

Dog Walking Guidelines



SAFETY LATCH



SHIELDS



IN KENNEL WITH DOG



VOLUNTEER TAGS

CHOKE CHAIN "P"



CHOKE CHAIN ON DOG

- 1) Before a volunteer can walk dogs, they must fill out a volunteer application and be trained. All volunteers must sign in and out of the Volunteer Log. Yellow volunteer ID tags should be worn while volunteering. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied at all times by a parent.
- 2) A choker chain and leash are required to walk the dogs, to avoid dogs from slipping out of their collars. A 22" choke collar works for most dogs. There should be approximately 2" of choke chain showing when properly sized and pulled taut on a dog's neck. If the chain does not easily fit over the dog's head, do not use it.
- 3) There is a dry-erase board to track which dogs have been walked. Select a dog to walk 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.
- 4) Check the kennel gate for specific information...the dog may have a notation about having worms or kennel cough or may require an experienced walker.
- 5) The method used for entering and exiting the dog kennels is very important. There are safety latches on each of the kennel gates that should be latched at all times if a dog is in the kennel. Undo the safety latch and regular latch to 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 also 3 red boards available to use as shields to block dogs from escaping while you enter or exit the kennels.
- 6) Once inside, immediately close the gate latch and take your time. Dogs should be sitting or at least have all four paws on the ground before taking them out of their cage. Encourage sitting at all entrances and exits.
- 7) The choker should be in the shape of the letter "P" for correct placement on a dog. Slip the choker over the dog's head placing it right behind the ears, high on the skull. The extra chain and lead should dangle 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.
- 8) Make sure no other dog will be passing by. Watch for children or 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 away from other dogs. If your dog is staring hard at another dog, change direction.
- 10) When walking dogs, be upbeat; encourage good walking, and praise them for eliminating outside. Carry plastic bags for cleaning up after your dog. Use of cell phones is prohibited while walking dogs. It is imperative to be in control of dogs at all times.
- 11) When entering or exiting, check the mirrors to see if other dogs are in your path.
- 12) Lead dog back inside kennel, enter the kennel with the dog, and shut latch before removing choke collar.
- 13) 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. The red boards are also good for use when exiting. Always finish by re-attaching safety latches.
- 14) If for some reason you were unable to walk a dog you had marked off, please make sure you clear the space on the board so another walker can see and will hopefully take the dog out. For "best practices", see washingtontpashelter.org/walkers.htm

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.