



Title: **Reporting Behavior Issues**

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1. Purpose and Scope

Animals may exhibit certain unwanted behaviors. As such, it is essential that we provide a safe environment to our staff, volunteers, adopters and other animals, and provide behavior plans so that these animals follow the pathway to adoption.

In order to do this, it is necessary that each staff member, volunteer and foster report when an animal exhibits concerning behaviors. **Aggressive behavior must be reported IMMEDIATELY. Non-aggressive behaviors must be reported no later than 4 hours after they have taken place, and the earlier the better.**

Piecing together the behavior assessment with the animal's history and interactions we have with them in the shelter will help the behavior team create a plan for them. Note the list of behaviors below and the procedures for reporting them.

2. Procedure

Following are the concerning behaviors we should look out for when interacting with animals:

Dogs

- Growling
- Charging
- Biting
 - If a dog bites and breaks skin on a human, follow [CHK-1 In-Shelter Domestic to Human Bites](#) instead of the instructions below
 - If a dog bites and breaks skin on another animal, follow [CHK-2 In-Shelter Domestic to Domestic Bites](#) instead of the instructions below
- Freezing (body is completely still and stiff, often staring at you)
- Behaviors that concern people enough that they don't want to touch the dog or put on or take off equipment
- Nipping that hurts
- Hard mouthing
- Head-whipping (may quickly whip their head and mouth toward your hand or body, especially if you're touching them. You may feel the dog's teeth or nose. This may also happen if you touch the dog while they are highly aroused by another dog or animal)
- Scratching a person with nails, which leaves marks
- Compulsive humping where you can't get the dog to stop
- Not being able/willing to go outside on leash or come back inside on leash with just one person walking the dog
- Cornering someone in a den or outside
- Compulsive vocalization that sounds like screaming or whining for longer than 10 seconds
- Compulsive spinning
- Head pressing into the wall or other surfaces

Cats

- Eliminating outside the litter box

- Hissing
- Growling
- Swatting when no one is attempting to handle (such as if you just open the den door)
- Charging people or the door
- Scratching with nails when handled or attempting to handle them
- Biting with pressure and/or breaking skin
 - If a cat bites and breaks skin on a human, follow [CHK-1 In-Shelter Domestic to Human Bites](#) instead of the instructions below
 - If a cat bites and breaks skin on another animal, follow [CHK-2 In-Shelter Domestic to Domestic Bites](#) instead of the instructions below
- Head pressing (not head bunting) into the wall or other surfaces

When you witness animals showing any of these behaviors, follow the steps listed below.

If the behavior occurs at the Oglethorpe Street Location:

1. Change the **den card** to STAFF ONLY
2. If the animal was in an "Available" stage in PetPoint, change the **stage** in PetPoint to BEHAVIOR REVIEW
 1. For animals in other stages, you may skip step 2 and proceed to step 3
3. Write a **detailed memo** in the animal's record in PetPoint about what happened
4. Copy and paste the memo into an **email** to BehaviorConcernsOGL@humanerescuealliance.org and cc your supervisor

If the behavior occurs at the New York Avenue Location:

1. If the animal is on the adoption floor, talk to your supervisor/manager and **get assistance to move animal off the adoption floor** then update location in PetPoint
2. If the animal was in an "Available" or "Awaiting Space" stages in PetPoint, change the **stage** in PetPoint to BEHAVIOR REVIEW.
 1. For animals in other stages, you may skip step 2 and proceed to step 3.
3. Write a **detailed memo** in the animal's record in PetPoint about what happened
4. Copy and paste the memo into an **email** to BehaviorConcernsNYA@humanerescuealliance.org and cc your supervisor
5. Make sure that the animal has an **internal cage card** printed and placed in their cage card holder - no adoption signage or purple card

If a **volunteer** witnesses or experiences any of the behaviors listed above, they should IMMEDIATELY stop what they're doing, leave the animal and report the behavior to the nearest staff member. The staff member will then follow the steps outlined above.

Foster staff and all volunteer foster case managers are responsible for IMMEDIATELY forwarding concerning behavior information to either one of the two above email addresses, if an animal is in a foster home for any reason or period of time, as soon as they receive the information from the foster. They should also make sure that all relevant notes have been entered in PetPoint as soon as possible. If a bite has occurred, please see [SOP-20 Response to bites by dogs in foster care](#).

3. Attachment

1. [Concerning Behaviors Flow.jpg](#)

4. References
