

## SAFETY TIPS FOR DOGS

- 1) Gradually introduce your dog to the water. They need SWIM LESSONS too! All dogs instinctively paddle, but inexperienced dogs only use their front legs. This results in a vertical swim which is exhausting and ineffective. Teach your dog where the steps are or install a “Skamper Ramp” for your dog. Dogs will panic and try to get out the side, only to exhaust themselves and eventually drown. The best way to train them is to get into the pool with your dog. Hold him under the belly so he can use both his front and back legs, walk a few feet away from the steps, and then with someone on the steps encouraging him, release him with a little shove toward the steps. Repeat this getting further away from the steps each time until he can find the steps himself.
- 2) Dogs have poor depth perception. Mark the pool steps with a large potted plant so he can identify the steps or install a non-slip ramp for dogs.
- 3) Always use a life jacket on your dog in lakes, ponds, rivers or the ocean. Just like humans, dogs can be overcome by exhaustion, leg cramps or heat stroke.
- 4) Keep floatation devices nearby. Dogs panic easily when trouble hits, and a panicked dog can accidentally drown a person trying to assist. Try to throw out a long line preserver first.
- 5) Teach your dog *Pool Manners*. A big, excited Golden Retriever jumping into the pool could injure a child or adult. The *come* and *wait* commands are equally important around water.
- 6) Watch your dog’s nails. They can quickly wear their nails down to the quick on the decking causing bleeding (keep a septic stick on hand). Also be watchful of their paws as repeated launching from the pool steps can tear up their paw pads.
- 7) Unless your pool has a solid cover that is strong enough to support their weight, do not leave it on if your dog has access to the pool area. Dogs can become trapped in the pool cover.
- 8) Avoid letting your dog drink pool water. Keep an ample water bowl near the pool.
- 9) Rinse your dog off after each swim. Chlorine and other chemicals or pond and lake bacteria can cause moisture induced infections. Make sure their collar is dried out, as wet collars left on can lead to “Hot Spots.”
- 10) Have a great summer with your furry friends!