

# DEFENSIVE DOG HANDLING

SHELTER Behavior Department 2018

This handout accompanies the SHELTER Defensive Dog Handling lecture. The training details defensive handling skills that can keep you safe while caring for shelter dogs. For any questions about this information, please contact the SHELTER Behavior Department at [CONTACT INFO HERE](#).

## Body Language Review

What do you see here?



5)



6)



6)



On the scale of aggressive body language and intensity, a dog may “skip around” and **does not always follow the same progression.** For example, dogs do not always growl before they bite.

7)



This is a preliminary aggressive threat. The **dog's** ears are back, she's giving a direct stare and her lips are pulled over her teeth.



The threat is more serious now. Her muzzle extends forward and she's giving a low growl.



Now she's wrinkled her muzzle to expose her front teeth. She's growling loudly and preparing to lunge forward and attack.

**Remember to look at the whole dog!**

## Tools for Safety

Know when and how to use your safety tools!

- Walkie-Talkie
- Easy Walk harness
- Back clip harness
- Gentle Leader
- Slip lead
- Bite gloves/reinforced gloves
- Muzzle
- Compressed air canister (for breaking up dog fights)
- Water bottle
- Hose
- Bucket
- Trash can and lid
- Additional leashes
- Toys
- Carabiner clip (“rock climber” clip)
- A coworker or volunteer buddy
- TREATS!

## Leash and Handling Skills

- Leash skills give you added milliseconds to deal with aggression.
- Keep short leashes at first to better manage a dog (but not tight!).
- Monitor your body position: keep limbs in your centerline as much as possible.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- Toss treats vs hand-deliver.
- Communicate with those around you.
- Provide space and “trade-outs” when working around valuable resources like food and toys. Never forcefully remove a food or toy item from a dog.
- **Use defensive handlings skills with all unknown or aggressive dogs.**



## Leash Locks



*Lock on thumb*



*Lock on index finger and thumb*



*Look at how strong the lock is!*

## Double Leash



1. To use a double-leash, clip a leash to the ring on a slip lead. (Note: Some slip leads do not have a metal ring and only have fabric. A double-leash will not function properly on an all-fabric slip lead. You must use a slip lead with a metal ring.)
2. Place the opening of the slip lead over the dog's head.
3. Only pull the clip leash when you are ready to remove the slip lead. This allows you to remove the leash from the dog without reaching toward the dog's face and neck.

## Muzzle Wrap



1. Place a slip lead onto the dog's neck.
2. Quickly wrap the excess leash around the base of the dog's snout 2-3 times.
3. DO NOT USE this method with a dog that is actively demonstrating aggressive behavior or attempting to bite. *This should be used in anticipation of a situation that could contribute to a bite. I.e. If you need to handle an injured dog that is in pain and no other tools are available to you.*

## Back Tie



1. Place a carabiner clip onto the end of a leash.
2. Attach the clip to a fence or wrap the leash around an object and clip the leash to itself.
3. If a clip is unavailable, walk your leash around an object such as a tree or post to create distance between you and the dog.

