

Dog Care Expectations

Dog Program - TLAC

Background

Austin Pets Alive! inherited the Town Lake Animal Center, which originally opened in 1952, from Austin Animal Center. The property is owned by the city of Austin and APA! is provided a long-term lease. The indoor/outdoor kennels provide unique opportunities in saving lives and preventing airborne disease as well as challenges in upkeep and layout.

The long-term plan is to replace this facility with a modern and innovative animal care facility.

Below are guidelines for our standards of care to ensure that there is transparency about what we believe is our baseline care. Our goals are to surpass this baseline but the baseline serves the purpose of allowing volunteers and staff to understand what is not acceptable to us as an organization, allowing for accountability, and better communication about our dogs' needs. Extreme weather conditions will be noted in the volunteer gazebo and may impact these guidelines. Weather protocols are documented separately.

Daily Checks

The Dog Care Manager on Duty, Dog Program Manager will complete daily status checks. These are outlined on the daily walk-through checklist. The daily walk through checklist will be used by staff to ensure the standards of care are met. There will be at least one check in the morning upon arrival of MOD, at shelter opening time, prior to afternoon playgroup and a check during closing duties for the evening conducted by last counselor for the night.

Kennel Cleaning

Interior and exterior parts of the kennels are fully cleaned once per day. When temperatures are less than 45 degrees, spot cleaning may be used in lieu of full cleaning for no more than two days in a row to minimize the amount of very cold water in the interior kennels.

- All bedding and toys removed during cleaning. Gently used bedding may be reused; however, any soiled bedding will be sent to laundry. Laundry more than 30% covered in diarrhea or feces with parasites is discarded.
- Feces and urine removed.
- Walls and floors sprayed using pressurized hoses.
- Kuranda beds squeegeed/wiped to remove puddles of water.
- Kennel doors washed with detergent and disinfected completely once per week or before a new dog is placed in kennel.

The clinic will advise the dog team of cleaning guidelines for animals with infectious diseases or specific medical needs. Dogs are moved to opposite side of the guillotine door during cleaning. Walkways are cleaned/swept during initial cleaning.

Following initial cleaning, spot cleaning will occur following daily walk throughs. Spot cleaning consists of scooping feces and rinsing any noticeable fecal residue or urine with watering can and brush. This is done throughout the day by walkers, cleaners, or dog counselors.

When an animal is adopted/fostered/moved, the kennel is completely cleaned and disinfected to prepare for the next dog.

Bedding

Kennels have one raised platform in the interior portion and a Kuranda bed in the exterior portion. Platforms and Kurandas may be removed if medically or behaviorally indicated, and will be noted on the interior kennel card.

Bedding will vary by season. It is placed in the interior portion of the kennel. Bedding is laid down after full cleaning and checked in the evenings during "Tuck In" time. Additional bedding is added in the evening as needed.

- Winter (December to April): 2 blankets as a base layer with an additional to curl up in
- Summer (May to November): 1 blanket as a base and 1 sheet/light blanket on top

When misters are in use, bedding will not be used in the exteriors of the kennels.

Feeding

Dogs are fed once per day, unless another schedule is medically or behaviorally required. Specific feeding guidelines per dog are indicated on the interior kennel card.

During the week and Saturday, regular and medical and behavior feeds (excluding Behavior Team Only feeds) are performed by Kennel Techs. On Sunday, Medical/Behavior Counselors are responsible for medical and additional feedings. Feeding starts at 6:00am and should be complete by 11:30am. Sunday feedings are led by a volunteer team.

If food is not laid down in a kennel for any reason, a flag is placed on the kennel door. It is the responsibility of the Customer Service Counselor and Lead to walk through in the afternoon and evening and make sure all dogs present have been fed and flags removed.

During the week and on Saturday, Kennel Tech will walk through at least once after all have been fed and note which dogs have not eaten or only eaten partially. Before leaving at the end of their shift, 2:00pm, this list will be shared with the Customer Service counselor for closing check. That information will be updated and left for the kennel tech the following morning so food can be adjusted accordingly or the medical counselors can be made aware.

Water

Water checks of interior bowls occurs a minimum of four times daily during each walk-through and includes confirming bowls are full and free from feces. Exterior bowls in the summer are filled in the morning during the cleaning process.

- Winter (December to April): water container/bowl in interior of kennel
- Summer (May to November): water containers/bowls in interior and exterior of kennels

ISO

All dogs that are physically able are walked by Behavior/Medical Counselor by 9:00am with bedding changed and kennel cleaned.

Cages are checked and cleaned twice daily by staff ensuring no dog/puppy is in an unclean space. Floors are swept and mopped a minimum of twice daily. There is a checklist on the end of the cage that is a sign-off when completed each day.

ISO kennels are checked a third time at the end of the night before staff leave to ensure dogs have water and any soiled bedding is changed. Check is done by closing counselor in accordance with final walk-through protocol.

Kennel Techs are responsible for feeding dogs in ISO before 11:30am. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the Clinic, which would result in feedings being conducted by Medical Counselor or Clinic Staff.

Outings

All dogs that are medically able are taken out of their kennel at least two times a day by staff or trained volunteers. Dogs may be taken to playgroup, play yards, or on walks for these outings.

Playgroup attendance is determined by the behavior team based on the individual dog's needs and composition of the playgroup. Playgroups are run twice per day. Attending playgroup will count as one outing.

Staff and dog walking volunteers may utilize play yards across campus for outings. Additionally, authorized dog walking volunteers may take eligible dogs to the extended campus or off the TLAC campus. Refer to dog walking policies for details.

Volunteers are able to request a sleepover or field trip with a dog. Based on the home environment/field trip, training of the volunteer and the requirements of the dog, approvals may be granted.

In-Kennel Enrichment

The volunteer kennel enrichment team works diligently to provide in-kennel enrichment items for every dog. All dogs without medical restrictions are given an enrichment item daily, as able. The Customer Service Counselor is responsible for ensuring that enrichment items are given daily to dogs exhibiting kennel stress. These dogs are determined by the Behavior Counselor.

Wellness Checks

Looking at each dog every day gives us the opportunity to evaluate overall health and wellness. Staff conducts wellness checks four times per day. Any medical issues or extreme stress signs are reported at once to the medical counselor.

Binders

Medical, behavior, and facilities binders are located at the courtyard table. Volunteers and staff document issues noted throughout the day. Medical and behavior binders are picked up twice a day by the appropriate staff member and items actioned. The facilities binder is picked up by the courtyard staff member on duty once per day. Maintenance requests are submitted to the facilities

team. This flow of information from lots of people to the counselor to the appropriate department allows for efficient and effective communication so that information is not lost or forgotten.

Seasonal Standards

Weather conditions will determine specific weather protocols. The current weather protocol in place is noted on the daily walk through checklist by staff member performing walk through. When extreme heat or cold weather protocols are enacted, a note is made on the whiteboards in the volunteer gazebo. Management and staff receive the LCRA weather updates whenever inclement weather is approaching and act according to protocol for that weather (weather protocols are in separate documents).

Laundry

It's important to the organization that animals have bedding available where medically and behaviorally permitted. We have staff members seven days a week doing laundry along with multiple volunteers. Warm water and bleach are used in all laundry loads to disinfect. Laundry is then folded and stacked for use.

Dishes

Bowls are rinsed, scrubbed out, and disinfected with bleach by volunteers and staff. They are then rinsed and stacked to dry.