



College of Veterinary Medicine Policies and Procedures

Subject: Animal Restraint

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ANIMAL RESTRAINT

Restraint Techniques

Usually the most difficult problem is getting the pet out of the kennel. Some ideas to try include:

- If you cannot get a pet out of the kennel, use the restraint pole gently.
- Use a large towel over the head of small dogs.
- Place tape on the muzzle and around the ears.

If in doubt, call the doctor.

If there is an indication it is aggressive, muzzle the pet. If it is impossible to muzzle the pet, use a loop pole or pull leash and allow the doctor to administer tranquilization. If the dog cannot or will not muzzle, it is permitted to refer the client elsewhere.

With all pets, it is better to tranquilize than to struggle and allow a bad experience that will affect the behavior forever.

Do not allow clients to restrain or assist in the care of the patient.

Muzzles

If muzzling is necessary, use only the proper muzzle and the correct size.

Control Pole

Advise team members working alone to leave an aggressive patient alone until a doctor arrives rather than using a control pole. Use a control pole only with a doctor's approval and only in the presence of a doctor. When using the pole, keep a close watch on the pet's color and respiration as it is easy to choke the pet. Note: Use caution so as not to choke the pet, but rather control the head of the aggressive animal.

Towels

Use towels for extra protection, especially when handling cats. Do not use gloves. They are cumbersome and create a false sense of security. They also do not look humane to clients.

Aggressive Dogs

Aggressive dogs are most likely to bite, therefore only experienced handlers should handle aggressive dogs. The best way to learn to read dog body language is by observing an experienced handler. Remember many aggressive patients are just scared, not vicious. Treat them with compassion. Be gentle but firm.

If you do not feel that you can handle the pet, explain it to the clinician. The clinician may recommend tranquilization and/or obedience training. Do not put yourself, your teammates, the client or the pet at risk. You can refuse treatment.

If you are unsure of a pet, call the doctor or technician to get a suspect dog out of the kennel or exam room. Do not take risks. Call for help if you have any doubt about handling the pet properly.

All aggressive dogs have one body language characteristic in common: the “frozen” or “statue” posture. When a dog freezes, it may attack without any other sign. Watch for the tell-tale frozen posture, then back off and call for help. Bite wounds received usually indicate an inexperienced handler was too shy, or too overconfident, to call for help.

Dominant Aggressive

This usually occurs in guard-type dogs who are not properly restrained or taught manners as a puppy. The typical posture of the dominant aggressive dog is to try to make itself look as BIG as possible in order to intimidate its enemy. Therefore, these dogs will move forward in a kennel with ears, tail and stance erect and hair raised on their backs. They will often give warnings like growls, showing teeth, or barking. These pets try to bite to show you that they are your boss.

Fearful Aggressive

This occurs in dogs who are poorly socialized as puppies. They tend to be inexperienced, had bad early experiences, and see handlers as a feared enemy. Their body posture is intended to make the pet look as SMALL as possible; backed into a corner with tail and ears down and possibly bared teeth. These dogs may growl, but often do not give any warning (except frozen posture) before biting. They try to bite as an “imagined” self-defense because they think you are going to hurt them.

Non-Aggressive Dogs

You can divide this category into two sub-categories; fearful and friendly.

- Fearful Non-Aggressive – One way to measure if confidence is being built between you and these dogs is to offer a food treat. How readily the dog accepts food is a measure of trust and confidence.
- Friendly – They are the delightful dogs we handle most of the time. The key body language postures are tail wagging and fluid motion (no frozen posture). In most cases, they will approach you in a relaxed posture, often lick your hand and ask to be petted.

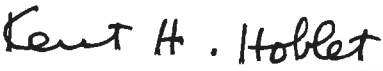
Aggressive Cats

Cats can attack with both teeth and claws and deserve our respect. Cats do not have the same dominant and fearful categories as dogs. Instead their aggression can be divided into fearful and escape motivated.

- Fearful – The body posture for a fearful cat is similar to a fearful dog. They try to appear as SMALL as possible by flattening ears and tail, and moving away or crouching at the back of the kennel. Fearful cats are much more likely than fearful dogs to give a verbal warning before attacking. They will growl or hiss and spit. This means business. Stop and get an experienced handler to restrain or retrieve the pet from the kennel. In general, a large towel can work, or use a loop leash to pull the pet from the kennel.
- Escape Motivated – This usually occurs while being heavily restrained. The cat will suddenly “explode” into a screaming ball of teeth and claws. You cannot miss this body language. Close all doors to prevent escape. Use netting or towels to restrain and have the doctor administer tranquilizer injection.

In general, the most gentle restraint possible works best in cats. Frequently chemical restraint is indicated. The least restraint possible is best. Be gentle and quiet. When working with cats, be extremely careful not to put pressure on the trachea.

Approved:  9-24-14
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