

# Why do I need a fence?

GRR's fence policy is as follows: GRR requires that you have a private fenced yard (with a large enough grassy area for a medium-large size dog to run around and play fetch) with a minimum 4' fence attached to your home. (Dog parks do not qualify). Dogs need sufficient room to exercise and play. (Rare exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis and only for senior/golden oldie dogs deemed appropriate for the situation). GRR does not accept an invisible fence as an appropriate fence. Additional kinds of fencing may not be acceptable or deemed safe for the dog.

GRR along with other rescue organizations have adopted this policy to ensure the safety of our rescued Golden Retrievers. We are routinely quizzed on the reasoning behind this policy and have listed some of the most common arguments we hear.

## **"I'll train him/her not to run off."**

Golden Retrievers are working dogs with a strong chase/retrieve drive. By natural instinct, they live and love to chase things. A Golden will run after just about anything that moves, just for the fun of it. Deer, squirrels, birds, opossums, cats, and even a plastic bag floating in the wind represents a rowdy game of chase to most fun loving GR's. If there is no boundary (fence) to stop the Golden, the game will continue into the next county.

## **"He/She will love us and never want to leave."**

Golden Retrievers are very social animals, so they love everything and everyone. They will run up to anything to see if it will engage in a game or give a loving pat. In excitement, they may ignore a roadway with cars in between them and the children they see playing ball across the street.

## **"I'll keep them on a leash at all times."**

Everyone deserves a safe place to run free, exercise and play. Picture life constantly on a leash, never being able to chase and pounce on a ball or just run some laps for the fun of it. Without safe, secure boundaries to romp in, a golden will become bored, hyper and destructive. Golden Retrievers are large dogs and require exercise to

maintain healthy bodies and joints. Without the ability to run and play freely, they can become obese and out of shape. Regular exercise keeps them fit and healthy.

**"I'll take them to obedience class and teach them to heel."**

Even the most well trained Golden still needs free space to do their own thing unencumbered. Dogs are taught to "heel," (walk politely by your side on a leash) and most Golden retrievers do so very nicely. While this is fun for the person walking the dog, it is not fun for the dog as their only means of exercise. Life would be very boring if you had to spend your entire life walking right beside someone without ever getting to go where you wanted to go, smell what you wanted to smell, etc.

**"I'll get a dog out of the puppy stage so they won't need to run."**

The older they get, the less exercise they require. However, all Golden retrievers, be they 6 weeks or 16 years old love a daily romp and the ability to just kick up their heels a bit.

**"I'll use electrical or 'invisible type' fencing."**

As stated before, Golden retrievers love to chase things. Many excited Golden retrievers will forget about the shock or decide the shock is worth the fun and chase the deer, ball, child, etc. right out of the yard anyway. What they won't do is come back into the yard when it's over because, now that the excitement of the chase is over, they know the shock is coming. In addition, there have been reports of dogs "freezing" at the transmitter line and getting repetitively shocked over and over again.

In addition, this type of fencing only affects the animal wearing the special collar. It does not keep things out of the yard. It won't stop other dogs, animals, people, etc. from coming into the yard and harming, attacking, or stealing the dog.

The effectiveness of the 'fence' is dependent on many variables:

- The batteries in the collar and their state of charge
- The dog keeping the collar on and in proper position and
- The power supply to the wiring remaining intact

Any of these can go dead, be lost or interrupted at any time without warning and render the 'fence' useless. Electrical containment does have merits and is very effective at keeping dogs out of forbidden areas such as flowerbeds, gardens, certain rooms/areas of the house, etc. Electrical containment does not suffice as a primary barrier fence under GRR's policy.

Lastly, let's face reality, even the most diligent owner has bad days, bad weather or is just too rushed.

- *Example #1:* It's midnight, freezing cold, pouring rain and the dog has to go outside to potty...are you really going to get dressed and take him/her for a walk?
- *Example #2:* You're horribly sick in bed, the dog has to go out...the last thing you can possibly do is get up and take them out, nobody else is there...
- *Example #3:* The alarm didn't go off, you're late and you have a big meeting/test/etc. to give in 30 minutes, there's just no time for a walk...

So, just this once, you let them out "just to go and come right back while you stand there and watch..." Then, a squirrel runs by, the dog takes off after it and you're in no condition to chase it. Dog runs into street, and gets hit by car... OR Dog runs off and you can't find it.

GRR's fencing policy is for the benefit and well being of the Golden Retriever. It is not meant to imply that all homes without fencing are not capable and diligent owners. Experience has taught us that Goldens do best in fenced environments. A number of Goldens are surrendered to GRR because the owners don't have fencing, or have moved to unfenced properties, and felt their dogs were not happy or doing well in that environment. GRR's sole intention is to provide the best, safest and most loving home we can for our Goldens in need.