

EXAM ROOM ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION

Veterinary exam room assistants are responsible for the organization and cleanliness of exam rooms, treatment room, surgical suite, patient cages/runs, and outdoor pet relief areas. Exam room assistants must also be prepared to assist veterinarians, and veterinary technicians as needed to include restraint and handling of animal patients. Exam room assistants must have sufficient physical strength, mobility, and stamina to lift and/or move heavy pets and objects, the dexterity and confidence to restrain patients, and the ability to monitor pets for signs of distress or disease. It is essential that they have the ability and willingness to learn and the desire to provide gentle, compassionate care for boarded and hospitalized pets.

General Knowledge and Tasks

General Knowledge

- Know the range of services the practice provides and the species it treats.
- Be reasonably familiar with breeds and coat colors.
- Follow OSHA standards. Be able to find Material Safety Data Sheets quickly.
- Know and use standard medical and business abbreviations.
- Use proper medical terminology when speaking and writing.
- Be familiar with infectious diseases, including their prevention and steps to reduce or eliminate transmission. Know the most common zoonotic diseases.
- Competently speak and write the English language.

General Tasks

- Always be in position and prepared to work by the start of each scheduled shift.
- Ensure accurate personal time records are made via the practice management software system.
- Maintain a professional appearance while at work, including clean and pressed uniforms or clothes. Change clothes daily as necessary to look professional and avoid carrying odors.
- Maintain an even, friendly demeanor while on the job. Perform job tasks efficiently without rushing.
- Smile and maintain an even, friendly demeanor while on the job.
- Handle stress and pressure with poise and tact.
- Show respect for clients, team members, and animals (alive or deceased) at all times.
- Have the physical strength and ability to stand for an entire shift when needed, and be able to lift pets and objects weighing up to 50 pounds without assistance, handle repetitive up-and-down or back-and-forth motions, and work while bending. Assist in lifting patients weighing more than 50 pounds.
- Maintain a list of tasks and engage in productive work during slow periods.
- Assist other employees as needed. Avoid waiting for coworkers to ask for assistance.
- Participate in your performance appraisal, and, as requested, in those of others.
- Participate in all staff and training meetings.
- Answer preliminary questions from interested parties regarding stray and adoptable animals.

- Conduct tours of the practice and/or kennel. Before each tour, ensure that the facility is orderly and that staff and patients are prepared for tours.
- Maintain constant vigilance regarding open doorways that could allow pets to escape from the facility.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding clients and patients for whom the practice provides veterinary services.
- Be prepared to handle any pet or facility emergency that may arise, including dog or cat fights, choking or strangulating animals, and facility fire or weather-related emergencies. Follow contingency plans.
- Follow established facility closing procedures to ensure the security of patients, boarders, and the building.

Exam Room Tasks

Patient-Admittance Tasks

- Ensure each exam room fully stocked and clean at start of shift utilizing checklist.
- Be aware of day's appointment schedule and anticipate needed availability of rooms for each appointment.
- Coordinate with technicians to ensure necessary supplies for appointments are immediately available.
- Administer tick and/or flea repellants or pesticides at the time patients are admitted as directed by management.
- Take custody of pets from clients. Restrain dogs with the practice's leashes. Label and store clients' collars and leashes and return them to clients promptly when pets are retrieved from the facility. Note all belongings on admittance paperwork.
- Note special instructions given by clients.
- Assist clients with unruly or unrestrained pets. Ensure that all dogs are leashed and that cats and smaller pets are caged. Isolate aggressive pets. Request assistance as needed.
- Weigh pets and record weights when they are admitted.
- Walk or carry pets to the appropriate wards. Apply identification bands. Settle pets comfortably in their assigned cages and runs. Provide fresh water, if permitted, and clean bedding. Mark cages and runs with pets' cage cards.
- Make sure that all kennel and cage doors are properly secured after admitting or moving patients and before leaving the facility at the end of a shift.

Patient-Discharge Tasks

- Provide clients with summary evaluations of their pets' boarding stays. Advise them of significant events during their pets' boarding, including changes in anxiety and/or signs of illness, such as constant barking (dogs) or hiding (cats), loss of appetite, diarrhea, excessive thirst, sneezing, or coughing.
- On the day of discharge, gather pets' toys, bedding, and food in preparation for discharge.
- Check all pets for cleanliness prior to discharge. Clean, bathe, and/or groom pets prior to discharge as needed. Assess additional fees as directed. Discharge pets.

- Measure and record pets' exit weights for comparison against entry weights.
- Handle angry or grieving clients with a calm, compassionate, and reassuring manner.
- Assist clients to their cars if needed.

Pet-Care Tasks

Examination and Restraint Tasks

- Restrain pets in a manner that allows necessary work to be performed, minimizes stress to pets, and ensures the safety of pets and people.
- Know and use, when appropriate, various techniques to restrain fractious pets, including:
 1. muzzles, choke collars, Gentle Leader™ headcollars, body harnesses, collars, cat bags, and “rabies poles”;
 2. blankets, towels, or nets to trap and move cats, dogs, and pocket pets;
 3. collars and lead ropes through cage doors or chain-link fences or over tables; and
 4. use of physical restraint using your body, hands, and/or arms.
- Aid veterinarians and technicians in evaluating incoming animals through examinations and health tests. Assist in administering immunizations.
- Use warning stickers and notations on cage cards and records as appropriate.

Contagious-Disease Tasks

- Follow isolation procedures for contagious or potentially contagious animals. Using the designated products and dilutions for disinfectants, properly disinfect your shoes, hands, and clothing before leaving isolation areas.
- Follow the practice's procedures and state guidelines in handling suspected or potential rabies cases. Inform the kennel manager, veterinary technicians, or doctors of signs that patients are having difficulty swallowing, exhibiting rear- or front-leg weakness, or exhibiting other neurological abnormalities.

Pet-Care and Monitoring Tasks

- Wash, dry, and store patients' bedding and the practice's towels. Bedding should be in good repair. Wash surgical towels separately.
- Maximize pets' comfort with a gentle and reassuring manner. Understand that actions that would constitute animal cruelty under state or local laws or the practice's policies will be grounds for immediate reprimand and/or termination.
- Walk dogs on a double leash or on a leash within a fenced exercise area. Ensure that they are restrained and under your control at all times.
- Prepare meals according to clients' instructions, and feed animals. Note the volume of food eaten or rejected on cage cards or kennel logs.
- Withhold food and water from pets scheduled for or recovering from surgical procedures and anesthesia as directed.
- Rinse and refill water pails and dishes at least once daily. Wash and disinfect them as needed during pets' stays.

- Monitor pets and kennels/cages for urine, feces, vomit, and blood. When noted, clean pets, runs, play areas, litter pans, and cages or runs immediately. Note incidents on cage cards or kennel logs.
- Collect and save urine and fecal samples as requested.
- Continuously monitor pets in your care. Pay particular attention to signs of distress, illness, or injury.
- Know the key symptoms of emergency medical problems likely to be exhibited by boarders. Immediately notify the kennel manager or veterinary staff members if you observe any of the following clinical signs:
 1. Dogs or cats that are unable to or are straining to urinate or defecate
 2. Dogs or cats in heat
 3. Dogs suffering from gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV or bloat), (i.e., bloated abdomens, unproductive vomiting, vomiting thick ropy saliva, and/or general discomfort)
 4. Difficult, heavy, or rapid breathing
 5. Sneezing, coughing, or ocular discharges
 6. Listlessness
 7. Loss of balance
 8. Inability to rise
 9. Anxiety
 10. Seizures
 11. Significant vomiting and/or diarrhea, especially bloody or foul-smelling diarrhea
 12. Bleeding
- Monitor boarders' behaviors and note potentially aggressive behaviors. Use caution when handling aggressive or potentially aggressive pets. Request assistance when needed for personal safety or for the safety of other boarders.
- Identify a patient's level of pain and possible causes of pain, and understand the medications and methods used to control pain.
- Under the supervision of the kennel manager or a veterinary technician, medicate and treat boarders, including the proper and safe administration of oral, otic, ophthalmic, and topical medications; insulin injections; and subcutaneous fluid therapy. Record treatments on pets' cards and kennel's logs.
- Inform the practice manager or doctors immediately of all bite or scratch wounds you suffer so that reports can be made and you can be referred for timely medical care by a physician, if necessary. Clean all wounds quickly and thoroughly.

Grooming Tasks

- Deflea patients with flea combs, flea sprays, spot-on topicals, baths, dips, or appropriate medication as directed by the kennel manager, veterinary technician, or doctor.
- Detick pets using proper instruments or techniques.
- Trim nails to the quick without causing bleeding.
- Clip and remove matted hair without injuring the underlying skin, and provide other grooming services.
- Administer medicated baths and dips.
- Provide cooling baths for overheated patients under veterinary supervision.

Kennel Procedures and Maintenance Tasks

Cage-Cleaning Tasks

- Follow procedures for cleaning and disinfecting cages and runs.
- Remove feces and place them in a separate container for disposal as directed by the practice or kennel manager.
- Remove food and dirt from cages and runs.
- Clean cages with spray disinfectant and paper towels. Clean runs with disinfectant and a scrub brush or high pressure cleaning system. Wash cages and runs with a dilute (one part bleach to 32 parts water) bleach solution weekly and after occupation by potentially contagious animals.
- Remove and wash all bedding after use. Empty and wash water pails, bowls, and food dishes after use.

Facility-Maintenance Tasks

- Maintain kennel and grounds as directed by the hospital administrator. Mow lawns. Tend plantings. Mulch as needed. Periodically treat the grounds to reduce the number of parasites present.
- Ensure safe walkways during inclement weather. Remove ice and/or snow from walkways and runs. Place salt or sand on walkways as needed.
- Gather garbage and place it in designated receptacles.
- Ensure the proper functioning of all kennel equipment. Periodically clean and maintain cleaning, snow-removal, and lawn-care equipment. Repair or replace broken lights and fixtures. Maintain and repair cages and runs to ensure their secure closure and safety. Bring significant malfunctions to the attention of the kennel manager.
- Note low inventory in food, cleaning, and restraint supplies. List items and give the list to the ordering manager.
- Know all the cleaning products used, including their safe handling and proper use.
- Maintain a “lost and found” bin for items left behind by pets’ owners. Tag and date each item. Discard or donate items not retrieved after three months.