Vet-First Red Flags

If you tick any box, call your vet before starting the training plan. In an emergency, contact your nearest emergency vet.

- [ ] **Self-injury:** broken teeth, torn nails, cut paws or mouth from chewing at doors, windows or crates
- [ ] **Escape attempts** through doors or windows, or out of a crate
- [ ] **Won't eat or drink** when alone, or extreme drooling or panting
- [ ] **Accidents in the house,** to rule out medical causes
- [ ] **Sudden onset,** especially in an older dog, or other new behavior changes
- [ ] **Signs of pain** (limping, stiffness, not wanting to be touched), or a dog who suddenly gets worse
- [ ] **Broader fears,** such as panic at fireworks or thunder, or anxiety in many situations
- [ ] **Time pressure,** such as a formal warning from your landlord, or no progress after a few weeks of careful training. Ask your vet for a referral

WHY THIS MATTERS

Pain and illness can cause or worsen behavior problems. Your vet can look for medical causes, and refer you to a veterinary behaviorist if your dog needs one. Some dogs benefit from medication alongside training; only your veterinarian can decide that.

KEEP THESE NUMBERS HANDY

My vet _____ **Phone** _____

Nearest emergency vet _____ **Phone** _____

Force-free, always. Nothing here uses punishment or any method meant to frighten or hurt your dog.

General information only, not veterinary advice. Talk to your vet or a qualified behavior professional about your dog.

Is It Separation Distress?

A rule-out checklist. Tick everything that applies. This is a guide to talk through with your vet, not a diagnosis.

Does it happen only when you're out (or out of reach)?

- [ ] Yes, only when I'm out
- [ ] It also happens when I'm home

When does it start? (check on video)

- [ ] Within the first few minutes
- [ ] Later in the absence
- [ ] Not sure yet: film it

Before you leave, does your dog

- [ ] Get worried when you pick up keys, put on shoes or a coat?
- [ ] Follow you from room to room?

While alone, does your dog

- [ ] Howl, bark or whine
- [ ] Scratch or chew at doors or windows
- [ ] Have accidents
- [ ] Pace, pant or drool
- [ ] Ignore food or a food toy

Other clues

- [ ] Barks at outside noises when I'm home too
- [ ] Gets upset in a crate or closed room even when I'm home
- [ ] Older dog, or the problem started suddenly
- [ ] Any sign of pain, illness or a recent health change

WHAT IT SUGGESTS

Mostly ticks in the first sections → a separation-related problem is likely. Check the red flags, then start with week one: cover every absence and film your dog.

Ticks under "Other clues" → talk to your vet first.

NOTES FOR MY VET

General information only, not veterinary advice. Talk to your vet or a qualified behavior professional about your dog.