



PENINSULA
HUMANE
SOCIETY

TLC Volunteer Handbook

The TLC Volunteer

The goal of the TLC Volunteer is to increase the adoptability for all shelter animals, therefore decreasing the need for euthanasia.

You can make a difference in every animal's life!

Objectives of the TLC Volunteer

- I. To provide socialization and care to the following shelter animals:
 - A. Stray animals
 - B. Potential owner & protective custody animals
 - C. Animals in recovery
 - D. Animals available for adoption

- II. To improve the quality of life for all animals at PHS by:
 - A. Providing hands-on socialization in kennels and cages (being a "buddy" for the animals)
 - B. Distributing toys and blankets
 - C. Providing fresh water
 - D. Spot cleaning cages and kennels when necessary
 - E. Brushing and grooming animals
 - F. Helping the animal care staff with dishes and laundry
 - G. Maintaining information board about the special needs of specific animals
 - H. Completing PHS Volunteer Visit Cards
 - I. Acting as a "Puppy Buddy" by assisting with puppy evaluations and socialization. This duty requires training with shelter and behavior staff.
 - J. To act as the animal's voice by helping the public and adoption staff know as much about them as possible.

Understanding Cage & Kennel Cards

It is very important to read all of an animal's paperwork before interacting with that animal.

- I. The PHS **Kennel Card** is the primary means of identification for all shelter animals.
 - A. Information you will find about an animal on the Kennel Card:
 1. Name (if provided)
 2. Breed
 3. Color, physical characteristics and special markings
 4. Sex
 5. Spay or neuter information
 6. Age
 7. Date the animal arrived at the shelter
 8. How the animal was brought to the shelter (surrendered, stray, impounded, etc.)
 9. Pick-up/Animal ID number to correspond with the collar number on the animal
 - B. Kennel Cards are completed by Screening Room staff. Please do not add/change information on kennel cards by writing on them. Talk to front office staff so that the information can be changed in the computer and a new kennel card can be printed.

- II. **Daily Report Cards** help us pay particular attention to the behavior pattern of an animal.
 - A. General behavior information you will find about an animal on the Daily Report Card:
 1. Behavior (normal, listless, aggressive, etc.)
 2. Eating
 3. Urine
 4. Stools
 5. Vomiting
 6. Coughing
 7. Sneezing
 - B. It is very important that TLC Volunteers help PHS staff closely monitor each animal's behavior pattern.
 1. Record information on the **Yellow Medical Card** if you observe any behavior out of the ordinary (diarrhea, excessive urination, etc.). Please put your name, the date and time on the Med Card.

Again, it is important to read the medical card before interacting with an animal so that you are aware of any conditions that are being monitored. This will allow you to act or react accordingly.

2. If the behavior is acute, notify a veterinary technician immediately (example: sneezing, hacking cough, bloody urine, etc.) and indicate your observations on the Med Card. Page a Vet Tech to call the extension that you are at so that you can explain the situation to them before they come over to see you.

III. **Volunteer Visit Cards/Dog Personality Profiles** are essential for tracking a TLC Volunteer's interaction with an animal.

A. Visit Cards provide the following information:

1. Animal's name (if provided)
2. Pick-up/ID number
3. Date to shelter
4. Sex
5. Spay or Neuter information
6. Date of visit
7. Volunteer's name
8. Personality traits – personality & training
9. Additional Comments regarding animals behavior and personality – how well the dog responds to commands, interaction with other dogs, how the dog walks on leash.
– shy cat, explored get acquainted room.

B. Visit Cards provide the most useful information about an animal's personality characteristics, and are a valuable resource for PHS Adoption Counselors and the general public.

Safety Issues & Concerns

- I. TLC Volunteers work side-by-side with members of PHS staff, therefore it is essential that we all work together to identify safety hazards for people and animals.
 - A. "Wet Floor" signs should be placed on wet walking surfaces without exception.
 1. If a dog urinates outside of his run, please mop up the mess and place a "Wet Floor" sign on the area.
 2. "Wet Floor" signs can be found in all parts of the shelter.
 - B. Maintenance Request Forms are important to complete if something needs repairing (broken kennel latch, leaking hose, etc.).
 1. If the repair needs to be addressed immediately, please alert a PHS staff member.
 2. Maintenance Request Forms can be found in the main kitchen at the "Right to Know" Station.
 - C. Hazard in the Workplace Forms need to be completed if a safety hazard is identified in the shelter.
 1. If the hazard is potentially dangerous, please alert a PHS staff member.
 2. Hazard in the Workplace Forms can be found in the main kitchen at the "Right to Know" Station.
- II. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) detail all hazardous substances to which employees and volunteers of PHS may be exposed.
 - A. MSDS are updated and maintained by the PHS HR Director.
 - B. MSDS are available to volunteers for review during each work shift at the "Right to Know" Station.
 - C. If MSDS are not available or new hazardous substances do not have MSDS, the HR Director should be contacted immediately.
- III. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE: gloves, mask, goggles, etc.) is needed when performing certain tasks to prevent possible eye irritation, accidental ingestion and skin irritation from disinfectants.
 - A. PPE is available at areas throughout the shelter or may be obtained by the Animal Care Supervisor.
 - B. It is necessary to use PPE when:
 1. Using high-pressure hoses on cages with disinfectant.
 2. Mixing or pouring disinfectant concentrates.

3. Mixing or pouring concentrated flea & tick dips.
4. If indicated by the safety label on a product.

IV. Zoonotic diseases are transmissible from animals to humans.

- A. The most effective means of preventing zoonosis is to:
 1. Stay current on appropriate vaccinations, such as tetanus and rabies.
 2. Wash hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling any animal and prior to eating or smoking.
 3. Wear long pants and sturdy closed-toe shoes or boots.
 4. Use gloves when changing litter pans, washing food and water dishes, or cleaning up feces, urine or vomit.
 5. Disinfect scratches and bite wounds thoroughly.
 6. Seek assistance when handling animals whose dispositions are questionable.
 7. Tell your physician that you work closely with animals, and visit him or her regularly.
 8. **Report any bites or injuries to the PHS Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator immediately.**
- B. Zoonotic diseases sometimes found in a shelter environment are:
 1. Bartonellosis (Cat-Scratch Fever)
 2. Brucellosis (Malta Fever)
 3. Bubonic Plague
 4. Ringworm
 5. Campylobacteriosis
 6. Cryptosporidiosis
 7. External Parasitic Infections (caused by lice, mites & fleas)
 8. Giardiasis (Beaver Fever)
 9. Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease)
 10. Lyme Disease
 11. Nematode (worm) Infections
 12. Pasteurellosis
 13. Rabies
 14. Salmonellosis (Salmonella)
 15. Toxoplasmosis

Please do not be alarmed by this list of diseases, but be aware that you are volunteering in a hospital environment where they often exist. For this reason, we strongly encourage all volunteers to make sure that their own animals have all of their vaccinations up-to-date. As an added

measure, we suggest that you always change clothes before socializing with your animals at home.

Dog Handling

Wash your hands thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap between handling dogs from separate kennels.

- I. There are many things to consider before going into a kennel with a shelter dog.
 - A. Make sure you sign in on the white board outside of the Animal Care Office so that staff knows you are in the building.
 - B. It is very important to read and carefully interpret **ALL** information on the kennel cards before going into a run.
 - C. Meet the dog from the outside of the run first to evaluate the animal's behavior.

Although all animals up for adoption are put through rigorous behavior tests, we can never predict for sure when an animal's behavior will change.

1. If the dog gives even the slightest hint of being aggressive, do not enter the run.
2. If the dog appears to be scared, proceed cautiously.
Remember, there is little difference between a real threat and a perceived threat when handling a dog.
3. If the dog appears to be friendly, proceed into the run cautiously.
4. Do not lock yourself in the run and always keep yourself between the dog and the kennel door.

DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE ENTER A DOG KENNEL THAT HAS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL SIGN ON THE KENNEL!

- II. Once you are in the kennel with the dog, be aware that you are communicating with your body.
 - A. Friendly human body posture includes:
 1. Look to the side of the dog
 2. Arms at side, or extended slightly toward the dog
 3. Move slowly
 4. Speak to the dog in high-pitched, reassuring tones
 - B. Submissive human body posture includes:
 1. Look to the side of the dog, or down
 2. Make your body appear smaller by stooping
 3. Hands at side
 4. No movement
 - C. Threatening human body posture includes:

1. Direct stare
2. Arm raised, with or without a weapon
3. Rapid movement toward the dog
4. Shouting, growling commands

III. Taking a shelter dog for a walk can be a challenging experience, therefore there are important guidelines to follow.

A. Dogs may be walked and socialized during the following times:

1. **Dog walking & socializing hours:**

Experienced Volunteers: Monday through Sunday
7:00 am – 8:00 pm.

New Volunteers: Monday through Sunday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm.

In order to avoid any accidents, volunteers should not walk dogs in back parking lot after dark.

During winter months, when it gets dark earlier, volunteers have the following choices:

- use indoor Get Acquainted Rooms – only after 5pm everyday except Wednesday.
- use adoption lobby - making sure that glass doors are completely closed.
- use auditorium - you must first check with staff in auditorium to make sure that the space is available and to ensure that all employees' dogs are in their respective offices.

2. **Dog walking & socializing areas:** Dogs may be walked on-leash in the back parking area of the shelter. Dogs must be leashed at all times once outside of their kennels, except in the TLC pens and get acquainted areas. You may also visit with dogs in their kennels. **Do not walk dogs near the Wildlife Department, near the Barnyard animals, in front of the shelter or in the back courtyard near the Vet Clinic.**

Puppies under six months of age may only be exercised in the indoor Get Acquainted Rooms. Puppies should be carried to the room and not put on a leash. IN ORDER TO SOCIALIZE PUPPIES YOU MUST FIRST COMPLETE A "PUPPY BUDDY" TRAINING CLASS!

B. **It is critical to clean-up any "messes" a dog leaves behind.**

1. Pooper scoopers are located in several locations, including just outside the exercise yards.

2. Spray bottles with disinfectant are effective for cleaning indoor messes (located in the Available Cat Room kitchen).
 3. There are mops located by the Get Acquainted Rooms and the D-Section Hallway.
- C. Always return the dog to the exact cage from which you found him.
 - D. TLC Volunteers should seek assistance if trying to get a single dog out of a kennel housing more than one dog. Always try to separate dogs using the guillotine door. However, you may buddy up with another TLC Volunteer to walk or socialize two dogs from the same kennel at the same time.
 - E. The only approved equipment for walking shelter dogs is a training collar and a sturdy leash.
 - F. Always carry a couple of plastic bags for picking up poop.
 - G. Once a dog is removed from his run, an "out for a walk" or "out for a visit" sign must be posted on the front of the kennel. Do not remove the dogs kennel paperwork from the kennel.
 - H. When passing through the front office, hallways, kennels, or in close proximity to other animals, keep a close lead and a firm grip on the leash. It is very important that you are the one who is in control. Your goal is to get the dog outside. If it is very crowded in the front office, the dog may become overly stressed and react aggressively out of fear. Use your judgment, but remember that we do not want to put an animal in a position that may interfere with its availability for adoption.
 - I. Never pull a dog by the leash. If the dog refuses to leave the kennel, you may want to sit in the run and pet him. Some animals are too upset to leave the safety of their kennel.
- IV. What do you do if a dogfight breaks out in a kennel?
- A. If a fight occurs while you are in a kennel, try to exit the run immediately. If you are unable to leave, scream for help. **Never use your hands to break up a fight.**
 - B. Try to distract the dogs fighting in the kennel by shouting or kicking the kennel fence.
 - C. If the preceding does not work, grab a hose and spray the dogs (not in the face).
 - D. If all attempts to break-up the fight are futile, quickly find an animal care technician or veterinary technician for help.
 - E. You may also page an animal care technician to the specific kennel area -- "**Code 2**" -- indicating an animal emergency.

- F. Always immediately report a dog fight to the PHS Animal Care Supervisor and the Veterinary Department to check for injuries.
- V. What if a fight occurs while you are walking a dog outside the kennels?
- A. Pull the dogs apart by their leashes. Do not use your hands to break-up a fight.
 - B. Try to distract the dogs so they will look at you and release their hold on each other (scream and shout).
 - C. If the above does not work, tell the nearest person to go to the front desk for help. If no one is around, scream for help.
 - D. If there is a hose nearby, spray the dogs (not in the face). If there is no hose, throw small objects at the dogs to distract them (aim for the rear).
 - E. If the preceding does not work, continue screaming and wait for help.
 - F. Always immediately report a dog fight to the PHS Animal Care Supervisor.
- VI. What do you do if a dog bites you?
- A. If a dog bites you while you are in the kennel, exit the kennel immediately.
 - B. If you are walking a dog and she bites you, try to seek assistance from the nearest person and stay put.
 - C. If the above does not work, cautiously walk the dog back to her kennel and seek help from a PHS staff member.
 - D. If the dog bites you in a Get Acquainted Room, securely leave the dog and quickly find a PHS staff member.
 - E. Report bite immediately to the Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

All bites must be reported to the PHS Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator immediately! You will be required to fill out an accident report and may be required to go to IMED for medical attention.

Cat Handling

Wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap between handling cats from separate cages.

- I. There are many things to consider before opening the door to a cat's cage.
 - A. Make sure you sign in on the white board outside of the Animal Care Office so that staff knows you are in the building.
 - B. It is very important to read and carefully interpret **ALL** information on the cage cards before opening the cage door.
 - C. Meet the cat first from the outside of the cage to evaluate the Animal's behavior.
 1. If the cat shows any signs of aggression, do not open the cage.
 2. If the cat appears to be friendly, open the door cautiously.
Remember, there is little difference between a real threat and a perceived threat when handling a cat.
- II. Some cats do not adjust well to being in a cage. This can result in the cat becoming depressed. A depressed (or shy) cat will usually not respond to your presence or your voice. (S)he may appear withdrawn or disinterested. It is best not to handle these cats outside of their cage, but instead gently pet or talk to them while they are in the secure environment of their cage.
- III. How do you get a cat out of a cage?
 - A. The cat must appear to be friendly and interested in your attention. Should the cat start exhibiting any behaviors such as growling, tail swishing, ears pushed back, etc., follow the preceding guidelines for depressed or shy cats.
 - B. Turn the cat away from you, and gently scruff the cat by the skin on the back of the neck. Slowly begin to lift the cat, and with your free hand, reach under the cat from behind and grab the front legs. Carefully maneuver the cat to your side and gently press the cat's body into your side with your elbow.
 - C. Walk the cat to a Get Acquainted Room while holding her in the preceding position. If the cat is noticeably distressed, put her back in the cage immediately.
 - D. Be aware that shelter cats are under great stress and that they can become easily alarmed by things outside the safety of their cage (other cats, dogs, doors opening and closing, etc.).

- E. If the cat seems OK and you do use a Get Acquainted Room, allow the cat to explore the room.
 - F. If the cat comes to you, offer it a toy. Never use your fingers as a toy.
 - G. Let the cat calm down from playing before putting him/her back in the cage.
 - H. If you have been a cat toy, please return the toy to the cage with the cat. Do not share toys between cats.
- IV. Cats that are available for adoption may either be socialized in their cage or in a Get Acquainted Room. Strays may only be socialized in their cage.
- A. **Cat socialization hours:**
 - Experienced Volunteers :**Monday through Sunday
7:00 am – 8:00 pm.
 - New Volunteers:** Monday through Sunday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm.Get Acquainted Rooms are available before Noon and after 5pm, everyday except Wednesdays. They are available all day Wednesday.
 - B. Cats may not be taken into the auditorium kitchen.
 - C. Always return the cat to the exact cage from which you found her.
 - D. Once a cat is removed from his cage, an "out for a visit" sign must be posted on the front of the cage. Do not remove the cat's paperwork from the front of the cage.
 - F. When you return the cat to it's cage, make sure the cat has fresh water and a clean litter pan.
- V. What do you do if a cat bites you?
- Cat bites are fairly common in the shelter environment, but by understanding a cat's body language, bites can be prevented.
- A. If a cat bites or seriously scratches you while in his cage, close the cage door.
 - B. If you are carrying a cat and she bites you, scruff the cat firmly while also controlling the front legs and quickly put the cat back in her cage.
 - C. If you are bitten by a cat while in a Get Acquainted Room, securely leave the cat in the room and quickly seek assistance from a PHS staff member.
 - D. Report bite to the Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

All bites must be reported to the PHS Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator immediately! You will be required to fill out an accident report and may be required to go to IMED for medical attention.

General TLC Socialization Guidelines

- I. Probably the most important aspect of socializing with a shelter cat or dog is your tone of voice. It's best to speak in a friendly, calm and reassuring manner.

- II. Hands-on socialization is a huge confidence-builder for shelter animals, but you must let the animal be your teacher.
 - A. Not all animals enjoy the same methods of petting.
 1. If you are petting a dog and he begins to lick you, sigh deeply or even lay down, he is telling you "yes, I like what you're doing."
 2. A cat may tell you "no, I don't like that" by swishing her tail quickly, holding her breath or changing her body posture from relaxed to upright and looking at you.
 - B. The only effective way of learning how to properly pet animals is by practice and trying different methods of touch.
 1. Circular fingertip touch is a great way to give a cat or dog a "mini-massage." Say to yourself: "push in, pause, push around, pause, release."
 2. Lift and hold is a calming touch. Place the entire hand on the lower abdomen and pause, push in gently, pause, lift the skin and tissue up one-half to one inch, pause for 5 to 10 seconds, slowly release down to your starting place and repeat.
 3. Spine touch begins in the rear back area. Place two fingers across the spine from each other. Press in and push up toward the head no more than one-half inch, pause for at least 15 seconds, release back to starting position and repeat movement again continuing to move up the spine.
 4. Gently smooth the coat of the animal with the palm of your hand rather than patting her.

- III. When it comes to grooming, sometimes an animal simply needs to be brushed, rather than bathed or clipped.
 - A. As a TLC Volunteer, you will be grooming cats and dogs with the help of a brush, and in some cases, a bath.
 - B. One important consideration of brushing is the type of brush.
 1. Be careful of the animal's face and legs. These are delicate areas and require a softer brush.

2. For shedding dogs, use a silver-toothed flat brush to remove as much of the hair as possible.
 - C. If the animal has mats, you can try to brush them out. However, be careful not to pull the animal's hair too hard. **Never use scissors to clip mats. Seek assistance from an animal care technician or veterinary technician if you feel electric clippers are necessary.**
 - D. Many shelter animals have never been brushed, so it may be wise to slowly ease them into the process.
 1. Allow the animal to sniff the brush.
 2. Try not to force the animal to endure a long grooming session. Short sessions work best.
 3. If the animal clearly does not enjoy being groomed and begins to show even the slightest sign of aggression, discontinue immediately.
 - E. Fleas are the most common nuisance facing animals at PHS. If the animal is infested with fleas, alert the PHS Animal Care Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator to arrange to have him flea bathed and/or treated with Advantage flea control.
- IV. One of the most important and rewarding tasks of the TLC Volunteer is to ensure that every animal in the shelter have the basic "creature comforts."
 - A. TLC Volunteers will have the opportunity to provide toys, blankets, cardboard boxes and treats for the animals.
 - B. TLC Volunteers should also pay attention to the cleanliness of each animal's cage or kennel. No animal enjoys living in his own feces.
- V. Exercise and play are necessary for the physical and mental health of any animal who has spent time in a confined space. For the shelter animal, exercise also means freedom.
- VI. Companionship is one of the purist pleasures we can give the animals at PHS. Many of our animals have not been included as a member of the family, so you will find they are very receptive to your attention and affection.
- V. Your role as a TLC volunteer is to socialize the animals. If you are at PHS during regular working hours, members of the public may ask you questions about the animals that are working with. Feel free to share information that you

know about a specific animal, but DO NOT go into one of the Get Acquainted Rooms with the public to show them an animal or let them hold an animal. If they are interested in visiting with an animal, refer them to the front desk where they can fill out an application and put their name on a waiting list. They must be with an Adoptions or Customer Service staff/volunteer in order to meet an animal.

Euthanasia

- I. The term "euthanasia" is derived from the Greek words "eu" and "thanatos," which means *easy death*.
- II. As a TLC Volunteer, you will have a direct impact on the number of animals euthanized.
 - A. By providing socialization to all shelter animals, you have the opportunity to increase their adoptability, thus decreasing the need to euthanize "healthy surplus" animals.
 - B. As a TLC Volunteer, you can give an animal with special needs the chance of a good home by providing her with the "tender loving care" (s)he has never received.
- III. Compassion fatigue is "the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people or animals," and it is very real for animal care professionals and volunteers exposed to euthanasia.
 - A. You may become overwhelmed by the volume of euthanasia and feel powerless about the overpopulation problem.
 - B. You will likely become frustrated over the realization that euthanasia of "healthy surplus" animals is preventable by society.
 - C. You will develop a personal connection and relationship with the "traumatized victims" and feel victimized yourself.
- IV. Volunteers will never be asked to help staff with Euthanasia.
- V. Volunteers are welcome to ask questions about an animal that is longer at the shelter. Our goal is to find homes for as many animals as possible. However, there may be instances when the animal was euthanized. Staff will be happy to share information with you, but they will not lie to you.

TLC Work Stations

- I. **TLC work stations** are located in the following locations:
 - A. Behind APR and ACR. This station is stocked with dog and cat care items such as leashes, training collars, cat play toys, brushes, extra linens, volunteer visit cards, out for a visit cards, etc.
 - B. Next to the main kitchen, in between “red kennels” and stray dog kennels. This station is stocked with dog care items only – leashes, collars, etc.
- II. Dog treat containers are located at each TLC work station. Please only feed the dogs the treats that are in the containers.
- III. Please let the Volunteer Coordinator know if items need to be replaced in the work stations or if there are no dog treats.
- IV. Please let the Volunteer Coordinator know if we are low on “Out For A Visit” Cards, Volunteer Visit Cards, pens and/or any other items that you need to do your job.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. It is very important that all policies and procedures are followed, and that volunteers and staff work together.

We appreciate your time here, and we want it to be a rewarding one!

Welcome to the PHS family.