



case study

Background

Bedford Hills Township Bark Park has become a popular recreational spot for dog owners to allow their pets to socialize and exercise off-leash. Over the past year, an increasing number of dog-related incidents have been reported within the park, raising concerns about the safety and well-being of both dogs and their owners.

Incident Overview

Unsafe Entry and Exit Practices

- Numerous incidents have been documented where dog owners failed to use the vestibule properly when entering and exiting the Bark Park.
- Instances include dogs slipping out of collars, escaping through open gates, and owners struggling to control their dogs during these transitions.

Size Guidelines Ignored

- A considerable number of conflicts have arisen due to owners not adhering to the designated size guidelines for the small and large breed areas of the park.
- Instances involve larger dogs being placed in the small breed section, resulting in potential intimidation, fear, and altercations.

Lack of Canine Behavior Awareness

- Several incidents have occurred where dog owners were unable to recognize and respond to canine behavior cues effectively.
- Examples include owners failing to intervene when their dog exhibited signs of stress, fear, or aggression, leading to confrontations and injuries.

Data Analysis

Incident Reports

A review of incident reports from the past 12 months reveals a significant increase in the number of incidents related to unsafe entry and exit practices, disregard for size guidelines, and a lack of understanding of canine behavior.

Survey Results

A recent survey conducted among park visitors indicates a concerning lack of knowledge among dog owners regarding proper park etiquette, leash handling, and canine behavior recognition.

Emergency Room Visits

An analysis of emergency room visits related to dog park incidents shows an uptick in injuries to both dogs and owners, emphasizing the need for proactive safety measures.

Stakeholder Implications

Public Safety Concerns

The recurring incidents pose a threat to public safety, leading to potential liabilities for Bedford Hills Township.

Negative Community Impact

The increasing number of incidents is tarnishing the reputation of the Bark Park and affecting the overall experience for responsible dog owners.

Recommendation

Given the data highlighting the frequent incidents and the lack of knowledge among dog owners, it is recommended that a dog owner safety course be developed to address these issues. The course should cover proper entry and exit procedures, adherence to size guidelines, and education on canine behavior to reduce the occurrence of preventable incidents. This targeted training will contribute to a safer and more enjoyable environment at Bedford Hills Township Bark Park for both dogs and their owners.