

## International Positive Dog Training Association Research Findings – Tools Retractable Leashes

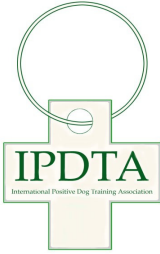
**Tool:** Retractable Leashes

**Rating:** Unacceptable due to high potential for accident and/or injury.



### Drawbacks, Risks and Warnings

- There have been numerous reports of even the strongest retractable leashes breaking, most on powerful dogs, others on dogs not as powerful but due to poor leash construction.
- Breakage has been known to occur;
  - where the line attaches to the clasp
  - where the line attaches inside the plastic casing
  - the line itself
  - the plastic casing
  - the locking and retractable mechanisms
- Retractable leashes for sale at dollar stores are of extremely poor quality and have a high potential to break.



## **International Positive Dog Training Association**

### **Research Findings – Tools**

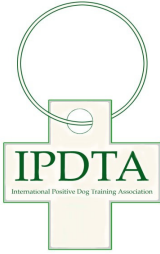
### **Retractable Leashes**

- Since there's a constant tug on the dog's collar it teaches dogs to pull on leash making it difficult to teach the dog to heel.
- You can't train a dog to heel on an extended retractable leash as it allows the dog freedom of movement.
- Because it takes full use of one hand to hold onto the handle, retractable leashes allow the handler only one free hand making it difficult to use the techniques required to teach the dog to walk on a loose leash.
- The retractable leash is counter-productive when proofing the recall because of the constant pull of the leash. The dog learns that it must come when call when the leash is attached but as soon as the leash is removed, the pull is gone and the dog knows it's free to do as it pleases. A "life line", "lunge line" or long leash is preferable for this exercise because the dog will not feel the tug on its collar.
- Retractable leashes are extremely dangerous when used with choke chains, pinch collars or head halters as the handler has little control over the jolt to the dog's head or neck if the dog runs ahead and hits the end of the leash.
- The retractable leash has a high potential for becoming wrapped around the dog, passing dogs or people, bikes or objects causing accidents and/or injuries.
- If the plastic casing is dropped and the dog is frightened by the handle "chasing them" they can run off and get lost or be injured.
- The dog encounters another dog or animal at the end of the leash. Because you are not close enough to the dog to control it this can result in bites and fights.

#### **Reported accidents associated with the retractable leash**

The following are not just accidents that could happen, they have.

- Line breakage where the line attaches to the clasp causing the clasp to snap back. This can cause injuries such as lacerations, eye injuries and/or blindness.



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### **Research Findings – Tools**

### **Retractable Leashes**

- Accidentally dropping of the plastic casing handle caused the handle to retract back to the dog. The handle can strike the dog in the head causing lacerations, eye injuries, blindness and/or concussion. This type of accident can also cause fear and/or superstitious cues.
- A dog walking ahead of the owner down the sidewalk when a car backs out of a driveway. The dog could be hit by the car.
- The dog runs into traffic. This can result in injury or death.
- The line of the retractable leash becomes wrapped around a dog or person. This can result in deep lacerations, amputations and/or broken bones.
- The cord or tape breaks. This can result in the dog running into traffic or running away.
- The dog takes off when the handler is holding onto the cord or tape or has the cord or tape wrapped around a hand or finger. This can result in lacerations, amputations and/or broken bones.
- The dog runs into an elevator ahead of the owner just before the door closes. This can result in strangulation and/or death.
- The dog bolts after another dog, rabbit, squirrel etc. pulling the handler off his/her feet and dragging them along the ground. This can result in lacerations, abrasions, amputation and/or broken bones.
- The dog gets tangled with a passing cyclist. This can result in injure to both the dog and cyclist.
- When a running dog hits the end of the leash with force it can result in;
  - cause the leash to break
  - cause neck injury



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### **Research Findings – Tools**

### **Retractable Leashes**

- can cause the handler to drop the plastic casing handle
- breakage of any kind can cause the dog to be loose in a public area causing injury due to being hit by a vehicle, causing vehicles to crash to avoid hitting the dog, and/or other dangers associated to dogs being loose in a public place.
- When used by cyclists retractable leashes can be dangerous to both dog and cyclist for the following reasons;
  - only one hand is free with which to control the bicycle
  - the dog can pull the bicycle off balance causing the cyclist to fall
  - the dog can pull the bicycle into traffic
  - the dog can run in front of the moving bicycle

“I allowed retractable leashes when I first began running my training classes. I can’t count the number of times dogs escaped both inside and outside my facility while on a retractable leash. There were numerous incidents involving the handler accidentally dropping the plastic casing which retracts and hits the dog. I’ve witnessed the clasp breaking loose on a few occasions causing it to snap back at the handler. Due to these experiences and the numerous reported accidents and injuries I no longer allow the use of retractable leashes in my classes.

Each client is informed that retractable leashes are not acceptable when they sign up for class. Those who bring a retractable leash to class are given a leash to borrow and asked to bring an acceptable leash to their next class.

It’s clear to me that with this tool, the risks out weight the benefits and as result I will not allow them in my classes, discourage their use, will not recommend them to my clients and will never use one on my own dogs.” Norma Jeanne