

Are Crates at Camp Mandatory?

The question of mandatory crating comes up a lot. We ask people to bring crates for their own dogs' well being and safety. We do not perform "bed checks" at night to make sure everyone puts their dog in a crate. We don't care if your dog sleeps on the bed or where ever, but we do not want one dog in the room threatening, guarding territory, or stealing from the other dogs in the room. Sometimes, just a dog pacing back and forth at large in the room is enough to drive your roommates batty. It is up to the camper who opts not to use the crate to make sure that the dog does not perform any of these annoyances.

Also, if your dog is loose in your room, your roommate could come through the door and accidentally let your dog out, where he may get into the main hall and find the exit door. Another reason crates come in handy is for a place to let your dog rest and have quiet time while you are in a lecture class or in the shower. If you don't have a place to confine your dog when he can't be in your sight, then you'd have to put him in your car. We don't allow tying dogs to any fixed objects at camp. You cannot expect other campers to always be willing or able to hold your dog's leash. They are there to enjoy camp with their dog, not yours.

If you are bringing more than one dog, there will be times when you will only want to have one with you (trying to teach something new to your dog like agility or swimming or dock diving for example). So the other dog that's supposed to be resting will need a safe place to stay. Just because your dogs don't mind being taken one at a time at home doesn't mean they will be ok with that at camp. After all it a new place AND the dogs seem to know it's for THEIR enjoyment and that there is lots of fun stuff going on, so they don't want to get left out! Plan for the dog on down time to bark, whine, spin or whatever other behaviors he can think of to try to get you to come back and take him too. This is another reason we recommend one dog per person, especially the first year.

Now, you could eliminate most of the possibilities of the above things happening if you brought your own RV, rented a private room, or stayed off site. However, if your dog experienced separation anxiety in the room here, and damaged something trying to get to you, you would have to pay for it. (If the only issue is barking, whining, crate scratching, and other noise, your options are an RV, tent or off-site.)

We had a person come to camp after she had gone out and bought a crate specifically for camp. Her dog had never become accustomed to being confined in one. He started salivating and drooling and fretting. I told her to fold it back up and put it in her car, because it was doing more harm than good. We are not out to make dogs uncomfortable, but we do want people to be in control of their dogs at all times, and there's no better way to be sure your dog isn't causing harm to himself or others in your absence than by using a crate. You could try to spend every moment with your dog, but that's pretty impossible (we DO hope ever so much that you'll shower occasionally!). :-)

If you need help getting your dog accustomed to a crate (which should be done well in advance of camp) there is training information available on the website.

So, if you want to opt not to bring a crate, you just must have some other viable option if you suddenly find yourself in a situation where you must do something without the dog.

