

February 21, 2019

Dear DCR Park User:

Any commercial use of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) managed property requires a permit, but for many years commercial dog walkers have been using DCR parks for their businesses without permission. As a result of an open and public process to update the DCR regulations, the agency is now set to commence a new [Commercial Dog Walking Permit](#) starting in 2019.

The annual permit, which will expire on December 31st each year, regardless of when the permit is acquired during the year, will provide commercial dog walkers with access to specific DCR parklands in order to exercise their clients' pets. The permit will cost \$100 per year, and the collection of these nominal fees will serve as a vital revenue resource for the agency as the Department continues to further its mission to conserve and protect the state's natural resources, enabling citizens across the Commonwealth to incorporate and enjoy outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state parks system.

The annual Commercial Dog Walking Permit will authorize a handler for up to eight dogs. Requirements for an individual to receive a permit and remain in good standing with the agency include:

- All dogs must be properly licensed in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 140, section 137 and 141](#) and all applicable local municipal ordinances;
- All dogs must wear a collar (no choke or prong collars are allowed) with current tags containing detailed license and rabies vaccine information;
- All dogs must remain leashed within on-leash areas, with a leash no longer than 10 feet in length tethered to a person; and,
- All dogs must be under control of the commercial dog walker at all times regardless if in an approved off-leash area or on-leash area.

Additionally, commercial dog walkers must display their issued permit while walking dogs on DCR parklands and abide by all [dogs in DCR parks rules and etiquette](#), including proper disposal of dog waste. Furthermore, with the exception of service dogs, dogs are not allowed at the following locations: Walden Pond State Reservation in Concord, City Square Park in Charlestown, Plum Island's Sandy Point State Reservation in Newburyport, the Boston Harbor Islands, inside DCR buildings (administrative offices, visitors centers, restrooms, etc.), indoor skating rinks, yurts and cabins, all DCR swimming pools, all DCR swimming beaches between May 1 and September 15 (unless otherwise posted), and all of DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection land and bodies of water, such as the Quabbin, Sudbury, Wachusett, and Foss Watersheds, and the Ware River Roger H. Lonergan Intake protection zone.

Those in violation of the Commercial Dog Walking Permit may receive a citation per infraction. For more information regarding the permit, please visit the DCR's [Commercial Dog Walking Permit](#) webpage. We appreciate your support in this matter, and please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L. Roy', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Leo P. Roy  
Commissioner  
Department of Conservation and Recreation