

Update: 4/11/2020

Hello Dog Volunteers!

We wanted to send out an update to our current dog walking protocol. We understand that there have been a lot of policy changes recently, so thank you for your continued flexibility and support.

During a time when medical facilities are overwhelmed with treating patients, we want to be sure that we are being as safe as possible when it comes to our dogs. We all know that we have some dogs with quirks, and that managing them takes a skilled handler (sometimes two!)

We have decided that it is in the best interest of our dogs, volunteers, and members of the public if we put some additional temporary parameters in place around our offsite walks.

Effective Monday April 13th, the following guidelines will go into effect:

- Staff and Volunteers will be encouraged whenever possible/safe to do on-site activities
- Dogs MAY go around the block IF they are ON muzzle
- Dogs who cannot be safely muzzled but may become over-aroused in yards MAY go around the block off muzzle ONLY if:
- Dogs are on an approved list by Leadership and Behavior Team (see current list of dogs below)
 - Ringo, Dennis, Ricky, Maximus, Yosemite, Andy, Milky Way, Mango Salsa, Rocco and Yucca.
 - These dogs must have a buddy system including one staff member – spotter must be out 10ft+ ahead to ensure path is safe/clear
- All other dogs not listed above must be muzzled if they are to be walked around the block.

We understand that an increase of onsite activity may cause longer wait times for our enclosed volunteer yards. To mitigate this problem, our amazing dog team will be setting up an Enrichment Walk with stations in our current staff parking lot. They will be utilizing stanchions, banners and crates stacked as visual barriers to create a one-way pathway with chalk/tape arrows. We hope to have this up and running by the end of next week!

All staff will be parking in the front of the center, and the following activities will be available for dogs.

- Scent/sniff stations
- Nosework stations
- Muzzle training stations
- Place Fresh Patches out
- Snuffle Stop
- Toy exploration bin

Additionally, the team will be doing twice daily enrichment for all dogs. The first form of enrichment will be incorporated into their 2nd feeding (Kongs, puzzles, wobblers, snuffle mats, nosework with boxes). The second enrichment activity of the day can utilize other senses and activities: toys, scent, sound, kennel presentation/training.

In order to continue to follow social distancing guidelines and ensure handlers/dogs are safe due to increased activity onsite, we will be strictly enforcing the amount of volunteers allowed on site at a time. This means that it continues to be mandatory for all volunteers to sign up for a shift prior to arriving onsite and leave at the end of the scheduled shift.

There will also be a change to our current Adventure Buddy outings. Since we need to make sure that we are following all community guidelines, we are temporarily requiring any Adventure Buddy outings to take place either in the volunteer's home, or by taking a dog on a car ride. We are asking that you do not go to hiking trails, etc. for the time being.

We understand that this is a trying time for everyone and that we must continually pivot to provide the best care possible for our animals. Safety must remain our number one priority and this is another example of staff and volunteers working together to enrich the lives of the dogs in our care, while also being mindful of our community.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Brittany Sorgenstein

Senior Manager of Operations
Best Friends Animal Society
