

J. Miscellaneous

Assisting Clients During the Pet Grieving Process

The loss of a pet is often very difficult as the pet was in most instances a valued and loved member of the family. Therefore, it is important we treat the client and their deceased pet with dignity. The following are guidelines to help you know what to do when an owner's pet has died or is going to be euthanized.

- Be sensitive--remember the owner and their family are grieving.
- Do not joke with the owner. Remain friendly yet solemn to show respect to the owner.
- If the pet is being euthanized, don't request payment at that time if the owner is a current client. We will send a bill or the client can pay when he/she picks up the ashes if the pet is to be privately cremated. New clients, however, should be gently instructed beforehand to pay in advance. Most new clients understand this policy for first visits.
- If the owner needs to talk, take the time to listen.
- Offer the client a tissue.
- If you wish to express your sympathy, you can do so by saying something like "I am sorry about (pet's name)." You may also let the owner know what a good owner the pet had during its lifetime. Sometimes, also, the owner needs reassurance they did the right thing by euthanizing their pet, especially if the pet had been ill for a long time. Provide them that reassurance.
- Make sure a sympathy card is attached to the pet's record for the doctor to express their own sympathy to the owner. There may be a few exceptions where a card is not sent, but the doctor will let you know.

Pet Cremations

City regulations forbid the burial of a pet on the owner's property located within city limits. Clients, however, who have property outside the city limits may be able to bury their deceased pet on such property. However, they should check that city/county's ordinance for confirmation.

For pets that are deceased, we offer a cremation service through Bluebonnet Pet Crematory. This crematory works directly with veterinary clinics in providing this service. Clients, however, may visit the crematory or its garden where communal ashes are spread by contacting the crematory for an appointment. The crematory offers 2 types of cremation services:

- Communal—ashes not returned
- Private—ashes returned in either a wooden or ceramic urn (client's choice).

NOTE: Wooden urn is standard. If client wants ceramic urn, please indicate this on the private cremation tag. There is no additional charge for a ceramic urn.

Communal cremation certificates are not automatically provided by the crematory unless the client specifically requests one.

Once the pet has been euthanized or the deceased pet brought to the Clinic, call Bluebonnet Pet Crematory to notify them we have a pet that needs to be picked up. Complete the appropriate cremation tag (orange tag—communal cremations, green tag—private cremations). Also complete the Bluebonnet Pet Crematory Pick-Up form except cost and signature areas—a staff member of Bluebonnet will complete these areas when pick up pet. Any staff member at the Clinic may sign the Clinic signature line on the form (this also applies for the Pet Remains Delivery form when private cremations are returned). Place yellow copy of form in the Practice Manager's "In Box."

For private cremations, call the client to notify them their pet's ashes have been returned and are ready for pick-up. Check to see if the client has a balance on their account (or saved on the invoice screen). Place a post-it note on the cremation box when the client was notified and the amount of any balance due on the account. This will prompt the staff member to inform the client of any balance due when the client comes to pick up the pet's ashes. Often times, clients are prepared to make payment on their account at this time. However, if the client is emotionally upset, please use discretion and offer to bill the client if the client is not ready to make payment.

Animal Bites Reported to Animal Control

If someone is bitten by an animal, the owner, the person bitten, guardian of the bitten person, or other related party must report it to the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, Animal Care Services Division, if in the San Antonio city limits. If in another city or county, they will need to call the appropriate governmental agency and report it. The agency will fill out a report and assign a case number. The date the pet can be released back to the owners after the observation period will be put on the form. The pet, however, can't be picked up until after 5 p.m. on that date.

The pet will then be taken to an approved facility to have the pet quarantined for 10 days. We are an approved facility for quarantining pets.

Once the pet is brought to our Clinic, the receptionist tells a doctor about the pet and the doctor will take the pet to the appropriate cage. If a doctor is not available, a technician can take the pet to the back and put it in a cage. A padlock will be placed on the cage to make sure it doesn't get out (this is a governmental regulation).

The pet can not be touched by **ANYONE** while staying at the Clinic. The owner is encouraged not to visit the pet since the pet would want to be petted by their owner. The doctors and technicians will know how to handle giving the pet food and water as well as how to clean out its cage.

The receptionist will fill out 3 forms:

1. Rabies Observation Record—The agencies no longer assign an animal number to the case. The case number will be found on one of the forms the governmental agency filled out. Fill out all information through the part “DAY IN: __/__/__.” The chart section will be filled out by the doctor who checks the pet each day.
2. San Antonio Metropolitan Health District Questionnaire for Rabies Examination—Fill out all pertinent information that you have knowledge or can obtain knowledge.
3. Bite Report—Fill out all information available to you.

Another form that would need to be printed and filled out by the person bringing the pet in is the Boarding Form. It would be good if it was put on the form who will be expected to pick up the pet at the end of the quarantine period (assuming it is able to be released back to the owner).

All forms filled out by us and the governmental forms stay with the pet's records.

At this point, call the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District or other agency (depending on where the bite took place) and report that you have received the pet at this facility.

If the pet shows no signs of rabies at the end of the 10-day period, the owner can pick the pet up. The pet can not be released to anyone other than the owner unless the owner gives permission. If permission is over the phone, make a note in the pet's record that verbal approval was given for an assigned person to pick the pet up. The bill will need to be paid at the time the pet is picked

up. If someone other than the owner agrees to pay the bill, it still needs to be paid at the time the pet is picked up. The owner and the other person can settle who pays what on their own.

At this time, the agency the bite was reported to is called by us to let them know what the status is with the pet and that it has gone home.

If the pet shows possible signs of rabies, the pet will be euthanized and the head sent off for testing. The governmental agency will be called and informed of the findings and what has been done with the pet. Later, the agency will be informed of the findings. The owner will be called and will be told the findings and the amount they will owe for the pet.

Lost or Found Pet Search

Often times, there is a need to locate a pet by the Rabies Tag number or Micro Chip number, to accomplish this:

- In Intra Vet, bring up Client Account Management screen
- Click on Advance Search
- Once in the search field you can search by name, Rabies Tag type under Tag ID number, Micro Chip number type under, Patient ID or phone number.
- Enter number in appropriate field and click on “begin search.”

Checking Voicemail

You will need to check voicemail each day, especially whenever the voice message light is lit in case a client calls regarding their pet.

To check voicemail:

- Hit "Spkr" or pick up receiver on left receptionist phone
- Dial 300 and wait for voicemail to pick up
- Hit the * key
- When prompted enter username 200#, then password 2002#
- Follow voice prompts

Adding Postage to Postage Meter

The Clinic has an account established with Pitney Bowes to dial into their Operations Center to download more postage as needed to the postage meter. The Clinic will automatically be billed for the downloaded postage. In order not to have too much postage on the meter, we limit the downloaded postage to \$100 for each refill.

FYI: There is only one analog phone line in the Clinic; therefore, the fax machine and the postage meter share the same line. This means the phone line will need to be moved temporarily from the fax machine to the postage meter in order to dial into the Operations Center to refill the postage meter.

To refill postage meter:

- Move phone line from fax machine and place in phone line port on postage meter
- Hit Refill button on postage meter
- When prompted, enter \$100 for refill postage amount. Larger refill \$ amounts may be added to the meter when doing bulk mailings.
- The meter will then dial into the Operations Center to download postage
- Once completed, you will be prompted to enter a slip of paper to print a receipt
- Replace the phone line into the fax machine
- Place the receipt in the Practice Manager's in-box
- If the meter reports an error in reaching the Operations Center, try holding the phone line snugly in the telephone line port to help give the phone line a better connection.

Miscellaneous Office

- Line 4 on the phones is the fax and credit card line. Please try to avoid using this line as much as possible.
- Dial "9" to reach an outside line when faxing.

Telemarketers

At times telemarketers will call to speak with the owner, Practice Manager or person who makes financial decisions. Because such calls can take away time from clients, it is best to ask such callers to remove our contact information from their database if they are not someone we normally do business with.

Be very careful of persons calling to confirm an order or wanting to mail out office supplies, etc. In nearly every case, we find this is a company trying to solicit business by making it sound like we have already placed an order. Confirm such calls with the Practice Manager before responding.

Be particularly mindful of the following:

- Vendors should not be calling the clinic about problems except from our regular inventory/supply vendors like MWI, Webster, Hills, etc. where such a phone call is expected.
- No one should be calling about office supplies as we buy online or in store. If anyone asks for model numbers of our equipment, be wary and don't give out this information.
- Be careful if a telemarketer specifically asks for your name, especially your full name. They are likely trying to get a name for authorization to back up the transaction.
- Vendors should not have to ask you for information that they should already know.
- Be wary to answer yes to any question a telemarketer asks you. They are likely tricking you into answering yes to a transaction.
- If it sounds out of the ordinary, it probably is not legitimate.

We currently do business with the following approved vendors:

- Aetna (medical insurance for FT employees)
- AT&T (phone, phone book advertising)
- Bayer (Advantage, Advantix, Advantage Multi)
- Bank of America (credit card merchant)
- Bluebonnet (cremations)
- Boehringer Engelheim
- Butler (misc.)
- Care Credit (client financing for clinic services)
- Delta Dental (dental insurance for FT employees)
- Ecom Folders--formerly File Doctor (aging labels, label protectors)
- Frost National Bank
- Hartford, The (insurance policies)
- Hills Science Diet (food)
- IDEXX (lab testing & supplies)
- IntraVet (veterinary software)
- Jefferson Bank
- Lupine (collars, leashes)
- MBS Communications (decorated invoice paper, reminder cards)
- Medical Arts Press (preprinted booster reminder cards, end-tab labels for new client files)
- Merial (Heartgard, vaccinations)
- MWI (misc. veterinary products)

- N.L.S. Animal Health (misc. veterinary products)
- Patterson Dental/Office Supply (cage card label stickers)
- Pfizer (Revolution, misc. veterinary products)
- Purina (food)
- Smart Practice (disposable leashes, preprinted canned lids, etc.)
- Virbac (shampoos, etc.)
- Webster (misc. veterinary products)
- Welder's Supply (O2 tank refill)
- Local neighborhood, school and church organizations in which a client is calling (be careful as some telemarketers are not clients and use local school organizations to solicit business)

End of Section