

**Immediate Release:**  
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### **GTCHD reminds dog owners and caretakers of Michigan Leash Law**

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) would like to remind dog owners and walkers that under [MCL 287.262](#), off-leash dogs are not permitted in any park or public space within the county boundaries. The announcement stems from an event earlier this spring where an off-leash dog was shot out of self-defense.

Those that do not abide by the law are subject to a dog at large citation, which such fines are set by civil courts. A misdemeanor can be issued for repeat offenders or if there is an injury as a result of a dog being at large. The only exception to the leash law is within the boundaries of a designated dog park.

GTCHD Animal Control Supervisor, Jaime Croel, says that usage of parks has gone up the past year with the pandemic as people seek space for themselves and their pets. "We just want to remind everyone that leashing your dog is not only the law, but it's the respectful thing to do for all that are trying to enjoy the parks."

"We had a very scary, and unfortunate incident at Hickory which resulted in a dog being shot and another owner suffering an injury as a result of defending themselves," said Croel. "We would like the public to know that the laws are set in place to protect both dogs and people. The situation could have been avoided if the dog at large had been leashed."

Anyone that witnesses a dog off-leash in a public space is encouraged to call GTCHD Animal Control at (231) 995-6080.

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