Training Manual for Kennel Assistants at Lewisville Animal Hospital

Maggie Bone
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Introduction

Working a veterinary clinic can be a lot of fun, but it’s up to you to make it that way. It isn’t all about playing with cats and dogs every day. There’s a lot of sweat and hard work that goes into the job as well. While the working environment is typically pretty laid back, it’s still a place of medical protocol. Without kennel assistants, veterinary technicians cannot do their job, and without veterinary technicians, the veterinarian cannot perform his or her job. The following training and reference manual outlines and describes the basic responsibilities that need to be taken care of the kennel assistants on a day to day basis.
Fly Page Chapter One
Chapter One: Various Responsibilities

Cleaning the Clinic

One of the main responsibilities of being a kennel assistant at a veterinary clinic is making sure that the entire clinic is clean and presentable at all times. No one wants their pet’s medical issues being taken care of someplace where people aren’t even taking the time to make sure the floors are clean.

This includes all areas of the clinic. The boarding area, treatment area, exam rooms, waiting room, and bathrooms, as well as hallways, all need to be clean as much of the time as possible. After all, clients are most likely going to see 2/3 of the areas just mentioned within the first 30 minutes or so of their visit.

Feeding the Animals

Making sure that the animals staying at the clinic are well taken care of is another main responsibility of the kennel assistant. While the doctors and technicians are taking care of exams and emergencies, it is the kennel assistant’s job to take care of the daily needs of animals staying with them. Dogs should stay on their normal eating schedules while boarding at a veterinary clinic to reduce stress, so it is up to you to make sure that you tend to each animal’s individual needs. Also, a lot of animals receive various medications along with their meals, some of which are vital. It’s important to keep track of which dog gets fed what and when.

Walking the Dogs

Dogs are creatures that require regular activity. Unfortunately when dogs are boarding, there’s no choice but to keep them in a cage for most of the day while you’re going about your other required tasks around the veterinary clinic. At Lewisville Animal Hospital we walk the dogs three times a day to make sure that they get out as much as possible. Once in the morning after breakfast at 8:15pm, once during lunch time at 12:00pm, and once after they are fed dinner at 5:15pm. During this time they are walked for a minimum of five minutes. You can use your best judgment for this. Obviously a small older dog will not require as much time as a large, young dog.
Restocking
A lot of the things required to perform veterinary exams on the animals are universal, and the technicians tend to go through these supplies very fast. If you notice that something is running low, it is your job to restock it. You will be shown during training which cabinets you can find these supplies. Here is a list of the materials that you will be responsible for restocking:

- Qtips
- Gauze
- Cotton Balls
- Soap
- Surgical Scrub
- Rubbing Alcohol
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Needles
- Syringes

Weekend Duties
Since Lewisville Animal Hospital is closed on the weekends, you will only be asked to come in twice per day on Saturday and Sunday. The times for these meetings are 8:00am and 5:00pm unless you’ve been notified otherwise. Keep in mind that these are the only two times during those days that the animals get any human interaction and get to be active. Here is a list of the tasks you’ll be asked to take care of during the weekend shifts:

1. Feed the dogs.
2. After all dogs have finished eating, one person walk each one at a time.
3. While one person is walking each dog individually, the other person must rinse and dry out that dog’s designated cage.
4. Wash the dog bowls.
5. Feed the cats.
6. Clean the cat cages while they are eating.
7. Change any dirty litter boxes.
Chapter Two: Outline of Basic Daily Procedures

The following sections are basic outlines of what your daily routine should be. These are subject to change if an emergency comes in or if your manager or a veterinarian specifies a change.

**Morning Tasks**
When you first arrive in the morning, here is a list of the first things you should do:

1. Feed the dogs.
2. Give individual dogs their medications should they so need it.
3. Walk the dogs one at a time.
4. While one person is walking the dogs one at a time, one person cleans that dog’s designated cage.
5. Change out the dogs’ water bowls.
6. Wash the dirty dog bowls.
7. Feed the cats.
8. While the cats are eating, change each one’s litter box.
9. Give each cat fresh water.
10. Clean any cat litter that falls on the floor with the dry mop.
11. Go to the treatment room and ask a technician what they need you to do.

**Lunchtime Tasks**
When the technicians and the veterinarian go to lunch there are no scheduled appointments. This is the best time to get cleaning done. Here are some things that you should check:

1. Scrub any dirty surgical appliances/supplies.
2. Make sure the bathrooms are clean.
3. Pick up any trash around the doctor’s office.
4. Dry mop all of the floors to make sure there isn’t any clumps of hair anywhere.
5. Make sure there are no messes in the cat room or the boarding facility.
6. Walk the dogs at 12:00pm.

**Afternoon Tasks**
Afternoon tasks are very similar to the morning tasks, only there isn’t as much that needs to be done. The afternoon tasks are as follows:
1. Feed the dogs.
2. Refill any empty or close to empty water bowls using the watering can.
3. Walk the dogs one at a time.
4. Clean all dirty dog bowls.
5. Feed the cats.
6. Refill their water bowls.
7. Change out any dirty litter boxes.

Closing Time
Once all the appointments are over, it’s time to close up the clinic. One person vacuums and one person mops behind them. Make sure you don’t rush through this, as this is the only time of day that the floors get thoroughly cleaned. Make sure any stains that have accumulated throughout the day are all mopped up. Close all the doors after you are done vacuuming and mopping. Make sure all the lights are turned off, and then you can clock out.

Assisting in Exams
Most of the time between your usual daily tasks, you will be asked to assist in exams. The process is as follows:

1. Lay out any supplies that the technician asked you to get out.
2. If the technician asks you to make up some vaccines, then draw those up now.
3. When the technician brings the dog or cat back, you will assist them however they ask you to.
4. If blood needs to be drawn then you hold the animal by following steps 5-7.
5. Sit the animal down with its back towards you.
6. Place your hands on either side of its face, putting your index fingers under each side of its chin. (this keeps you in control of the animals head)
7. For a small dog: place your arms down the length of its back. For a big dog: stand up and keep the fronts of your shins along the length of its back.
Chapter Three: Protocol for Working with Aggressive Animals

How to Hold
Aggressive animals require a much different method to get them under control. Some are aggressive because they’re in a different place and just scared, while others just don’t get along well with many people. Either way, there’s no use in risking getting yourself or the animal hurt while a simple examination is going on. Here are some basic rules to handling an aggressive animal:

1. Get a cloth muzzle from the cabinet. (there are different sizes for different sized animals)
2. Slowly inch up to the side of the animal.
3. Get the cloth muzzle ready with each hand on a different strap.
4. Make an average paced motion around the animal’s head as to secure the muzzle onto the animal’s nose.
5. While holding firm so that the animal cannot back out of the muzzle, snap the clasp that should now be behind the animal’s head shut.
6. Adjust the straps so that the animal cannot shake itself free.
7. Make sure that the straps are not too tight by placing a finger behind the animals head in between its skin and the strap to see that there is some room.
8. Hold as you normally would for the rest of the exam, making sure not to hold too tightly as this will only anger the animal more.

Warning: Move slowly. Any sudden movements will startle the animal and may result in...

Walking and Feeding
Most animals, even when angry, will let you feed them. If they don’t then you can always just open the cage door quickly, throw the bowl in, and shut the door just as quickly as you opened it. However, when it comes to feeding, some animals are reluctant to trust you when you have them on a leash. For these rare cases, here is the correct protocol:

1. Get the metal pole with the loop at the end specifically made for holding the neck loop of a leash.
2. Place the neck loop loosely around the end of the metal pole.
3. Open the door of the cage slowly but surely.
4. Ease the metal pole towards the dog slow enough for it to be able to tell what you are doing.
5. Keeping easing until you get the neck loop around the dog’s neck.
6. While walking the dog, keep the handle of the leash an arm’s length away from you at all times. (this way the dog should not be able to reach you)
7. When you get back inside, just leave the leash in the cage with the dog.

Note: The dog will work the leash off of itself. The next time it’s brought outside, ask someone to retrieve the leash from the cage.
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