



## Animal Shelter Safety Assessment

For each question, respond 1 (no or never), 2 (sometimes or somewhat), or 3 (yes or always).

Each question represents a factor that can positively or negatively impact safety in your animal services organization. Please note, this is not a complete list of all recommended safety protocols, but is intended to be utilized as a tool to gauge the overall attention to safety and risk management in your shelter.

### Policies and Procedures

**Protocol for behavioral euthanasia decisions.** Does your shelter have a written protocol for making decisions to euthanize an animal for behavioral reasons? **1 2 3**

**Dogs with known histories.** Does your shelter have a defined process for reviewing and evaluating case notes of dogs with known histories of causing harm to people or animals? **1 2 3**

**Routine self-auditing.** Does your shelter have a safety audit process and quality assurance measures in place to ensure safety protocols are followed? **1 2 3**

### Bites

**Bite data tracking.** Does your shelter track bite data over multiple years including bites in shelter, bites inflicted by adopted pets, and bites in the community in order to analyze short and long-term trends? **1 2 3**

**Reporting.** Does everyone in the shelter understand bite reporting requirements and feel they can safely report bite incidents without facing a punitive response? **1 2 3**

**Bite scale.** Does the shelter utilize a standard bite scale with shared definitions? **1 2 3**



## Volunteers

<b>Training.</b> Can volunteers sign up to receive training to handle animals with more challenging behaviors?	1	2	3
<b>When can they help?</b> Are volunteers able to be at the shelter from morning through evening hours?	1	2	3
<b>What can they do?</b> Are volunteers empowered to and supported in providing a range of mental health support activities for dogs? Eg. enrichment, exercise, day trip, foster, adoption counseling? Are volunteers able to walk dogs and/or take them to play yards?	1	2	3
<b>Specialty groups.</b> Does your organization have specific volunteer roles or programs on at-risk groups like 'long-stay' dogs, dogs with behavioral histories, or fearful dogs?	1	2	3

## Operations and Staffing

<b>Documentation.</b> Are all staff and volunteers trained on appropriate, specific, and objective terminology when reporting behavioral and medical histories, incidents, and concerns?	1	2	3
<b>Rounds.</b> Do staff members conduct daily rounds to determine the next step to move each dog forward towards an outcome?	1	2	3
<b>First aid.</b> Are there fully-stocked first aid kits in each dog housing area and are staff trained in emergency first aid and taught where the kits are located?	1	2	3
<b>Training.</b> Do staff members receive introductory and ongoing training to learn how to safely handle and interact with cats and dogs of various difficulty levels? Does the shelter have a system to assess the knowledge and skill level of trainees?	1	2	3
<b>Fear Free.</b> Are medical staff and veterinarians trained in Fear Free handling? Are staff members trained to humanely move animals from one place to another, including moving them from one side of the kennel to the other?	1	2	3



## Communication

**Emergency.** Do staff and volunteers have a safe way to communicate in a safety emergency with other people in the building? (radios are most common) **1 2 3**

**Cross-team.** Do staff and volunteers meet regularly to discuss challenging/concerning/long stay dog cases and work together to identify activities that can lead to outcomes? **1 2 3**

**Public.** Does your shelter provide clear guidance to the public on how to safely interact with dogs at the shelter? **1 2 3**

**Walk boards.** Does your shelter have an internal communications system so all volunteers and staff know the specific handling needs of each animal and which dogs have known history or observed behaviors that indicate they may pose a significant safety risk? **1 2 3**

**Public pleas.** When an adoptable pet's behavior has begun to deteriorate due to stress, are they immediately prioritized for placement in foster care? **1 2 3**

## Daily Routine and Care

**Chew enrichment.** Are dogs given chew toys like Nylabones, Benebones, and/or stuffed Kongs in their kennels? (outside of the "exceptions" like dogs who resource guard, dogs who are co-housed, etc). **1 2 3**

**Collars.** Does every dog get outfitted with a martingale or flat collar upon arrival at the shelter? **1 2 3**

**Kennel breaks.** Do most dogs get out of their kennels at least one time each day? **1 2 3**

**Cohousing.** Are dog-friendly dogs co-housed to improve their overall welfare and increase their chances of being adopted? **1 2 3**

**Play groups.** Are most dogs attending playgroups several times per week? **1 2 3**



**Safe walkways.** Is there enough space for dogs to safely walk down kennel rows without redirecting bites to the handler or getting into 'fights' at the kennel front with other dogs? **1 2 3**

**Treat buckets on kennels.** Are there treat buckets on kennel fronts that encourage visitors and volunteers to reward dogs when they're calm and quiet? **1 2 3**

**Sleep.** Does your shelter ensure dogs can rest by turning off lights at night and providing beds, blankets, and other comfort items? **1 2 3**

### Equipment and Tools

**Safety tools in kennel areas.** Does each kennel row have a safety bucket that includes fight interruption tools including an air horn, bite stick, and leash as well as a catchpole for safety emergencies and have volunteers and staff been trained in how to use them? **1 2 3**

**Walking equipment.** Is there a variety of appropriate handling equipment for dogs, including martingale collars, flat leashes, front-clip harnesses, head halters, and other walking equipment to make walking strong and jumpy dogs easier to handle? **1 2 3**

**Veterinary equipment.** Do veterinary staff have appropriate handling equipment for medical exams, including muzzles, towels, nets, protective gloves, transfer cages, and e-collars? **1 2 3**

### Dangerous and Quarantined Animals

**Dangerous dog policies and protocols.** Does the shelter have a written safety protocol and secure housing and handling procedures for dogs who pose an immediate safety risk to humans or other animals? **1 2 3**

**Catch poles.** Are catch poles reserved for truly aggressive dogs who pose an immediate threat of harm to people? (as opposed to being used for routine movement of dogs among kennels) **1 2 3**



## Adoption and Foster

**Adult dog foster program.** Does your shelter have an adult dog foster program that includes dogs with behavioral histories or challenges? **1 2 3**

**Documentation.** Does your shelter provide all documentation related to a particular pet to foster caregivers and adopters? **1 2 3**

**Counseling.** Does your shelter provide comprehensive, individualized adoption counseling, including explaining and contextualizing medical and behavioral histories? **1 2 3**

**Low barrier practices.** Is your shelter free of barriers, restrictions, and roadblocks that lead to increased length of stay? **1 2 3**

**Transparency.** Does your shelter have a process for ensuring complete transparency with adopters and with foster caregivers? **1 2 3**