

PET GUIDELINES FOR STATE PARKS

These Rules are taken directly from the state parks site: in.gov/dnr/state-parks

Help your pet be a good guest

Hiking trails, picnic areas, boat ramps, and campgrounds can be busy, unfamiliar, and even sometimes overwhelming places for dogs and other pets. Please follow these basic property rules regarding pets.

The 6-foot leash rule applies to the entire property and to all pets. The only time your pet may be off the leash is inside your camper, tent, or vehicle. This includes pets traveling with mountain bikers and horse riders. If it's not possible to keep your pet on a 6-foot leash, the best and safest option is for your pet to stay at home. At reservoirs (Patoka, Brookville, Cagles Mill, Cecil M. Harden, Salamonie, Mississinewa, Monroe, Hardy) dogs may be permitted to be off leash when in lawful pursuit of wild animals or when authorized by a license for field trials or in a designated training area.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding pet fencing and leashes at Indiana State Parks

This FAQ is intended to provide answers to the questions you have related to the containment of pets at Indiana State Park properties. These responses are based on Indiana Administrative Code and Indiana State Park regulations.

- Are pet fences permitted at Indiana State Parks properties (at campsites or in other locations)?

Indiana code requires that all pets are either on a leash or in a cage while visiting Indiana State Parks. The code does not allow for pet fencing to substitute this requirement. Unfortunately, there have been many instances where loose animals have made their way into/over the pet fencing and/or animals have been able to get out of pet fencing because they are not secured by a leash.

- Is this a policy or is it enforceable by law?

It is enforceable as a part of the Indiana Administrative Code (IAC). There are two property regulations that address this situation:

- IAC 312 IAC 8-2-6 (a)(1) states that a person who possesses a pet or service animal must keep the animal caged or on a leash not more than six (6) feet long and must attend the animal at all times. There are exceptions to this, such approved hunting or field trial areas at reservoirs and fish and wildlife areas, but those exceptions are rare.
- IAC 8-2-10(6)(A) indicates that, except as authorized by a license, a person must not place or maintain a structure within a DNR property. A temporary pet fence would be considered a structure and is therefore not permitted.

These codes and all others are in place to help protect all of our property guests. Indiana State Park security officers and other professional staff who see pet fences at campsites will make it clear, when possible, that these fences are not permitted.

- **Is a tent or dining fly considered a structure, too?**

Tents, recreational vehicles, and associated equipment to provide cover from the weather are permitted on campsites under 312 IAC 8-2-11 (a). That equipment does not include pet fencing.

- **How is a fence defined and different from a cage?**

A cage has a top, bottom, and sides and is appropriately sized for the animal so the animal can be clearly confined and so that other animals cannot enter the space where the pet is located. The cage should be made of durable material that separates the pet from the immediate area and may also be used to transport the pet safely.

- **Does this rule apply to electric fences?**

Electric fences, leashes, or other electric control methods are prohibited and do not supplement or replace the 6-foot leash requirement.

- **Can a fence be used for toddlers or other small children?**

A fence is considered a structure, whether it is used for pets or children, and as noted, 312 IAC 8-2-10(6)(A) states that, except as authorized by a license, a person must not place or maintain a structure within a DNR property. However, a portable, usually collapsible playpen, crib, or other similar enclosure designed specifically for babies and small children is permissible when used for that purpose. These devices, in which a baby or small child is placed for safety, include an open top, and sides with bars or netting that surrounds them.

- **We see fences in campsites all the time. Why don't you enforce this if it is a property rule?**

Every guest is responsible for knowing and following the property regulations, just as each of us is expected to know and follow all traffic laws for our safety and for the safety of others, regardless of whether an enforcement officer is present.

During 2023, our security officers and other professional staff who see pet fences at campsites will make it clear, when possible, that these fences are not permitted.

The best solution if you plan to bring your pets with you to our properties is to make sure you make plans to carry and use a 6-foot leash for each pet, both at your site and when you leave the campground to hike or visit other park locations.

Thanks for keeping pets, wildlife, and people safe and healthy when you visit an Indiana State Park property.

Your pet is a guest but the wildlife lives here. Please respect wildlife and plant life. Follow the 6-foot leash rule to protect wildlife, other people, and your pet.

Please pick up after your pet. Animal waste can contain parasites. The hiker behind you and the camper who follows you at the site do not want to step in pet waste. Buy waste bags at your pet store or bring plastic grocery bags. If you are hiking, pick up the waste and carry it out. When cleaning your campsite before leaving, remove all pet waste and place the bags in the campground dumpster. Double bagging is helpful.

Campground quiet hours (11 p.m. – 7 a.m.) apply to all guests, including pets. If your dog barks excessively at your campsite, particularly during quiet hours, we may ask that you take your pet home.

Parks are not the place for territorial pets. If your pet is highly dominant or aggressive, please leave your animal at home in familiar territory.

When you go exploring, please take your pet with you. Keep your pet with you at all times. Do not leave your pet tied up at a campsite or locked in a car.

Pets, excluding service animals, as designated by Indiana Code, are prohibited at:

- swimming pools
- beaches (unless specifically designated for pets)
- rented recreation buildings
- the Pioneer Village at Spring Mill State Park
- public buildings

Be sure to carry fresh, clean water for your pet as you hike or visit other areas in the park.

Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up-to-date. This state law protects your pet from other pets (or wildlife) that may not be in perfect health.

A local kennel may provide a good compromise. If you want to experience the outdoors with your pet but your pet doesn't handle the campground well, days in the park and nights in a kennel might be an option. Check the park office or campground gate for information.