

Soiling

The dog urinates when visitors arrive.
The dog urinates when he is left alone.
The dog urinates when he is excited.
The dog defecates in the house.



How to correct your dog's errors

When the dog commits an error, he must understand what he did wrong. The dog will have to be let loose in the house, and given the possibility of defecating in your presence. This doesn't mean that you should let the dog "hold it in" until he must defecate. Simply set the puppy free in the house after a meal; take him out at normally appointed hours, and be ready to correct him.

There are two types of messes: those where the dog is caught in the act, and the other, where the mess is found after the fact.

Should you catch your dog in the act

In such circumstances, avoid striking the dog or screaming at him. Otherwise, he will associate defecation with punishment, and the dog will fear defecating in your presence. It will then become hard to go outside with your dog for this purpose, as he will refuse to do it in front of you. He will be afraid of being struck by you. He will look for a hiding place to do his business.

So, whenever you see the dog sniffing the ground, going around in circles, waking up from a long snooze, putting a stop to his playing, and start crouching down, you must:

1. Interrupt the process by giving him the VW "HEY!" + SHORT SPRAY with an assertive tone.
2. Go out for five minutes.
3. Give the command "POOP" for defecation.
4. Put him back in his cage; if he doesn't defecate, take the dog out once more twenty to thirty minutes later for five minutes, and so on, until you have obtained the desired results.
5. If he does what is required, congratulate him (SR "SOUND + GOOD!").

If you discover the mess after the fact

When the mess is discovered after the fact, it is already too late to correct the dog. When you find the mess, clean it up right away, otherwise the dog will be led to understand that it is acceptable to defecate at that place. Seeing as dogs have a tendency to defecate at a place where they recognize the odour of their own stools, it is recommended to use vinegar, which completely neutralizes the odour.

Note: Do not use commercial products which contain chlorine and/or ammonia, because dog urine contains these elements.

Remember :

- Give the VW "HEY!" when the dog defecates inside, and the SR "SOUND + GOOD!" if he does so outside, and the dog will clearly get the message.
- Be vigilant concerning the defecation of your dog; if he cannot hold it in at all, this could be indicative of some ailment, or disease.

Underlying reasons most frequent in dealing with soiling problems:

- * Changing the dog's meal schedule, as this has direct repercussions on the time that the dog will relieve himself. Ex: feeding the dog near bedtime, and having to take him outside when you have already gone to bed.
- * Punishing the dog when he does his business in front of the master, which results in the dog being afraid of defecating in his presence.
- * The master's absence when the dog defecates. It is then impossible to know if the dog has actually defecated. Example : The master lets the dog go out alone then lets him in, thinking that the dog has defecated when in fact, he hasn't.
- * Letting the dog hold it in until he can no longer do so.

Is the problem related to urine, stools, or both?

- * When the dog couldn't be watched, was he confined or monitored?
- * Do accidents occur often? If so, how many times a week?
- * Do you go outside with the dog? When he does his business, are you ready to reinforce good behavior with a treat?

- * How many times per day does the dog go outside?
- * When the dog was caught eliminating inside the house, did you correct or punish your dog?
- * Has the dog always had a cleanliness problem, or has the problem developed suddenly?
- * Does your dog eliminate on places which have the same texture, such as the rug, a piece of clothing, ceramic tile, paper, etc.?
- * Does the act of urinating occur only when the dog meets someone, or gets petted, or when you play with him? If so, does the dog roll over on his back, pull his ears backward, crouch down and pull his tail between his legs?
- * If the problem is intermittent, could it be attributed to something or someone the dog is afraid of?
- * Does the problem occur when you are present, but the dog is not being watched?
- * Does the problem occur only when you are not in the house? If so, does it happen every time the dog is alone, or in specific situations, such as, only in the morning?

Possible causes for soiling

Before beginning education or re-education, you must find the root of the problem. Here is a list of typical causes for problems with soiling:

The dog's training is incomplete or inadequate

Since the dog has never received a complete education on cleanliness, many previous experiments have shown that the problem manifests itself at various degrees. The puppy that has not understood everything he should know about cleanliness could be clean for awhile, then relapse into soiling, because of a lack of relevant data on his behavior. If there has been no education whatsoever given to the puppy on cleanliness, he will be messy from that moment forward. The problem will manifest itself as urine or stool-related. Because of a badly used technique for correction, the dog could be urinating in a place where he will not be caught, when the master is out of sight. The dog could also eliminate in a place where hardly anyone ever goes. They will wait for cover at night, or shelter in the basement. An irregular daily routine, not enough opportunities to go outside and be rewarded for good behavior can be at the root of the problem. The dog will eliminate either in a few select places, or all over the house. Perhaps an ammonia-based cleansing product was used to mask the odour, thus exacerbating the problem.

Separation anxiety

A dog that soils because of separation anxiety displays the same behavior pattern than one suffering only from separation anxiety. Elimination will occur in the thirty-minute period which follows the departure of family members, after he's left alone. The dog can urinate and defecate. If the dog does this as often when the master is present as when he is absent, the problem is most likely not linked to separation anxiety, but rather, to one or more problems. Most of the time, a dog that is left in his cage when the master leaves, and defecates in it soon after, most likely has a problem with separation anxiety. In any case, the problem worsens if the dog remains in a cage. The dog will display one or more behavior patterns related to separation anxiety, such as following the master all over the house, showing excitement when he returns from a period of absence, becoming frantic if he loses sight of his master, switching on the anxiety button if the master doesn't give him all the attention he craves, and being very nervous before each outing the master prepares for. Oftentimes, this problem is triggered by a change in the family schedule, in the number of family members, or other sources. It is important to note that it is not because the dog has soiled something while you were not there that he suffers from separation anxiety. Consult the section dedicated to "Separation Anxiety" and "Demanding Attention". If you are having too much trouble dealing efficiently with this problem, please consult a professional, such as an ethologist or a behaviorist veterinarian.

Fears and phobias

Dogs eliminate when they are afraid. The stimuli which create the problem can be either loud noises, certain people or objects, and many others. If the problem hasn't been generalized, there could be a direct link between soiling and the occurrence of these stimuli. It is possible that the dog will not react the same way in the master's presence, because the latter inhibits his fear. You could realize that the dog that usually goes outside will begin eliminating inside the house, because the very cause of his fear lies outside the house. You will notice that the dog will not want to go outside for long periods, which should cue you into what is causing the problem. A dog suffering from fears and phobias will not experience any particular problem to be educated to cleanliness. There will only be a problem when the dog is experiencing fear or generalization (see section on fear). If you happen to have too much trouble dealing with this problem, please consult a professional.

Marking with urine

Marking is usually linked to non-spayed males rather than females, which leads one to believe that the problem is hormonal. Usually, dogs don't begin marking their territory before puberty. However, it is not so rare to see a dog beginning to mark his territory before the age of six months. Most of the time, marking takes very little urine. It is important to observe in which context marking occurs, because it typically happens when the dog feels the need to mark his territorial limits. The following situations depict when a dog marks his territory: the dog sees a person or an animal passing on the perimeter of his territory, or he sees a strange person or object in the house, or again smells an animal or person on his master's clothing. Marking can occur before or after a

walk, or when there is tension in the air at his master's house. Some dogs do their marking in specific areas, others operate within a wider radius (consult the section on "marking").

Urinating by submission or excitement

This situation occurs most often in younger dogs (less than one year old), in a context where the dog is very excited, or feels challenged. More precisely, the problem will surface when family members meet, or when a visitor shows up at the door; it can happen when someone bends down to pet the dog or to greet him, or when the dog is verbally or physically punished. If the dog urinates by submission, you will be able to detect positions of submission such as: the dog rolls over on his back, pulls his ears backward, places his tail between his legs. If the dog urinates because he is excited, the dog is over-agitated, and will behave like a dog that suffers from submissive behavior (consult the section "Urinating by submission or excitement").

The dog develops an inability to eliminate on a particular surface

It can happen that this problem stems from an inadequate education on cleanliness. The dog develops preferences as to the place, and the type of surface he will privilege to eliminate. If the dog is deprived from going outside, he will be forced to adopt places situated mostly inside. With time, the dog will consider places outside as places inappropriate for elimination. For example, a dog that has always defecated on the grass, and must now do it on a concrete surface, will find himself unable to execute himself. Possibly, climactic conditions will prevent the dog from eliminating. At that moment, the dog will hesitate to go outside, and will prefer waiting to be back inside to find a favourite spot to do his business. Experience will allow you to tell the difference between a dog that discriminates between surfaces, and the dog that is afraid. After a while, the dog develops his own behavior patterns. Then, if you bring him on the grass, chances are that he will prefer the sidewalk! In another situation, the dog adopts his cage to eliminate (because he learned the behavior while pensioning in a pet shop); he will have to undergo behavior modification, and should not be given access to any of his favourite spots until he has demonstrated that he can eliminate on many different surfaces.

How to solve the problem

When you want to educate a dog to cleanliness, it is important to assign a specific area to the dog, such as a cage. As soon as the puppy enters your house, follow the steps suggested below. Apply the same procedure if you have a dog that has had soiling problems for a while.

Use the reward to show the dog where you want him to defecate from now on. The key to success lies on positive reinforcement. The following procedure was conceived to make the dog understand that it is unacceptable to defecate in the house.

Each dog has different needs as to how much protein, carbohydrates, fat and fibre he needs. The type of food and the number of meals vary with each dog. In fact, the type of food he eats influences his absorption level. We suggest you rely on the dog's stools to tell you the number of meals the dog needs, as well as how much food should be given for each meal. For example, if the stools are too soft, reduce the amount of food by 10%, until you get firm, humid stools. On the other hand, you will have to increase food intake by 10% if the stools are hard and dry. For more details, consult your veterinarian.



Place the dog in his cage, and feed him. When he has finished his meal, observe him. Wait ten to fifteen minutes. Take out the puppy, put on his leash, and bring him directly to the place that you will require him to eliminate upon from now on. Encourage your dog as he behaves to your satisfaction, on the spot, for two or three minutes. Once the job has been done, play with your dog, so he doesn't associate defecation with the obligation to go back into the house. If the dog sits and seems to expect something, encourage him. If after five minutes outside, the dog hasn't yet defecated, put him back into his cage for 30 minutes, and then take him out for another five-minute period, and so on, until he has done his business. Seeing as the dog needs many attempts to defecate, wait

five minutes after the defecation to make sure that the dog has finished. Every time you take the dog outside to do his business, you must use an appropriate command.

The word should be as short as possible, preferably not exceeding two syllables (1 is better). The dog will eventually recognize the command, and will associate it to the reflex of defecating. As soon as he has eliminated, give him the SR "SOUND + GOOD!" immediately, and reward him for his performance. Many dogs can learn to defecate on demand. Select a word suitable for your needs, (such as "POOP") and repeat it once every minute. At the moment the dog has defecated, congratulate him (SR "SOUND + GOOD!") and give him a reward. You can also congratulate him by giving him free access to the house.

Note: it is possible that the dog will ask for the door to get some attention, and the reward. If such is the case, stop rewarding the dog by letting him go outside at his request; rather, wait a few minutes until he has calmed down before letting him out.

Do not let the dog wander in the house without supervision until you are sure he is clean. When you have no time to take care of your puppy, put him back in his cage. This cage should be big enough so that an adult dog can turn around, sit, and lie down inside it. If the cage is too big for the dog, there is a possibility that he will defecate in a corner, and still have enough room to distance himself from his stools. If such is the case, isolate the extremities with a box or a piece of plywood (if he destroys the box), so that the cage becomes of adequate size for your puppy. An older dog might need some "encouragement" to start liking his cage. To facilitate the dog entering the cage, throw a piece of food in the bottom of the cage. You can then either close the door, or leave it open. If you close the door, give him some treats now and then. In such a case, the dog

must not bark, because the situation could degenerate into the problem of excessive barking. Don't take the dog out of the cage if he is crying, because if you do, the dog will quickly understand that if he wants to get out of his cage, all he has to do is bark, or cry. The dog may come out of his cage only if he stops barking. To make the cage more comfortable and more inviting, place a cushion inside. It is important that the dog like his cage, and that he feels free to go inside it to rest, just like a terrier in his natural habitat. To give your dog (especially a puppy) a stronger sense of security, place a sheet of plywood over an open cage. Outings that are planned for defecating should only serve this purpose. The dog must be brought to understand this situation clearly. Feed your dog, and isolate him in his cage (or any other appropriate place). Thirty minutes later, take him out. Stay outside with him for five minutes, during which time you will say "POOP" every minute. If the dog cannot bring himself to defecate, return inside and isolate him for twenty minutes, either in his cage, or any other place where you can watch him. Observe how much time it takes after a meal to be ready to defecate, and take him out at once. Time can vary between thirty minutes and many hours.

After each meal, take the puppy out of his cage, give him the command, and let him follow you freely to the designated spot for defecating. Meals should always remain at the same time; this way, the dog will be programmed for this and will develop a routine to go out to defecate. One day, the puppy will understand where he has to do his business, and how to get there without assistance. He will ask you to let him out of his cage, or the room where he is kept to go outside. At that point, the dog can be given access to the house without supervision. Give him more and more freedom, and keep an eye on him. Check regularly to see if he dog is ready to defecate. If he tries to relieve himself in the house, you will be all set to correct the behavior; if he lets you know that he wants to go outside, you can congratulate him. He is now clean, and you can now let him wander in the house, with no supervision, for longer and longer periods of time. After a few weeks of education, put your dog to the test by taking him out of his cage after the meal without taking him outside. This will give you the opportunity to correct him should he attempt to defecate in the house, or to congratulate him if he asks for the door. Check with the person who sold you your dog to find out at what time he is fed, and where he is accustomed to defecate. At the beginning, keep the same hours, and gradually change the schedule to accommodate yourself.

It is recommended to give your dog a reward when he does his business at the designated spot. Reward him before going into the house, so that he doesn't think the reward is for going into the house. Give him a treat right after his defecation to reinforce his good behavior, and to allow the "POOP" command to sink in. Give him the SR "SOUND + GOOD!", and give him a reward. In order to avoid a mess, take the dog out more often at the beginning of the education process.

Take him out when you get up in the morning, after breakfast, at noon and after the meal, at night before and after supper, and before going to bed. Every time he defecates, reward him. Once the dog has been educated, you can decrease the frequency of outings to at least three a day. All you have to do is establish a fixed schedule, and respect it.

Meal times and defecation times must be fixed, and you must keep to those hours. Defecation rhythms vary from one dog to another. Intervals can be of thirty minutes after the meal to as long

as six hours later. If you are familiar with your dog's rhythm, you will not have any nasty surprises. Do not forget that the same schedule applies to the weekend as well.

The importance of a cage in education for soiling

If you don't want to use a cage, you can simply watch the dog after meals, but keep an eagle eye on him. The cage can :

- * Prevent the dog from being afraid; it also helps to eliminate many bad habits such as sleeping on the bed, defecating on the carpet, resting on the sofa, etc.

- * Be used as refuge for the dog throughout his life; it is therefore important to purchase one of suitable size. The program can be done without a cage, but you must pay extra attention to your dog after meals. A viable solution would be to build one, reserving a restricted area in the house that the dog must keep clean. Using a cage reduces the possibility of something unfortunate happening. Most dogs will keep their sleeping area clean, but not all of them. Simply take your dog outside before he cannot contain himself anymore.

Note: If the dog eliminates when you thought that he was clean, and that he had free access to the house when left alone, withdraw the privilege and start the education over again with the cage for two or three days.

Closing remarks concerning soiling

Observe your puppy after he awakens, and after meals. Your companion is looking for a place to do his business. If he starts going around in circles, sniffing the ground, or crouching down in the house, immediately activate the spray collar. When the puppy is startled and reacts by jumping up, pick him up quickly, and place him in the exact spot where he is supposed to defecate. When he defecates at the proper place, congratulate him heartily. At the beginning of his education, you can add a treat to the praise.

Have a regular schedule

A fixed schedule allows you to determine when the dog is hungry, and consequently, when you are going to integrate the education periods in your schedule, including times for defecation .

Always pick up the bowl of food fifteen minutes after the beginning of the meal, whether the dog has finished his bowl or not. The schedule should include a morning outing, before and after the meal, as well as when you come home from work, after supper, and before bed. A stable routine allows the dog's metabolism to stabilize itself. Seeing as all dogs don't defecate at the same time, keep track of your own dog's rhythm, and let him out at opportune times. The key to success lies in the "meal-defecation" routine, stable, seven days a week.

The pack leader controls the food

Your dog is counting on YOU to feed him. The dog must clearly understand that the food comes from you, and no one else. During his education, give him food directly from your hand. You are not demonstrating your authority by leaving a bowl full of food on the floor. However, when you feed your dog, and he's hungry, it becomes perfectly clear in the dog's mind that you are top dog.

The pack leader eats first

In nature, the dominant dog eats first, therefore, if the dog's schedule resembles yours, make sure your dog eats last. It is imperative that the dog be with you when you eat, but from a distance, as it would be in a pack of wolves.

Urinating by submission or excitement

Urination by submission and/or excitement is normal behavior. As for submission, it is triggered by the desire to have dominance reversed. As for over-excitement on the part of the dog, he will urinate because he is excited, and he cannot control his urinary functions in such situations. In many cases, frequent punishment results in the dog urinating out of submission, not excitement. These actions therefore assume an emotional dimension.

Many authors have observed that there is a higher incidence of this condition in females than in males. Probable cause could be that lack of hormones makes it difficult for females to identify male dominance. Abusive use of physical punishment by a master who desperately wants to control the dog is often the root of the problem. Furthermore, if many people are involved in correcting the dog, the latter will generalize his behavior towards everybody, and will not discriminate whether or not the person is close to him.

Submission

That is why in cases of submission, it is best to ignore rather than reprimand. The best way to gain the trust of a submissive dog is to practice a few obedience exercises without prodding the dog. Avoid manipulating the dog physically. Whenever your dog greets you by rolling over on his back, he lets a few drops of urine drop. When you enter the house, the dog turns his back to urinate. Not to be misconstrued with a problem of cleanliness, this behavior clearly depicts a dog urinating out of submission. This situation requires particular re-education. When the dog urinates in this fashion, he is telling you either that he acknowledges you as the dominant element in his reality, or he is over-excited or under excessive stress.

Examples of dominant behavior

* Initiating direct eye contact

* Standing directly over the dog

* Walking towards the dog while looking at him

Do not punish your submitted dog, and avoid making the situation worse by striking him. Maybe the dog is afraid of humans. Crouch down, and gently pet your dog. You must absolutely not look at him directly in the eyes, or face him squarely. Do not pet his head, as this is a gesture of dominance. The dog needs to be reassured by making him understand that it is not necessary for him to go into submission mode every time you enter the house. In order to make that perfectly clear, leave the house and return often. When you enter:

1. Say "HI!", but wait fifteen minutes before you touch your dog. Assume a detached attitude.
2. When you are ready to greet the dog, lie down on the floor (instead of remaining standing), while you bend over towards him. This is a less dominant position, and in so doing, you minimize the possibility that the dog will demonstrate signs of submission.
3. Approach him from the side. Instead of petting the dog on the head, ask him to "SIT", and "GIVE THE PAW".
4. As soon as the dog starts urinating, say "O.K., we're going outside" right away, using a happy tone. You can also distract the dog from his submissive behavior by luring him with a toy, and playing with him. It is important that the dog understand that you have recognized and acknowledged his signs of submission.
5. When guests arrive at the house, tell them not to look at your dog in the eyes when he goes towards them to sniff them. When everyone is seated and engaged in conversation, suggest that they gently present their hand and talk to the dog, without looking at him, however. After the dog has gotten accustomed to the people and has calmed down, (usually after fifteen minutes) and especially if he has not shown any signs of submission whatsoever, ask your guests to give him a small treat.
6. You can then distract him with a toy, or give him a command ("NAME + SIT", for example). Be careful not to get angry, because you will send a message to the dog to the effect that he is not sufficiently submitted, and he will make sure that it is very clear that you are the boss by urinating. Such a dog has a huge lack of self-confidence. He needs to be exposed to your positive attitude, because he will turn to you often for your approval.

How to introduce your dog to strangers

* When the situation improves, practice this exercise with people that the dog doesn't know by putting him on a leash, seated by your side.

* Then, ask a group of friends to pass next to the dog without looking at him. If the dog can manage this ordeal without urinating, go on to the next exercise.

* Now, ask your friends to pass near your dog, this time, smiling at him.

* Then, the friends pass by the dog, and give him a little treat.

* After that, the friends can pass by the dog, and lightly touch his head.

* Finally, ask them to redo all the above exercises, except that they now briefly stop in front of the dog, instead of simply passing by him.

In order to counter urination caused by excitement, avoid giving the dog too much affection as you arrive. For example, you must not go to him, or look at him in the eyes. For conditioning purposes, ignore him for a few minutes when you arrive (see the section on separation anxiety). Leave the house, and return often. Repeat this procedure when you arrive, until the puppy no longer gets all excited. You can then say "hi". At the least sign of over-excitement, go out again and repeat the conditioning.

Principles to Practice

1. How to eliminate the cause. It is possible that the dog fears humans. When a dog is over-excited, he urinates when you arrive because he feels the need to reassure you. Therefore, ignore him when you arrive at the house.

2. How to desensitise the dog Greet the dog with gentle, gradual gestures. For example, start by saying "hi" to him without looking at him; a few minutes later, discreetly pet him. Practice the "departure-entry" routine frequently.

3. How to elicit a predictable, acceptable behavior from a problem situation (counter-conditioning) When the dog is in a situation where he will surely urinate, give him a command, and congratulate him when he executes it. Make sure the dog understands the command, and that he can do it. For example, "SIT" lends itself well to such a situation.

Note: An excited dog should be taught the command "STAY".



Most of the time, this problem emanates from the presence of another male on the grounds. The dog sprays the area where the other dog has left his pheromones, or sprays another area with his own pheromones to identify his territory. For example, your dog is in the living room, and through the window, he sees another dog passing on the street. He immediately starts spraying in a corner of your living room. You can avoid this unfortunate situation by preventing the dog from seeing outside by

closing the curtains.

Any situation that makes the dog nervous is likely to trigger marking behavior, because the dog has a visceral need to identify himself. If your animal is an excessive marker, castration should be considered. Ask your veterinarian. In such a case, castration will contribute to reducing marking inside the house.

The first step towards correcting marking consists in showing the dog the only place reserved for urinating and defecating. There is no better stimulant than the urine of another dog to trigger the marking reflex. You must collect the urine of your dog with a cotton ball, and place it on the selected spot outside. Let the dog sniff and urinate, then reward him immediately. For best results, repeat this manoeuvre many times.

The second step consists in educating the dog not to eliminate inside. Always initiate the conditioning with the urine of your own dog, before introducing that of another dog. To do this, deposit a cotton ball imbued with urine in a forbidden place, and watch your dog. As soon as he approaches it to sniff it, give the VW "HEY!" + SHORT SPRAY, and take him outside as soon as possible. As soon as the dog approaches the pre-selected outside spot, reward him right away.