

Rye Dogs at Large Committee
Report to the Rye Board of Selectmen
September 17, 2018

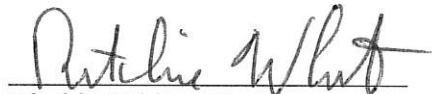
The Rye Dogs at Large Committee held ten public meetings, all of which were attended by members of the public. The Committee received and considered public input from citizens of Rye through their attendance at our meetings, emails, phone calls and in person meetings with Committee members. The Committee also received input from the Rye Board of Selectmen, Rye Town Attorney, Rye Police Department and the Rye Conservation Commission. In addition, the Committee researched the regulations in place in surrounding seacoast towns, as well as towns in Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Colorado.


The following are the findings and recommendations determined by majority vote of the Rye Dogs at Large Committee, most of the votes being unanimous.

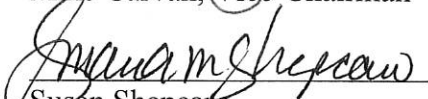
1. The Rye Dogs at Large Committee finds that, “after reviewing information provided by the Town of Rye Police Department, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, landowners and other residents, the Rye Dogs at Large Committee has determined that, generally, dogs not under owners’ control have negatively impacted public safety and the public’s use and enjoyment of our recreational areas, Town owned land and beaches.”
2. The Rye Dogs at Large Committee recommends to the Rye Board of Selectmen that the Town institute a definition of “Dog at Large” for the Town Forest, Town beaches, Town property and other public places:
 - A dog at large means the dog is off the premises of the owner or responsible party and is not under the voice and sight control of any person responsible for the dog.
 - Voice control of the dog is defined as a dog returning immediately to and remaining by the side of the responsible party, in response to the responsible party’s command for the dog to return.
 - Sight control of a dog is defined as a dog always being within the sight of the responsible party.
 - The dog is also specifically defined as “at large” under the ordinance when:
 - The dog is on private property without the permission of the property owner.
 - The dog jumps on an unwelcoming party.
 - The dog shows aggression to another dog and is not under voice control of the responsible party.
 - A responsible party refuses to call their dog through voice control when requested to by an authorized Town of Rye Official.

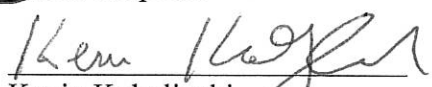
3. The Rye Dogs at Large Committee recommends to the Rye Board of Selectmen that the Town institute a "Voice and Sight Control Tag Program" and dogs registered in the Program may be allowed off leash in the Rye Town Forest and on abutting Town land; all other dogs must be on a leash. (see attachments #1 and #2)
4. The Rye Dogs at Large Committee recommends to the Rye Board of Selectmen that in addition to the current restrictions the Town institute a one year trial requiring all dogs to be leashed on Town beaches from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm on Saturdays, beginning the Saturday before Memorial Day until the Saturday after Labor Day.
5. The Rye Dogs at Large Committee recommends to the Rye Board of Selectmen that the Board educate the public about any dog related warrant articles that pass town vote with the following list:
 - Signs in the woods;
 - Handout flyers that would be created with input from the Police Department;
 - Pamphlet that could be printed off the website;
 - General information posted on the Town's website;
 - Posting in the Town Newsletter, Rye Magazine and the Portsmouth Herald;
 - Posting through the Rye Civic League, and
 - Any other ideas the Selectmen may have for education.


Rye Dogs at Large Committee,


Ritchie White, Chairman

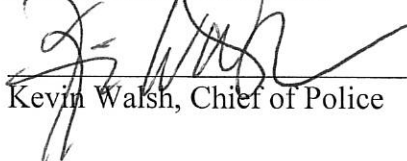

Mike Garvan, Vice-Chairman


Susan Shepcaro


Kevin Kobylinski


Shawn Joyce


Phil Winslow, Selectman


Kevin Walsh, Chief of Police

Guidelines for the Voice and Sight Tag Program for Rye Town Forest

General Questions

What is the Voice and Sight Tag Program?

In 2019, The Town of Rye, adopted a leash law in the Rye Town Forest that requires all dogs to be leashed unless they are registered in the Voice and Sight Tag Program. This program allows dogs to access the Rye Town Forest off leash if they display special participation tags and they are under “voice and sight control” of their guardians at all times.

Can I carry the tag instead of displaying it on my dog?

No. The tag must be displayed on your dog so that it is visible. If the dog is small or the tag seems uncomfortable, guardians can try using a harness with the tag attached or affixing the tag directly to the collar or harness. Dog guardians must display the tag on the dog at all times when using voice and sight control.

Is participating in the program a requirement or just a request?

It is required by law for anyone intending to use voice and sight control privileges. Participation in the program and displaying a valid program tag on all dogs under voice and sight control is required by Town of Rye Ordinance.

I paid the fees – where will my money go?

The money from fees will pay for the expenses of the Voice and Sight Tag Program.

I do not allow my dog to go off leash in the Rye Town Forest. How does the program affect me?

It does not. You do not have to be a part of the program if your dog is always leashed. Anyone can walk their dogs on leash anytime in the forest.

Is the Voice and Sight Tag unique to a specific dog?

Yes, the tag signifies that the dog guardian has registered in the program, has been given the guidelines of program, watched the online video of what it means to control a dog, and that the dog meets vaccination requirements.

Is there a test or certification process associated with getting Voice and Sight Tags?

No. By being registered in the program, displaying the tags on your dog, you are simply stating that you have received the guidelines, watched the video of what it means to control a dog and will comply with all the rules.

Getting a Voice and Sight Tag

What do I need to do to obtain a Voice and Sight Tag?

You need to watch Boulder Colorado’s Voice and Sight Training Video.

<https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/voice-sight-video>

While the Town of Rye's program is not as robust as Boulder's, the video is an excellent example of what it means to control a dog, specifically 3:20 to 7:40 which shows exactly what voice and sight control means and what is expected to comply with the Town of Rye's program.

You then need to go the Clerk's Office at the Rye Town Hall where you will receive the current materials for the Voice and Sight Tag Program. All participants will be required to provide proof of a current rabies vaccination for each dog to be registered and pay registration and annual renewal fees. Rye residents will need to have a Rye dog license for each dog to be registered.

Registration Fees:

- Rye residents: \$25. The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$5, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$10. All guardians must sign that they received the materials and understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements. Note: guardian and dog registration fees will be waived for Rye households who apply and meet the income criteria.
- Non-Rye residents: \$75. The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$10, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$25. All guardians must sign that they received the materials and understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements.

Annual Renewal Fees:

- Rye residents: \$25. The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$5, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$10. All guardians must sign that they received the materials and understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements. Note: guardian and dog registration fees will be waived for Rye households who apply and meet the income criteria.
- Non-Rye residents: \$75. The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$10, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$25. All guardians must sign that they received the materials and understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements.

Do I have to renew the tag every year?

Yes, all Voice and Sight Tags expire Dec. 31 of each year.

What else do I need to do to be in compliance with the program?

Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges must be renewed annually. Program participants will get updated information on the program to ensure that participants understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements. They will also be given a copy of all town ordinances concerning dogs.

Dog guardians and dogs must remain registered in the program and demonstrate proper voice and sight control at all times. While in the Rye Town Forest, all off-leash dogs must wear their program tag and guardians need to have a leash for each dog in their possession.

Infractions and Penalties

Am I protected from getting a ticket if my dog has a Voice and Sight Control Tag in the Rye Town Forest?

No. A dog guardian who participates in the program and walks a dog under voice and sight control may still be issued for any violation of voice and sight control rules including but not limited to the following infractions:

- The dog guardian is walking more than three dogs under voice and sight control
- The dog guardian is not carrying a leash for each dog being walked under voice and sight control
- The dog guardian fails to display a voice and sight tag on dog
- The dog guardian has a dog under voice and sight control and is not registered in the Voice and Sight Tag Program
- The dog is not within the guardian's sight and under voice control at all times
- The dog does not come to and stay with the guardian immediately upon command
- The dog jumps on, charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression toward any person, or behaves in a way that any reasonable person may find harassing or disturbing;
- The dog charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression toward any dog
- The dog chases, harasses or disturbs wildlife or livestock
- The dog is on private property without the permission of the landowner
- The dog guardian does not carry dog waste bags and does not immediately pick up their dog's waste, carry it with them (does not leave it to be picked up at a later time) and dispose of it in a waste can

Voice and Sight Control Definition: "Voice Control" means that the dog returns immediately to and remains by the side of the responsible party in response to the responsible party's command. "Sight Control" means that the dog is always within sight of the responsible party and the dog is capable of complying with Voice Control. If a dog approaches or remains within 10 feet of any person other than the responsible party, that dog is not under voice control and is in violation of this Ordinance unless such person has communicated to the responsible party by spoken word or gesture that such person consents to the presence of the dog. The same applies to a dog approaching another dog. A dog is automatically defined as out of control and in violation of this Ordinance if it: 1) is on private property without permission. 2) jumps on or knocks down an unwelcoming person. 3) fights with or shows aggression to another dog(s). A responsible party who refuses to attempt to call their dog(s) when requested by an authorized Rye official is automatically in violation of this Ordinance.

What are the penalties associated with violations?

Offenses related to not meeting the requirements of the Voice and Sight Tag Program, off-leash or voice and sight control violations, and dog at large circumstances are subject to a maximum penalty first violation of up to \$100 and/or loss of one year of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. For a second violation, the maximum penalty is a fine of up to \$200 and/or loss of one year of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. A third violation will result in a fine of up to \$300 and/or a permanent loss of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. Additional fines may be applied up to \$1,000 for dog waste violations.

Registration Form

This form must be completed for every guardian at the time of registration and at the annual renewal for the Voice and Sight Tag Program:

Date: _____

I, _____, have received the current guidelines for the Town of Rye's Voice and Sight Tag Program for the Rye Town Forest. I watched the online video as an example of what it means to be in control of a dog. <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/voice-sight-video>

I agree to follow the guidelines for the Town of Rye's Voice and Sight Tag Program for the Rye Town Forest and will ensure that any dog under my guardianship will always be under my control as shown in the video or on leash.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Address if different than above _____

Dog's Tag ID: _____

Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Address if different than above _____

Dog's Tag ID: _____

Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Address if different than above _____

Dog's Tag ID: _____



Techniques to be Successful with Voice and Sight Control

- Stay alert and attentive to where your dog is and what they are doing at all times. Keeping your dog close and in front of you will help you control him/her immediately if needed.
- Consider your line of sight (like when driving a car): how far ahead can you see the open trail? Keep your dog closer on trails with limited sight lines and when conditions create poor visibility.
- Be proactive by maintaining a manageable distance between you and others. This can give you more time to react when facing a possible conflict with other dogs and recreationists.
- If you see another person with their dog on a leash, leash your dog or keep your dog close to you with voice commands. There is a reason why they have their dog on leash.
- Read your dog's intentions. Learn their body language such as signs of unease, stress, fear, or signs of predatory interest.
- Know when your dog is stressed, excited or in distress by having basic awareness of body signals and fearful behaviors. These can differ from dog to dog. A tail wagging is not always positive and hackles rising (when the hair raises up on the ridge of a dog's back) is not always negative.
- Be aware of the environment and your dog's reactions to it. Are deer more active today? Are there many other dogs? Is it so windy your voice will be carried in a direction AWAY from your dog? Are there other dog guardians who seem distracted and unable to control their own dogs?
- In a calm environment with no stimulus factors like other dogs or people, play a call-back game rewarding your dog when they return. After your dog consistently returns, practice the call back game in a stimulating environment where there are other people and dogs around. This can support your dog to be successful under voice and sight control in the most stimulating environments where there are hikers, bikers, dogs, and wildlife.

If you have any doubt that your dog can not meet the voice and sight control standards, play it safe and use a leash. Consider working with a trainer. We highly recommend working with a trainer because it will greatly enhance your relationship with your dog which means both you and your dog will be happier and will have a better time together.



Rye Police Department

Animal Control

Voice and Sight Control Tag Program

(Town Forest, Recreation Land, and Parsons Field)



Overview

- Voice and Sight Control Tag Program
- Legality and Enforcement
- Registration Requirements and Annual Fees
- Summary





Voice and Sight Control Tag Program

The Town of Rye implemented the Voice and Sight Control Tag Program (VSCTP) with the objective of reducing off leash animal related incidents. Participation requires:

- Dog owners (residents and non-residents) to register each participating dog in the program.
- Owners must review all program rules and acknowledge, with their signature, that they understand the VSCTP and agree to abide by the rules.
- Payment of fees associated with the program.
- Participating dogs must display their VSCTP tag when off leash on Town property.



Legality & Enforcement

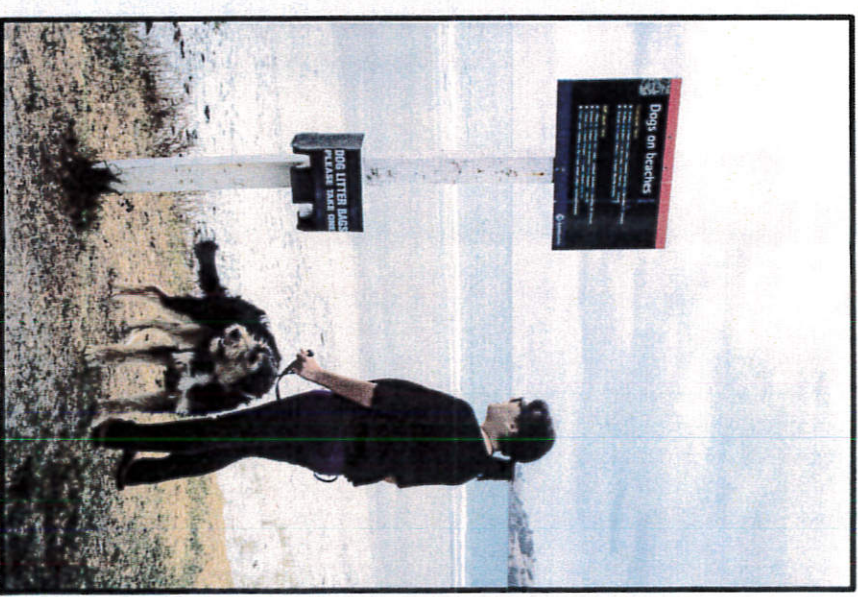
- Voice and Sight Control Tag Program will be used in the Town Forest, Recreation Land and Parsons Field
- Signs associated with the program posted at all entrances
- Town ordinances with associated fines
- Modification of currently enforced Town Ordinances





Enforcement Cont...

- Must have tag displayed at all times
- Maximum of Three (3) dogs under VSCTP
- All handlers must carry a leash and waste bags for EACH dog under their supervision
- Dogs must display obedience to owners' commands





Town of Rye Dog Regulations

The following is a list of requirements for all dog owners.
Failure to follow is a violation.

Voice Control- The dog returns to the responsible party when called.

Sight Control- The dog is always in sight of the responsible party.





Town of Rye Dog Regulations

The following is a list of requirements for all dog owners.
Failure to follow is a violation.

- Any loose dog not displaying a Voice and Sight Control Tag is considered "at large" and may be taken into custody.
- Dogs must not growl, snap at, run after, chase, jump on or display aggression toward any person, or behave in a way that any reasonable person may find harassing or disturbing.
- Dogs must not growl, snap at, run after, chase, jump on or display aggression toward other dogs or wildlife.
- Dogs must be wearing a collar with current dog license.
- One handler may walk a maximum of three (3) dogs at a time.
- Handler is required to carry a leash for each dog under their supervision.
- Handler must be capable of physically restraining dog(s) under their supervision.
- Handler must carry waste bags, immediately pick up all dog waste, carry dog waste with them and place bags in a waste can.
- Dog(s) must be within handler's sight at all times.
- Dog(s) must come and stay with handler when called.
- Handler must not allow dog(s) to approach people or other dogs without permission.
- Handler must not allow dog(s) to be on private property without the owner's permission.



Registration Requirements & Annual Fees

The Town of Rye will provide the requirements and guidelines for Voice and Sight Control Tag Program eligibility. The following documentation will be required for registration:

Current dog license for each dog. Dogs must be registered for VSCTP annually. Fees paid annually.

RYE RESIDENTS:

First dog \$25, additional dogs in the household \$10 each

Primary handler included in \$25 fee, additional handlers \$5 each. Must be a registered handler to participate in VSCTP

NON-RESIDENTS:

First dog \$75, additional dogs in the household \$25 each

Additional handler \$10. Must be a registered handler to participate in VSCTP

NO FEE FOR LEASHED DOGS

PARTICIPATION IN VSCTP IS VOLUNTARY

