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Introduction

Sanitation is achieving and maintaining a clean environment. An animal control officer's environment includes the truck, shelter, and equipment. Keeping a clean and sanitary environment will decrease odors and disease transmission, increase public appreciation, and reflect the pride and professionalism of the animal control agency.

Personal Hygiene

Good personal hygiene habits will help protect your health and the health of the animals in your care. Never eat, drink, or smoke in the area where animals are kept. Antiseptics prevent the growth of germs or microorganisms on living things, such as your hands.

Sanitation (Basic)

Always wash your hands with soap (preferably one containing an antiseptic):

- before you eat or prepare food;
- before you smoke;
- after you use the restroom; and
- as frequently as possible after handling animals, dirty equipment, or other items on which disease-causing microorganisms could be found.

Cleaning and Disease Control

Develop and maintain a planned cleaning schedule for the animal control vehicles and the shelter. Proper cleaning techniques help control the spread of disease. Surfaces must be cleaned with a detergent to remove grease, films, soil, and debris. Clean and disinfect cages that house healthy animals before cleaning those that house sick animals. **Follow these steps for cleaning cages, including cages located on trucks and facility runs:**

- Remove the animal to a secure, clean cage.
- Remove food and water bowls, litter pans, and bedding.
- Remove feces and urine by scooping or rinsing.
- Scrub all surfaces with a detergent and warm water, including bars on cages.
- Rinse thoroughly.
- Squeegee any standing water into the drain, if applicable.
- Apply disinfectant for the recommended amount of contact time.
- Return the animal, if applicable, to the clean, dry cage. Be certain the impoundment records are on the correct cage.

Sanitation (Basic)

Disinfectants

Disinfectants destroy many viruses and bacteria on objects such as floors and cages. Apply a disinfectant after you have cleaned with a detergent. Surfaces must be clean before a disinfectant can work.

There are various disinfectants approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that you can use. Some kinds are stronger and more effective than others. Be sure that the disinfectant is labeled for use against the pathogen (disease-causing microorganism) of concern. Look for products that will destroy canine parvovirus. Products containing chlorine (hypochlorites) are commonly used for disinfecting kennels. When selecting a product containing chlorine or any disinfectant, make sure that it is labeled for use as a disinfectant. Read and follow all the directions on the label. If label instructions are not followed carefully, the disinfectant may not be effective in destroying pathogens. Read product labels carefully for proper use and warnings. A disinfectant will have a **contact time**, which is the length of time that it must be left on the surface for it to work. Rinse the surface thoroughly and allow it to dry after the contact time has been completed.

Never mix products because they can inactivate each other and not work properly. They can also combine to form a dangerous mixture. If the product is to be diluted with water, check label recommendations for the correct amount and best temperature of water to use for maximum effectiveness.

Remember: You could be allergic or sensitive to cleaners or disinfectants. To protect yourself, ventilate the area (provide good air flow), wear gloves and safety glasses when working with these products, and be careful not to splash them on your skin.

Sanitation (Basic)

Deodorizers

Deodorizers hide or cover odors and have no cleaning or disinfecting ability. If your shelter is properly cleaned, there will be no odors to cover. Drains are common sources of odors; clean and disinfect them regularly.

Equipment and Vehicles

Fomites are inanimate (non-living) objects that can become contaminated with germs and serve to spread disease. Examples include cage and run surfaces, towels, blankets, food bowls, litter boxes, cleaning equipment, shoes, and clothes.

Clean and disinfect surfaces of cages, including cages located on vehicles and facility runs, as described earlier in this chapter.

Scrub food dishes, water bowls, litter boxes, mats, carriers, and other utensils with hot water and detergent. Soak these items in a disinfectant and then thoroughly rinse and dry them. Launder towels, blankets, leashes, stuffed toys, and other fabric items with hot water and disinfectant.

Change clothing or wear protective garments for activities such as cleaning or the handling of sick and/or newly impounded animals. Keep spare scrub tops or protective smocks available for use whenever participating in these types of activities. Remove and launder these garments after handling this kind of animal or after cleaning.

Use shoe covers or disinfect your shoes by stepping into a shallow disinfectant bath as you leave an isolation area. Choose a disinfectant proven effective for this use and effective against organic matter (such as urine and feces). Use a brush to remove organic matter on the bottom of shoes before stepping into the bath. Make the foot bath deep enough to cover treads of shoes. Change the foot bath daily or more often as it becomes contaminated.

Sanitation (Basic)

Wash your hands as frequently as possible, especially after handling animals or cleaning equipment. First, wet your hands with warm running water. Then, lather your hands with soap. Scrub all surfaces of your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds followed by rinsing them with water. Thoroughly dry your hands using two single-use paper towels for 10 seconds each. If cloth towels are used instead of paper towels, use a fresh one for each hand-washing session; dry your hands for 10 seconds on one area of the towel and then 10 seconds on a fresh area of the towel.

Summary

Disease prevention begins with a clean environment. You can help keep yourself and the animals in your care from getting sick by knowing how to properly clean and disinfect your facility and vehicle(s). Your knowledge of sanitation and hygiene protects your health and improves the image of your agency. It is easier to work in a clean, odorless facility, and the public will be more likely to visit it.

Additional Reference:

UC Davis Veterinary Medicine, Koret Shelter Medicine Program, Shelter Health Portal, *Sanitation in Animal Shelters* at:

<http://www.sheltermedicine.com/shelter-health-portal/information-sheets/sanitation-in-animal-shelters#products>

A table of useful conversion factors is provided on the reverse side of this page.

Sanitation (Basic)

Some helpful conversion factors include:

1 milliliter (ml) = 1 cubic centimeter (cc)

1 teaspoon = 5 ml = 5 cc

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce = 1 tablespoon = 15 ml = 15 cc = $\frac{1}{16}$ cup

1 ounce = 2 tablespoons = 30 ml = 30 cc = $\frac{1}{8}$ cup

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup = 8 tablespoons = 24 teaspoons

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint = 8 fluid ounces = 1 measuring cup (approximately 240 ml)

1 pint = 16 fluid ounces = 2 measuring cups (approximately 480 ml)

2 pints = 1 quart = 32 ounces

2 quarts = $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon = 64 ounces

4 quarts = 1 gallon = 128 ounces

1 gallon = 4 quarts = 8 pints = 128 ounces