

Veterinary update

Dear colleagues,

Picture this: your patient, a 1.5yo MN Labrador Retriever (Indy) is attacked by an off-leash dog on a walk. You flush the puncture wounds, place a drain, and Indy mends quickly from his physical injuries. However, the psychological trauma proves more difficult: Indy develops fear-based reactive behaviour towards unfamiliar dogs on leash. Your client calls your clinic for help.

Maybe you recommend Trainer A, who calls themselves a 'Master Dog Trainer' and left some cards on your clinic's front desk. Trainer A puts a prong collar on Indy and teaches his owner to give 'corrections' (sharp, painful tugs on the prong collar) whenever he steps out of heel position. If he barks or lunges, this trainer recommends forcibly rolling him over on his side and leaning over him until he 'submits'.

If this training methodology is employed consistently and with effective timing, Indy's behaviour will change. He will learn to walk exclusively in heel position and forgo natural exploratory behaviours like sniffing. He may learn to inhibit barking and lunging at other dogs, but he is still experiencing fear and may bite without warning. Now he associates the appearance of unfamiliar dogs with scary behaviour from his owner, reducing his trust in them. Studies have shown that aversive training methods may be effective for altering dog's behaviour, but are associated with long-term unwanted consequences. At best, Indy will become more fearful and exhibit more inhibited behaviour on walks. At worst, his reactive behaviour could worsen into real aggression towards other dogs or his owner.

Instead, you could recommend Trainer B, who recommends systematic desensitization and counter-conditioning to the presence of other dogs. Starting in a controlled environment, Indy learns that the arrival of unfamiliar dogs reliably predicts positive experiences for him (attention, treats, play). Over time, he loses his fear of unfamiliar dogs approaching, and develops a positive emotional response, looking to his owner in happy anticipation instead of barking and lunging. Long-term, Indy feels more comfortable on walks, experiences less fear and anxiety, and has a stronger bond with his owner.

How can you find Trainer B's and avoid Trainer A's? It's often harder than it looks. The dog training industry in B.C. is completely unregulated, meaning there is no educational or skill-testing requirement to call yourself a dog trainer. There are many dog trainer certification programs available, but the number and variable quality of the programs make it difficult for the public and veterinarians to decipher which certifications indicate true expertise.

This year, the BC SPCA launched the AnimalKind Dog Trainer Accreditation program to solve this problem. Accredited dog training businesses must meet education and skill-testing requirements, as well as pass several in-person audits. There is also a defined complaints procedure to ensure ongoing compliance with training standards. Our branches and veterinary clinics recommend these training businesses knowing their clients and patients will receive humane, high-quality behaviour help. Please visit animalkind.ca/dogtraining.



With gratitude for all you do,

*Dr. Karen van Haften, DVM, DACVB
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**Do you have questions or
feedback for the BC SPCA?**

Please email us at
outreach@spca.bc.ca

*The British Columbia Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC
SPCA) is a not-for-profit organization
reliant on donations from the public.*

Post-adoption veterinary exam certificates: An update

We greatly appreciate the participation of community veterinarians in supporting animals as they transition from BC SPCA shelters into homes. Based on feedback from veterinarians across B.C., we have updated the certificate received by adopters for free post-adoption examination at participating veterinarians. The time period for presenting animals for examination has been extended from 3 to 7 days.

This reduces pressure on veterinarians to fit people in on short notice for non-urgent exams. Practices always have the option of whether to participate in this program or not, as well as whether to shorten or extend the time interval that the certificate will be honoured.

For questions, please email egordon@spca.bc.ca.

Thank you for supporting shelter adoption!

Dogs in the back of pick-up trucks: Not just dangerous

Veterinarians across British Columbia care for dogs that have fallen out of pick-up trucks. Working with the client to make the best choice for their dog is difficult. Making an ethical decision about reporting them to police can be even more challenging, particularly if you have an established relationship. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, section 9.3 specifies the restrictions in transporting an animal.

If an animal is in distress from falling from the vehicle or being injured during transport, veterinarians are required to report the incident to the BC SPCA's Call Centre at 1-855-622-7722.

Another law, Section 72 of the Motor Vehicle Act, also applies: A person

commits an offence if the person transports a living animal on the runningboard, fender, hood or other exterior part of a motor vehicle unless a suitable cage, carrier or guard rail is provided and is attached adequately to protect that animal from falling or being thrown from the vehicle.

RCMP has the authority to issue a ticket to a driver for dogs that are not secured with an attached **cage, carrier or guard rail that protects them** from being falling or being thrown from the vehicle. Call the RCMP non-emergency line to report when you see a dog in the back of a pick-up truck, noting the license plate, make and model of the vehicle as well as the location you last saw the vehicle.



2018 Asilomar Accords reporting

In 2016, the BC SPCA implemented the Asilomar Accords data collection system in all sheltering branches. This process is part of ongoing efforts to save more companion animals, assure consistent operational practices, utilize resources to help the greatest number of animals possible, and promote transparency and collaboration. The policy, which includes determining treatability for all medical and behavioural conditions, is available here: https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Asilomar_Accords_and_Adoptability_Guidelines_Policy_V_2016-08-04.pdf. Each year, we report our euthanasia statistics by Asilomar Treatability Category. In 2018, we took in 20,751 shelter animals and euthanized 2,213 of them. 70.9% of euthanized animals were considered Untreatable, while 26.9% of euthanized animals fell into Treatable categories. 49 (2.2%) of euthanized animals did not have an assigned category because they were small exotic species that are not included in the Asilomar Accords Matrix (and for software reasons cannot be excluded from the report). The categories are determined by a public opinion poll of what is generally considered treatable in B.C. communities and not by the BC SPCA. There were no Healthy animals euthanized. This report can be found here: <https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/BC-SPCA-2018-Asilomar-Annual-Report.pdf>.

We are very grateful to BC veterinarians for partnering with us to provide medical treatment to the animals who entered our shelters in 2018. We are working to put resources in place to meet our long-term goal of being able to adopt out rather than euthanize Treatable animals.

Promoting permanent ID at your practice



With summer in full swing, permanent identification (ID) is a more important topic than ever! Many clients will be heading on vacation and looking for ways they can protect their pet, from parasite prevention to microchip implantation.

The BC Pet Registry, BC's provincial pet identification database, has come up with some exciting ways you can help clients keep their pets safe and happy this summer.

3 ways to share the benefits of microchipping:

1. Introduce a Permanent ID Protocol at your veterinary practice: The BC Pet Registry has created a Permanent ID Protocol to help ensure your clinic/hospital patients have permanent identification that is registered and kept up-to-date. This Permanent ID Protocol will help you educate clients on the importance of permanent ID, walk you through team responsibilities, and provide steps to make implementing this protocol a success at your location! Access the protocol here: bcpetregistry.ca/resources
2. Create a Staff Contest: Get some healthy competition going for the sake of permanent ID! Encourage staff/volunteer participation by providing a coffee gift card to the team member that scans the most clients during that month.
3. Promote Microchipping using the BC Pet Registry Promotion Toolkit: The BC Pet Registry Promotion Toolkit is filled with sample social media content, including images and video that you can use on your organization's social media pages! Access Facebook posts, eye-catching pet photos, and find hashtags you can use to promote permanent ID. Access the toolkit here: bcpetregistry.ca/resources

Questions? Reach out to the BC Pet Registry team at:
info@bcpetregistry.ca
 1-855-622-7722

Introducing our new feline foster manual

Summer is the busiest time of year in our shelters due to kitten season. We are flooded with kittens too young for adoption, and in order to give them the best start in life we send all kittens under 8 weeks of age to foster homes. This protects them from contagious disease exposure and allows positive experiences with people and household activities during their critical early socialization window.

While in foster, kittens receive dewormer, vaccines, and any necessary medical care. By the time they reach 8-10 weeks of age, they are ready to come back to the shelter and find new homes.

This spring, we introduced a new feline foster manual to help fosters prepare for this volunteer opportunity that is both cute and challenging! The manual covers everything from setting up the home to caring for special cases such as orphan kittens. We recognize that veterinarians are key community partners in providing kitten care, and that you may also work with other organizations or individuals who rescue kittens and reach out to you for advice. You can find this resource, developed by our shelter medicine and behaviour experts, at <https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCSPCA-Feline-Foster-Manual.pdf>.

The Dr. Carol Morgan Memorial Award

Are you a veterinary professional looking to expand your training? This annual award is open to any practicing veterinarian in Canada to use for continued education and training-related costs in ethics and/or animal welfare.

Dr. Carol Morgan cared deeply for the welfare of all animals and advocated tirelessly on their behalf. A continuing education fund established with the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada honours her dedication to the ethical practice of veterinary medicine to improve the welfare of all animals.

Application deadline October 15th for courses to be taken in the following year. Submit application forms to Dr. Sara Dubois, sdubois@spca.bc.ca

Recipients will be notified by December 31st. To apply visit: awfc.ca/grants/the-dr-carol-morgan-memorial-award

Help clients keep their pets cool and happy this summer

The weather is hot, the days are long, and pets need stuff to do! Here are some fun ideas for keeping pets cool & entertained to share with your clients:

Dogs:

- **Pupsicles:** Wondering what to do with your leftovers at the end of the week? Mix some canned dog food with water, or use low-sodium broth. Stuff Kongs, empty paper towel rolls, or ice-cube trays and freeze for an easy grab & go treat later on.
- **Kiddie pools are for dogs too:** Try filling yours in the yard and letting your dog explore on their own. When that gets boring, toss 'pupsicles' in the water.
- **Scavenger hunts:** While your dog can't see you, hide some kibble or treats around your home. They will have to use their nose to find them all which takes a lot of cognitive effort.
- **Stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking:** Some dogs like to take water adventures. Start off by teaching your dog to balance on a wobble board or stability disc, then challenge them to use those balancing skills in the water!

Cats:

- **'Fishing':** HexBug AquaBots are small, robotic fish that cats love to hunt in sinks and bathtubs!
- **Frozen wet food in ice cube trays:** Place these on baking sheets for your cat to bat around while they melt.
- **Catios:** Is this the year you build your feline friend an enclosed patio? This is the safest way to give your cat enriching outdoor access.
- **Catnip:** Did you know catnip is easy to grow in your garden? Cats who respond well to catnip love nibbling on the fresh green leaves. Cats can enjoy larger amounts of the fresh 'nip without the psychological effects that can occur with the concentrated, dry version.



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