

### Blues JAM Handout

#### 1. PURPOSE

Ensures proper handling and training of Blue Collar dogs and puppies involved in the Blue Collar Jumpy & Mouthy Dog Training (AKA Blues JAM Session).

#### 2. SCOPE

Defines the tools commonly used in training Blue Collar dogs. Provides general guidelines for handling Blue Collar dogs as well as detailed training techniques for common events and challenges. This policy also provides a section specifically for handling Blue Collar puppies.

This policy applies to all Dog Behavior Program staff and volunteers tasked with training Blue Collar dogs and puppies, including events like getting dogs in/out of the kennel, dealing with jumping, mouthing, and leash climbing, and being out and about with a Blue Collar dog.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

Why are dogs jumpy and mouthy to begin with? A number of reasons, including:

- Still in the puppy phase of life
- Lack of structure
- Stress

#### 4. POLICY

This policy describes the processes that must be followed in order to safely and properly handle and train Blue Collar dogs and puppies.

#### 5. PROCEDURES

##### A. Tools for working with Blue Collar Dogs

APA! uses the following training tools:

- Equipment:
  - Gentle Leader
  - Good Dog Collar
  - Pinch Collar
- Clicker
- Treat pouch
- Toys
  - Handlers can either carry the toy on their person (where the dog cannot see it) or they can place it in a yard before getting the dog out. Do not offer the toy while inside the kennel, as the dog needs to progress through a proper kennel routine.

- If the handler takes a toy into a yard, they need to leave the yard with it. This is especially true if a dog destroys a toy. The goal is to avoid another dog ingesting those pieces or putting another handler in a bad situation with a resource guarder dog.
- Aversive/interruption tools
  - Shake can - (Handlers are highly encouraged to make their own and keep it with them. To make a shake can, take a soda can, fill it with 5-8 pennies, and thoroughly duct tape).
  - Squirt bottle - Harder to carry around.
  - With all aversives, handlers start with a verbal command, either "enough" or "uh uh," and in a calm neutral tone. If the dog does not respond to the verbal, the handler introduces the lightest possible use of the aversive. All dogs choose what is rewarding and what is aversive. If the tool is still not effective, the handler should increase the intensity, still leading with a verbal. Increase the intensity a few times, as needed.\*\*If a particular aversive is entirely ineffective with a particular dog, report this to the Behavior Staff.

## **B. General Guidelines**

- Remain calm, cool, collected, and confident. Many of the dogs will pick up on nervousness and take advantage of it. Remain calm and coolly assertive while working with these dogs.
- Absolutely no yelling at the dog, grabbing the dog's mouth, hitting the dog, or any other type of physical abuse. The only possible exception to this is the handler yelling for help if a situation gets out of their control.

## **C. Getting a Blue Collar Dog**

All training techniques from Level 1 apply.

- Step 1: Sign dog out.
- Step 2: Read Safety Checklist and have a shake can or squirt bottle with you.
- Step 3: Take dog's equipment and put in pouch or pocket.
- Step 4: Get leash ready.
- Step 5: Approach kennel:
  - If dog jumps, back up. As soon as the dog's feet are on the floor mark (either with clicker or a verbal "yes") and quickly reward. Speed is key. If dog jumps, back up again.
  - There will be a lot of rapid marking and rewarding with these dogs, especially in the beginning. The trick to this is to quickly mark & reward. Start to unlock kennel; if dog jumps, back up. If dog has 4 on the floor (4onF), mark & reward. Repeat.
- Step 6: Once dog has shown consistent 4onF, enter kennel with leash in hand. Remember to reward the dog for all calm behavior, eye contact, etc.
- Step 7: Clip leash to dog's collar and step on it (so that if the dog were to jump, he cannot make contact and will get downward collar pressure).
  - If the dog starts mouthing or is so jumpy they cannot be leashed, use the aversive tool(s). Again, a verbal command of "enough" or "uh uh" should precede all uses of aversives, and always use the lightest effective version of the tool.
- Step 8: Attach equipment, make sure it is backed up, and adjust leash as necessary.
- Step 9: Kennel routine.
  - Kennel routines are required for all Blue Collar dogs. If a handler is spotted not doing a kennel routine, they risk losing their Blue Collar approval.

## **D. Jumping**

- If handler does not have tools on them or readily accessible, they should walk into the dog. They should not turn away. They will not push the dog down or use their knee, they will just take a few assertive steps forward, reclaiming the space.
  - If walking into them is ineffective, use aversives.
  - If a leash is attached, step on the leash (tack it) so that the dog will get a small leash correction when he tries to jump up.
- Bounce/elevator game: Dogs who are jumpy, especially for treats, can benefit greatly from the "bounce game." The handler attaches a leash to the dog and tacks it with their foot so that the dog feels no pressure when sitting. Handlers may need to wrap the leash around their foot depending on the ground they are on (rocks are slippery). Have the dog sit and hold a treat high

above the dog's head and slowly begin to lower it. If the dog jumps for the treat, handler moves their hand back to the original starting point. The leash should keep the dog from being able to get the treat while simultaneously providing a correction. If the dog does not jump, continue lowering the treat. If no jumping occurs, the dog gets the treat. The only time the handler 'resets' the elevator is if the dog jumps. In other words, if the dog is doing what the handler wants, reward him, do not tease him.

#### **E. Mouthing**

- Remain calm and collected.
- Start with a verbal command ("enough" or "uh uh"). If verbal is not enough, introduce the lightest use of either shake can or squirt bottle.
- Increase intensity of aversive (still giving a verbal prior to use) until effective. If never effective, communicate with Behavior Staff immediately.
- Other techniques
  - Ignore the dog
  - Stop petting/interacting with the dog entirely. Occasionally, this may get the dog more riled up, at which point an aversive will be needed.
  - Reward for calm, non-mouthy behavior.
  - If there is an action that normally incites mouthing in a dog and the dog chooses not to mouth, make sure to mark and heavily reward this.

#### **F. Leash Climbing**

Some dogs try to grab on to the leash once the handler leaves the kennel. This is called leash climbing. If this happens, handler can try a drop & go, the use of an aversive (with a preceding verbal), or a leash correction ("pop").

- To perform the leash correction, the handler grasps the leash with both hands with little space between their hands and the point where the dog is holding the leash. Pull upward sharply 1-2 times. This should pop the leash out of the dog's mouth. At that point, handler can try to redirect the dog's attention with a left hand circle, a sit, or continued movement forward.
- If a dog exhibits severe leash climbing and none of these techniques are effective, please alert staff.

#### **G. Out and about with a Blue Collar Dog**

- Play yard
  - If handler knows the dog is mouthy or if it's a new dog to them, it is a good idea to have something for the dog to put its mouth on. Placing a toy in the yard prior to taking the dog out is recommended.
  - If the dog is ignoring the toy and choosing handler or handler's clothing as a toy, they should use aversive(s).
  - Reward for calm, non-mouthy behavior.
- In public
  - Work on leash skills, rewarding for positive behaviors, especially eye contact.
  - Reward for long periods of calm behavior.

#### **H. Returning to kennel**

While not required for all Blue Collar dogs, a reverse kennel routine is a good idea.

- Handler enters the kennel with the dog, closes the door, and puts the dog in a sit.
- As handler begins to back out of the kennel (dog must hold sit), handler frees the dog while tossing a handful of treats to the back of the kennel.

#### **I. Blue Collar puppies**

- It is extremely important that puppies are monitored for mouthy behavior. For one, their sharp teeth are more likely to break skin, which could result in the dog needing to serve a 10 day bite quarantine, which means strict isolation at the city shelter.
- The goal is to build a strong foundation of where the puppy's mouth should go. Try redirecting the mouthing on to a toy.

- If a puppy mouths, handlers can try “crying” like a puppy (let out a high pitched yelp). This technique is only to be used with puppies. If this does not work after two or three yelps, stop making the noise and move on to an aversive.

## **6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For questions regarding this policy, contact the Dog Behavior Department.