

Veterinary Receptionist: Full- or Part-Time Position

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The Veterinary Receptionist's primary duty is interacting with clients and coordinating communication between the medical staff, doctor, and the client. Receptionists provide the first impression all clients see and hear and, as such, comes with certain obligations.



Pay

Receptionists generally should expect to begin at or around the \$10/hour mark. Receptionists with extensive experience, background, or skills may receive more. Starting wages are negotiable at the time of hire. Additionally, receptionists will receive evaluations at which time raises may be considered.

Qualifications

- High School Diploma or G.E.D.
- At least 1 year of customer service job-related experience
- Must be able to safely lift 30 pounds
- Basic math, critical thinking, and problem solving skills
- Proficiency with speaking and writing in the English language (Spanish bilingual is preferred)
- A positive attitude, follow-through, and excellent communication and teamwork skills
- Multitasking and accepting constructive criticism is essential
- 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 receptionist will be provided training hours for the completion of basic online receptionist training and to shadow a current receptionist. Fellow receptionists, the medical staff, and management will serve as mentors in order to help a new receptionist during their first few months. Receptionists 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

- Be able to give directions to the practice.
- Know the range of services the practice provides and the species it treats.
- Follow OSHA standards. Be able to find Material Safety Data Sheets quickly.
- Know hospital safety procedures and code words to ensure a safe work environment
- Know standard medical and business abbreviations.
- Use proper medical terminology when speaking and writing.
- Competently speak and write the English language.
- Competently speak and write the Spanish language (preferred, but not required).
- Understand the life cycle and pathology of common parasites (intestinal parasites, heartworms, fleas, ticks), and know the names of most common preventatives, recommended treatments, and diagnostics.

- Be familiar with zoonotic (contagious) diseases, including their prevention and steps to reduce or eliminate transmission.
- Communicate with clients about the various pet-identification systems available, including tags, tattoos, and microchips.
- Know the policies regarding provision of veterinary care, treatment of stray animals, deposits for hospitalized patients, payments, credit, pet health insurance, and finance fees.

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. Follow the dress code in the Employee Handbook.
- Smile and maintain an even, friendly demeanor while on the job.
- Perform job tasks efficiently without rushing.
- Handle stress and pressure with poise and tact.
- Show respect for clients, team members, and animals (alive or deceased) at all times.
- Be able to lift pets and objects weighing up to 30 pounds without assistance.
- Prioritize tasks to maximize client satisfaction and patient health.
- Maintain a list of tasks and engage in productive work during slow periods.
- Assist other employees as needed. Take over for colleagues when they are called away to another priority.
- Read and refer to the Employee Handbook or Electronic Employee Library for answers to staff policy questions before asking the owner(s) or manager(s).
- Participate in your performance appraisal, and, as requested, in those of others.
- Participate in all staff and training meetings.
- 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 facility emergency that may arise, including facility fire or weather-related emergencies. Follow contingency plans.
- Follow established closing procedures to ensure the security of patients, staff, data, revenue, inventory, and the facility.
- Report malfunctioning equipment (including a detailed description of the malfunction) to the manager.

Client-Interaction Tasks

Face-to-Face Client-Interaction Tasks

- Cordially greet arriving clients and patients, and address each by name.
- While handling phone calls, acknowledge the arrival of people in the reception area with eye contact and/or a hand wave.
- Review consent forms with clients and have clients sign the forms. Check that the clients' signatures match the signatures on the records.
- Advise clients of special call-in times to check on patients or speak with doctors.
- Using reminder, recall-system, and outpatient-visit and patient-admission protocols, advise clients of recommended services for their pets.
- Explain special programs such as the Wellness Plans or Monthly Auto Shipment plans offered by the practice.
- Advise clients of significant changes in policies or services since their last visit.

- Provide clients with accurate and thorough information about all over-the-counter products. Understand and explain internal- and external-parasite products as well as diets, dental products, and behavior management tools.
- Refer product questions you are unable to fully or accurately answer to doctors or technicians.
- Give estimates for services to be performed on patients.
- Provide clients with handouts and brochures regarding relevant medical conditions, surgeries, immunizations, internal and external parasites, pet insurance, and diets.
- Explain delays to clients. Ensure the comfort of clients and patients during their waits. Reschedule appointments as needed.
- Placate and/or compensate clients distressed by long waits, scheduling glitches, and other problems.
- 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.
- Monitor patients' behaviors and note potentially aggressive behaviors. Use caution when handling aggressive or potentially aggressive pets. Request assistance when needed.
- Offer water to patients in need (or withhold water from patients as appropriate).
- Handle angry or grieving clients in a calm, reassuring manner. Escort complaining or angry clients from the reception area to a separate, closed room where their complaints may be heard privately. When necessary, enlist a doctor or the office manager to resolve the complaint.
- Dispense prescribed medications and diets to clients. Discuss dosing and administration instructions to ensure that clients understand the use of prescribed products.
- Discharge hospitalized patients and boarded pets. Ensure client has no questions regarding instructions or medications. Give a copy of the instructions to the client and scan a copy into the medical record. Discuss any problems noted in the record. For hospitalized patients, schedule recheck (medical progress) appointments and follow-up callbacks.
- Provide basic grief counseling. Always be sensitive to background chatter or conversations that could exacerbate the anxieties and grief clients experience during euthanasias or deaths of their pets.
- Provide clients with information regarding options available for the remains of deceased pets.
- Assist clients to/from their cars if necessary.

Client-Interaction Telephone Tasks

- Use clients' and patients' names during conversations.
- Schedule appointments for exams, rechecks, surgeries, medical procedures, boarding, and grooming.
- Call clients with hospitalized pets to provide patient status updates.
- Provide basic pricing information to callers. Respond in a manner that encourages potential clients to visit the practice.
- Answer routine questions or refer callers to the appropriate colleagues.
- Receive and record prescription-refill requests.
- Schedule euthanasias to maximize the comfort of clients and patients while allowing the practice to run efficiently.
- Call clients scheduled for the next two days to remind them of their appointments, appointment times, and special instructions, such as the need for fasting or withholding or administering medications.
- Call clients on the reminder lists to schedule appointments and/or fill and pick up products.
- Call clients who missed appointments and reschedule their appointments.

Doctor/Technician-Support Tasks

- Seek the assistance of doctors or technicians immediately when assessing potentially critical patients.
- Ensure that doctors, technicians, and assistants enter occupied exam rooms within reasonable time periods.
- Obtain current patient-status reports or updates from doctors, technicians, or assistants.

- 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.

General Telephone Tasks

- Know phone functions, including hold, intercom, transfer, forward, and three-way calling.
- Answer the phone by the third ring and use the recommended greeting.
- Smile while answering and talking on the phone to enhance the friendly quality of your voice.
- Manage multiple phone lines effectively; prioritize phone calls.
- Transcribe messages from the answering machine and distribute messages appropriately.
- Accurately record messages for doctors and staff. Note the caller's name, date, time of call, return phone number, and message. Notify recipients of urgent messages immediately. Place routine messages in the appropriate communication boxes.

Medical-Record Management Tasks

Daily Medical-Record Preparation Tasks

- Upon the client's arrival, mark the patient's appointment with the arrival time and provide a "Consent for Treatment" form to be signed and scanned to the medical record.
- Check for and enter phone, address, and email updates in clients' records.
- Check for and enter medical updates (spay/neuter status, immunization status, microchip number) in patients' medical records.
- For patients that are being admitted, create and provide cage cards, neck collars, and other forms.

Medical-Record Filing Tasks

- Understand the medical-record filing system.
- Accurately file all paper medical records.
- Check for misfiled records and file them properly.

General Medical-Record Tasks

- Ensure that medical charts or records are complete and that they include current laboratory test results, doctors' notes, and forms. Ensure that records have been updated to reflect financial transactions, medications and products dispensed, weights, immunizations, and diagnoses. Attach missing files.
- Understand and properly use special record notations, including male, female, aggressive, caution, no credit/charging, and inactive.
- Transfer patient records upon written request of clients and approval of attending doctors or the practice owner.

Reception-Area and Front-Office Tasks

Reception-Area Housekeeping Tasks

- Keep the reception area clean and organized by dusting, picking up trash, and organizing the work area.
- Vacuum or sweep the reception area and waiting room as needed to keep these areas clean and free of hair.
- Place mats on the floor to prevent clients and patients from slipping and to minimize the tracking in of water and mud.

- Offer towels to pet owners to dry their pets during inclement weather.
- Clean urinary and fecal accidents in the waiting room immediately; check with doctors or technicians to see if they need samples for diagnostics before discarding them.
- Maintain a current and attractive selection of reading material in the reception area.
- Check public restroom(s) and clean them as needed. Restock toilet paper, paper towels, and hand soap as needed.
- Keep the entrance and sidewalks clean, safe, and presentable.
- Turn on the television and begin playing the video at the beginning of the day, and turn it off at the end of the day.
- Keep the temperature at a comfortable level. As established by the practice manager, adjust the heat or air-conditioning as needed. Ensure that window treatments are closed during the afternoon when the sun is shining in.
- Water, feed, and maintain plants so that they are vibrant and add to the professional appearance of the practice.

Supplies-Management Tasks

- Establish and/or maintain a list of depleted office supplies, handouts, and medical-record supplies. Request that the office manager order depleted supplies.
- Keep forms, brochures, and handouts neatly stocked and readily available to share with clients.

Other Reception-Area Tasks

- Maintain contact with animal-control officers, animal inspectors, and town officials regarding lost or stray animals and animals subject to rabies quarantines.
- Maintain display(s) of lost and found pets.
- Maintain a phone and address list of local resources for training, boarding, and grooming, as well as for animal-control officers, animal inspectors, city officials, township officials, state officials, veterinary medical association contacts, and other professional contacts.
- Set up referral appointments and complete all necessary paperwork.
- Create, label, and mail New Client Welcome Letters in a timely fashion.
- Be prepared to handle medical emergencies at all times. Recognize the symptoms of pets and clients in crisis. Alert doctors and technicians to emergency situations. Prepare rooms for incoming emergencies.
- Follow scheduling guidelines to maximize efficiency when booking clients. Properly utilize emergency or open slots in the schedule.
- Reorganize daily appointment schedules as needed to account for emergency situations and time overruns.
- Follow isolation procedures when greeting clients with contagious or potentially contagious patients. Using the designated products and dilutions for disinfectants, properly disinfect your shoes, hands, and clothing before leaving isolation areas.
- Assign and dispense rabies tags.

Computer Tasks

General Computer Tasks

- Use your own password identification to enter the practice-management software and signify your work.
- Properly use the doctor's identification to attribute work performed by various doctors to their production records.
- Schedule examinations, drop-offs, surgery, and boarding reservations.
- Use practice-management software procedures to check in clients.

- Know the storage location of electronic forms and/or how to find them quickly and efficiently.

Database-Management Tasks

- Add new clients and new patients into the computer system as appropriate.
- Inactivate clients or patients using correct software procedures.
- Insert notes regarding communications with clients in computerized medical records.
- Inquire about and record vital changes in client or patient information, including weight, immunization status, microchip number, and spay/neuter status. Update the medical record in the computer.
- Scan and attach all forms, test results, and other materials to the medical record
- Input reminders and callbacks.

Word-Processing Tasks

- Know the word-processing program sufficiently to draft letters and modify and print forms or letters.
- Print hard copies of forms for incoming clients whose pets will have anesthetic, surgical, dental, or medical procedures.
- Produce immunization, health, and neuter certificates.

Report-Generation Tasks

- Print monthly service reminders and perform reminders.
- Generate end-of-day reports as needed for receptionist end-of-shift drop.

Internet-Based Tasks

- Know how to access and navigate the Internet to download email, find veterinary websites, and access information for clients.
- Be familiar with the practice's website.
- Prepare and send email reminders and notices.
- Respond to basic questions sent via email.
- Handle online appointment bookings.

Financial Tasks

Cash-Management Tasks

- Ensure that the cash register has sufficient change for each day's monetary transactions.
- Count and record the cash in the drawer each morning and at shift end.
- Count and record the cash in the drawer at closing. Follow procedures for end-of-day counts and drop reports and cash in safe.
- Match each day's monetary intake (cash and credit cards slips) with the computerized report and reconcile differences. Alert management if differences cannot be reconciled.

Payment-Processing Tasks

- Correctly apply discounts for employees, Wellness Plans, and coupons.
- Process clients' cash, credit card, CareCredit[®], and debit card payments.
- Accurately record all payments in client/patient records and in the system.

- Give accurate change.
- Check that clients' signatures on credit receipts match those on credit cards or their photo identification.
- Provide clients with printed receipts of their transactions, whether or not they have requested them.
- Produce legible and accurate receipts.
- Review itemized entries on receipts with clients at the time of payment.
- Answer clients' questions regarding charges, or refer questions to the appropriate colleague.

Tasks Related to Incomplete Payments

- Process and help clients complete CareCredit® applications.
- Provide additional copies of invoices to assist clients in insurance claims.
- Process clients' credit applications and store them in clients' records.
- Properly record deferred payments.
- Call and follow up with clients whose Wellness Plan payments have not gone through. Document all such calls and report changes in credit cards to the manager immediately.
- Issue updated invoices to clients, including appropriate finance charges, and show accurate balances due on their accounts.

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.