



GENERAL ANIMAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

It is very important to remember that the animals in our care can potentially be under a lot of stress and be fearful of their living situation. In order to ensure that we both keep the animals comfortable and avoid potentially dangerous situations (both for the people and for pets), we ask that you please read the following guidelines on being safe and kind around WAC animals. *

- 1) You may not handle any animals unless you have been through all of the necessary training and have been approved by the Volunteer Coordinator to handle the animals.
- 2) Please do not cause physical harm to the animals by:
 - a. Feeding them food they should not be eating
 - b. Using force when handling them
 - c. Putting dangerous food or toys in their kennel with them
 - d. Leaving them outside in the extreme weather for long periods of time
- 3) Please do not cause distress to the animals by:
 - a. Banging on their cages
 - b. Teasing them through their cages
 - c. Standing closely over them through their cages
 - d. Yelling at them
 - e. Loudly shouting (especially in the cat room where it is usually so quiet)
 - f. Using force when handling them
 - g. Allowing a group of people to stand for long periods of time in front of a dog's kennel
- 4) It is important to be able to tell when an animal is fearful through their cage and should be left alone. For instance:
 - a. If a dog is barking at you loudly, leave them alone.
 - b. If a dog exhibits fear in their body language (ears back, tail between legs, shaking, wide eyes, huddling to the ground), please notify a staff member and leave the dog alone.
 - c. If a cat's hair rises on its back or they hiss at you, leave them alone.
 - d. If an animal is moving away from you and trying to 'get away,' leave them alone
- 5) Many of the animals in our care have not learned things your pets may have learned at home, or may be too nervous to behave in certain ways (i.e. – the right way to play, commands like sit or down). Please keep this in mind and do not ask too much of them. For cats, use toys to play! For dogs, always have treats to give out for "FREE!"
- 6) Please avoid bothering animals when they are sleeping or eating. If you wanted to play with that animal or take them outside, please wait and visit that animal at a later time.

**Please note: this information provides general guidelines. When you go through animal handling training, you will learn more about animal behavior in a shelter setting. We also ask that everyone reads the Volunteer Manual for detailed information on safety protocols at WAC.*

Women's Animal Center

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