Tips for Creating a Safe and Secure Enclosure for Your Dog

- Your dog's **secure enclosure** is not only good for making sure he or she stays **safe at home**, but also for keeping **intruder animals out**.
- The basic methods of escape are:
  - **Digging and/or squeezing under fencing;**
  - **Squeezing through fencing gaps;**
  - **Jumping or climbing over fencing; and**
  - **Opening the gate.**
- When constructing an enclosure for your dog, always use **strong**, **durable** fencing materials.
  - Some weaker chain-link fencing can easily be stretched, bent, and pulled apart by some stronger or more persistent dogs.
  - **Chicken wire is useless**, even for chickens since it allows dogs to break in.
- Using **concrete** in the right places can vastly improve the **security** and **durability** of your dog's enclosure.
- Fence posts should be set in concrete approximately **2 feet** into the ground.
  - The post holes should be filled approximately **2/3** of the way with concrete.
  - Allow the concrete to **cure before** stretching fencing between posts; 3 days is best, but 1 will usually due.
- The standard fence height for a secure dog enclosure is **5 to 6 feet**; though some dogs may require more security.
  - This can be accomplished either by **extending the height** of the fencing, or installing a slanted **inward extension** using "**barbwire arms**" (actually designed for keeping intruders out).
    - Inward extensions are particularly helpful with dogs that learn to climb wire fencing.

  - It's important to remember, placing a doghouse or other structure next to the fencing may give your dog an easy boost for climbing out of the enclosure.
- Most chain-link fences are constructed with a tension wire strung across the bottom of the fencing just above ground level.
  - This is one of the most common **security weaknesses** of dog enclosures.
    - With little effort, most dogs can dig a little and push their way out, bending the fencing up just enough to fit through.
  - The fencing should be buried **6 to 12 inches** below floor level. A trench should be dug around the enclosure for the fencing to sit in.
  - Ideally, once the fencing is stretched, the trench should then be filled with concrete.
  - Another good alternative to concrete is to lay galvanized pipe along the bottom of the trench, and secure it to the bottom of the fencing with galvanized wire. Thin fencing runner piping can be used for this; or even cheap **½" conduit** will do the trick.
  - A combination of these 2 methods makes for even greater security.
  - One alternative often used is concrete blocks or bricks lining the bottom of the fencing. As long as these bricks can be adequately secured to the fencing, this method may work.
    - Buried bricks along the bottom of some gates is a good way to help secure the enclosure for some dogs (poured concrete is always better).
- Fill any gaps in the fencing that are more than a few inches wide.

    - Often, when gates are installed, unexpected gaps may be left over.
    - One quick and easy way to fill these gaps is the use of "**panel clamps**" and pieces of **1-1/2 inch galvanized runner piping** (or other durable pipe).

- Check the enclosure frequently for necessary repairs.
- Again, avoid using "**chicken wire**" to make repairs or to fill gaps.
    - Although this type of fencing may be easy and cheap to work with, most dogs can easily pull this thin fencing apart.
- Simple "**fork latches**" or "**butterfly latches**" are commonly used to secure the gate of an enclosure.
    - Many dogs learn to lift and open this type of latch, so remember to keep a padlock or some type of clip in the locking hole, commonly built into this type of latch.
    - Some particularly cleaver dogs may require **2 latches** on one gate; one near the top and one near the bottom. These latches are relatively cheap; and are much more reliable than bungee cords or bailing wire.

- One commonly used mechanism for securing double gates, is the "**drop-pin**."
    - For this mechanism to work reliably, there should always be something substantial in the ground for the pin to set in while the gate is closed.
    - The most secure option is to pour a **concrete slab** across the bottom of the gate, leaving a hole just large enough for the pin to fit into.
    - An appropriately sized piece of pipe for the pin to set in can be strategically placed in the concrete before it cures.

- Your dog's enclosure should contain **shelter**, **shade**, **water**, and **toys** to occupy his or her attention and energy.
    - Having a **companion** may also help many dogs stay occupied while you are away for the day.
    - **Shade is essential**.
        - While the doghouse inside the enclosure will provide shelter from the elements, you also must create an open space for your dog that is protected from the sun.
        - Enclosed doghouses can become ovens during the hot summer months.
        - If you are building the enclosure near a tree or other natural shade, this need will already be met. If not, use a lightweight but durable material to create shade while still allowing airflow.
- **The more room the better** - for exercise and to discourage some dogs from becoming overly territorial.
- All potentially hazardous material and debris should be removed from the enclosed area.
- The floor of the enclosure should be higher than the surrounding area to aid with **water drainage** and to discourage flooding.
- Consider using a high wattage light bulb in the enclosure to provide your dog with some **warmth** during the colder months of the year.