

Best Practices for Keeping Pets and People Safe at Adoption Events

Events are great for introducing some adoptable dogs to their forever homes, but they aren't the right setting for every dog. To ensure a safe and successful event, you must **only bring dogs who are fixed, vaccinated, healthy and non-aggressive** and follow these best practices. Good luck at your event!

Bring Dogs Who Will Be “Adoption Ambassadors”

Adopters want to meet their new dog when she is at her best. Whether she's shy, spirited or sporty, they want to see her true personality shine.

But adoption events are exciting—there are tons of pets, people, kids, noises, and smells—and some dogs won't feel comfortable at them. When a dog is uncomfortable, she won't shine when meeting potential new parents.

So give her the best chance at a new home. Talk her up to potential adopters. Share her story, show photos and videos of her, and offer to schedule a quieter time for adopters to meet her one-on-one at the store.

Don't bring a dog if she has a reported history of or you have observed any conduct that may lead to unwanted or aggressive behavior, like

- Fearful behavior
- Lunging, charging, chasing
- Negative reactions to kids or other animals
- Extreme barking
- Excessive excitement when faced with lots of stimuli

Don't bring a dog if she shows any signs of illness or is unvaccinated.

Important! If a dog shows any signs of aggressiveness or illness, remove her from the event immediately.

Help Your Dogs Stay Safe

Every dog needs a designated person who is responsible for keeping him safe, who is focused on facilitating his adoption. So only handle one leashed dog at a time, and only if you are physically able to handle him safely.

When a dog is on leash, make sure he is wearing an appropriate restraint. At a minimum, use a secure, buckle or snap collar and fit it properly. But if his head is about the same size as his neck, use a harness or martingale collar.

Always keep your dogs a safe distance from people and pets, generally a few feet. And if someone is getting too close, gently remind them how to approach safely. Lots of folks think nose kissing is cute, but aren't aware that it can be intimidating to a dog.

Finally, give your dogs time to take a cool down break and have some privacy. Use blankets to cover crate sides, being careful to provide enough ventilation. Rotate dogs out of exercise pens. Take them for walks and don't be afraid to pull them from the event if they seem overwhelmed or exhausted.

Always

- Handle one leashed dog at a time
- Use secure collars or harnesses appropriate for each dog's body type and disposition
- Use non-retractable leashes no more than 6 feet long
- Put visual barriers between crates or pens
- Be vigilant! Stay aware of approaching dogs or people
- Remind pet parents how to greet a dog

Never

- Use slip leads or retractable leashes
- Allow nose-to-nose contact between leashed dogs
- Let children or untrained people to take control of a dog

Important! If a dog shows signs of stress, remove him from the situation and give him a break.