

## Dog Coordinators

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# BEGINNER DOG HANDLING CLASS

Bring \$10 cash for a slip lead. This class is to walk dogs that have a green or yellow sticker.



## General Info

- HEAVY DUTY WORK GLOVES ARE REQUIRED in the kennels and while walking.
- Wear sensible shoes for walking in grass and on uneven ground.
- Bring a pen, clothes pin, and waste bags.
- Hours for Walking: Monday through Sunday 11:30am to 4:00pm (until 7:00pm on Thursdays)

## Safer Interactions

- Use caution - even after multiple interactions but especially with dogs you've never met.
  - Do not put your hands or your face near their face.
  - Get to know them first before petting them; start on their back not their head.
  - No matter how friendly they appear, some dogs do not want you in their personal space.
  - Familiarize yourself with behavioral cues (tail tuck, whale eye, raised hackle, lip licking, etc...)
  - <https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/dog-behavior/dog-communication-and-body-language/>
- Plan for the worst, **ALWAYS THINK AHEAD**, remain focused!
- Do not show or allow dogs to interact with the public (refer them to staff at the front desk).
- Do not let the dogs into wooded areas or tall grass (they aren't given flea/tick preventative).
- Report signs of illness to the front desk staff and leave an orange Sick Slip in front of chart.
  - Dogs who appear ill should not be handled.
  - Non-bloody Diarrhea is normal but not Lethargy, vomiting, bleeding, limping, etc...

## Step 1: Picking a Dog

- Do not enter the rooms with red or green clip boards.
- Even if you've walked this dog before: check for sticker, activity sheet, other notices.
- **ONLY** walk if chart has a **green or a yellow round sticker**.
  - Tell staff if you think the sticker is missing and ask them for a new one.
  - Do NOT walk blue sticker dogs until you pass the advanced class.
  - Do NOT walk red sticker dogs or dogs with no sticker.
- New dog walkers should use extra caution or wait for more experience if:
  - "Top Yellow" is handwritten next to the sticker.
  - Blue or Red stickers are visible underneath the green/yellow sticker.
- Check for clues about the dog's personality before interacting with it.
- Review the chart (yellow activity sheets, behavioral assessment, medical notes)
  - "Needs Rabies" cards – do not walk.
  - "Kennel Cough" – save for last to avoid spreading it to healthy animals on your leash or clothes.
  - Difficult to get in/out – consider using outdoor kennel door/wait until hallway is clear.
  - Pay close attention to the feedback from volunteers with similar abilities.
- Regardless of the notes – **BE PREPARED** for pulling, yanking, and other unwanted behaviors.

- It is ok to walk the same dog more than once, it is good practice for them.
- Walks should be limited to 10 minutes at a time, especially when:
  - There are potential adopters browsing.
  - During extreme hot or cold weather.
  - There are other dogs in your level who have not yet been walked.

## Step 2: Removing the Dog from the Kennel

- Place your clothespin on the cage and remember the name and location of the dog.
  - Helps you coming back in and lets staff and other volunteers know the dog is out.
  - Use one on both doors if taking from outside section.
- Place hand through the handle and wrap excess leash around your wrist.
- Slide the leash stopper out of the way and create a loop with the slip lead.
  - Too big they can step into it. Too small they won't slip their head through.
- Remove the safety chain and brace the door (animal may want to push out)
  - Most people place their foot on the concrete in front of the door.
  - Open door just enough to get your arm in and loop the dog's head.
  - Be sure that it is securely around the neck.
  - Do NOT push a fearful dog to leave its kennel, pick another dog.
- Look both ways to be sure there is no other dog coming in or going out.
  - Don't open the door until there are no dogs in the hallway and all kennel doors are closed
  - Open the door when you're ready for the dog to come out.
- Keep the excess leash wrapped around your wrist. **Short leash = better control**
- Slide the leash stopper down but not too tight.
  - You can also wait to do this before exiting the final gate to outside.
- Close and secure all gates behind you.

## Step 3: Walking the Dog

- Walk through the kennels with your body hugging the wall.
  - Do not walk between the dog and the kennels.
- Keep your leash short so the dog cannot make contact with other kennels.
  - Short leash high on the dog's neck is a **MUST** inside the building except small/fearful dogs.
- Be slow and cautious walking around corners.
- As you open doors and gates, make the dog wait for you to walk through.
- Keep 10 feet of space between dogs.
  - Do not let dogs interact – only the official play group or adoption assistants can do dog meets
- Give the dog more leash once you're walking out in the open
  - Focus on good leash manners.
  - If dog pulls too much, shorten the leash and practice heeling.
- You can walk or sit with the dog anywhere outside.
  - Stay away from the fire department and the school fields if they are in use.
  - Meet/greet rooms can be used but leave if the room is needed.
  - DO NOT enter the dog's kennel.
- Ask staff or fellow volunteer for help if you're having difficulty handling a dog.
- Keep focused on your dog and your surroundings.
  - Not all dogs are friendly with other dogs.
  - Do not use your phone, do not smoke, avoid conversations while a dog is in your control.
  - Do not encourage unwanted behavior (Jumping, mouthing, leash biting, etc)

- Dog bites that draw blood **MUST** be reported to shelter staff for your safety and the safety of others.

#### **Step 4: Using the Play Yards**

- Dogs with higher levels of energy might benefit from yard play followed by a structured walk.
- Dogs who walked nicely might enjoy a play yard reward.
- Do not remove the leash, either drop yours or attach a flat lead.
  - Check that all gates are closed before dropping leash.
- 15 minutes of high energy play is the equivalent of a 1 hour walk.
- If using balls in the yard **NEVER** take it out of the dog's mouth
  - Even reaching for the ball on the ground could cause accidental or purposeful injuries.
  - Use treats or a second hidden ball to encourage 'drop'.
  - Use the leash to remove dog from ball never your hands to remove ball from dog.
  - Absence of a note does not mean the dog will not exhibit resource guarding.
  - Do not hold ball in the air to encourage jumping.
- Agility yard is also available for use (ask the agility teacher if you want help)
- Do not leave treats or toys laying on the ground in the yards.
  - The next dog may have guarding issues and it can cause fights during a meet.
- **NEVER** enter the yard if there is someone in the yard or in an adjacent yard.
- Do NOT get close to the play yard while there is group play or dog meets going on.

#### **Step 5: Returning the Dog to their Kennel**

- Do not to allow the dog to walk into the building before you check that it's clear.
- Loosen the leash safety stopper (or do this before opening their kennel door)
- Keep dog at your side but do not walk between the dog and the kennels.
- Look for your clothespin and verify it's the right kennel before opening the door.
- Most dogs will want to enter their kennel so let them.
  - close the door and brace it with your foot again before reaching in to remove the leash.
- Some dogs will resist going back in, avoid pushing the dog in with your hands.
  - Might help to toss a treat into the kennel.
- Close the gate, push/pull to make sure its securely closed, use the safety chain!
- Write in the volunteer activity sheet that provides valuable insight to others.
  - Needs leash manners, knows commands, relaxed once out of building, etc...
  - Be professional since it is visible to adopters.

#### **To pass green/yellow you must successfully:**

Use all 3 types of latches, exhibit control walking a yellow dog, remove and return to kennel properly using a short leash, close gates and use safety chains, keep dog between you and the kennels and away from others.

#### **Connect with a Mentor**

If you have not walked at the shelter for 3 months or just want more help – contact us to set up a refresher.

#### **After 15 hours and 1 month of walking yellow dogs you can request training for:**

Advanced Blue Class, Volunteer Adoption Assistant (VAA), or Volunteer Veterinary Assistant.