Basic Orange Orientation (BOO)

1. PURPOSE

Orange Collar dogs are dogs that are shy or fearful; dogs that need to learn not to be afraid of people.

This policy details the proper handling of dogs involved in the Basic Orange Orientation (BOO), the ultimate goal being to ease and alleviate the dog's fears of human interaction.

2. SCOPE

Provides an overview and guidelines for handling Orange Collars dogs, including the trainer's attentiveness to the dog's body language/behavior, and how to approach meeting, walking, and kenneling the dogs.

This policy applies to all Dog Behavior Program staff and volunteers tasked with handling Orange Collar dogs.

3. POLICY

This policy includes procedures that must be followed to ensure proper handling of Orange Collar dogs.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Body language/behavior

It is always important to pay attention to a dog's body language. Obviously, dogs cannot talk but their bodies can give their handlers a lot of information. It is important to note that there is no absolute guide to dog body language. What one dog intends with his head position may be completely different than what another dog doing the same thing intends. However, there are some generalities and things to look out for:
- Tucked tail - This generally expresses a feeling of fear and/or lack of safety. Be cautious and slow with a dog tucking his/her tail.
- Baring teeth
- Flat ears and wide eyes

B. Meeting

- First, a handler should make sure they are calm. Dogs pick up on a person's energy and with a nervous dog, the more relaxed and confident the handler is, the more the dog will pick up on it.
- With Orange level dogs, handlers want to physically enter the kennel. Many of the Orange Collar dogs are flight risks, so they should not be given the opportunity to sneak out.
- Once in the kennel, handlers should crouch down, so the dog is facing their shoulder. Handler can try tossing a few treats, talking "sweetly", etc. Once the handler is able to put a leash on the dog, they are just about ready to go.
- Handlers should bring high value treats (beef hotdogs, Natural Balance logs, etc.); high value treats can be very helpful in enticing a dog to come to you.

- If a dog is hiding on the inside of the kennel and shows absolutely no interest in coming to see the handler, it is okay for them to move on to another dog. However, the handler should make the Dog Behavior Manager or Assistant Manager (or a counselor if neither is available) aware of the situation.

C. Walking

- Before exiting the kennel, handlers should practice a loose kennel routine. Generally, dogs are taught to sit and wait while the handler opens the door and when the dog offers eye contact to the handler, they are free to go. This is especially important with scared dogs. Their instinct is to take off at the first chance, so the goal is to instill in them that they can get what they want (in this case, to get out of the kennel) by making eye contact.
- Handler must hold tightly to the dog's leash the entire time they are handling an Orange Collar dog. Again, these are the dogs most likely to take off if given the chance. When it comes to fight-or-flight, they are definitely going to opt for flight. A leash must be on an orange dog at all times (outside of its kennel). This includes all play yards. Handlers are welcome to take these dogs into the play yards and drop the leash; leaving a leash on the dog will make it easier to catch the dog when it is time to go.
- All the basic rules of APA! dog walking apply to Orange Collar dogs as well (no nose-to-nose greetings, ten feet away from other dogs, etc.).

D. Kenneling

- Once the session with the dog is complete, return to the kennel.
- Enter the kennel and close (latch) the door.
- Unleash the dog.
- Toss a few treats into the back of the kennel so it is easier to leave
- As comfortably as possible, keep an eye on the dog while backing out.
- Make sure that all latches are secure before walking away.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions regarding this policy, contact Dog Behavior Department.