



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS -- DOG DAYCARE

What are the requirements to attend daycare?

In order to attend daycare, your dog must be all of the following:

- At least 16 weeks old
- Spayed or neutered (if older than 6 months)
- Non-aggressive to dogs and humans
- Up to date on vaccinations for Bordetella, Rabies, and DHPP
- Willing to approach, be approached, and comfortably handled by strangers
- Protected from fleas on a monthly, year-round basis (oral or topical treatment)

To sign a new dog up for daycare, please follow these steps:

1. Read through this handout, the Daycare Application, and the Assumption of Risk contract carefully, to make sure you understand and are comfortable with our policies and expectations.
2. Fill out the Daycare Application.
3. Make us a copy of your vet records showing proof of all required vaccinations.
4. Email (bluecollardoghouse@gmail.com) or bring in your application and vaccination records for review.
5. Wait for our call to schedule your daycare trial. Trials are conducted from 7:30-9:00 am, Mondays-Thursdays. We cannot schedule your trial until all your paperwork is received and reviewed.

How do we evaluate dogs during their daycare trial?

The first phase (10-15 minutes) of your dog's trial is spent ensuring he does well being handled by our staff. We spend this time with all dogs individually to evaluate their comfort level accepting petting and being grabbed and held by the collar. This gives our staff the chance to start building a positive relationship. Your dog must pass this handling phase to continue on. In the second phase, we introduce him to a few dogs of different sizes, breeds, genders, and temperaments, one-by-one. We watch for any body language signals of fear, stress, or aggression. Some dogs start off shy and timid; this phase gives us a chance to gauge whether your dog is ready to join the pack, or needs a little more time to acclimate. When he begins to show more interest, he is allowed full access to our daycare room and outside yard. It is not uncommon for dogs – especially younger puppies with no group play experience – to spend their trial watching from the sidelines. Others join the play right away. And some tell us through their behavior that daycare is just not the right setting for them. The cost of the daycare trial is \$20, but if your dog fails the trial, you will not be charged.

What are the daycare hours? Do I need to reserve a spot?

Our daycare facility is open Monday through Friday, from 7 am to 7 pm. We do not provide daycare on weekends. Once your dog has passed the trial, you do not need reservations. You may drop him off any time after 7 am, but no later than 2 pm. If your dog is new, nervous, or prone to separation anxiety, we do suggest arriving and departing earlier in the day. The heavy stream of departing dogs in the late afternoon and evening can be very stressful to those personalities. Please aim to pick up your dog by no later than about 6:50 pm, to help us clean and close the facility on time.

Anything else I need to know when I come to daycare?

Our lobby can be very congested, and not every dog you encounter will be friendly. Please look through the door before you come barging into the face of potential disaster. Your dog must always be leashed, and you must always be holding that leash. (Please lock retractable leashes to a short length.) For the safety of everyone, you should not allow your dog to greet other dogs in the lobby. Please also make sure your children know to ASK FIRST before approaching strange dogs. To minimize potential entanglement during play, all dogs in daycare must wear a well-fitting, quick-release collar. These collars snap open and closed, and are much easier to get off, in an emergency. If you do not have a quick-release collar, you may purchase one here or elsewhere. If your dog does better in a harness, please bring him inside with his harness on. We'll just take it off for playtime, and then put it back on when you arrive for pickup.

How much does it cost?

Daycare rates are shown on the table below. You can purchase individual visits as you go, or receive a discounted rate by purchasing multi-day packages in advance. Please note that all packages are **NON REFUNDABLE**. If you’re not sure your dog will be coming with some regularity, purchasing a prepaid package can be risky. We advise you to wait for new dogs to comfortably transition into the pack – typically four to six successful visits - before buying packages. Dogs from the same household can share packages, but only households with two+ active daycare dogs can purchase the Family Packs. Packages expire if your dog is absent for more than a year in between visits.

DAYCARE	Rate
Daycare Trial	\$20
Mini Visit (< 90 minutes)	\$10
Single Visit, Half Day (< 5 hours)	\$30
Single Visit, Whole Day	\$40
Package of 5 Days	\$185 (save \$3/day)
Package of 10 Days	\$350 (save \$5/day)
Package of 20 Days	\$640 (save \$8/day)
Family Package – 40 Days	\$1200 (save \$10/day)
Package of 5 Half Days	\$135 (save \$3/day)
Package of 10 Half Days	\$250 (save \$5/day)
Package of 20 Half Days	\$440 (save \$8/day)
Family Package – 40 Half Days	\$800 (save \$10/day)

What happens if I’m late picking up my dog?

We have a very strict late policy. You will be charged a \$20 late fee if you do not pick up your dog by 7:10 pm. After 7:10 but before 7:20 you will be charged \$30; after 7:20 but before 7:30 you will be charged \$40; and any time after 7:30 you will be charged \$50. We understand that sometimes ‘stuff’ happens; you will be allowed one free late pickup.

What type of dogs do best in daycare?

Truthfully, some dogs are just not made for daycare. A typical daycare is loud and boisterous, which can be overwhelming for dogs that are shy, insecure, old, or socially inexperienced. Many dogs enjoy daycare while they’re young, but lose interest when they’re older. Some are overwhelmed at the beginning, but then settle in. We like to give all dogs adequate time to adjust. But if your dog doesn’t seem to benefit from daycare, it’s best (and safest) to respect his/her choice. In general, sporting breeds tend to do well. Herding breeds and terriers can really go either way. The constant motion and crowding may be too stimulating to their natural instincts. Dogs with high prey drives, low bite thresholds, dominant personalities, separation anxiety, toy/space aggression, or inadequate social skills may also be unsuitable. If your dog is so afraid of people that it won’t willingly come to us, we can’t turn it loose in our daycare yard.

Will my dog get dirty?

Maybe. We’re located in a low-lying area close to the Sound and adjacent to a marsh. Fluctuating tides and heavy rains, combined with a high water table, can make our yard wet and messy in the fall and winter. And in the summer, the hose, sprinklers, and swimming pools are in heavy use. We advise you to keep towels or blankets in your car, just in case. There is also a free ‘toweling off’ station in the corner of the lobby. If you arrive before 5:30 pm and don’t require assistance from our grooming staff, you can also use our self-wash tubs for a discounted rate of \$10. Or ask us how to save even more money by joining our Daycare Self Wash Membership Club. We think the benefits of a tired dog trump the hassles of a dirty dog. But if you don’t agree, please don’t bring your dog to daycare in wet weather.

How many dogs do you typically have? Do you have a separate area for small dogs?

We are fortunate to have one of the largest daycare spaces in the area, including a huge outdoor yard. On average, 40-50 dogs attend our daycare each day. Our staffing levels are at their highest during the busiest hours (typically, between 9-5), and decrease in the evening, as dogs start to go home. We don’t currently separate the dogs by size, but if we feel that your dog would do better in a smaller group, we can recommend other daycares with that setup.

How will I know how my dog is doing?

Feel free to ask us how your dog is doing, at any point. As time permits, we may also send you emailed Report Cards to communicate issues, concerns, and general progress. Report Cards are not always indicative of bad things! You might get a Report Card just to say ‘all is well,’ or to share a cute story, photo, or video. If we notice undesirable behaviors but they don’t represent a safety risk, we may send you Report Cards alerting you to our concerns and what steps we’re taking to work on them. We use Report Cards to maintain an open dialogue with you, but we can’t predict everything that may go wrong. We reserve the right to dismiss your dog from daycare on any day that we witness behavior that presents a risk to safety, even if we have not previously seen or documented that behavior via Report Cards.

Do the dogs ever fight?

Yes, but it’s quite rare. Our trial process screens out the vast majority of dogs that are not suitable. After that, it’s a matter of diligence and experience on the part of our staff. Dogs in a pack will naturally seek order amongst themselves. Minor disagreements resulting from over excitement, shared resources, challenges to the pecking order, and other breakdowns in dog communication are perfectly normal and acceptable, as long as they follow basic rules of good canine conduct. Although these spats can look and sound ferocious to the untrained eye, the overwhelming majority end without bloodshed in a matter of seconds. Our daycare employees are taught to recognize and redirect any behaviors that could escalate into a fight. We’re probably stricter about some of these behaviors than you need to be at home, simply because we have so many dogs.

Can my dog get hurt while playing? What happens then?

Yes. Active play can result in injuries, for any species. Most daycare injuries are superficial wounds that do not require a veterinarian. These may include stiffness or minor limping from running and jumping; broken, split or blistered pads, toenails or dewclaws from turning and twisting on pavement; and skin tears, scratches or minor punctures from over-exuberant play. If your dog gets injured in daycare, we will immediately isolate him from the pack to assess the severity of the injury. If it appears to be superficial, we may clean the wound, monitor him closely from that point forward, and discuss it with you at pickup. If we believe your dog should see a veterinarian, but it doesn’t appear to be an emergency, we may call you to arrange early pickup and a visit to your own veterinarian. For true emergencies, we may decide to transport your dog to the closest veterinarian (Edmonds Westgate Veterinary Hospital). As soon as your dog is safely there, we will call you. We expect you to immediately contact the veterinarian to take responsibility for treatment decisions and provide full payment. You are responsible for your dog’s veterinary bills.

Can my dog also get a bath or haircut on a daycare day?

You can schedule grooming services in advance, if you’re looking for a specific day. You can also take your chances by asking upon arrival if there are any grooming slots available that day. Your dog can play in daycare before and/or after his grooming appointment. (But if you choose to let him play afterwards, we can’t guarantee he’ll stay clean and dry.) You’ll only pay for a half-day of daycare on those days, no matter how long your dog stays.

Why can’t I go through the door into the daycare hallway?

The door/window to the daycare facility is the equivalent of your own front door. What happens when a stranger knocks on your door or enters your house without warning? Your dog goes ballistic, right? Now imagine multiplying that noise and excitement level by 40-50 dogs. Our top priority is to protect the safety of all dogs in our care. We accomplish this by controlling excess excitement and territorial behavior. The barking and leaping frenzy that erupts when strangers enter the daycare or stand peering into the window can quickly escalate into bad behavior or even a fight as dogs jockey for position and release pent-up frustration.

Do you have any breed restrictions?

We reserve the right to refuse daycare services to any dog, for any reason. However, we determine a dog’s suitability for daycare based on his behavior, not his breed. If you’re not comfortable having your dog around any specific breed, you should not bring him to our daycare. With that said, we recognize that some breeds are genetically inclined to be dog aggressive, once they reach sexual maturity. And certain other breeds have a personality and/or playstyle that can be problematic in a large pack. All dogs will be evaluated for temperament and appropriate social behavior, during their daycare trial, and throughout their enrollment.