



Marin County Open Space District preserves are set aside to provide habitat for native wildlife. Wild animals become accustomed to the presence of people and dogs encountered on roads and trails, but when unleashed dogs explore adjacent areas, wild creatures perceive them as predators and react with fear or flight. MCOSD regulations governing dogs are intended to protect native species that depend on these remaining tracts of undeveloped land and to ensure that all visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience. Be respectful of others, be in control of your dog(s) at all times, and always clean up and pack out.

When visiting MCOSD Preserves with Your Dog

- Unless signed otherwise by MCOSD, dogs are permitted on MCOSD lands when restrained by a leash.
- Leashes must not exceed six feet in length.
- Dogs are allowed off-leash on fire protection roads only when under the direct and immediate control of a responsible person.
- Dogs may not run free in marshes, meadows, ponds, hillsides, or on trails.
- Sensitive wildlife areas and preserves may have additional restrictions, as signed by MCOSD (**dogs are not permitted at Santa Margarita Island Preserve, except service animals**).
- A maximum of three dogs per person are permitted per visit on MCOSD lands.
- Commercial dog walkers require a special permit – visit [permits](#) for more information.
- Dog owners and individuals accompanying dogs on MCOSD lands are required to clean up and remove dog waste.
- All individuals bringing a dog or multiple dogs on MCOSD lands must possess a leash no longer than six feet in length, for each dog.
- Dogs may not be left unattended in vehicles at any time.
- Violation of the MCOSD code is subject to citation and fine.

Excerpt from the MCOSD Code

Section 2.05.010 - Dogs and other animals. Dogs and other domestic animals are allowed on District lands when under the direct and immediate control of a responsible person. Up to three dogs per individual are allowed, with exceptions beyond that number granted only through issuance by the District General Manager of a Special or Commercial Use Permit. On maintained and designated fire protection roads three dogs off-leash per individual are allowed. In all other

areas, dogs and other domestic animals must be fastened to and restrained by a chain or leash not exceeding six feet in length. No person shall do any of the following on District lands:

- a. allow any dog or other domestic animal to enter environmentally sensitive or restricted areas of District lands;
- b. allow any dog or other domestic animal to interfere with, bother or disturb others using District lands;
- c. allow any dog or other domestic animal to hunt, pursue or harass other animals or wildlife;
- d. bring or keep a noisy, vicious or dangerous dog or other animal;
- e. bring or keep a dog four months of age or more without proof that the dog has a valid rabies inoculation and a valid license;
- f. fail to promptly remove from District lands any dog or other domestic animal after being ordered by District personnel to do so;
- g. allow excrement from dogs under their control to remain on District land;
- h. bring dogs or other domestic animals onto District lands without possessing a chain or leash not exceeding six feet in length for each dog or animal so that they shall be prepared to restrain their animals, if necessary.

Visit [Rules and Regulations](#) to view the entire Marin County Open Space District Code.

Leash-Only Preserves

Dogs must be on leash at all times at the following MCOSD preserves, either because there are no fire protection roads or because of the presence of sensitive wildlife habitat:

- Bald Hill
- Bolinas Lagoon
- Bothin Marsh
- Cascade Canyon
- Deer Island
- Maurice Thorner
- Ring Mountain
- Rush Creek
- San Pedro Ridge

Note: Dogs are not permitted at Santa Margarita Island Preserve, except service animals.

Dog Parks

The Marin County Parks and Open Space Department does not have a formal dog park or, as the Marin Humane Society describes, “a place where dogs can socialize and run off leash in a safe, secure environment.” Please visit the [Marin Humane Society](#) for information about dog parks in Marin. Check out [DogFriendly.com](#) for a comprehensive guide to dog-friendly locations in Marin and the North Bay.

Dogs and Other Land Management Agencies

A mix of local, state, and federal agencies own public land throughout Marin. Each agency has unique and different rules concerning dogs. The following links are provided to help dog owners locate information and understand which public agency has jurisdiction over the area(s) they want to visit with their dog(s).

- Visit [Marin County Parks](#) to learn about the rules governing dogs in Marin County parks and facilities.
- Visit the [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#) to learn about the rules governing dogs on their lands.
- Visit the [Point Reyes National Seashore](#) to learn about the rules governing dogs on their lands.
- Visit the [Marin Municipal Water District](#) to learn about the rules governing dogs on their lands.
- Use [Find a Park](#) tool to locate a California State Park in Marin County. Select the By City/County link, then select Marin from the dropdown list of counties and click the park name you want to visit or learn more about.

Rules and Regulations

Rules and regulations of Marin County Open Space District are designed to ensure visitor safety and protect natural resources. Recreation is permitted on open space lands only when consistent with resource management objectives. Activities which threaten or endanger visitors, the land, or the environment are not permitted.

[Municode](#) provides free access to the Marin County Municipal Code and the MCOSD Code.

Note: the MCOSD Code is in "APPENDIX A".

Frequently Asked About Rules and Regulations

Individuals and groups are responsible for knowing and following the rules and regulations when visiting MCOSD preserves. Some of the most frequently asked about MCOSD codes are:

Bicycles: No person shall operate any bicycle on district lands except upon fire protection roads, designated bicycle pathways or public roads not signed against such use. Furthermore, no person shall operate or possess any bicycle elsewhere on district lands, including trails, unless signed specifically to permit such possession...

Dogs: Dogs and other domestic animals are allowed on District lands when under the direct and immediate control of a responsible person. Up to three dogs per individual are allowed, with exceptions beyond that number granted only through issuance by the District General Manager of a Special or Commercial Use Permit. On maintained and designated fire protection roads three

dogs off-leash per individual are allowed. In all other areas, dogs and other domestic animals must be fastened to and restrained by a chain or leash not exceeding six feet in length...

Fires: No person shall build, light or maintain any open or outdoor fires, including barbecues, camp stoves, gas lanterns, etc., within district lands. In addition, no person shall possess such items, nor similar items, while on district lands.

Group Use: No group, school, club or similar organization, whether formally organized or not, shall hold or conduct any activity on district lands with twenty or more participants without prior written approval of the district. Group use of district lands is subject to prior reservations, conditions and charges.

Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD): For inquiries concerning the use of a power-driven mobility device on a County or Open Space District trail, pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, § 35.137, Mobility devices, please contact Principal Planner [Steve Petterle](#) at (415) 473-6394.

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