

DeZavala-Shavano Veterinary Clinic

Accident Prevention Program

Accidents can occur anytime and anywhere. The best defense to deter or minimize accidents is utilizing accident prevention measures. Such measures include appropriate personal protective and safety equipment combined with safe work practices.

A. Personal Protective and Safety Equipment

While proper work practices help provide a safety guideline, additional safety measures are sometimes required. Therefore, personal protective and safety equipment is provided to help protect staff members from illness and/or injury. It is pertinent each staff member be familiar with the location and use of the following personal protective and safety equipment and use them as warranted.

Summary of Personal Protective and Safety Equipment
<p><u>Eye and Face Protective Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face shields and safety goggles--located in grooming area back wall cabinet • Eyewash station--located on wall to left of rear exit • Face masks (particulate)--located between dental sinks
<p><u>Hand Protective Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevlar and leather gloves--located in treatment area cabinet overhead left of sink • Latex gloves--located in drawer of each exam room, drawer of treatment area exam tables, and in cabinet on far wall of treatment area • X-ray gloves--located on shelf next to x-ray machine
<p><u>Hearing Protective Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear plugs--located in cabinet over sink in grooming area
<p><u>Body Protective Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X-ray apron--located on shelf next to x-ray machine and in dental area between dental sinks • X-ray monitoring badge--located on x-ray apron or in drawer in treatment area; badges are name-specific • Plastic apron--located on hook next to bath tub in grooming area
<p><u>Floor Safety Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet floor signs--located in janitor's closet • Non-slip rubber mats--located at main entrance of waiting area and outside in kennel area when not in use inside
<p><u>Restraint Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muzzles--located on top of fridges in treatment and pharmacy areas, and in 2nd cabinet in grooming area • Leashes--located in treatment area, kennel and reception area • Rabies catch pole--located next to fridge in treatment area

Other Safety Equipment

- **Chemical spill kit**--located in cabinet under treatment table 2
- **Step ladders**--located in ICU, dog and cat kennel wards
- **Stretcher**--located in ICU
- **Fire extinguishers**--located in cat ward by exit, in break room, in hallway beside doctors' offices, upstairs at top of stairs, and in pharmacy beside janitorial closet.
- **First aid kit**--located in treatment area in cabinet left of sink
- **Sharps containers**--located throughout clinic in exam rooms, lab/pharmacy and treatment area
- **OSHA/SDS (Safety Data Sheets) Manual**--located in treatment area in 2nd cabinet left of sink

1. Eye and Face Protection

Work accidents take sight from people every day, usually when they are not using eye protection. Unlike broken limbs, damage to the eyes is generally permanent. Proper eye protection reduces the chances of injury and the severity of the injury if an accident does occur.

Safety glasses and face shields help protect your eyes and face from:

- flying objects and particles that may be thrown from equipment with considerable force.
- hazardous chemicals that may be splashed as a result of bathing and dipping.
- hazardous chemicals that may be present as a result of mixing medications or use of cleaning products.

Safety glasses and/or a face shield should be used when performing tasks that involve the possibility of flying objects or chemicals. Should something get in your eye, use the eyewash station immediately to help flush out the object or chemical. The eyewash should be kept clean and available for use at all times. To help ensure proper functioning when needed, the eyewash is to be inspected and flushed weekly.

To use the eyewash:

- hold affected eye open with one hand
- turn on eyewash with spout turned upward
- place affected eye in stream of water
- flush for 15 minutes
- repeat as needed

2. Mouth and Nose Protection

A particulate face mask should be worn over nose and mouth at all times when working with chemicals or performing a dental cleaning. This helps prevent the inhalation or ingestion of potentially hazardous fumes or substances.

3. Hand Protection

The most commonly used tool in the veterinary industry is your hands. Almost everything you do on the job requires your hands, whether it is restraining an animal, examining patients, administering medication, or simply writing post-op instructions.

Your hands need protection against mechanical hazards such as cuts, abrasions, and punctures; from contact with sharp items such as scalpels, needles, and glass microscope slides; and friction burns from the use of leashes. Your hands also need protection against animal bites and protection against environmental hazards such as burns from hot surfaces such as the autoclave and cauterizing instruments. Irritants such as chemicals, bacteria, toxic substances, and radiation from taking radiographs can cause burns and rashes on your hands and skin.

The best way you can reduce hand injuries is to eliminate hazards as much as possible. Restrain dangerous animals and clean-up chemical spills using chemical spill clean-up kit or following MSDS recommended clean-up procedure for particular chemical. Use appropriate hand protection equipment depending on task being performed. Also, good housekeeping helps keep the work area free of unnecessary items that may cause hand injuries.

When using hand protection, the type of gloves chosen will depend on the type of hazard. A tough Kevlar or leather glove will help provide good protection from hazards such as cuts, bites and scratches while rubber type gloves will help provide protection against chemicals. At times it may be necessary to use a combination of gloves in order to provide adequate hand protection. When taking radiographs, consider using lead-lined x-ray gloves for imaging.

When selecting gloves, be sure that they fit properly. Gloves that are too small will be tight and uncomfortable, and gloves that are too large may slip off and are more likely to create an additional hazard. Worn, cracked or contaminated gloves should be replaced.

If you do suffer a cut, scratch or bite, rinse it with clean water and try to control the bleeding by applying pressure to the wound. If bones are broken, immobilize the hand. For chemical and heat burns, hold the affected part under cold running water. For more serious injuries such as dismemberment, remember to keep the severed part cool and take it with you when you seek medical attention. Severed parts can often be successfully reattached.

In the event you become bitten by an animal, seek the assistance of a physician as soon as possible. Even if the injury appears to be minor, small punctures may harbor bacteria that can cause serious infection.

4. Foot Protection

Working in a veterinary clinic means working with animals who may nip or bite at your feet. Good foot-wear such as closed-toed tennis shoes or other closed-toed shoes is essential to help protect your feet from injury. Also, good foot wear will help protect your feet from injury due to chemical spills as well as fallen items such as needles and scissors.

5. Hearing Protection

Working in closed quarters such as in the kennel area with barking/meowing animals can be quite loud. Continued exposure to high levels of noise can lead to hearing loss. To protect your hearing, use ear plugs to protect your ears from loud noises.

6. Body Protection

At times you may need to protect your body from x-ray emissions or chemical splashes/spills. To protect against x-ray emissions, use the lead-lined x-ray apron and name-specific monitoring badge whenever you are taking radiographs. It is important you do not enter the treatment room when an x-ray is in progress without this appropriate safety equipment. The front reception lights will go out as an indicator when the x-ray machine is in use. Wait until these lights are turned back on before entering the x-ray area.

When working with chemicals such as administering a mitaban dip to a pet, use a plastic apron. Depending on the task, additional protective equipment may be needed to protect other parts of the body. The shower should be used immediately for major chemical spills that come in contact with the body. Be sure to remove contaminated clothing as quickly as possible to prevent chemical burns on the skin.

B. Safe Work Practices

Safe work practices help provide the framework for a safe work environment. It is important each staff member follow safe work practices to protect themselves and others around them. Safe work practices alone; however, are often not enough and must be coupled with appropriate personal protective and safety equipment for increased protection against accidents.

1. Safe Lifting

Numerous injuries caused by improper lifting and carrying affect veterinary clinics every year. A back injury caused by improper lifting can be very serious, resulting in considerable time away from work, the possible need for surgery, and permanent injury.

The following guidelines will reduce your chances of back injury; whether on or off the job. Back pain is cumulative. Every time you lift the wrong way, some damage is done.

- Plan the lift by determining how heavy the load is and how far it must be carried. (Is a lifting device needed and available? Is a second person available to help?) Never lift any object that is too heavy for you without assistance. The recommended maximum weight one should carry by themselves is 40 lbs, which is the size of the largest bag of pet food kept in the Clinic.
- Grasp the item firmly, using gloves if the item is hot, cold, sharp, or contaminated. Lifts beginning below knee height or above shoulder height involve greater risks.
- Hold the load close to your body.
- For a two-person lift, have one person give instructions.
- When lifting, bend your knees and keep your back as straight as possible. Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Avoid twisting and jerky movements.
- Demonstrate correct lifting and carrying techniques when lifting an animal, heavy supplies, or other items.

Paying attention to your posture, weight, and physical fitness, combined with correct lifting techniques, will reduce your chances of experiencing a back injury.

2. Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips and falls cause a significant percentage of workplace injuries and deaths. The following hazards can be present in every veterinary practice, be caused by poor housekeeping, and may be hazards inherent to the practice's location.

Examples of poor housekeeping include:

- Not cleaning spills or animal excrement immediately.
- Not supplying non-slip mats at entrances.
- Wet floors without caution signs.
- Cluttered furniture in waiting areas.
- Boxes or other clutter in passageway areas

Examples of inherent hazards:

- Ice, snow, and water.
- Wind and rain
- Loose rock and gravel
- Uneven ground including slopes and hillsides.

These hazardous situations can increase the chances of slipping or falling. Other factors can also increase the chances of falling, such as using ladders, hurrying, and not paying attention.

The following guidelines can help prevent a slip or fall:

- Practice good housekeeping by cleaning up spills, animal excrement and clutter immediately.
- Make sure non-slip rubber mats are at entrances and yellow caution Wet Floor sign is displayed during wet conditions (rain, freshly mopped floor, etc.).
- Take extra care and allow sufficient time when surfaces and working conditions are not ideal.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Keep footwear clean and in good condition.
- Use a step stool or ladder to reach items out of reach. Before climbing a step stool or ladder, check that it is safe to do so (read the manufacturers safety guidelines).
- Remove ice and snow from parking lots, sidewalks, and entryways.

3. Preventing Spread of Disease

Wash hands regularly, especially after contact with an animal, so as not to spread diseases to other pets or your own pets. Also, keeping hands clean will help prevent the spread of diseases and/or conditions such as ringworm to your own body or someone else's. Be sure to keep clothes clean by washing them after each wear. Change clothes immediately that become contaminated.

4. Caution Around Pets

The main function of the Clinic is to provide health services to animals. This means working with animals on a daily basis which involves a certain level of danger depending on the pet being cared for. The safety of each pet as well as the safety of each person in the Clinic is a shared concern and responsibility.

Therefore, it is important to follow directions and exercise caution when around animals. The following information will assist you in keeping yourself, the pet and others safe.

Visual and auditory warning signals of possible aggression of a pet

Whenever a pet exhibits any of the following behavior, be extremely careful and seek help and/or use personal protective and restraint equipment when handling such animals.

- Growling
- Snapping
- Barking
- Bearing teeth
- Flinching
- Hissing

Other precautionary information when working with animals

- Pay attention to patient warnings (such as a green-lined aggressive pet, do not let out alone warning, vaccine reactions or other medical condition warning) on the computer system, patient records, and cage cards. These warnings are placed to forewarn you of any potential danger or special need of the pet.
- Use caution when handling pets. While most pets are friendly, they can be frightened by new environments or sudden movements and possibly bite or scratch. Do not reach down too fast to pet or hold a pet. Be careful around the pet's face and back. If you are to pet an animal, approach slowly and pet the top of the head. Be careful when backing a pet into a corner as they will likely feel threatened and may become aggressive.
- Follow veterinary nurse or doctor instructions when holding a pet. Proper handling helps protect the attending person and the pet from possible harm.
- If a pet is here for observation because of biting someone, make sure the cage has a padlock on it and no one touches the pet until the quarantine time is up. Only trained personnel can give the pet food and water as well as clean out the cage.
- When a client brings a pet in, get the client and their pet into a room as soon as possible so there is little, if any, contact with other pets that might result in the animals or people being injured by agitated pets.
- When working with a frightened or aggressive pet, use appropriate restraint equipment to keep the pet from biting you or others.
- Use caution when using tools around a pet. If the pet makes any sudden moves, the pet could hit the tool and cause injury to a person or the pet.