

<i>Shelter/Behavior SOP</i>	Use of Harnesses on Shelter Dogs	Shelter/Behavior
<i>Effective Date</i>	<i>Authorized by:</i>	



Name of Organization or Shelter

Standard Operating Procedures

I. Purpose

This procedure establishes standardized guidelines for the use of harnesses on shelter dogs. Front-clip or redirection harnesses are recommended for dogs because they lessen pulling, keep the dog calmer, lessen a dog's reactivity level on leash and allow more freedom and range of motion. Well-fitted front-clip or redirection harnesses turn the dog from the front so do not worsen pulling by the handler pulling against the dog in an oppositional direction. Harnesses can prevent neck and spinal injury, choking, and tracheal collapse. If a dog is not comfortable in a harness, flat collars or snap buckle martingale-style collars can be used. Avoid using slip collars on any long term basis.

It is possible that personnel will find themselves in situations not specifically addressed in this procedure. In those cases, personnel must use discretion and sound judgement, and can direct any questions to their supervisor.

II. Procedure

- Harnesses should be put on dogs for walking within 7-10 days of being at the shelter. For small/medium to large-sized dogs, and for smaller dogs who pull, front-clip or redirection harnesses are recommended.
- A harness should be fitted properly for each dog. Every dog should have his/her own well-fitted harness the entire length of stay at the shelter. Harness recommendations should be made for both adopters and fosters.
- Size the dog for harness fitting when the dog is outside in a fenced-in area or have the dog in a relaxed room.
- When putting on the harness, use proper body-language. Put the harness on the dog while standing or kneeling parallel or next to the dog and buckle and unbuckle snaps by reaching under the dog's chest. Do not lean or reach over the dog or stand directly in front of him/her.
- Give treats to the dog when putting on and fitting the harness and while buckling straps. Also provide treats to the dog as you unclip straps and remove the harness.
- If the dog is uncomfortable with handling, or is fearful and/or aggressive, use a flat collar or snap buckle martingale-style collar instead of a harness.

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- Notify a supervisor if the dog is uncomfortable with touch or handling or if the harness causes chafing or doesn't fit properly.

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