Animal Behavior and Restraint

Companion Animals

- Domesticated species
  - Dogs, cats, rabbits, rodents, birds
- Exotic pet species
  - Reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, monkeys, wildlife or farm animals
- Service animals
  - Remain with owner at human shelters

Animal Facilities

- Local animal facilities
  - Animal shelters, kennels, pet stores, animal research facilities
- Illegal animal activity
  - Hoarding, animal fighting operations, illegal exotic animal breeding, illegally kept exotic or native wildlife

General Companion Animal Behavior

- Most approachable, non-aggressive
- Disaster situation may behavior changes
- Fear, injury, protective nature make animals more likely to bite

Approaching an Unknown Animal

- Safety first
- Watch animal’s body language
  - Cues to demeanor of animals
- Approach from the side
- Avoid cornering the animal
- Avoid direct eye contact
- Expect the unexpected
Dog Body Language: Playful and Attentive

- Tail is horizontal or up
- Ears are upright and pointed forward
- Eyes are open and alert

Dog Body Language: Fearful or Aggressive

- Tail is tucked or down
- Ears are flattened against the head
- Eyes are wide

Dogs Not Showing Aggression

- Call the animal using a soft voice and relaxed posture
- Approach slowly
- Place slip leash without physical contact
  - Avoid grabbing collar or standing over dog
- Avoid loud noises, flashing lights
- Minimize people in area
- Offer a treat or food
- Attempt basic obedience commands
- Minimize arm and hand movements

Frightened or Aggressive Dogs

- Best approached by experienced dog handler
- Two or more people
- Move slowly
- Avoid direct eye contact
- Stand sideways
- Calm, quiet voice
  - If possible, get the dog to come to you

Dog Restraint Devices

- Slip leashes
  - Only if non-aggressive
  - Loop around neck, slip to tighten
  - Do not attach leash to the collar
  - Do not drag dog on leash
  - Do not leave dog in slip leash unattended or tied to any object
- Snare or catch pole (Rabies stick)
  - Aggressive dogs

Muzzles

- Cloth, leather
- Gauze, rope, twine
- To prevent bites
- Do not restrict open-mouth breathing
  - Especially in hot weather
- Do not leave muzzled dog unattended
- Should not be on for long periods of time
Lifting and Carrying Dogs
- Support chest and hindquarters
- If bite potential, muzzle prior to lifting
- Small dogs
  - Lift under abdomen
  - Hand between front legs
- Medium dogs
  - Cradle arms around chest and haunches
- Large dogs
  - Two people

Standing Restraint for Dogs
- Place one arm under the dog’s neck
- Other arm behind the rear legs or under dog’s abdomen
- Pull dog’s head snug against shoulder

Lateral Restraint for Dogs
- Gently lay dog on its side
- Stand against dog’s back
- Place arms across the dog’s neck and hindquarter
- Grasp bottom legs

Cat Body Language
- Aggressive
  - Rear elevated
  - Ears out to side
  - Direct eye contact
  - Hair raised on back
- Relaxed
  - Calm posture, relaxed tail
  - Ears pointing up and out

Handling Cats
- Approach in crouch or sideways
- Move slowly
- Speak slowly and softly
- Offer food
- Aggressive or fearful cats
  - Allow cat time to calm down
  - Use double thick or armored gloves and eye protection
  - Attempt capture with nets, blankets, traps
- Work with a partner
Carrying and Transporting Cats
- One hand restrains the forelegs
- Arm crosses flank to hold body
- Other hand gently holds the head
- Scruffing by loose skin at neck
- Minimize noises and bright lights.
- Gloves or blanket can protect from bites and scratches
- Transport in appropriate carrier
  - Lower cat hind feet first
  - Pillowcases can be used as carriers

Rabbits
- Grasp the scruff of the neck
- Lift quickly
- Always support the hindquarters
- Never grab by ear or tail
- Carry a rabbit with feet pointed away from your body
- A light towel or blanket

Birds
- Trained personnel
- Can stress easily
- Do not squeeze thorax
- Sensitive to overheating
- Small to medium sized
  - Grasp from behind, finger and thumb on sides of head, others around body
- Large birds require 2 hands
- Towel can also be used

Reptiles and Amphibians
- Range from small and delicate to large and dangerous
- Temperature-sensitive
  - Different species
  - Different temperatures
  - Avoid getting too cold or too hot
- Skilled professionals for handling
References and Resources

- Restraint and Handling of Wild and Domestic Animals, 3rd Edition by M Fowler
- Restraint of Domestic Animals by TF Sonsthagen

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