Keeping Pets, People, and the Environment Healthy and Safe

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians
Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters

Mary Blinn, DVM
Shelter Veterinarian
Charlotte/Mecklenburg Animal Care & Control
Charlotte, NC

Jeanette O’Quin, DVM
Clinical Assistant Professor
Dept. of Veterinary Preventive Medicine
OSU College of Veterinary Medicine
Columbus, OH

What is Public Health

- Public Health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention.

- Overall, public health is concerned with preventing health problems before they occur and protecting the health of entire populations. These populations can be as small as a local neighborhood, or as big as an entire country.

  - Association of Schools of Public Health
Health Threats

- **Biological (Zoonoses)**
  - Rabies
  - Larval Migrans
  - Ringworm

- **Physical Injuries**
  - Animal Bites
  - Needle Sticks
  - Noise

- **Chemical Injuries/Irritants**
  - Disinfectants
  - Ammonia

Who is Affected

- **Staff**
- **Volunteers and Foster Parents**
- **Visitors-to shelter or offsite events**
Why Care

- Worker Productivity
  - Absences from work
  - Higher turnover

Why Care

- Increased Costs
  - Workman’s comp
  - Medical payments/insurance premiums
  - Liability claims
Why Care

- It’s the Law
- Reputation

Zoonoses

- Those diseases that can be transmitted from animals to people
- All people are at risk but immune-compromised individuals are at greater risk
Rabies

- 2009 -- domestic animals made up 7.5% of all rabid animals
- 7.2% increase over 2008
- Cats were the majority (59.4%)
- 2011 human case acquired from a stray cat in CA

The Other Face of Rabies
Rabies Prevention

- Pre-exposure Rabies Vaccinations

- If possible, vaccinate animals prior to adoption/reclaim or require the adopter/owner to do so afterwards

- Report all bites to local health authorities responsible for rabies control

Ringworm
Larval Migrans

National study of shelter dogs
Nationwide - 36% shedding
Southeast - 52% shedding

Recommendations and Free Educational Resources!

Quick Poll

Have you or anyone in your shelter contracted a zoonotic disease?

Use the buttons on the right side of the screen to answer.

Click ✔️ for YES
Click ✗ for NO
Risk Reduction

- Prophylactic De-worming and External Parasite Control
- “Rounds must be conducted at least once every 24 hours”
- No Food in Animal Areas

ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care

“Information about zoonotic diseases should be made available to visitors, adopters and foster care providers”

“Literature should suggest that immune compromised adopters discuss pet selection with health care professionals before adoption”
Risk Reduction

- Isolation
  - Away from the general population of animals
  - Restricted public access and limited staff access
  - Identification of animals

Risk Reduction

- Protect the Immune-compromised
  - Assume all are immune-compromised
  - Information on health risks should be visible and readily available without disclosing health status

Immunocompromised Household: Informing Clients
Risk Reduction

- Protect Foster Parents
  - Animals with known or suspected zoonotic disease should not be sent into foster care
  - Provide information on what to do in case of suspected illness or bite, including after-hours instruction

ASPCA Infection Control for Home Based Foster Care (tipsheet and webinar archive)
http://www.aspcapro.org/foster-care.php

Reporting

- To Supervisor/Manager/Veterinarian
  - Appropriate treatment for the animal
  - Appropriate treatment for a human exposure

- To State or Local Animal/Human Health Agency
  - Each shelter is responsible for knowing which diseases are required to be reported
Training/Written Protocols

ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care

“Shelters should provide periodic staff and volunteer training and information on the recognition of potentially zoonotic conditions and the means of protecting others from exposure”

“Ideally, a written zoonotic infection control plan should be available to all staff and volunteers”
Infectious Disease Control Plan

- **Policy** - indicates what response will be to an animal with a specific disease
  - Based on the nature and severity of the disease
  - Reflects the shelter’s philosophy and available resources
  - Avoids delays in decision making that could allow disease spread

- **Protocol** - details how disease is handled in the shelter
  - Determined by the established policy
  - For each disease - prevention, recognition, transmission, treatment and management in the shelter population

Many Resources Available

- **Textbooks, University Program websites**

- **Iowa CFSPH** [http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Infection_Control/index.php](http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Infection_Control/index.php)
  loads of resources on specific zoonotic diseases, biologic risk management and general infection control practices, some educational tools as well.

- **Maddies’s Infection Control Manual for Animal Shelters**
  This manual was developed as a resource for veterinarians and veterinary students involved in animal shelter medicine. The purpose of this handbook is to enhance knowledge about infection control measures in the shelter environment, and to aid veterinary professionals in the development and implementation of infection control protocols.

- **Maddie’s Animal Shelter Infection Control Tool**
  [http://shelter.cfsph.iastate.edu/Manager/ManagerDefault.aspx](http://shelter.cfsph.iastate.edu/Manager/ManagerDefault.aspx)
Physical Injuries

Animal Bites  Noise  Needle Sticks

Animal Bites

- Occurrence is under-reported
- Fewer reported bites from cats
- Cat bites more likely to become infected
Training/Prevention

• Body Language Recognition

Training/Prevention

Animal Handling
Training/Prevention

- Housing
  “Housing that requires dogs to be removed by use of a control pole or cats to be removed using nets for daily cleaning and care is unacceptable”

Training/Prevention

- Identification of biting and aggressive animals
Quick Poll

Does your facility rehome biter animals?

Use the buttons on the right side of the screen to answer.

Click ☑️ for YES
Click ✗ for NO

Rehoming of Biter Animals

- Considerations
  - An animal deemed to be dangerous should not be rehomed
  - May present threat to public health and safety
  - Liability for shelter ($ and reputation)
  - Circumstances must be investigated
  - Assessment of the animal by experienced personnel
  - Full disclosure to adopters
Noise

- Sound levels in shelters regularly exceed 100 db
- Hearing protection may be required if you have to raise your voice to be heard

Largely due to barking but hard surfaces contribute; University of Cincinnati study showed hearing loss in dogs after 6 months

Noise Abatement

- Sound absorbing materials
- Instruct staff not to make excessive noise

Environmental enrichment
Needle Sticks

- Puncture wound from the needle
- Possible injection of material in the syringe

Risk Reduction

- Don’t uncap needle with your mouth
- Don’t walk around with uncapped needle
- Don’t recap needle with two hands
- MSDS sheets present in the areas where tranquilizers, euthanasia drugs, etc. are used
Chemical Hazards

Disinfectants
Pesticides
Anesthetic Gases

Disinfectants and Sterilants

Concentrated forms more toxic, caustic or irritating

Know the hazards - review MSDS and product labels

Toxicity may be a selection criterion as well as efficacy
Risk Reduction

• Follow manufacturers recommendations for storage, handling and use

• Eye protection if fumes or splashes are a concern

  • Dilute in a well ventilated area

Pesticides

• Environmental (eg. rodenticides)

• Animal (eg. flea control products)
  – Absorbed through the skin of people too!
  – Avoid direct contact with products during application and recently applied

• Most are regulated by EPA
Anesthetics

- Compressed gas cylinders
  - Explosive risk
  - Should be confined in a small reinforced room and chained to prevent falls

- Waste anesthetic gases
  - Nausea, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, and irritability, as well as sterility, miscarriages, birth defects, cancer

OSHA WAG Guidelines

Risk Reduction

- Maintain equipment in good working order
- Use a scavenger and leave animals on the circuit after turning off the flow of anesthetic
- Avoid routine use of masks
- Recover in well ventilated area
OSHA Hazard Communication Plan

• Every business which handles, stores, or uses potentially dangerous chemicals must develop a written plan for these procedures. These rules apply to all chemicals on the premises, regardless of whether they are currently in use.

• Include a list of all hazardous products in the shelter.

• Compile all MSDS sheets.

• Staff must be trained; training should be documented.

OSHA Hazard Communication Plan

• Ensure that all containers, including secondary bottles for mixed solutions, are properly labeled.

What is in the unlabeled bottle?
OSHA Hazard Communication Plan

• Ensure that all containers, including secondary bottles for mixed solutions, are properly labeled

Does not have to be fancy

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

• Skin
  – Gloves, gowns, aprons, smocks, tyvek suits

• Eyes and Face
  – Safety glasses, goggles, splash shields

• Respiratory
  – Mask, respirators

• Other
  – Hearing protection, non-slip shoes
ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care

“Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, smocks, goggles, masks, etc. must be provided by the employer in order to protect employees from exposure to chemical and biological agents”

- Appropriate for the task and person in correct size
- Training on proper use and disposal

Gloves and Hygiene

- Gloves are just as capable of spreading germs as hands!
  - Usually worn to protect the person wearing them from chemical and biological agents
  - If you would normally wash your hands before the next task, then you should ideally change your gloves

- Remove gloves appropriately
- Wash hands after removing gloves
ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care

“Hand washing should be strongly encouraged after handling animals and after removing PPE”

“Ideally hand washing facilities should be easily accessible to all visitors, staff and volunteers”

“Hand washing is the best way to protect people and animals in the shelter from possible disease transmission”

Emerging Diseases

• Community diseases will be reflected in the animal shelter population

• Reemergence of diseases
  – panleukopenia, distemper

• Newly emerging diseases
  – Canine influenza
Antimicrobial Resistance

“Routine use of antibiotics to prevent infection in healthy animals is unacceptable and must never be used as a substitute for good animal health management”
MDR Salmonella typhimurium DT 104

- Animal Shelter in Idaho
  - human cases had adopted cats

- Culture identified infected cats
  - Most non-clinical or developed diarrhea after adoption
  - Extensive environmental contamination in facility

- 49 human cases, 10 hospitalized, 0 fatalities
  - child who visited shelter but did not adopt

MDR Salmonella typhimurium DT 104

- Shut down for three weeks
  - Disinfected and painted

- Scratches in polypropylene cages still harbored bacteria and had to be replaced

- New protocols for cleaning, animal flow, disease prevention and management
MDR Salmonella typhimurium DT 104

• Signage in the shelter
• Waiver on adoption forms
• Handouts on zoonotic diseases
• Visitors in cattery only when supervised
  – Hand washing before and after handling each cat is enforced

Regulation and Guidance

• Local health departments
• State Depts of Agriculture, Public Health, EPA
• State and National Org. (AVMA, ASV, etc.)
• Federal Agencies
  – DEA—regulates controlled substances
  – FDA—regulates drug prescription and labeling
  – USDA—regulates biologics such as animal vaccine
  – EPA—regulates pesticides and disinfectants
  – CDC—protects human health, regulates animal import
  – OSHA—regulates safe and healthy workplace
  – NIOSH—research and guidance for OSHA
OSHA in Shelters

- Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 created OSHA in the Department of Labor and NIOSH in the Department of Health and Human Services.

- Federal rules—but states are allowed to have their own plans in lieu of federal as long as they meet or exceed their requirements. OSHA must approve these state plans.

- Some states are regulated by the state, some by the federal government and some by both. To find your state: [http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html)

OSHA in Shelters

- In states that are covered by federal only, there is no jurisdiction over the public sector.

- Insurance companies may stipulate that OSHA requirements are met as a requirement for coverage—this would also give them an out should a problem occur and the shelter was not in compliance.

- Regardless of jurisdiction, these are widely held industry practices and failure to meet them could bring additional liability.
OSHA in Shelters

• Every employer must maintain or post in a prominent location:
  – Job Safety & Health Protection Poster (OSHA 3165) or state equivalent. (recommended $1,000 fine if it is not posted prominently)

  – Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (OSHA 300 & 300A) and Supplementary Record of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (OSHA 301), if the business has 11 or more employees or if the business is selected to participate in a DOL survey.

OSHA in Shelters

• Every employer must maintain or post in a prominent location:
  – Copies of any OSHA citations for violations of standards
  – Appropriate warning or identification signs. Exits, hazardous areas (radiation), or situations (hearing protection required), etc.
OSHA in Shelters

- All stairs must be well lighted, those with more than 4 steps must have a handrail
- First-aid kits are required if medical care is not in close proximity
- Ergonomics is gaining recognition as there is an increase in repetitive motion injuries
- Employees driving on the job are also covered with basic vehicle safety and maintenance requirements

OSHA in Shelters

- The general duty clause says that workplaces must be maintained in a manner free from physical and health hazards; employers must take action to prevent any recognizable hazard in the workplace that could cause illness or injury
OSHA in Shelters

• Mandated training for specific hazards; which apply varies by type of business.

• Is or may be mandatory training in shelters
  – Emergency & fire prevention plans
  – Occupational noise exposure
  – Required PPE
  – Medical services and first aid
  – Hazard communication (chemicals)

• Additional trainings as part of the general duty clause should also be documented. In a shelter some of these might include:
  – Needle stick prevention
  – Waste anesthetic gas management
  – Safe lifting of heavy objects
  – Proper mixing of sanitation chemicals
  – Animal Handling
  – Zoonotic Disease Prevention
OSHA in Shelters

• Some plans are required to be in writing, they should be readily available and specific to the shelter. May include:
  – Hazard Communication
  – Emergency Action Plan
  – Fire Safety
  – Others

• Templates are available and can be used but they must be modified

OSHA in Shelters

• OSHA compliance officers can visit a shelter to follow up on a complaint or on request of management

• Either way they will identify deficiency and notify the administration of requirements and recommendations

• If they are invited they will not fine for any violations they find; unless of course, they are not corrected in a reasonable time period
Comprehensive Health and Safety Program

• Four main elements are essential to the development of this voluntary Program:
  – Involvement of employees and shelter leadership
  – Worksite hazard analysis and risk assessment
  – Written (all) hazard prevention and control policies
  – Ongoing health and safety training

OSHA Develop a Comprehensive Health and Safety Program

Safety and Health Resources

OSHA Effective Workplace Safety and Health Management Systems

AVMA Guidelines for Hazards in the Workplace

AVMA Guidelines for Veterinary Practice Facilities

AVMA Veterinary Facility Occupational Risks for Pregnant Workers
Questions

www.ASPCApro.org/asv

- Register for additional webinars in the series
- Links to webinar recordings
- Download presentation slides and bonus materials

Next Webinar in Series:
Association of Shelter Veterinarians
Shelter Guidelines: Spay/Neuter
Thursday, November 17