

# APDWS™

## Basic Dog Walking guide

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# About this Guide

**This guide is an introduction to dog walking as a Business**

**This guide will cover dog walking and sitting and will look at the basics that you need to start a successful business in this industry.**

**We can not cover every aspect of the business and will be covering the main points that you need to consider, this guide is free and you are welcome to make notes, print it or share it with others.**

**The information provided is to assist you with some key points when considering entering into the dog walking and sitting industry. This is not a comprehensive guide and therefore you should carry out your own research. You can also find additional information on our website [www.apdws.com](http://www.apdws.com).**



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# Introduction

## Welcome to our dog walking guide

### Purpose of this guide

*We want to see you to succeed in your new venture and we have put together a guide to assist you in starting your dog walking business. We will cover some of the basics you need to know when starting out and how to maintain a successful dog walking business. We will look at how to avoid the pit falls and what it takes to be the best dog walker or sitter in your area.*

# Know your Market

## Is there sufficient demand

*The first thing you need to know if you are looking to start a new business, is if there is sufficient demand in your area. This may depend on how wide the area you are potentially going to cover and how many dogs you are going to walk at a time. Spend a little time on market research and see who would be your competitors. Consider dog sitting as an additional flow of income.*

*Most dog walkers will normally only start with one or two dogs and then increase as word of mouth spreads around, this is the best way to increase your business.*

*You can also use social media to advertise your business, joining local selling groups is probably one of the most successful ways of getting your business noticed. You can also try a local leaflet drop in your area, this does not have to be expensive just print some leaflets or even hand written notes and post them in the immediate area.*

# Insurance

**As a minimum you will require public liability insurance**

*Before you can start walking dogs you will require valid public liability insurance as a minimum, this insurance is to protect you as a business and your clients. Most local authorities will insist that you have this in place before issuing a licence. If you want to join a dog walking association, some will ask for proof of insurance including APDWS™.*

## **Business car insurance**

*If you intend to carry dogs in a vehicle as part of your dog walking business, you will require business insurance added to your policy. If you are stopped by the police carrying animals without business insurance, you will be prosecuted for having NO insurance.*

# Dog walking qualification

## No legal requirement for qualifications

*Whilst there is no requirement to have dog walking training or qualifications to become a dog walker, having a basic understanding of dogs and experience with owning a dog is essential.*

*You could consider gaining some experience through volunteering at your local shelter or dog rescue centre.*

*City & Guilds offer a dog walking course which could be worth considering.*

# Taking on new clients and their dogs

## We recommend taking the following steps

- 1. Meet the client and dog in their home environment.*
- 2. Write down details of clients contact information.*
- 3. Check if the dog has any allergies / medical conditions.*
- 4. Ask about temperament especially with other dogs.*
- 5. Make sure the dog is free from flea or mite infestation.*
- 6. Try walking the dog for a short distance.*
- 7. If the dog pulls can you maintain control?*
- 8. Does the dog require solo walking.*
- 9. Make sure you sign a contract with all details.*
- 10. Take note of veterinary practice name and number.*

# Dog Walking Essentials

**We recommend carrying the following items**

- 1. Spare leads*
- 2. Spare collar*
- 3. Mobile Phone*
- 4. Dog owners contact details*
- 5. Poop bags*
- 6. Basic dog first aid kit*
- 7. Torch if walking in the dark*
- 8. High Visibility jacket if walking at night or on busy roads*
- 9. Water on hot days*
- 10. Water proof coat when the weather is poor.*

# How many dogs can I walk?

## Things to consider when taking dogs on

*This is not as straight forward as it may seem as it depends on many factors, you need to consider size and the strength of the dogs you would be able to handle. Even a medium size dog can pull hard on the lead and be difficult to control. Other factors include the temperament of the dog , how socialised they are and any specific needs of the dog.*

*If you are just starting out we would suggest no more than 2 dogs and then slowly increase as you gain more experience. Some local councils may limit the amount of dogs you can walk and if you are a member of a dog walking association there might be limitations. APDWS™ limit is no more than 5 dogs on a walk.*

# keeping control of your dogs

## It is essential that you can keep control of your dogs

*You have a legal obligation to keep control of the dogs in your care at all times. This can be achieved by considering what dogs you walk and their individual needs. Consider the temperament of the dogs, their size and how they walk on a lead. You may have to consider solo walks if a dog you have is nervous or unable to socialise with other dogs.*

*You may have to use harnesses with some dogs as this offers far more control than just a collar and lead.*

# Plan a dog walking route

**It's important to pre plan your route for the walks.**

*It's good practice to plan a route for your dog walks and there is nothing wrong with having a few different routes as this helps to relieve boredom for both dogs and walker.*

*Try to avoid walks along main roads where possible, if this is not feasible, keep your dogs on a short lead. If you want to let some or all your dogs off a lead for a run, avoid letting them all off at the same time to maintain control. Ensure there are no restrictions on the land and do not let them off if there is livestock loose. Be aware that there may well be other dogs walked in these areas.*

*Try to avoid areas with large spans of water or rivers as these can be quite dangerous if the dog becomes tangled or distressed.*

# Enjoy your work

## Have some fun

*Most dog walkers start their business through their love of dogs and this is an excellent basis for a dog walker.*

*It's important to enjoy your work and dog walking can be a very rewarding occupation, whilst providing an essential service to dog owners across the country. You have the opportunity to be your own boss and work hours that suit your lifestyle, while doing something you enjoy.*

# First Aid

Consider taking a basic first aid course for dogs, hopefully you will never have to call up on it but its good to know you have the knowledge there if you need it.

We offer a free basic first aid course as part of our membership, but there are other courses available.



# Disclaimer

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We can only cover the basics of dog walking and there may be other considerations not covered in this guide.

There may be other local considerations or legal requirements in your area and due diligence should be used.

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# End of Guide

**Thank you for taking the time to read this guide and we hope that you found it useful.**

**You are free to share this guide to others who may be starting out in the dog walking industry.**



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