

Roll Calls and Periodic Dog Checks

Objective: Discuss the importance of roll calls and periodic dog checks to enhance safety and prevent tragedy in your pet care business.

Content: Roll Calls and Periodic Dog Checks (PDC) are important procedures every day of the year but are particularly important during busier times. Summers and holidays bring many new clients and furry friends, but these months also bring new challenges. In most areas, heat will present an added layer of complexity to the day in the summer months. In addition, you may be working with quite a few new or temporary employees during these times. This Lunch & Learn is designed to facilitate discussion on keeping everyone safe during these busier times when there will be more distractions and challenges present. Implementing or enhancing Roll Calls and Periodic Dog Check procedures will help ensure everyone is happy and healthy every day of the year

Prior to Lunch & Learn Session:

- In preparation for leading the group discussion, the leader should review the information provided in the supporting materials section found below. If you do not have a Roll Call or PDC procedure in place you will need to create one.
- Print the Periodic Dog Check handout for each participant.
- Review the PDC with another leader so that he/she can assist in the demonstration.
- Select a couple of dogs to pull into the Lunch and Learn for demonstration and practice.

During Lunch & Learn Session:

- Open with your thoughts on why both Roll Calls and Periodic Dog Checks are critical to health and safety. Have a few examples on how each can save lives so that your team fully understands the importance.
- Pass out the Periodic Dog Check handout. As you go through it, have your assistant demonstrate on a live dog. The first six check points can be performed. Then, discuss how you will monitor the final three check points.
- Divide your team into small groups and have them practice a PDC.
- Close with a discussion how Roll Calls and PDC's will be documented and monitored.

Supporting Education Articles/Tools: The information below provides additional guidance on the topic and should be reviewed prior to and during the meeting:

Copyright 2020 Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs

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

Copyright 2013 Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs

Copyright 2020 Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs

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

Copyright 2020 Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs