



ABILENE
ANIMAL
SERVICES

Volunteer Handbook

As a volunteer you are responsible for:

- Performing all the duties of the volunteer position with a high level of integrity and professionalism.
- Honoring your time commitment.
- Being considerate and cooperative when dealing with other volunteers, staff, animals, and customers.
- Follow all the policies and procedures of Animal Services and notify staff when a question arises.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of privileged information relative to all areas of Animal Services, its staff, and volunteers
- The appropriate care and security for the animals at all times

Safety and Security

This is an animal shelter. Animals can be unpredictable. Please do not handle animals without proper training or staff assistance. Volunteers are prohibited from entering unauthorized or secure areas without prior permission from a supervisor. Volunteers shall immediately leave and secure any area if they are directed to do so by a supervisor. Volunteers shall have no contact with any animals located in an unauthorized area, unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

Tips for interaction of adoptable animals:

Whether you are working with our own dog or you encounter a stray dog on the street, a dog who is about to attack will give you plenty of warning signs. Dogs may attack out of aggression, fear, or insecurity. If you encounter a dog who you think is going to attack, avoid eye contact and remain still. When his focus is no longer on you, slowly move away.

Expressing Discomfort

Often a dog will express discomfort or fear of what you are doing before biting. Some signs that a dog is uncomfortable and may escalate to an attack include:

- **CROUCHING**

- **TUCKING HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS**
- **LOWERING HIS EARS**
- **AVERTING HIS EYES**

Signs of Aggression

An aggressive dog may:

- **CURL UP HIS LIPS TO BARE HIS TEETH WHILE SNARLING AND GROWLING**
- **HOLD HIS BODY AND TAIL TENSE WITH THE HAIR ON HIS NECK AND BACK RAISED**
- **NARROW HIS EYES AND FIX YOU WITH AN INTENSE STARE**
- **SHIFT HIS WEIGHT TO ESCAPE OR START LUNGING**

Breed Considerations

While most breeds exhibit the same behaviors and warnings of aggression, it is important to consider the breed when observing body language. For example, some breeds traditionally have docked tails and cannot express fear by tucking their tail. Other breeds have long, floppy ears, which are not as expressive as smaller ears. It may be difficult to see eye movements in dogs with wrinkled skin.

Some of the most common indicators that a dog might bite are:

- **Direct eye contact (This is a direct threat from a dog).**
- **Tail up, may be wagging stiffly (Just because the tail is wagging doesn't mean that the dog is happy or he likes you; a wagging tail indicates high energy.)**
- **Legs apart and chest thrown out (The dog is trying to look big!)**
- **Ears up or perked**
- **Low rumbling growl**
- **Showing front teeth (This is considered a "short mouth" and it shows clear intention to bite.)**

If the dog you are approaching is showing any of these signs, assume that the dog will bite – and then back away slowly. DO Not attempt to get a dog exhibiting any of these behaviors out of a kennel seek staff assistance.

Injuries

If you are injured while volunteering you must report your injury to your immediate supervisor as soon as possible and an incident and/or accident report should be filled out.

Smoking and Tobacco Policy

City of Abilene is smoke and tobacco free. Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are not allowed in the buildings of Animal Services. Smoking and Smokeless tobacco is permitted in your vehicle or designated areas during designated breaks.

Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace

Volunteers who use drugs or who work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol present a safety hazard to themselves, to fellow volunteers and staff, to customers and to the animals. Volunteers are prohibited from using or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal.

Dress Code and Appearance

- All volunteers should practice common sense rules of neatness, hygiene, good taste, and comfort.
- All volunteers should dress in a professional manner that is appropriate to a professional environment and supportive of the mission of Abilene Animal Services.
- Be prepared for adverse weather conditions such as: extreme hot and cold temperatures, wind and rain.

- Wear name tag while volunteering on the premises or at Animal Services Event.

Leave of Absence

Volunteers may be granted a “leave of absence” before becoming inactive. Requests should be discussed with the Animal Services Director or Volunteer Coordinator prior to the period of inactivity unless an emergency exists.

Resignation

If you are no longer able to fulfill your time commitment as a volunteer, you may resign. Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator.

Dismissal

Volunteers are expected to follow established Animal Services policies and procedures. An infraction or disregard for the policies will result in dismissal from the volunteer program. Dismissal may result from, but is not limited to: inconsistent attendance, poor treatment of guests, staff, animals, or other volunteers, violation of the substance abuse policy, stealing, harassment of city staff, endangerment of volunteers, staff, guests, or animals. Volunteers must be respectful of other volunteers and/or City worker’s time. Actions that monopolize other volunteers or worker’s time or interfere with the performance of other volunteer’s or worker’s duties may be cause for dismissal. Volunteers are prohibited from representing themselves as an employee of the shelter.

Please note that your continued participation in the volunteer program is, among other things, dependent on your attitude towards volunteer work, your comfort level working with animals, and your attitude toward animal shelters and our specific activities. All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner that is supportive of the mission of Abilene Animal Services.

Open Door Policy

Volunteers are encouraged to share their concerns, seek information, provide input, and resolve problems through the Shelter Supervisor. If for any reason you are unable or unwilling to talk to the Shelter Supervisor, please talk with the Director regarding your concerns.

Workplace Harassment

As an equal opportunity employer, the City of Abilene has a strict policy against harassment. This policy refers to, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or other factors identified and protected by federal, state, and local legislation. Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Harassment will not be tolerated by volunteers or by staff. If you have concerns about this notify the Shelter Supervisor or Director.

Volunteer Opportunities

Abilene Animal Services houses approximately 9,400 animals per year. The assistance of volunteers to support staff can greatly enhance the program opportunities to adopt more animals and better save rates.

The strategic use of volunteers is important and though Animal Services wants to accommodate as many volunteers as possible, however priority will be on those program opportunities that best support the animals and lead to positive outcomes for the animals at the shelter.

Photography

- Volunteer will take digital photographs of the adoptable dogs and cats to use on the city's website and social media account(s). Volunteers will also write a blurb to help market pets to the public. Volunteers are

prohibited from taking personal cameras on premises unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

Bio Writing

- Volunteers will also write a blurb to help market pets to the public.

Daily Walking of Adoptable Dogs:

- Similar to those who live in areas without yards it helps to walk a dog each day. From the times of 2:00p – 6:00p the goals of these volunteers would be to walk each adoptable dog in the shelter. Having time to walk and play helps the dogs be happier in a shelter environment and thus increases their chance of adoption.

Lost and Found Assistant:

- Update lost and found animals on the bulletin board system at the shelter and other platforms that may be available.

Administrative Assistance:

- Assist front office staff and officers with data entry of adoption papers, trapping reports and intake forms and making reminder phone calls. File documents and organize storage units for records to be maintained.

Special Event Assistance:

- Attend special events to assist with adoptions and the caring of animals during the events.

City of Abilene Animal Services Volunteer Acknowledgement Form

The City of Abilene (the "City") Animal Services Volunteer Handbook describes important information about the Animal Services personnel policies and procedures, and I understand that I should consult the Shelter Supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the Volunteer Handbook. I have entered into my volunteer relationship with Animal Services voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of participation. I understand that I am not an employee of the City of Abilene. I understand that either I or Animal Services can terminate the volunteer relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

With the exception of Animal Services volunteer program-at will policy, all of the information and policies described in the Volunteer Program are subject to change. I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. I agree that any conflicts or ambiguities in Animal Services policies and procedures will be decided by the Director.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that I have received the Volunteer Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in it and any revisions made to it. I also understand that the policies in the Volunteer Handbook supersede all prior written and/or oral Animal Services policies.

By signing below, I hereby agree that I will not object to or challenge the protocols and procedures outlined by the Abilene Animal Services Director. This includes, but is not limited to: not entering unauthorized areas, not touching animals that are in unauthorized areas due to the risk of transmitting contagious disease to other animals or personal injury, not bringing cameras on the premises unless directly asked to by the Director, not representing yourself as an employee of the Shelter and failing to secure areas as advised. Violation of any of these guidelines is grounds for immediate removal from the premises and termination of all future volunteer opportunities with Abilene Animal Services.

By Signing below I acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies of the City of Abilene provided to me in the volunteer handbook.

X

VOLUNTEER'S SIGNATURE

VOLUNTEER'S NAME (TYPED OR PRINTED)

DATE