



SAPA Petsmart EAC

Dog Walking Policy

Taking a shelter dog for a walk might seem as simple a task as walking your own dog, but giving shelter dogs a little exercise involves more than just grabbing a leash and running out the nearest door. This SAPA Dog Walking Policy provides imperative information for all dog walking staff and volunteers to ensure people safety, the safety of the animals, and the safety of shelter staff and visitors. With exception of our group walking program, all new dog walking volunteers **MUST** complete the SAPA Volunteer orientation class: “Dog Walking 101” prior to walking dogs at the EAC. All scheduled group walking volunteers **MUST** meet with an experienced group leader who will show them how to handle and socialize the SAPA dogs before they start volunteering.

Importance of Dog Body Language

The kennels are a very stressful place where dogs have little control over their environment. Many are lonely, anxious, fearful, frustrated or depressed. Behaviors indicating emotional stress include: ears down, low body, pupils dilated, eyes look away, low whine or moan, spinning, and tail beating. Walking and socializing the dogs and providing kennel enrichment helps to reduce emotional distress and increases the psychological well-being of each dog residing at the EAC.

Body Language in Dogs

A dog’s body language can tell a lot about her/his mood, behavior, and emotional state. Dog walkers need to be aware of the body language of each dog they are working with. For example, if a dog is demonstrating a behavior that a volunteer is uncomfortable with, such as growling from inside her/his kennel, the volunteer should refrain from entering the kennel and walking the dog. In addition, if a dog runs to the back or outside of her/his kennel when a volunteer or staff member approaches, the dog may be fearful and require extra patience and attention from the dog walker.

Step By Step Instructions

- Wear shoes with good support and grip for your safety and comfort – floors are sometimes wet.
- Before walking, make sure you grab a good supply of dog poop bags (atleast 3 per dog), and dog treats, to put in your pocket or treat pouch.

- Before you pick a dog to take out, check the dog walking white board located in the dog kennel hallway, to see which dogs need to be walked first.
- Before opening the kennel/cage door, read the dog's kennel card and any notes that you may need for dog walking. The notes may give dog walkers an idea of what type of temperament the dog has (excited, playful, submissive, etc.).
- Before entering the dog's kennel, have the leash ready and be sure you know how to work the latch. The ability to quickly open and close a kennel door will be important when dog walkers are getting dogs out and putting them back in the kennels.
- Open the kennel door only part of the way, and make sure your body is blocking the opening, so the dog doesn't try to scoot past you. Crouch down low, with your leash ready, and use your leg or foot as a "stopper" on the outside of the door, so the dog cannot push and swing it wide open.
- It is important not to reward a dog for inappropriate behavior, such as jumping or barking, in her/his kennel. Open the kennel door only when the dog has four paws on the floor and is not barking.

**This procedure listed below should be used any time the kennel door is opened. **

- 1) When preparing to open the kennel door, wait for the dog to have four paws on the floor and to be quiet. (When the dog learns a "solid" Sit, substitute the Sit for the four paws on the floor.)
- 2) When the dog is calm, reach for the kennel latch, and unlock the door. If at any time the dog barks, jumps, or becomes too animated, immediately shut and lock the door and back away from the kennel. Start over again and wait for the dog to have four paws on the floor and to be quiet. This will continue until the dog remains calm.
- 3) At this point, open the kennel door. These steps can initially take a great deal of time. Remaining calm and not losing patience is one of the keys to success. If five to ten minutes have passed, move to another dog and come back to this dog later. With each session, the amount of time spent opening a kennel door will decrease.

***Please note that all dogs walking outside at the EAC, MUST have either a properly fitted martingale collar with a sturdy clip leash, OR an EZ Walk harness with a sturdy clip to walk outside. If both items are being used (group walk situation) and there are no martingale or EZ walk harnesses available – a double leash needs to be used instead. Double leash consists of a regular collar (properly fitted) with a sturdy clip leash attached, AND a slip lead. Please note- the stronger the leash material, the better.**

- Once inside the kennel, put the leash on the dog and once the collar is in place get ready to exit the kennel.

- Ask the dog “Sit” before she/he is taken out of her/his kennel. (See Training tips on the last page).
- Before exiting the kennel, look to your left and right to make sure no other dogs are coming.
- How to hold the leash: place your hand through the loop with one hand and grasp the middle of the leash with the other – **You must keep your dog under control at all times.**
- Do not allow the dog to jump on people (volunteers, staff or visitors).
- Do not allow the dog you are walking to “kennel fight” with other kenneled dogs. The easiest way to do this is to place the dog against the wall and keep your body between the walking dog and the kennels.
- Before entering the hallway, open the door and look to your left and right to make sure that no other dogs are coming. · If a dog is too strong or lively for you to control, return the dog to her/his kennel and take out another dog.
- Before going outside, ask the dog to “Sit” and ensure you have your waste pickup bags– **You must pick up your dog’s poop.**
- Please remember, Petsmart policy is to always exit and enter out the back door of the store when dog walking.

Always Practice Loose Leash Walking:

- Once outside, the first lesson to teach your dog is that nobody’s going anywhere if the leash isn’t slack. Not allowing the dog to pull is one of the best ways to stop a dog from pulling. When the dog begins to pull -- “Be A Tree.” Meaning, stop moving and do not allow the dog to move forward. After a few moments, the dog will look back and loosen on the lead. As soon as the lead loosens, move forward. Moving forward is the dog’s reward.
- Anytime forward motion starts, use the command “Let’s go.” If, after 5-10 seconds, the lead does not slacken, take three big steps backward. The dog will have to follow. As soon as there is slack in the lead, begin moving forward again.
- Another method for loose leash walking is to change direction often. When you change direction, give the dog the “Let’s Go” command. Use this as an alternative when the dog begins to pull. This will teach the dog to follow the handler.

Some rules for loose leash walking:

- NEVER yank on the dog’s lead. The dog may do this naturally during “Be A Tree” or when changing directions.
- Each dog walker needs CONSISTENCY and plenty of PATIENCE when doing these exercises. It is very easy just to let dog pull occasionally. However, allowing the dog to pull, even occasionally, will teach the dog to do it regularly. In time, the dog’s newly learned manners will make for nicer walks and a better chance for adoption. ·

- Dog Walkers should use basic training techniques when handling the dogs. The success of these basic techniques requires CONSISTENCY from every dog walker to be effective.

Dog Walking Safety:

Make sure that the dog you are walking does not get too close to or come in contact with any other dog (unless dogs are a pair sharing a kennel). EVERY DOG WALKER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF THE DOG SHE/HE IS WALKING AT ALL TIMES. Please practice the SAPA “10 Foot Rule” – keeping dogs separated by 10 feet at all times.

- Dog Walkers need to be alert and constantly aware of her/his surroundings and be diligent in keeping her/his dog under control at all times (i.e. not walking too close to other dogs, waiting at a safe distance until another dog walks by, etc.).
- Before taking a dog back inside the EAC, ask the dog to “Sit” before opening the door.
- Once you are back inside the shelter, grab some treats (this will help when returning the dog to her/his kennel).
- You may encounter a little resistance when the dog you are walking realizes that she/he is about to be returned to her/his kennel. Use treats, and kneel to coax and reward your dog for going back into his/her kennel.
- When putting a dog back in her/his kennel, enter the kennel with the dog, close the door, remove the leash, ask the dog to “Sit” and give her/him a treat, exit the kennel and close and lock the gate. Always make sure that the latch on the kennel door is locked – if a kennel door has a clip attached to it, make sure that you replace the clip above the latch. ·
- If you are unable to exit the kennel without the dog escaping, put the leash back on the dog and go back out into the hallway and ask for a SAPA staff member or another volunteer for help.

***Remember to mark the time walked on the SAPA dog walking board after each dog is placed back in the kennel. The dog walking board is the most effective way to ensure that all dogs are getting enough exercise each day.**

- Before moving on to the next dog, make sure your dog has a clean kennel & access to fresh water.

Training Commands and Techniques

Jumping:

- For most dogs, jumping is only rewarding when the dog receives attention for jumping. When a dog jumps, turn 180° away from the dog and ignore the dog. When all four paws are on the ground, reward the dog with a small treat or petting. The focus is to teach the dog that good things happen when they are not jumping.

Watch:

- Stand or kneel in front of the dog. Take a treat between the thumb and forefinger and show it to the dog. Bring the treat to the bridge of your nose and say “Watch.” As soon as the dog makes eye contact, give the dog the treat. Repeat this 5 to 10 times.

Sit:

- Begin with a handful of treats. Allow the dog to smell the treats. Slowly move the treats up and back from the dog’s nose towards the area between the dog’s ears. As the dog raises his head, he should naturally move into a sit position. When the dog understands the movement, add the verbal command “Sit.”
- What if the dog does not sit? Try different techniques. Move the lure hand a little slower or faster. If the dog backs up, start him in a corner or near a wall. When the dog knows sit well (about 90% reliability), begin using it as a bridging command to certain rewards.
- Have the dog sit for petting, going outside, or throwing a ball. The dog should learn that good things happen when it is sitting.

Down:

- Exercise 1 – Put the dog into a Sit. Hold the treats in a closed hand in front of the dog’s nose. Lower the hand towards the floor. The dog’s nose should be following the treats. When the hand is right above the floor, move the treat away from the dog. In order to reach the treat the dog will need to move the front paws forward and will lie down. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat.
- After the dog begins to understand the behavior, add the command “Down.”
- Exercise 2 - Put the dog into a “Sit”. Hold the treats in a closed hand in front of the dog’s nose. Lower your hand towards the floor. The dog’s nose should be following. When the hand is right above the floor, move the treat hand between the dog’s front legs. In order to get the treat the dog will need to slide back and lie on the ground. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat.
- After the dog begins to understand the behavior, add the verbal “Down” command as the dog is starting to lie down.
- Exercise 3 – You sit on the ground with your legs in front. Bend your legs at the knees to form a tunnel or arch. Lure the dog with the treats to go under the legs. Make sure that the legs are low enough that the dog must lie down to go under. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat.

Leave It:

- Start with a handful of tasty treats. Keep your hand closed, but let the dog smell what is inside. The dog will begin to dig his nose into the hand to get the treat.
- Tell the dog to “Leave It” and patiently wait for the dog to move his head away from the hand. As soon as the dog’s attention moves away from the hand, give the dog a

treat. Repeat this process until the dog begins to understand the association between the command and the behavior.

- Next, unveil the treats in the palm. When the dog tries to grab them, say “Leave It” and close your hand, if necessary. When the dog moves his head away, give a treat while saying, “Take It.”
- Continue with the exercise but place the treats on the floor and cover it with a hand. Continue until the dog does not move toward the treat. Slowly increase the amount of time that the dog must ignore the treats before rewarding him. Use “Leave It” in a variety of situations and objects so the dog is able to recognize the command for multiple objects.

Stay:

- Start by asking the dog to “Sit.” Say “Stay” and have the dog sit for approximately one second, then say the release word, “Free,” and give the dog a treat. Try this 2 -3 more times. If the dog moves prematurely, just start again.
- After the dog is successful for several attempts at one second, increase the duration to two seconds, then three seconds, etc. Say “Free” and give the dog a treat. Do not increase the duration if there is an unsuccessful attempt. If the dog is unsuccessful after 2 or 3 tries, go back to the duration where the dog was last successful and reinforce at that duration a couple of times.
- After the dog can stay for 5-10 seconds at a time, begin to move away from the dog. After the “Stay” command is given, slowly take a step back away from the dog, hold for one second, and return to the original position. Say “Free,” and give a treat. If the dog moves when you step back, take a smaller step back on the next attempt. Continue this exercise until you can stay away from the dog for 5-10 seconds.
- Teach the same exercises listed above with the dog in the “Down” position.

Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____