



Orientation for TAG Canine Shelter Volunteers

Welcome to the Trumbull Animal Shelter! Thank you for giving these animals a chance to interact with trustworthy humans. As a volunteer, we want to insure your safety, the safety of the staff and the public, and the safety of the animals. We therefore ask that you adhere to the following guidelines when helping at the shelter.

- Each volunteer must make an appointment to meet once with Animal Control Officer, Lynn Dellabianca, for a brief explanation of what Animal Control is all about.
- Volunteers must be TAG members in good standing and must sign the Town of Trumbull volunteer release/waiver before doing any volunteer work.

Dog Walking and Socializing

- Receive permission from shelter staff before you interact with any unfamiliar dog. Ask for information regarding the dog's personality, likes and dislikes, health needs, etc. **Never handle a dog you feel uncomfortable with.**
- Read and follow any instructions on the dog's cage. **Do not touch a dog that has a "Quarantine" sign on its cage.**
- **By order of the Town of Trumbull, TAG volunteers may not handle or walk a dog that does not have a current rabies vaccination** (you will have to ask staff members which dogs are not vaccinated).
- **Unless you are a strong dog handler or are very familiar with a dog, ask a staff member to get the animal out of its cage and put it back.** All of the cages have a clip (or carabiners and leash clips) to prevent dogs from jumping up and opening the latches on their cages. Please make sure when you put a dog back in its cage to **put all clips/carabiners securely back in place the way you found them.**



When taking a dog in or out of the kennel area or shelter itself, check to make sure that no other volunteer is with a dog on the other side of the door. Wait until the other dog is out of the way.

- Use a leash and metal or nylon choke collar or a prong collar to walk the large dogs: **you must be in complete control of the dog at all times.** When walking a dog and another person approaches you with or without a dog, it is your responsibility to avoid the other person/dog. Hold the dog close; put yourself between the dog and the other person.
- The first 2 times you take a dog out for a walk, please have an experienced dog walker accompany you. If you don't know one, we will provide you with a name.
- **Walk dogs only on Shelter grounds.**
- Don't allow any non-TAG member to walk a dog (i.e. a friend or relative who is with you). **Do not allow the public to pet or get near one of these dogs.**
- Stay away from other volunteers handling dogs to avoid any altercation between the dogs.
- Never leave a dog unattended, unless it is in the outside fenced in pens and authorized by shelter personnel.
- Report to staff any problems you notice about a dog, for example: limping, sores, loose stools, heavy panting, nervousness, shyness, aggression, or any unusual behavior.
- Always give your complete attention to the dog you are handling. It only takes a second for a dog to get into trouble, for example, suddenly running after a cat or a squirrel, eating something inedible he finds on the ground, etc.
- Socialize the dog during the walk. Talk to him; teach him basic commands such as sit, down, stay, etc. Praise him with a pleasant "good dog" for



appropriate behavior. Never punish a dog by hitting him, yanking him angrily, or yelling at him.

- Take a plastic bag for dog's waste. Deposit used bags in bin outside the shelter.
- If you put a dog in the outside fenced in pens, make sure that the side doors are **firmly** closed and locked so that he can't push them open and come into the kennel area. The same goes for the door to hallway and the shelter front door (even a little dog with enough momentum can push open a door and escape).
- **Never be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help** – we have all been in situations where we could not handle a particular dog by ourselves.
- If you are unable to walk a dog, socialize him in one of the side pens. You can pet him, talk to him, teaching him to play, and teaching him basic commands. You can also sit in the cage with him if the staff approves.
- **Report any incidents/injuries to shelter staff immediately.**

Feeding

Feeding is generally done by shelter staff every morning and evening. Please talk to shelter staff if you want to assist with feeding.

Other duties

Volunteers can also help with other duties at the shelter including: socializing the cats inside the cat rooms, cleaning litter boxes and dog cages, doing laundry, maintaining the outside pens, and helping in the office if needed. Please consult with shelter staff for direction with these duties.

General Courtesy

- Keep your voice low in the office so as not to disturb shelter personnel who are on the phone or doing clerical work.



Focus your conversations with shelter personnel on the dogs and their needs.

- Respect shelter personnel's privacy by not going into the office when a staff member is not present. Do not answer the shelter phone!

Lost or Stray Animals

- Please be aware that volunteers **are not allowed** to return animals to their owners if the owners come when staff members are busy performing other duties. You may take information: name of the owner, address, phone number of the animal in question, and pass the info to a staff member.
- If a stray animal is brought to the shelter, do not handle the animal yourself--wait for a staff member. If the shelter has just been closed, the person who found the animal must call the police department (203-261-3665) regarding putting the animal inside the shelter.