

Daily Animal Health Monitoring Program

Training Manual/How To Guide

General Overview:

- The goal:
 - To provide daily monitoring of an animal's health parameters (eating, urination, defecation, clinical signs of upper respiratory illness and behavior) to provide medical staff with an individual's current and past condition during their shelter stay and to assist in early identification of health/behavioral concerns and changes.
- Monitoring sheets will be given to every shelter animal at the time of their first observation.
- The daily monitoring sheet will move with the animal as they move through the shelter and will be displayed on their kennel.
- Animals will be observed and scored on the monitoring sheets once a day, prior to cleaning (approximately from 7-8 am).
- Dog monitoring will be done in teams of two. Order of observations will be:
 - Adoptions
 - Holding
 - Isolation
- Cat monitoring can be done singly or in a team. Order of observations will be:
 - Adoption
 - Holding
 - Isolation
- Observations will be recorded in a uniform manner - according to this training manual and using the key provided on the sheet.
- If a Red Flag medical condition is noted, notify medical staff immediately.
- A summary sheet will be used on a daily basis to record health and behavioral concerns of individuals that need to be shared with the staff and medical team. Each volunteer will fill out a summary sheet based on the animals they observe. The volunteers will compile the summary information onto one or more sheets to be shared with shelter staff that day for action to be taken.
- Animals that have lost their sheets will be given a new sheet with monitoring beginning on the appropriate day of shelter stay.
- Animals will be weighed on intake (recorded in pounds) and will be given a body condition score (BCS) on a 1-9 scale. Animals will be weighted and BCS at weekly intervals during their shelter stay.
- Once an animal is outcome, the daily monitoring sheets will be saved in the designated folder.

Filling out the daily monitoring sheet:

If it is the animals first day in the shelter, fill in:

- **Animal ID #:** this is a shelter assigned 8 digit number starting with A found on the kennel card
- **Intake date:** will be on the kennel card
- **Age:** should be on the kennel card and will either be in months or years

- **Weight:** should be on the kennel card and is recorded in pounds

For every day of monitoring, fill in:

- **Date:** fill in correct date
- **Initials:** always initial the day that you do the observations
- **Cage/kennel #:** record the cage/kennel # that the animal is housed in

NOTE: The numerical coding of the health scoring system is based on 1= a normal observation. This allows assessment for deviations from normal via a quick visual review of the monitoring card.

- **Attitude/Vocalization:** B = bright, alert and responsive is for an animal that is interactive, Q = quiet, alert and responsive is for an animal that responds but is quiet, D= depressed and is for an animal that is dull/quiet. If an animal is not vocalizing score a 1, if an animal is whining score a 2, if an animal is panting score a 3 and if an animal is barking score a 4. It is possible for an animal to have more than one score for vocalization, for example if they are whining and panting (2/3).
- **URI signs:** If no signs of respiratory illness are noted score a 1, if the animal is sneezing 2, if the animal is coughing score a 3, if there is nasal discharge (clear or colored) score a 4 and if there is discharge (clear or colored) from one or both eyes score a 5. Additionally if there is something that is not present in the key, please put in the comment section on the back of the sheet.
**Animals showing clinical signs of upper respiratory illness should be recorded on the daily summary sheet.*
- **Eating:** If the animal has not eaten (all food is present) score a 0, if normal amount of food has been eaten or all food is gone score a 1, if some food has been eaten score a 2, if there is vomit noted that looks like regurgitated food score a 3 and if there is any other vomit present score a 4.
**Animals scoring a 0, 3 or 4 should be added to the daily summary sheet.*
- **Stool:** If there is not any stool present score a 0, if the stool is formed and normal score a 1, if the stool is soft score a 2, if there is diarrhea (very soft to runny) score a 3, if there is bloody diarrhea score a 4 and if the feces is outside of the litter box score a 5 (for cats).
**If an animal is scored a 3 or 4, record on the daily summary sheet. If there is bloody diarrhea find kennel staff immediately as this is a red flag emergency.*
- **Urine:** If there is no urine present score a 0. If the dog is seen urinating or there is obviously a puddle of urine in the kennel, score a 1. If there is abnormal urine noted, such as bloody urine, score a 2. If the urine is outside of the litter box (for cats) score a 3. If you're not sure, for example if the kennel is wet or messy and it's not clear whether urine is present, note an NA (could not be assessed).
**If an animal is observed to be straining to urinate, find a staff member to confirm as this is a red flag condition.*
- **Behavior:** record what behaviors the animal is displaying at the time of the observation. Animals will be assessed in each of 3 areas of behavior: interactions with people, acclimation and approachability.

1. Interactions with people:

1 = approaches friendly. This is an animal that approaches the front of the kennel with a loose body posture and is seeking attention

2 = interacts visually. This is an animal that looks at the observer but does not approach

3 = no interaction/unable to determine. This is an animal that does not change what they are doing when the observer approaches the kennel or this is an animal that is sending mixed signals and should be used if the observer is unsure of what the animal is doing. Please make notes in the comment section if this number is used.

4 = moves away. This is an animal that moves further away from the observer.

5 = approaches aggressively. This is an animal that has a stiff body posture, hard eyes and approaches the observer in a rapid, likely barking/growling manner.

2. Acclimation:

1 = calm. This is an animal that is acting very much as they would in a home; resting quietly, interacting calmly or playing with a toy.

2 = excited. This is an animal that is jumping, whining

3 = timid/shaking. This is an animal that may or may not interact and that might be shaking.

4 = cower/hiding. This is an animal that has a low body position in the kennel and/or is hiding if a hiding area has been provided.



5 = stereotypic. This is an animal that is displaying stereotypic behavior such as spinning, moving from side to side in the kennel, licking the kennel bars, or any other repeated behavior.

3. Approachability:

1 = no aggression noted. This is an animal has a loose body posture, is panting or has a relaxed mouth and soft eyes.



2 = questionable. This is an animal that is sending mixed signals or signals that are difficult to interpret. Make notes in the comment section if this number is used.

3 = whale eye. This is an animal whose eyes are wide and gaze is fixed.



4 = growling. This is an animal that is growling when observer approaches the kennel and likely has a low, stiff body position.

5 = snaps. This is an animal that snaps or tries to bite when observer approaches kennel.

- **Location/activity in kennel:** record where the animal spends most of their time during the observation:
 - F = front
 - M= middle
 - B = back
 - H = hiding

Also record what the animal's activity is during this time:

- 1 = sitting or lying down
- 2 = standing or walking
- 3 = running/jumping

****Animals displaying signs of marked mental distress should be added to the daily summary sheet. Signs of marked mental distress include:**

- Frozen or tense/stiff body posture or cowering into corners/gutters etc. for extended periods of time (e.g. > 1hour)
- Pressing head into the corner of the enclosure
- Constant or frequent growling, hissing, or lunging at the front of the cage
- Efforts to escape to the point of self-injury, e.g. blood on mouth or paws from chewing or clawing to escape
- Stereotypic behaviors such as repetitive pacing, spinning or lunging
- For group housed animals (including littermates and "bonded pairs")
 - Food guarding or inability to access guarded food within the enclosure
 - Attacking or being attacking by another animal within the enclosure

Filling out the Daily Summary Sheet:

- Each day there will be one sheet for dogs and one sheet for cats. They are to be filled out by the volunteers during the time that observations are being made. Be sure to include:
 - The correct date
 - Circle if the sheet is for dogs or cats
 - Your name
- Any health or behavior concerns should be recorded on this sheet. The categories covered are:
 - Not eating
 - URI signs (if not already on treatment for URI)
 - Diarrhea
 - Vomiting
 - Behavioral concerns
- Red Flag emergencies should also be recorded on this sheet – see list of emergencies below. *However, a staff member should also be immediately contacted if any of these signs are noted.*
- Other issues can also be noted on this sheet:
 - Primary health other – for example a broken water dish that does not have any water.
 - Secondary health other – for example a broken water dish that drips or dangerous kennel wire.
- Turn these sheets into the designated folder for staff once the daily monitoring is complete.

Red Flag Medical Conditions:

These conditions indicate a health risk for the individual or the population. Please notify kennel staff immediately upon finding any of the following conditions:

- Animal that is not breathing
- Animal that has severe lethargy or is non-responsive
- Animal that is seizing
- Animal that is actively bleeding or has a large amount of blood in its housing unit
- Animal that has watery diarrhea with or without blood
- Animal that is straining to urinate
- Animal with evidence of pain such as restlessness, vocalizing or panting

If no kennel staff is available – find a veterinary technician (medical treatment room in the cat annex) or any other shelter staff member to help you.

Additionally add any red flag cases to the daily summary sheet to insure this important health information is shared with the entire medical staff.