Shelter Canine Handling

## Handling Puppies

* Puppies should never touch un-sanitized surfaces, including staff clothing.
* Staff should wear PPE whenever handling puppies under 6 months.
* Switch to clean PPE between puppy litters.
* Use black rolling tubs or crates to transport puppy litters.
* If carrying a single puppy, wrap the puppy in a clean towel to avoid it touching your clothing.
* New intake puppies should never be combined with other puppies.

## Removing Adult Dog from Kennel

* When removing a dog from a kennel, distract the dog, and enter the kennel with your leash ready. Attempting to “noose” a dog through the gap in the gate can lead to an escape by the dog and should be avoided if possible. Enlist help when removing rowdy or escape-prone dogs from their kennels.
* Approach the dog from the side. Do not attempt to “noose” it over the top of its head, as this will only intimidate the dog. If the dog has a kennel mate, you can ask for assistance to make this easier.
* Talk calmly to the dog to avoid over stimulating him or her.
* When moving the dog, keep the dog away from other kennels, and break his or her line of vision. Use proper leash techniques, looping the handle of the leash over your thumb and across your palm (like a joystick). Keep the leash short and loose and use both hands for better control.
* Only small dogs and puppies should be carried if possible. Carrying a dog like a baby is not permitted. If the dog won’t move on the leash, coax the dog by moving in front and down low. Lead with your feet. Keep arms and leash loose when possible.
* Watch for signs of stress/fear like flattened ears, raised hackles, tail up stiff, tail tucked, dilated pupils, lifted lips, bared teeth, C-shaped mouth, hard eyes, whale eyes, submissive urination, one lifted paw, growling, whimpering, lunging, stiff posture, etc.
* If these signs appear, remove the dog from the source of the stress-- away from other animals, or into a less stressful kennel.
* Inform a member of management immediately if an animal is displaying signs of overt aggression and/or may be a threat to other animals or people.

## Housing Dogs with Behavior Issues

The housing of aggressive or potentially aggressive animals should be labelled Staff Only, and no volunteers or members of the public should be allowed to interact with the animals.

Aggressive animals should not be housed in crates or cages where they must be handled to clean. The exception is very small dogs who can easily be handled with bite gloves.

## Location Changes

When animals move locations, go into foster, etc., their location should be updated on the Housing Location Board immediately. Their kennel cards should always move with the dog when being ‘permanently moved, whether changing kennels or leaving the shelter. It is important that we always know where our animals are.

## Co-Housing and Combinations

Ideally, 1-2 large dogs, 2 medium dogs, 3 small dogs, or 4 puppies may be housed in one kennel. When space allows, runs should not exceed this limit. Efforts should be made to match dogs with kennel mates of similar size, complementary temperament, and similar intake dates. Dogs of the opposite sex may not be combined unless one or both is altered. The shelter max capacity is around 100 dogs and puppies, not including those in foster homes.

Puppies (under 6 months) should be housed in the Dog Room so that they aren’t exposed to contamination from other kennels. One single puppy may be paired with one other single puppy of a similar size in order to meet the behavioral development needs of the pair. Unrelated puppies should be NOT combined, unless they have already been to PetSmart together. All other puppies (under 6 months) should be housed with littermates only. Ideally puppies (under six months) should not be combined with adults unless they are a litter being housed with their mother.

Puppies who have gone to PetSmart together can be kenneled together if other littermates have been adopted.

Dogs that can escape uncovered kennels should be housed in a kennel with a topper in The Dog Yard or Outback.

Dogs with medical issues (hair loss, sneezing, nasal/eye discharge, hacking, loose/bloody stool, etc.) should not be combined without permission from a member of management.

Dogs should be introduced to new dogs in a neutral setting. Exercise Yards are the ideal setting for dog to dog introductions. Introducing dogs in noisy, high energy, and otherwise stressful areas is setting them up for failure. Dogs should be allowed to meet and sniff each other. If either dog shows signs of excessive arousal, dominance, anxiety, or stress allow the dogs to separate, walk away to shake it off, calm down, and then try again. If allowed to stare each other down face to face arousal can escalate into conflict.