

Volunteer Tasks

Please see our downloadable PDFs for each section!

Volunteer tasks:

1. **Check-in, helping clients fill out paperwork, getting dogs weighed and into cages with correct labeling and labeling cat carriers and moving them into the cat holding area.**
2. **Movers- moving dogs and cats from the holding areas to the surgery area, and from surgery into recovery and then back to the holding cages. By scheduling appointments (instead of walk-in), scheduling large dogs at the same time allows extra volunteers to be on hand for moving big dogs that are unconscious.**
3. **Monitoring animals during recovery. Remaining in the recovery area to monitor pulse, respiration and more.**
4. **Washing/sterilizing instruments, cutting surgery drapes and other tasks**
5. **Check-out, reviewing the written aftercare instructions with clients, and helping pets get safely to vehicles.**

FD	Smith	9:15 am
Fluffy	34 lbs	(3)

The label (left) tells us that this was the third dog to check in, the dog is a female dog (FD) weighing 34 pounds and that she entered at 9:15 am. The number "3" will be written on her intake form and, when she is sedated, it will be written in her ear.



Four volunteers (minimum) are needed per veterinarian.

If there is more than one veterinarian, more people will be needed.

Check-in area, 1-2 people handout intake forms, explain the process to clients, advise of pick-up times, coordinate paperwork, weigh dogs, take temperature and collect other "pre-op" information desired by the veterinarian.

Check in volunteers move dogs into cages in the "dog area," and get cats immediately into carriers and into the "cat holding area," making sure that each cage is labeled. Cats will be examined and sedated in the enclosed area later on.

These volunteers generally help with other tasks as the day moves on.

Moving animals, 2-3 people, from the holding area to the surgery area and then from surgery to recovery and back to their cages. This involves safely carrying or walking dogs on leash (no dog is moved without a leash), to the surgery area, making sure paperwork accompanies the animal and that crates are labeled.

The veterinarian or crew will signal to the "movers" that animals are ready to be moved from surgery to recovery.



This crew makes sure that:

- Crates have clean newspapers or pads for after surgery
- Following recovery, animals are returned to the correct cages with the correct labeling and paperwork on top,

- Transport animals are clearly separated to go home

Monitoring animals in recovery, 2 people

Recovery is the most critical volunteer task of the day.

Recovery supplies include blankets, towels, supplies for warming, stethoscope, thermometer, Karo syrup, canned food, and bowls

- Recovery volunteers will have a clean space ready for each animal.

Maintain body heat by using blankets, thermal blankets, protection from the floor using corrugated cardboard and if need be, hair drier on a warm setting.

Make sure all animals are labeled.

Breathing: An unconscious animal is placed on its' side onto a recovery area (either onto the blanket or into their cage). Gently pull the tongue forward to ensure that the airway is open.

Cats must be able to stretch out and should not recover in a tiny carrier. Monitor breathing. Being periodically flipped from one side to the other can aid recovery.

A dog or cat should take a breath at least every ten seconds.

Do not load the cages of recovering animals with towels and blankets; they can suffocate.

AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN RECOVERY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE HEARTRATE. The heartbeat should be a steady thud, not rapid, or uneven.

Heart rate: The normal dog heart rate is 60 to 160 beats per minute.

The normal feline heart rate is from 140 to 220 beats per minute.

Temperature: Feel the ears and paws of an animal to see if the body temperature is lowered. They should not feel significantly cooler than the animal itself. Check with a thermometer if unsure.

A dog's normal temperature is from 100.5 to 102.5

A cat's normal temperature is from 100 to 102.5.

Aggressive pets in recovery may be placed INSIDE a carrier placed on top of the heated blanket, keeping the animals warm while preventing escape or a bite. Aggressive pets require the same care as others!

Color: Gums should appear pink and moist. Pale, grayish, bluish, bright red or sticky gums should be treated as an emergency.

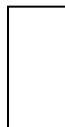
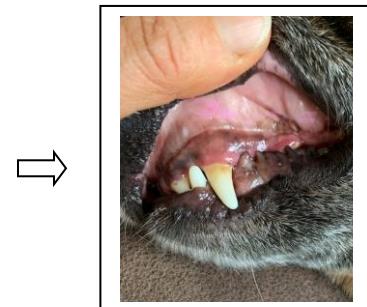
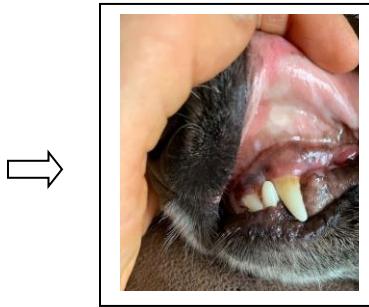
Check CRT (capillary refill time) by pressing on the gums to create a "white spot", let go; the color should return almost immediately. If color takes over two seconds to return, notify staff immediately.

Lift upper lip

Press firmly on gum

Lift finger

Color should return under 2 seconds



Karo syrup (0.25 cc) should be given to pets under 16 weeks, or ones that are thin once awake.

Abnormal recovery: the following must be brought to the attention of the veterinarian immediately.

- Breathing that is rapid, shallow or breaths that are more than 10 seconds apart
- Non-ambulatory within normal amount of time (may have had reaction to drugs)
- Not stirring when touched or a poor reflex at corner of eye (palpebral reflex) after 20 minutes, or a decline in reflexes while on the table or after returning to cage.
- Bleeding (not seepage) from incision (females that were in season at the time of surgery may continue to show vaginal spotting or bleeding).
- Pale, white, dark red, bluish or sticky gums.
- CRT over two seconds

Washing and sterilizing instruments, cutting drapes, 1 person

Each “pack” of surgical instruments contains the instruments needed to perform a surgery. Many veterinarians have specific items in the pack. If you are unsure of what instruments are in the packs, use a separate small plastic tub for each “pack,” or group, of instruments. The instruments from one “pack” go into this tub immediately after surgery for cleaning and repacking.

Scrub each joint in instruments that open and close.

Follow instructions on the sterilizer or autoclave in use.

Check-out, 1 person, reviewing aftercare instructions with each client making sure people are aware of the aftercare phone number to call in an emergency.



Close-down and cleanup will be done by everyone throughout the day. In the evening all instruments should have been sterilized, and all animals that will remain on site overnight are fed, watered and any dogs which are able to walk on a leash should be walked. Cats will have a small meal, a small litter pan, which can be a pie tin, etc. and water.

A small tub like this one keeps instruments from used "packs"