

Bathrooms



This mid-sized bathroom is simple with plenty of storage and easily cleaned surfaces. The deep bathtub is used for both humans and dogs.

When bathing a dog a shower curtain is easier to use than a fixed glass door.

Bathroom design has become an art form combining elegance and practicality. Today, dogs should be a part of this equation. Dogs gravitate to the bathroom for a variety of reasons. They are attracted by a myriad of human scents and the possible entertainment found within. Drinking from the toilet is the classic canine bathroom faux pas. An equally popular activity is unraveling or shredding rolls of toilet paper. The common sense solution to these problems is to keep your dog out of the bathroom. This is not always easy, especially in a busy home with kids. If your bathroom also doubles as your dog grooming area, modifications for safety and convenience are essential.

Slippery floors and surfaces are a major hazard to both dogs and humans. Getting a secure grip on a wet, soapy dog is challenging. Normally calm dogs can attempt daredevil maneuvers when trying to evade a bath. It's not that unusual for both dog and owner to sustain injuries in situations like this. During bath time it is important to plan ahead and have control over your supplies and your dog. Limit your dog's accessibility to everything by using closed storage cabinets with doors and drawers. Dogs can and will eat bars of soap. The best solution for a dog with this propensity is to purchase a refillable soap dispenser that can be attached to a wall. Commercial varieties are most durable.

Tips for keeping the bathroom safe include keeping:

- the bathroom door closed
- the toilet covered or use a childproof toilet lock
- recessed tubs covered
- medications in a secure cabinet: human drugs are the leading cause of canine poisoning emergencies
- human medications and dog medications separated to prevent accidental use of the wrong medication
- razors and toiletries out of reach of your dogs
- secure garbage cans for disposal of tampons, sanitary napkins, diapers and bandages
- an eye on your dog when your tub or sink is full of water

From a maintenance perspective, in contrast to many rooms, the typical bathroom floor is an ideal surface for dogs. Porcelain ceramic tile is the top choice because it is durable, easily cleaned, and stain and odor resistant. It's also a good choice for dog bathing or puppy raising and paper training. A less expensive alternative would be linoleum. For non-slip ideas refer to Chapter 3.

If you plan on bathing your dog in the bathroom install ceramic tile three to four feet in height on the walls. Regardless of the size of your dog, do not underestimate the amount of water that will end up on the walls. Durability is not as important on walls as it is on floors so any type of stone or ceramic wall or floor tile will do the job. Semi-gloss, eggshell or washable matte paint finishes are also suitable.

Good bathroom lighting is essential if you plan to use the bathroom for fine grooming chores such as close scissoring or nail trimming. The light should be bright and evenly distribut-

ed over the work area with no glare. Side lighting is preferable to overhead lights which will be obscured whenever you lean over the dog for close work.

PLUMBING FIXTURES

If you prefer to groom your small dog in the bathroom you will be delighted to learn that the ubiquitous tiny, shallow bathroom sink is a thing of the past. Today sinks are available in any shape imaginable and are made from a variety of materials with the most common being ceramic, glass and metal. They can also be made from the same materials used for the vanity or countertop surface which would include stone, stone composites, concrete and solid surface resins.

Sink configurations include: under counter mounted, surface mounted with a lip, vessels, wall mounted, or pedestal. Some sinks require a vanity or cabinet, wall mounted and pedestal sinks do not. These design features can make a big difference if you use your bathroom sink for bathing or spot cleaning your dogs. If you plan on using a bathroom sink to bathe your dog select a:

- faucet that is tall enough to fit over your dog and swings out of the way (i.e. kitchen faucet)
- deep sink large enough for your dog (i.e. kitchen sink)
- sink/vanity height optimal for your physical comfort
- durable sink, quartz composite or stainless steel are best

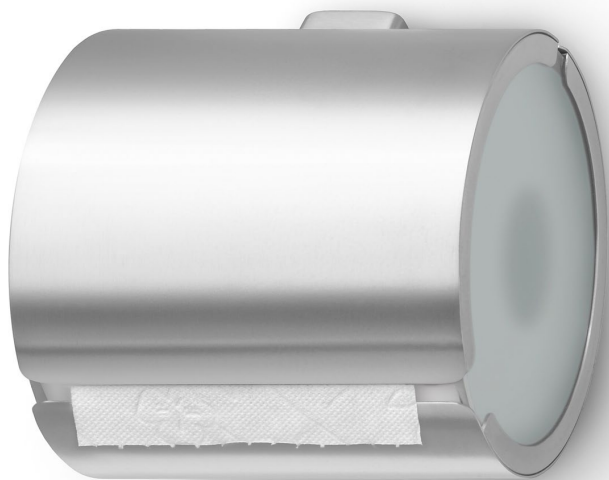
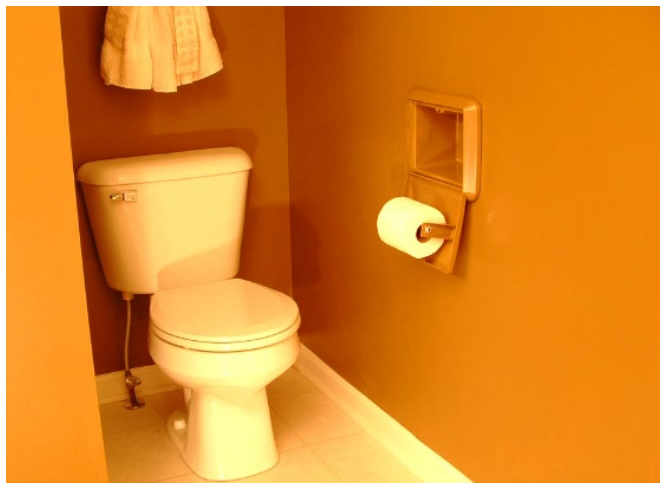
Drinking from the toilet is not only a nasty habit; dogs can be poisoned by cleaning chemicals in the water. Keeping the lid closed and providing a dish of fresh water in the bathroom discourages most habitual toilet hounds. If these measures fail, toilet lid locks are available from child safety supply retailers. A separate enclosed space for just the toilet also prevents toilet paper thievery.

ANTIFREEZE

Winterizing a seasonal use home usually includes adding anti-freeze to the water in the toilet. Use a safer type of antifreeze made with propylene glycol.

TOILET PAPER

Dogs love to shred toilet paper. This hobby seems to be popular with every breed so don't assume that your puppy will simply outgrow the habit. It is self rewarding and most dogs will continue to do it unless otherwise trained or hampered. The obvious solution is to "close your bathroom door." Yes that does work, but when your grandmother visits how often would you need to remind her to close the door? There are a few other solutions that may work. The emphasis is on may because some determined dogs can foil any solution if they really want something. Dogs are opportunists. They do not forget their favorite pastimes and will patiently wait weeks or months until someone forgets to close the door.



TOP LEFT This clever design features a door that closes when not in use. The unit can be painted to match the wall color. *Courtesy of Hidden TP Holder www.hiddentoiletpaper.com*

BOTTOM LEFT A stylish covered toilet paper holder. *Courtesy of Blomus www.blomus.com*



ABOVE DIY solution using an existing box. Two rubber feet were added to prop open the lid just enough for the paper to move smoothly.

Fully enclosed commercial toilet paper dispensers will foil most dogs because it's difficult to grasp the edge of one sheet without an opposable thumb, although persistent tongues might prevail. One hidden design called Hidden TP fits into the wall and has a door that swings down with the bar and paper roll in it. A few manufacturers make toilet paper holders with flaps that cover over the toilet paper. Other possible solutions include toilet paper storage canisters and small cabinets.

DO-IT-YOURSELF IDEAS

- Purchase a small cabinet or hinged box with interior minimum measurements of 5" deep x 5" high x 8" long and repurpose it by adding a toilet paper holder inside. This can be fixed to a wall or cabinet.
- Install a small door or drawer in a cabinet next to the toilet. Add an inexpensive toilet paper holder inside. The toilet paper will only be accessible when the drawer or door is opened.
- If your dog loves to grab the paper and run, try the TP Saver or a toilet paper holder with a flat bar instead of a cylinder. It's difficult to unroll the roll—which can be equally frustrating for humans!

BATHING OPTIONS

If you only have one or two small to medium sized dogs, they can be bathed in the bathtub or sink. Neither arrangement is ideal but there are ways to make the job easier. A standard bathtub or shower can be improved for dog bathing by adding a handheld shower wand. It should be long enough to reach the bottom of your dog and the shower. Measure before buying but six feet is probably sufficient. Handheld wands with an on/off or trigger switch is best. Select one with an overflow device to maintain an even water temperature.

Handheld showers for dog bathing are designed to either hook up to your existing shower, washing machine valves or sinks. Determine what type of hookup you need prior to purchase, they are not interchangeable. Choose one with a screw type or compression connection. Cheaper models with suction connections that attach to faucets do not work well or last very long.



TOP LEFT AND RIGHT Dog showers don't need to be bland. These showers were designed with standard and custom made tiles. *Courtesy of Sondra Alexander: www.sondraalexander.com*

BOTTOM LEFT The Jentle Pet®, is a whirlpool tub just for dogs, with jets and a handheld sprayer. The lower front edge makes washing easier. *Courtesy of MTI Whirlpool: www.mti.whirlpool.com, (800) 783-8828*

BOTTOM RIGHT Standard equipment such as this utility basin can easily be adapted for a dog shower. *Courtesy of Kohler: www.kohler.com*

If dog bathing is a frequent chore, the tub or shower and/or the dog should be elevated to avoid the need to continually bend over. Of course, lifting a heavy dog into the tub will be equally hard on your back and a ramp may be necessary. You can also modify a plastic, wood or stainless steel table in your bath or shower to raise the dog to a convenient level. Be sure to add a non-slip surface or mat on top of the table.

Extra accessories that make baths easier for difficult dogs include:

- leash clip attached to wall
- non-slip coating in tub
- shower attachment for rinsing
- step or ramp access for big dogs



ABOVE LEFT Savvy demonstrates the custom raised dog shower made for her. The components are standard including a shower basin, handheld shower wand and wall tile. *Courtesy of J. Symmons*

ABOVE MIDDLE The manufacturer of these durable tubs offers many accessories and configurations to fit any dog owner's needs. They can be custom finished to complement your style. *Courtesy of New Breed Dog Baths: www.newbreedtubs.com*

ABOVE RIGHT Hugo shows off his outdoor shower at the dog-friendly inn where he resides. *Courtesy of The inn on First, Napa, CA: www.theinnonfirst.com*

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A handicap shower system makes an excellent dog wash. The typical size is 5' long, 3' wide and it has a very low lip for wheelchair access. The shower is a long hand-held device. These shower systems often include folding seats that could be used to stand your dog on.

Customized showers lined with ceramic, stainless steel, concrete, glass or stone tile, can be built to accommodate your dog's breed and size. It should be large enough for the dog to completely turn around. Add a minimum of 6" to the total length of your dog measured from nose to the base of the tail for both the width and length. Elevating the shower will depend on your height and whether or not your dog needs a ramp. A standard size bathtub can be elevated on a platform about a foot off the ground. Steps or a ramp can be added

A mop service basin is a type of utility sink installed at floor level. It looks like a very shallow bathtub measuring 6" to 11" deep. To customize a mop service basin for dog bathing the base can be raised off the floor and the walls around it finished with a water resistant material such as ceramic tile or stainless steel. This is an excellent way to create a convenient custom

ELEVATED SHOWER HEIGHT

First you will need to measure your dog's height at the shoulder. Next, while standing up bend your arm with your elbow at a right angle to the floor. Keep your forearm parallel to the floor and measure the distance from your forearm to the floor. Subtract the height of the dog plus 6" to 9" from the total. (6 to 9 inches is the ideal distance for bent arm activities). This will give you the optimal elevated shower height.

EXAMPLE

The distance from your elbow bent to the floor is 43". Your dog is 24" high at the shoulders. $43 - 24 = 19$ inches. Subtracting another 6" to 9" for your work area will leave 13" to 11" which is the height you need to elevate your shower.

dog shower. Small free standing containers such as galvanized washtubs or rubber basins for watering cattle can be used to bathe tiny dogs and are also great for spot cleaning big dogs. Both are lightweight, inexpensive and portable. Laundry or utility sinks can make useful dog bathtubs for small to medium sized dogs. They are usually heavy duty, made from plastic, composites, porcelain, concrete or stainless steel and often have legs which raise them to a comfortable work height. The height can be adjusted by adding blocks under the feet. Plastic utility sinks are cheapest. Some have high backs which act as a splash guard. While single bowls would be preferred for dog washing, double bowl plastic sinks can be modified into a single sink by cutting out the middle divider using a reciprocating saw. To eliminate sharp edges sand them before using.

DOG SPECIFIC TUBS AND SPAS

There are many dog bathtubs on the market. At the lower price range are tubs made out of plastic and this is fine if you only bathe one or two dogs a couple of times a month. If you bathe multiple dogs on a daily or weekly basis it pays to consider a higher quality fiberglass or stainless steel tub. There are even whirlpool spa tubs made just for dogs.

Fiberglass models are similar to the bathtubs in most homes. The cost is generally less than stainless steel and the style is more likely to fit into your home. Stainless steel is the most durable choice but is limited to a cold, boxy style which may not be aesthetically compatible for all homes. Factors to consider while evaluating a manufactured dog bathtub include:

- Is the height adequate to accommodate both you and your dog? If not will you need to purchase additional accessories such as a table?
- How will the dog access the tub? From the side or one end? Will this require a ramp?
- Where are the plumbing features located? Are they within easy reach while you are working with a dog? The drain and faucet should be located at the same end of the tub for ease of installation.
- Ask about the quality of the faucets, hoses and other plumbing features. Heavy duty hoses and faucets will last longer. Can you upgrade these items?
- Can the tub be accessed from more than one side?
A tub that can be installed with 3 sides exposed is more convenient. Rather than turning the dog around the groomer can simply move around the dog. This type does sacrifice space for convenience.
- Does the tub or shower come with a device to trap fur?

OUTDOOR BATHING

In warmer climates it's possible to minimize the mess by bathing dogs outdoors. This shower/bath could be as simple as an outdoor faucet and a hose or it could be an outdoor shower with a shower wand that you and your dog could use. Your outdoor faucet must have a hot/cold hose bib. To hook up to an outdoor hot/cold hose bib you will need a special hose connector that is used for washing machines and is called a Y-mixer hose. They are available at most hardware stores. A sprayer nozzle with adjustable settings is kinder on your dog. You will need a plumber to supply the necessary hot/cold lines and hose bibs, but the hose hookup is quite easy.

No matter where you bathe your dog after the bath you will need dog designated towels and/or a blow dryer. 100% cotton towels are the best choice because they are highly absorbent. A handheld blow dryer will suffice for a one dog home. Clips, available through grooming supply companies, can be used to clip handheld dryers to a post or shelf. However, a professional dryer is necessary for serious grooming. The qualities to look for in a blow dryer include low noise, temperature control and high velocity. New models of forced air dryers are small, powerful, and reasonably priced.

An infrared overhead heat lamp or an electric surface mounted wall space heater can take the chill out of the air after a bath. This might be especially important for toy and short haired dogs. Safety is paramount with any type of heating element. It should be rated for use outdoors or in wet conditions. Look for appliances tested by a recognized laboratory such as UL (Underwriters Laboratory), CSA (Canadian Standards Association) or ETL (Intertek). These should be installed by a professional electrician. Overheat protection and a timer are necessary features for a heat lamp. Do not purchase a wall heater with open coils. Safer designs have tubular, finned tubular or plate finned heating elements and an enclosed motor. For safety reasons portable space heaters are not recommended for this use.

CLOGGED DRAINS

Brush your dog thoroughly before bathing. Mats in the coat will congeal into a solid mass when wet. Bathing also loosens dead coat. The result can be a bathtub filled with an avalanche of dog hair and a \$300 plumbing repair job. If your dog sheds heavily purchase a strainer to place over the drain before bathing. Some dog showers and baths come with small cloth strainers, but fine or short fur can slip through the drain trap. A piece of steel wool or fine meshed fabric placed over the drain is more effective. Other choices include buying a disposable hair strainer for a few dollars to expensive hair traps that can be installed in your sink, shower or tub.

Clogs in drains are best removed using mechanical rather than chemical methods. If a plunger or a hand auger fails to dislodge the clog, disconnect and clean out the trap. Place the plunger directly over the sink drain so that the rim of the plunger is in complete contact with the surface. Press firmly and straight down on the plunger handle. It may take several "plunges". You will usually see water moving down the drain and hear it in the trap if it works. A hand auger has a flexible cable that is pushed into the drain line to loosen clogs. It's a bit more complicated than a plunger so read the instructions before you try it. The trap is the U shaped section of pipe immediately below a sink. If neither the plunger or auger work and you feel that removing the trap is beyond your capabilities you may need to call a plumber.

See Chapter 9 for grooming facilities and other spaces that can accommodate a dog shower, tub or bath.

DOG TOILETS: WHERE WILL YOUR DOG ELIMINATE?

When your dog moves into your home this will immediately become a priority if your dog weighs more than ten pounds. For owners of tiny dogs or young pups that are not yet vaccinated temporary housetraining is often the best option. While it's true that whatever a dog learns first, he learns best, elimination habits remain fairly flexible until four months of age. After that, they may become reluctant to begin eliminating on an entirely different surface. So, if you plan on indoor training only, think about taking your dog outside once in awhile so they become accustomed to that occasional outdoor elimination opportunity.

It is essential to have a workable arrangement in place before you bring a new dog into your home. Consider:

- **THE SIZE AND BREED OF THE DOG**

Small to medium sized dogs are easier to accommodate indoors.

- **CLIMATE AND WEATHER**

Can your Chinese Crested be expected to “do his business” in a blizzard or your Bulldog take a midday walk in 90 degree weather?

- **YOUR LIFESTYLE**

Urban, suburban or rural? Will you need to walk your dog? Do you have a fenced yard?

INDOOR DOG TOILETS

A major advantage of small dogs is their ability to adapt to small spaces, including using a small indoor toilet area. If you live in an apartment or have limited access to the outdoors, this makes a lot of sense. Mobility problems or living several stories above the ground floor can make getting your dog outside several times a day a major challenge. In some climates, outdoor exercise may be limited seasonally. In some cases, predators (animal or human) can make outdoor exercise risky. An indoor dog toilet may be the best solution if you fit into one of these categories. The choices range from paper training your dog, using a litter box or installing a real flushable toilet made for dogs.

It's a common misconception that paper training will never result in a reliably housetrained dog. Dogs can be reliably trained to eliminate in any area designated for this purpose. The key issue is to utilize scheduling, supervision, and restriction methods rather than allowing constant access to the toilet area. Provide access to the toilet area at scheduled times, supervise your dog to ensure that he completes the task at hand, and do not allow free access to your home until he is trained. In between toilet breaks, remove the paper or litter box, or bar his access to the toilet area. Leaving the soiled paper or litter in place sends the wrong message to your dog. Basically, you are telling the dog that eliminating all over this floor all day long is fine. Constant access will provide no incentive for him to learn self control. More importantly, he will have trouble distinguishing where and when this behavior is okay in the house.

The classic solution is to create newspaper layers on a moisture resistant and easily cleaned surface such as linoleum flooring or a plastic tray and removing them once a day. Put the papers down at the dog's scheduled elimination time. After the job is done, pick them up and dispose of them. Dogs can detect minute traces of odor that we don't notice so it is vital to wash this area every day. If you use a plastic tray be sure to wash both sides.

Box toilets include cat-style plastic litter boxes to sophisticated freestanding toilet systems that must be emptied on a daily basis. Plastic litter boxes are three to four inches high with an opening at one end and are filled with special dog litter. They work well for small to medium size dogs, but are not recom-

Enzymatic based products are best for eliminating odors and stains from urine and feces.

mended for short legged dogs or multiple dog homes. Many puppies will also dig or play in the litter, kick it all over the floor or ingest it.

The litter box should be wide enough for your dog to circle comfortably, approximately 1 ½ times his length. The sides should also be high enough to prevent litter from being kicked out of the box. Also keep in mind that both males and females may hike a leg to urinate. Hock high sides should effectively contain any female territorial marking, but male dogs can lift their legs to nearly the height of their abdomen.

Sophisticated litter box designs include a layer of real or synthetic grass with a removable tray below. Your dog eliminates on the grass; the urine filters to the tray. Any solid waste and urine in the tray can be flushed down the toilet. A version of this product made with synthetic grass can be washed periodically, which makes for more effective odor control and less work. The version with real grass must be watered frequently to keep it alive. It is normally replaced every six months when urine burn tends to set in. Often the real grass is only used until the dog is reliably using the box. One manufacturer sells a sun and rain cover to shield your dog for outdoor use.

These products work if your dog is:

- small enough to effectively utilize the product
- trained to use this toilet system

And...

- you are prepared to keep the elimination area scrupulously clean

A portable dog potty for use on boats, patios and RVs is similar to some of the box style products and also utilizes synthetic grass, a plastic grate and a tray to hold the liquids.

If you have the space and the budget, a plumbed toilet specifically made for dogs may be the ideal solution. One manufacturer has created a large box structure slightly raised off the ground with three raised sides which the dog enters from one side only. The top surface is corrugated to prevent urine from getting on the dog's paws. It slopes towards a drain that is attached to a waste pipe in your floor. The product includes a hose and sprayer to wash down solid waste and clean the surface. A homemade version of this system can be constructed from a prefabricated shower stall. See Resources for a link to instructions.

An indoor plumbed toilet can be created by installing a floor drain in a garage or kennel area. This can be a good choice for larger dogs, disabled owners or owners contending with prolonged periods of bad weather. After the dog eliminates a hose and sprayer is used to wash everything down the drain.

Important design considerations include:

- floors sloped 1" per 3 to 4 feet of length to facilitate draining
- smooth water resistant floors and walls such as concrete or poured epoxy
- a drain plumbed to a sewer line and properly vented
- a hot and cold water line with hose bib(s)
- a garden sprayer nozzle to wash everything down the drain
- heating or insulation to prevent pipes or flooring from freezing
- ventilation
- a stainless steel post can be added for male dogs to urinate on

The cost of adding a floor drain in your garage will vary significantly depending on your location. An architect and/or plumbing contractor should be able to help design such a feature. This is a job that will require the services of a plumber and you may need to obtain a building permit.

OUTDOOR DOG TOILETS

Most dogs use the same favorite elimination spots again and again. If you intend for your dog to eliminate in your yard it's easy to reinforce this behavior through training. This has advantages for you, your dog, and your yard.

It's easier to monitor:

- his health by keeping track of urination and bowel movements and collect samples when needed
- his elimination schedule
- your yard to keep it clean and prevent stepping in dog poop!
- And can lessen the possibility of stool eating.

The major drawback is that your dog is apt to become very set in his ways. If you plan to travel with him, board him, or leave him with a temporary caretaker he may be extremely reluctant to relieve himself in unfamiliar territory.

Since a dog's instinct is to first mark the perimeter of the territory most dogs select a spot at the edge of the yard near a fence, or even outside your yard. If your yard is not fenced your dog may end up using your neighbor's yard, a classic source of poor neighbor relations. Some dogs are rather bashful and prefer to use a more hidden area, such as tall grass, shrubs or your perennial beds. If your dog is already in the habit of fertilizing the flowers, you may need to fence off the area to stop this. As an alternative you can create a small "wild" area of low growing dog resistant plants and a wall of shrubs for canine privacy. Dog resistant plants include any hardy fast spreading low to medium height perennial. Look for plants that might be labeled as an aggressive grower for your particular region. For example, in the northeast US, groundcover plants that work well and include goutweed or thyme. It has to be a plant that you don't mind being damaged. The surrounding privacy could be any shrub or medium to tall perennial. Another benefit is that the excrement will naturally decompose rather than contributing to a garbage landfill or contaminating water supplies. Pheromone treated yard stakes can encourage your dog to urinate in a specific area.



TOP A covered dog potty with synthetic grass. Note the plexi-glass "walls" to prevent overspray. Courtesy of Doggy Solutions: www.doggysolutions.com

BOTTOM A simple indoor dog potty for small to medium sized dogs. Courtesy of Wizdog: www.wizdog.com

The logistics become more complicated for multiple dogs. Usually they prefer individual areas rather than a communal potty zone. The designated area should be large enough so that each dog feels like he has some choice of territory. Depending on the size of your dogs, this can range from three to fifty square feet per dog. Dogs in the same household often avoid using the same area, especially for bowel movements. Keeping the area clean is important for sanitation reasons. It also discourages your dogs from searching for a clean area. Consider your own reluctance to use a public bathroom that is not scrupulously clean. Whether it is indoors or outdoors, do not expect your dog to willingly eliminate in an area that is not clean and safe.

Surface materials other than grass may be a better choice for a very small yard. Dog urine will eventually kill grass, leading to erosion and drainage problems. The end result is additional housecleaning chores as dirt and mud are tracked into the house. Artificial turf, gravel, concrete, and stone may be viable alternatives. Artificial grass has come a long way since it was



WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR DOG HATES GOING OUT IN THE RAIN?



ABOVE LEFT Covered area used as a doggy potty during inclement weather.

ABOVE RIGHT This light weight kennel cover could make an excellent and economical covered dog potty. *Courtesy of Shade 'n Things: www.shadenthings.com*

first used on athletic fields. Today it looks more realistic and is designed for specific purposes, including a place for your dog to pee. Newer designs allow fluids to drain through and incorporate antimicrobial agents to reduce odors. The product is installed over concrete or crushed stone and can be further elevated with a plastic grid. It is currently installed at kennels, animal resorts, animal hospitals and dog parks throughout the country. You can use it in a small area or replace an entire yard with it. There are concerns about lead in artificial turf which is added to give turf a brighter green color. Newer laws will restrict the use of lead in turf products, but older products may still contain lead.

“Stone” is the surface of choice for many commercial kennels and animal shelters because it is more economical, durable and can be hosed and disinfected. Gravel refers to natural stone that is round and smooth. Crushed stone is manually crushed rock and because of its sharp edges it tends to remain in place better than smooth gravel. Geo-textile placed under the gravel will block light and prevent plant growth. The stone beds are between 3 to 6” thick. If you are doing large areas this will require several tons of material and it is best to have your supplier estimate the quantity you will need. To make the best choice it is important to go to a local supplier and look at them firsthand. There are several drawbacks to using stone. It is difficult to scoop poop without picking up some of the stone. Dogs may ingest it which can lead to obstruction. In winter it attaches to wet fur and can lodge in paws causing injury. Crushed stone has sharp edges that are harsh on paws, bare feet and your flooring.

Concrete and solid stone surfaces are easy to clean and impervious to dog destruction. They can be hosed off with a sprayer nozzle and occasionally disinfected with cleaning solution. Concrete can be poured as one relatively continuous surface or utilized as individual pavers. Stone is cut into pavers of different sizes depending on the type of stone. Pavers can be placed snugly together to create a somewhat continuous surface or spaced far apart with grass or other natural material in between. If the surface is continuous or tightly laid pavers it should have a minimum slope of one inch for every six to eight feet of length. At the edge of the surface there should be a drainage area which could consist of porous material such as gravel or it should be connected to a drain.

Wood porches and decks are not recommended as dog potty zones. Urine will permanently penetrate the surface causing the wood to decay. If your dog is confined to a wood deck add a ready-made dog potty or make your own.

It is amazing how many housetraining accidents occur during rainy or snowy weather because dogs are reluctant to use an outdoor area that is wet, icy or covered with snow. Then there is the equally annoying problem of dogs relieving themselves immediately outside the door. Consider adding a roof over your dog’s daily elimination area to protect him from rain, snow and the hot sun. Your dog and house will thank you for it.

A permanent roof structure attached to your house will work best in areas with moderate to heavy rain or snow. This would

DECK DOG POTTY

Purchase a large durable plastic tray, like the ones used under washing machines to catch overflowing water. For extra large dogs two trays may be necessary. These trays come with or without a drain. A drain hole could be cut through the deck and a PVC drain pipe inserted. Dog waste can then be flushed down the drain with a hose.

You will need to periodically clean and disinfect the area under the deck or connect the drain to a sanitary sewer or septic system. Artificial turf could be used on top of the plastic tray.

be a porch with a floor of gravel, concrete, artificial turf or any cleanable material. If you have a porch you can add a ready-made or homemade dog potty. A permanent structure may require a building permit and architect.

In areas with little or no snow a less expensive alternative is an awning. Many awnings are manually or electronically retractable. Freestanding shelters, such as pavilions, gazebos or carports, constructed from a design or prefabricated kits can also work as dog potties if located relatively close to the house. The terms gazebo and pavilion are often used interchangeably but technically gazebos are elevated off of the ground and typically include a floor and railing. Freestanding shelters are most often made of wood, less frequently of stone or concrete. Temporary shelters made from canvas or plastic are not durable or permitted in all localities. Prefabricated kits can be erected by a skilled do-it-yourselfer. A ready-made or homemade dog potty is recommended in shelters with elevated floors. If the floor is at grade level cover it with artificial turf, concrete, stone or gravel.

Convincing your dog to eliminate in the right spot is only half the job. Then it's up to you to keep it clean. For methods on waste removal and disposal see Chapter 2.

See Resources for products and more information.