a clogged drain. In addition, the plastic bag may pollute water and land downstream.

Environmental stresses (temperature change, direct sunlight, moisture) quickly and effectively reduce bacterial numbers in dog feces. The transmission of disease from animal to human (Zoonoses) is more of a concern with wildlife than with domestic pet dogs (which make regular visits to a veterinarian and are checked for canine zoonoses). Proper personal hygiene and hand washing after outdoor activities will reduce the risk of any potential disease transmission. Accumulated dog feces is primarily an aesthetic problem.

Removing and disposing of your dog’s waste is the law in Lexington, and not doing so is punishable by a fine of up to \$50 (Lexington Code § 9-3). But the real reason to pick up dog waste is not because of the law; it is because it is the right thing to do. No one likes to step in dog waste, pick up other people’s dog waste, or have conflicts with neighbors over inappropriate treatment of dog waste. And certainly no one enjoys seeing piles of dog waste in public places.

By picking up your dog's waste, you are acting as a good neighbor to the people and land around you.

For more information, please contact the Office of Public Health, Gerard Cody, Health Director at 781-698-4503. This important message was brought to you by the Lexington Police, Animal Control, Lexington Board of Health and Conservation Commission.