

## **Host Organization Check-In Info...**

The goal of the "check-in area" at an animal clinic is to collect correct information from pet owners (or caregivers) before the animals are processed for vaccines and/or surgeries. Good planning makes your check-in process simple, efficient and safe.

To set up an efficient check-in area you must know if all of the animals will go through the same process or different ones. For example, some may get vaccinations only while others are vaccinated and also have sterilization surgeries or injections. If there are indeed different services, there should be different check-in lines in order to minimize confusion.

### **Make or buy small signs...they really help people get to the correct location in your MASH clinic.**

If there are different services, there needs to be a way to differentiate the intake forms that are filled out so the animals are moved to the correct station (vaccine, etc). You can use stick-on dots for one service or the other, or use magic marker to mark a "V" on the intake forms of those getting only vaccine, or even have a stamp which says, "**Vaccinations**" and another that says, "**Surgery.**" One host agency prints different intake forms to designate animals getting only rabies vaccines as opposed to ones that are also being spayed or neutered. Once complete the forms will remain with the pet throughout their visit. **If animals are checking in for surgery, writing the check-in time on the intake form is a good idea.**



**Visual cues such as magic marker or stick-on dots make it easy for staff and volunteers to see what the animal is getting and where to direct people.**

Intake forms should include all information that is needed to create the mandatory record keeping. A two-part carbonless duplicate creates one copy for the owner and one for the agency. The owners' name, address and the age, type (dog or cat), sex and size of the animals will be on the intake form along with any other data you are collecting.

Set up the check-in area to facilitate the flow. If you intend to keep clients out of the surgery area and away from the holding cages, set up your check in tables so that people can sit at the tables to fill in forms, but so the tables also block people from moving into the working area.

Make sure that pens, clip boards and chairs are plentiful so that a shortage of check-in supplies does not hold up the line. Check-in moves faster if people can sit while they write.

### **During check-in:**

The owner will fill out forms and either

1. the animal will be weighed and removed from the owner and placed in a cage to get ready for surgery or
2. the animal will remain with the owner while it is vaccinated or treated.



Any tasks outside of the intake process, including answering general animal health questions (which can become very time consuming) can be accomplished by handing out pamphlets or having posters or a video loop for people to watch. Keeping things self explanatory and clear saves time.

Remember delays can jamb the check in tables and even become a safety issue. Make sure forms are clear and easy to use for the owners and check-in staff alike.

The check-in process should enable people to keep pets apart in order to avoid dog fights. Having plenty of clipboards on hand enables people to walk away from others while filling out forms.

Things to consider when setting up...

**Will the caregiver be leaving the animal?** If the animal will be left for surgery, have the owner present when weighing and caging unless the pet is clearly easy to handle.

Will there be more than one type of service? If so, designate different areas of the check-in tables and have a way to differentiate the intake forms.

**Will people generally be leaving pets that will be put in cages in a holding area?** If so, have the flow set up to go from the check-in area to the weighing area to the cages.

**Marking the animals and the cages:**

All cats should be in a carrier which should be marked with the owner's name. During surgery a piece of tape with the owners name should be on the top of the cat's head between its' ears.

Always use 'slip leads' when moving dogs.

Cages should always be labeled with the owners' last name as it is seen on the intake form.

Safety first is a great rule to follow.

Remember...others see us as examples. If we move pets without leashes, forget stickers and labels, volunteers and pet owners will think its fine to do likewise. Our care and thoughtfulness toward the animals reflects the best of our message.