

## Guidelines for Volunteer Dog Walkers:

- 1) Before a volunteer can be trained, they must first obtain an application/registration form from the Humane Society office. Once the application is filled out and turned in, the volunteer will be contacted by a Dog Walker to schedule training.
- 2) Upon arrival, the volunteer should use the Volunteer Log to sign in. It is located on the desk in the volunteer office. Yellow volunteer ID tags are available in the volunteer room. It is requested that all volunteers wear a tag.
- 3) A choker chain and leash are needed to walk the dogs. Experience has shown that if chokers are not used, more dogs escape by slipping out of their collars. A 22-24" choke collar works well for most dogs (small and medium-sized) at the kennel. For larger dogs, a larger choke may be needed. There should be approximately 2" of choke chain showing when properly sized and pulled taut on a dog's neck.
- 4) There is a board in the center of the kennels to track which dogs have been walked. Select a dog that has not been walked and mark the time in the appropriate square. Since every dog does not always get a walk every day, be aware of which dogs may not have had a walk the day before. If all the dogs have been walked, choose dogs that need extra attention and add a checkmark or plus sign to the board to indicate you are providing extra walking time.
- 5) **The method used for entering and exiting the dog kennels is very important.** There are safety latches on each of the kennel gates. They should be latched at all times if a dog is in the kennel. Undo the safety latch and regular latch and open the gate. (*Some doors open in, some open out*). Block the dog with your body from getting out. Be careful the dog does not slip out between your legs. There are red boards available that can be used to block the dogs from escaping while you enter or exit the kennels.
- 6) Once inside, **immediately close the gate latch** and take your time.
- 7) Place the choker on dog. Chokers should be placed on a dog's head from the front in the shape of the letter "P" with the extra chain and lead dangling to the right side of the dog's neck so that it releases easily. Dogs should be encouraged to walk to the left of a walker. Ask someone to show you this if you do not understand.
- 8) Make sure no other dog will be passing by. Watch for children or other people who might impede your entrance and exit with the dog. When it is clear, lift latch, open gate and proceed to the exit. Avoid getting close to other dogs. They have been known to nip each other right through the cages.
- 9) While walking the dogs outside be sure to maintain a *little* tension on the choker to prevent the dog from slipping out. Always keep your dog out of reach from any other dogs.
- 10) When entering or exiting building use the mirrors to see if other dogs are in your path.
- 11) When walking dogs, be upbeat; encourage good walking and praise them for eliminating outside. Carry plastic bags (Located near door and at many spots on the walking trail) for cleaning up after your dog.  
**Use of cell phones is prohibited while walking dogs.**
- 12) Check the mirrors before entering or exiting to make sure it is clear of other dogs.
- 13) Lead dog back inside kennel, *get in kennel with the dog and shut latch* before removing choker.
- 14) Open latch and back out of cage, watching that the dog does not slip out. Treats are helpful to divert a dog to the back of the cage while you exit. **Always** finish by re-latching safety latches..
- 15) If for some reason you were unable to walk a dog you had marked off, please make sure you clear the date so another walker will take the dog out.
- 16) Sign out in the log book before your leave. The Humane Society receives grant monies according to the number of hours donated, so this procedure is very important.

## Q&A

### **Q. What if there are two dogs in a cage?**

A. Unless you are very experienced, it will require two people to walk two dogs in the same cage. One person should enter the cage according to guidelines with both chokes and leashes. Each dog should be leashed and the leash should be handed through the kennel to the person waiting. When both dogs are leashed, open the cage and both dogs can be walked concurrently.

### **Q. What if a dog appears very aggressive?**

A. Only walk dogs that you feel comfortable about. Most of the dogs are very receptive and anxious to get out even though they may jump and get very excited. If you are unsure of a particular dog, ask for help.

### **Q. What does a balloon on a sign mean at a dog's cage?**

A. Some dogs, usually new arrivals may be exhibiting signs of fear or aggression. The balloon means that the opinion about this dog is "up in the air" at that time and it is recommended that only experienced walkers attempt to walk that dog until more is known. Balloons are also posted when the dog is very strong or an escape artist. Some need a metal leash to prevent them from biting the leash. You can check with staff at the front desk if you would like to find out the reason for the designation.

### **Q. Why don't the dogs respond to their names?**

A. Many of the dogs are strays or are seized by humane officers and do not have a known name when they get to the shelter. They are named when they come in so that they are identifiable. Try to use the dog's given name often to build name recognition.

### **Q. Can I give a dog a treat?**

A. It is a good idea to carry **very small**, but yummy treats (sausages, liva-snaps, beg'n strips, etc. broken into a tiny size) to help a dog learn obedience commands and to toss to the back of the cage when trying to exit after walking a dog. A treat does not have to be large to be effective. Only give treats to dogs that you know are not food aggressive. Use an open palm and offer treats at the dogs level.

### **Q. What if a dog appears ill or hurt?**

A. Use the veterinarian action sheets that are located in the volunteer room to record illness or injury about a particular dog. Check and see if the dog has been listed previously. These reports are reviewed daily by the vet techs.

### **Q. Can I test or train a dog when walking?**

A. If you know how to properly implement obedience commands, it is always good to work with the dogs to find out which ones know commands and to reinforce the commands that they learn, such as sit, stay, heel, and come. It is also important to not reward dog jumping however cute it may appear. Say *off* and gently push the dog back down or use your knee to block the jump. The easier a dog is to handle, the more desirable for adoption.