



Periodic Dog Check

The periodic dog roll call procedure is a great time tool to accomplish three important tasks in one.

- Confirm physical presence of each dog
- Reinforce leadership of the staff working with the dogs
- Perform a health and behavioral check of the dog.

The primary goal of the dog roll call is to confirm that every dog that is on the playgroup roster is physically present. But by calling each dog to you using the come cue you also reinforce your leader role and perform one of the three recommended daily leadership exercises. Once each dog comes to you, perform a health and behavior check. This extra effort is a great way to confirm each dog in your playgroup is healthy and proactively notice and monitor any changes in them during the day.

Perform the Nine Point Dog Check below as part of your dog roll call procedure. The first six items can be observed as you call the dog to you and interact; the last three items should reflect your observations of each dog for the time period since arrival or the last roll call. A check for each dog should take 1-2 minutes as these are quick observations during the recall and not a “physical examination.” In the event a dog displays a red flag you may perform a more extensive physical exam on that specific dog.

Dog Check Point	Observation	Red Flag
1. Responsiveness	Response of dog to hearing his name and come cue	No response at all due to lethargy or illness
2. Gait	Movement of dog as he comes toward you	Limping, pace that is unusual for that dog
3. Coat	Coat is smooth and dry	Check wet areas or hair tufts for bug bites, injury, sores or hot spots
4. Ears	Dog shaking head repeatedly	Look in ears for redness, discharge or injury; smell ear for strong odors
5. Eyes	Does dog focus on you? Eyes are clear and bright	Darting or dilated eyes, excessive blinking, eyes closed
6. Mouth	Normal breathing, pink tongue and gums	Excessive panting for environment and activity level, bright red tongue or gums or very pale/white gums
7. Behavior	Is dog's response consistent in terms of other responses to name being called and response to come cue? Does dog respond to the sit cue?	Lethargy, ignoring cues, very slow response to cues, behavior out of character for that dog
8. Water	Has dog's water consumption been normal for the dog and conditions	Drinking significantly more than normal or for the current conditions or not drinking enough water for conditions
9. Eliminations	Has dog's eliminations been normal in frequency and form?	Frequent urination or straining; normal stools; no vomiting

All red flag items should be documented on the dog roll call checklist. Monitor these items for changes for the rest of the time dog is in the center. Be sure to communicate red flag items to other staff members before your shift ends. Follow your pet centers procedures for documenting dog health and behavior observations that need to be communicated to the dog owner.

We recommend conducting roll calls a minimum of twice per day (morning and afternoon) but hourly roll calls are preferred. During extreme heat with dogs in outdoor play yards hourly checks are an important safety precaution to monitor early warnings of heat stress.

Keep in mind that in certain environmental conditions a red flag response could indicate a critical health emergency that needs to be escalated to management immediately. Be sure you know the early warning signs of critical life threatening conditions for dogs that include:

- Heat stroke or stress
- Bloat
- Seizures

For more off-leash playgroup resources visit our website: www.TheDogGurus.com