

# Sonoma County Animal Services Cat and Dog Orientation



# Topics



Cat and Dog  
Experience

Safety

Disease Control

Working with Cats

Working with Dogs

Kennel Flow

Dog Fights

Housekeeping



# Cat and Dog Experience



Who has pets at home?

Who has fostered an animal?

Who has taken a dog training class?

Who has professional animal care experience?



# Safety First



Make sure all equipment is secured

Never handle an animal you are uncomfortable with, regardless of level

Clean up after yourself and the animals

Don't force fearful animals

Use positive reinforcement

Don't allow animals to mingle

If you have questions or problems, ask



# Disease Control



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Common dog illnesses:

Bordetella (kennel cough)

Giardia

Parvo

Common cat illnesses:

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Calicivirus

Ringworm (Tinea)



# Disease Control



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Dog treatments at intake

DHLPP

Bordetella

Strongid

Flea Treatment

Cat treatments at intake

FVRCP

Strongid

Flea Treatment

How you can help

Wash hands/use  
sanitizer

Clean up urine and  
feces

Don't let animals  
interact

Report sick animals



# Color Level Program: cats



Green

Easy to handle, friendly

Purrs and makes biscuits/kneads

Often seeks attention

Purple

Difficult to handle

Temperamental, timid, hisses, airplane ears

Need to be assessed by staff



# Working with Cats



## Cat body language

Approach quietly and calmly

Offer your hand slowly—let the cat come to you

Avoid strong scents

Keeps cats off the floor

Always use positive reinforcement

Do not allow cats to mingle

Add notes to the enrichment logs





# Working with Cats



Make sure disc is open

Top off water as needed

Do not add food

Scoop the litter box

Do not move cats to another kennel

Do not carry cats through the kennels  
unless in a crate

Do not share toys between cats



# Working with Cats: enrichment



Cardboard boxes (shoe box size)

Toys

Treats

Catnip

Holding on lap or in arms

Petting

Brushing

Cattery: take in crate, one cat at a time,  
only during nice weather



# Color Level Program: dogs



Green

Well-adjusted and -  
mannered

Easy to handle

Orange

Shy/fearful

Not easily collared or  
leashed

Jumpy

Purple

Reactive/high arousal

Mouthy

Resource guards

Difficult to manage



# Dog Behavior: body language



## [Dog Body Language 101](#)

Displacement: kennel stress response due to lack of enrichment

Yawning when not tired

Licking chops without food present

Scratching when not itchy

Bites at paws/other body parts

Sniffs ground/objects

Shakes when not wet/dirty



# Dog Behaviors: warning signs



## Yellow Flags

Tail tucked

Ears Back

Displacement behaviors

...but wants interaction

## Red Flags

Stiff body/freezing

Growling, barking

Not taking treats, trembling, shaking

Head whipping, whale eye

Increased/multiple displacement behaviors

Avoids interaction

# Working with Dogs: greeting



## Correct

No eye contact

Let the dog come to you

Keep side or back towards the dog

Pet or stroke the side of face, body and/or back

## Incorrect

Lean over and touch

Grab or hug

Stare in the eye

Squeal/shout

Kiss head



# Working with Dogs: duties



Work on reinforcing calm behavior

Basic training skills

Walk on a leash

Play in the yards

Spa attendant

Go on hikes

Enrichment—just as (or more) important than going for a walk

Know your “audience”

# Working with Dogs: enrichment



Squeaky/soft toys and tennis balls  
(outside and supervised only)

Puzzle toys/boxes with treats/lick mats

Sniffaris/scent work

Filled Kongs, Nylabones, pupsicles

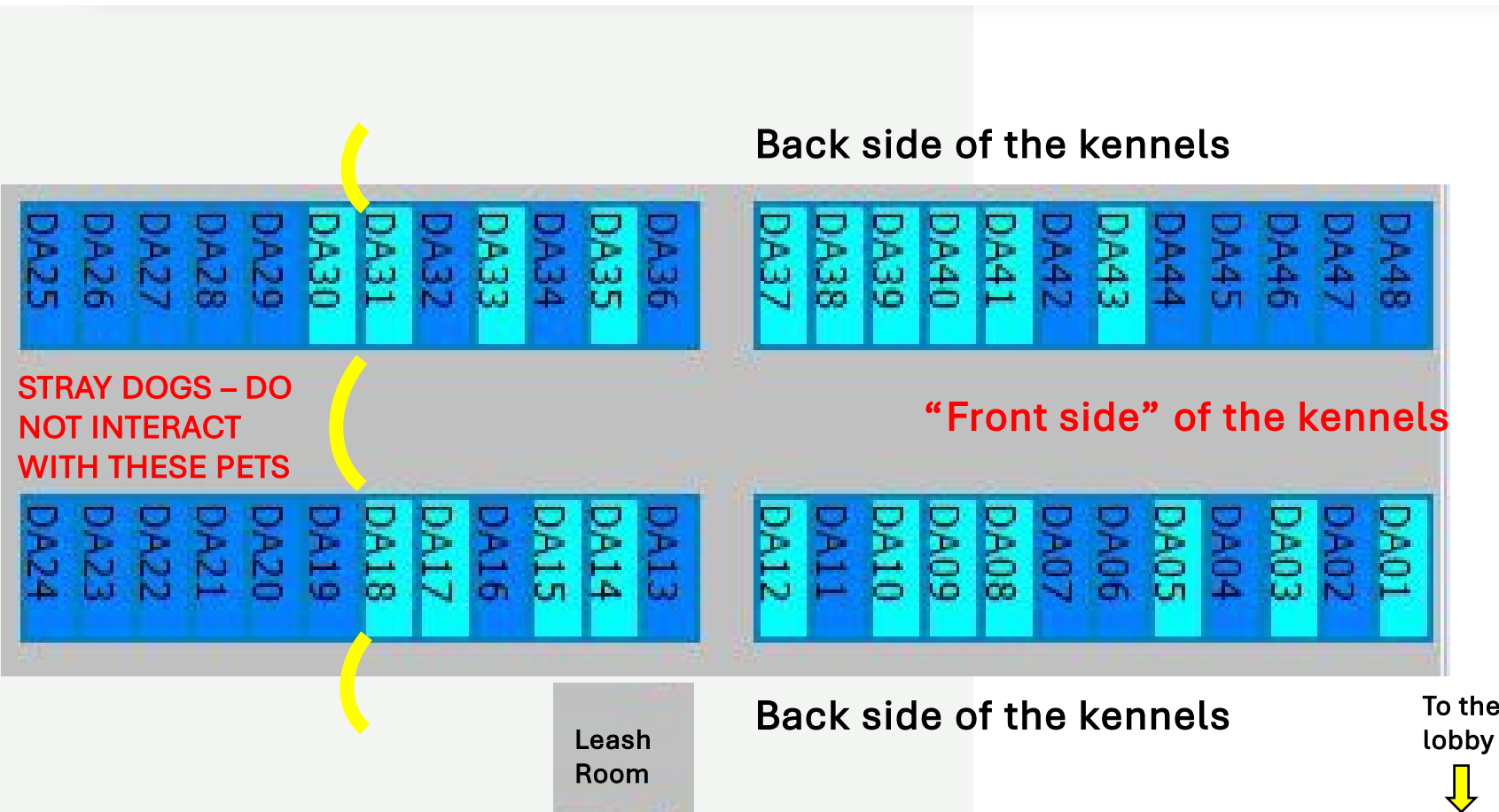
Do not leave toys in kennels—dogs may  
ingest them

Dogs can go out multiple times a day

Quality over quantity



# Kennel Flow



Use the back side of kennels for dog enrichment and getting dogs out of the kennel, unless staff is cleaning.

Stray dogs are in the area marked by signs and a yellow chain. Do not interact with these dogs, unless instructed otherwise.

# Dog Fights



Refrain from letting dogs meet in the kennels, play yards or while walking

Get help

If the dogs are on leashes, pull them away from each other

Separate between bites

Air horns are available

After a fight, dogs may be injured or aroused—avoid touching the dogs

Advise staff immediately





Thank you for  
volunteering! Have fun!

