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| **What is a relieving accident?*** Any time a pup requires relieving without a planned command to do so.
* This includes house accidents, indoor relieving during outings, outdoor walks that are interrupted by the need to stop to relieve.

**Relieving Protocol - June 2006**Relieving in harness is one of the leading reasons dogs do not become Guides. While there are some dogs that show stress in this way, others are tripped up by habits developed as puppies. There are three areas of relieving we can work on to help our pups avoid the “relieving trap.”**1. In the House:** Heel the puppy to the relieving area, with a double clipped training leash, shortened down. Have the dog sit.  Lengthen the leash so the dog can hear the snaphook click. Cast or send him out to your right, away from your left side. Have him circle or figure-eight in front of you and to the right. Try to habituate the puppy never to relieve in heel position or on your left. Stand in one place--take no more than one step in any direction. Don't let the pup lead you around. Quietly praise the dog for sniffing and other pre-relieving behaviors. Don't distract the dog by talking to it or repeating "do your business" over and over. Give the pup five minutes to finish. If the puppy doesn't relieve, crate her until the next scheduled relieving--even if that is four hours away. (If the pup has medical problems such as bladder infection or diahhrea, relieving sooner is necessary). Crating reduces the likely hood of accidents and allows you more control of relieving behaviors.  Don't scold the dog if it doesn't empty, simply put it in its kennel until next time. Once the dog successfully relieves, give it lavish praise and play time. Always leash-relieve your dog before letting it play in the yard. The free time after relieivng will make a positive association for the dog with doing its business when asked. Get the pup used to relieving on various surfaces and with distractions (i.e. in the front yard) right from the start. The command “Do your business” means “Now is your chance to go and you'd better take it because it's going to be a while before you can go again!”  .**2. On Outings:** When the pup is very young, plan outings that are short and non-stressful. Dedicate the outing to socializing the puppy and don't expect to get any errands done while you're out. Do not relieve the puppy before you leave home; rather, ask him to relieve before you enter the store. If the pup doesn't relieve, take it home, or take a ten minute break in the car and try again. Once he's relieved, go into the store for about ten minutes, then take the puppy back to the car, drive home, and give it another chance to relieve. This teaches the pup to relieve away from home with distractions and gives you an “empty” pup and hopefully a successful outing. As the pup gets older, lengthen the amount of time in the store. Once your pup is fairly successful, it's time to start taking him on errands and along for more of your everyday routine. If you have your pup at work all day, establish a “home base” at work that you can use as a second home.**3. On Neighborhood walks:** Relieve before you start out on your walk. Correct your puppy for trying to relieve on route. Have the puppy sit every few steps to encourage him to use his "holding it" muscles. Make it home if possible before letting the puppy finish up. After a while, the puppy will develop a pattern. If he always defecates after twenty minutes of walking, walk out ten minutes and back ten minutes, so he can make it home without relieving on the walk. Then gradually increase the length of time he is asked to go before relieving. The idea is to teach the puppy that it is never okay to relieve on route, and never okay to relieve on the left side in heel position.    A year-old dog should only need to relieve four to five times a day. Unless there is a physical problem, don't let your dog try to convince you otherwise, especially if it's fidgeting at work or class and simply wants a little break—it's okay (even desirable) to ask it to hold its bladder until a convenient break in your schedule! Relieving success for an one-year-old puppy includes walking a six-to-eight block neighborhood route without stopping to empty. If your pup relieves on a outing more than twice a year, that's too much. Careful attention to relieving habits will pay off with fewer embarrassing accidents to clean up in public, and, hopefully, a grand graduation day!***Graduates often touch their dogs so they can verify that the dog is actually relieving. The training department will work on this procedure when your dog is in formal training. Please DO NOT touch your dog when it is relieving.*** |
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| **Guidelines for Relieving a Puppy when it is wearing a  Puppy Coat:** * Remember to take off the coat before giving the "do your business" command
* If the dog starts to relieve while in coat, do not make a big deal about it, but do gently interrupt the process with a mild correction. Help the dog make it to an appropriate releiveing area by asking it to sit periodically until you can get there. Next time, watch more closely so you can take off the coat before he gets to the point where he can't wait any longer.
* Your responsibility is to teach your puppy to relieve comfortably on command on all surfaces.
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