

# Veterinary Kenneler: Part-Time Position

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The Veterinary Kenneler's are responsible for the day-to-day care of patients and boarders. This includes feeding, watering, cleaning, walking, bathing, and monitoring the well being of dogs, cats and, occasionally, other companion animals. Kennel assistants must have sufficient physical strength, mobility, and stamina to lift and/or move heavy pets and objects, the dexterity and confidence to administer medications, 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. In addition, Kennelers are responsible for the day-to-day cleanliness of the hospital and maintaining the cleanliness at sufficient levels for the medical needs.

## Pay

Kennelers are generally high school students with the desire to go in to a veterinary profession. As such, much of the benefits earned from such a position would be the experience and ability to list it on a resume. Kennelers should expect to begin at minimum wage. Hours can vary, but applicants should expect 4-20 hours per week.

## Qualifications

- Working on or having earned a High School Diploma or G.E.D.
- Must be 15 years of age (18 years to assist with X-ray)
- Must be able to safely lift 50 pounds
- Compassion for and the desire to work with animals
- Proficiency with speaking and writing in the English language
- A positive attitude, follow-through, and excellent communication and teamwork skills
- Punctuality and reliability are mandatory

## Tasks

A training schedule will be provided to help make the following list less overwhelming. Many of the tasks are basic and most will know how to complete them prior to training. Some are more complex and will require time to learn. During the first week of employment, a kenneler will be provided training hours for shadowing staff to learn the job. Fellow kennelers, the medical staff, and management will serve as mentors in order to help a new kenneler during their first few months. Kennelers should be proficient at most, if not all, of the following tasks at the end of the first three months.

## 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.
- Competently speak a second language commonly used at the practice.

### *General Tasks*

- Always be in position and prepared to work by the start of each scheduled shift.
- Maintain accurate personal time stamps.
- 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.
- Be willing and able to teach other staff members kennel skills.
- 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.

### **Client-Interaction Tasks**

#### *Patient-Admittance Tasks*

- Cordially greet incoming clients and patients, addressing each by name.
- Check on the immunization status of arriving pets before admitting them to the facility.
- Advise clients of recommended services, such as exercise/play time and grooming, for their pets and of special call-in times to check on patients or boarders.
- Explain special programs offered by the practice.
- Advise clients of significant changes in policies or services since their last visit.
- Obtain and record contact information from clients to ensure that they or their agents can be reached during pets' stays.
- Ensure that all boarding admission paperwork has been completed.
- Administer tick and/or flea repellants or pesticides at the time patients are admitted as directed by the Veterinarian or Manager.
- 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 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.
- Evaluate incoming animals for obvious signs of disease and readily felt skin or body tumors. Find and identify external parasites. Bring noted problems to the attention of pet owners and the support staff for discussion and resolution prior to admittance.
- Know and use, when appropriate, various techniques to restrain fractious pets, including:
  1. muzzles, Gentle Leader headcollars, body harnesses, collars, cat bags, "rabies poles," Cat Nabber, Snappy Snare, and cat gloves;
  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 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.
- Ensure birds and exotic pets' needs and environmental conditions are met, including proper housing, perches, bedding, and diet.
- When transferring boarders to new locations, provide them with clean, soft bedding and fresh water.
- 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.
- Provide individual playtime for boarders at clients' request and as directed by the practice or manager. Ensure pets' safety and well-being 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 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**

### *Patient-Transfer and Record-Keeping Tasks*

- Add admitted pets to kennel or hospital logs.
- Coordinate transfers or movement of pets with the front desk and/or veterinarians.
- Maintain accurate kennel records that include the number, type, and locations of boarders, special diets and requirements, your observations of boarders, and treatments or medications administered.
- Advise the front desk when requested services were not provided due to scheduling glitches or inclement weather so that front-desk staff can ensure proper billing.

### *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 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 practice manager.
- Ensure safe walkways by removing litter, debris, and pet waste.
- Gather garbage and recyclables and place it in designated receptacles.
- Ensure the proper functioning of all kennel equipment. Periodically clean and maintain cleaning equipment. Report broken lights and fixtures to the manager. Maintain cages and runs to ensure their secure closure and safety. Bring significant malfunctions to the attention of the manager.
- Note low inventory in food, cleaning, and restraint supplies. List items and give the list to the 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.
- Sweep and mop all floors as directed by manager.
- Clean, wipe, and disinfect all counters, treatment tables, and other surfaces as directed by manager.
- Complete daily cleaning activities per the posted checklist.
- Complete weekly cleaning activities per the posted checklist.
- Ask the veterinarian and/or manager about additional cleaning duties prior to leaving.
- Maintain a clean and ready veterinary facility.

While extensive, this job description does not cover every task or duty that might be assigned. Additional responsibilities may be assigned as necessary. If you have questions or concerns about this job description, please feel free to contact the General Manager.