



## **Category 1: Physical and Emotional**

### **MANDATORY**

#### **1.9 Written protocols for documenting, minimizing and treating FAS must be in place to support animals at admission, during the visit, and at check out**

- Job Level:
  - o All (CSR, veterinary technician/assistant, veterinarian)
- Special Skills Required:
  - o All staff shall be trained in recognizing and mitigating FAS by modification of the environment and handling plans

### **Equipment and Supplies**

May include but are not limited to:

- All handling tools (including but not limited to: towels, bandanas, various food and treats, toys, pheromones, basket-type muzzles, ability to play calming music in various locations, ability to provide white noise, ability to provide visual block in lobby, ability to elevate cat carriers off the floor, non-slip mats for exam sites, scripts for screening for FAS while scheduling, other more specialized handling tools as indicated by patient FAS)
- All equipment required for patient exam and procedures
- FAS scale
- Pre-visit questionnaire
- Client handouts for preparing for the visit and car travel

### **Examples and Compliance Paths**

- Scheduling appointments
  - o Patients are prescreened via phone or email for FAS at previous veterinary visits. A script for phone screening for previous FAS will be used. If the patient has been seen at the practice previously, notes on FAS are referred to during scheduling.
  - o The practice will have client handouts that describe how to acclimate pets to carriers and restraint devices, and how to best minimize FAS before and during travel.
  - o Scheduling will be at times that are best for the patient and client that will work within the practice schedule.
  - o Scheduling for patients with FAS should minimize contact with triggers
  - o Examples of triggers include but are not limited to:



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- Dogs with fear of other dogs or people or dogs with any aggression:
  - Schedule at a time when they are the only patient
  - If environmental conditions allow, instruct client to wait in the car until they can be escorted directly to an exam room
  - Schedule at a time when patient can be brought into exam room immediately
- Scheduling of cats should allow them to wait in a cat-only area (unless triggered by other cats) or when they can be escorted directly to an exam room.
- Clients will be reminded to bring special treats or comfort items, use calming music, and to use recommended protocols to minimize FAS prior to and during transport. If PVP have been prescribed, clients will be reminded to administer them at the appropriate time.
- Schedule extra time for patients with FAS as needed.
- Admission
  - Have clients with special-needs patients call prior to or upon arrival in the parking lot.
  - The waiting area will have seats that allows for separation of patients and visual barriers between patients.
  - If check-in causes congestion at the reception desk, the clients should be seated in a non-crowded area and allowed to check in while seated with the patient separated from other patients.
  - When needed, clients and patients' entry to the clinic will be assisted by the veterinary staff.
  - The CSRs will monitor the lobby environment<sup>1</sup>:
    - All dogs are on leash (4-6', no retractable)
    - Pheromone plug-ins are operational and pheromone-treated towels or bandanas are available
    - Patients are monitored for FAS and managed appropriately
    - Patients vocalizing are recognized and managed appropriately
    - Comfortable flooring is available, cats are elevated off the floor, and/or carriers are covered
    - Treats are available and offered unless medically contraindicated
    - Noise levels are minimized
    - Calming music playing softly
- During the visit

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Shreyer, Barrett "Environmental Management Checklist - Lobby" *Bringing Behavior in Clinical Animal Behavior Conference*, 2015



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- The exam room environment is managed<sup>2</sup>:
- Lights are dimmed (task lighting is used when needed)
- Calming music is played and/or white noise is used to block other noises from outside the room
- Voices are kept low
- Pheromone support is used
- Noxious odors are minimized
- Non-slip mats for exam surfaces are used, hiding places are available
- Food or other Fear Free tools (toys, praise) are used for all parts of the exam (before, during, and after)
- Temperature is appropriate for the thermoneutral regulating zone of the patient
- Handling tools are easily available (towels, basket-type muzzles, other)
- All items are ready for exam and needed procedures prior to start of the exam
- The patient is continually monitored for changing signs of FAS as the exam proceeds. If increasing FAS is noted, the exam process is modified to mitigate the FAS (e.g. moving up the treat ladder, changing handling tools). The exam may be discontinued, and the patient treated or released to allow for PVP at a future visit.
- Entrances and exits from the exam room will be minimized, using as few team members as possible to facilitate the exam and procedures.
- Considerate approach and gentle control are used for all interactions with the patient. Touch gradient is used for all physical interaction with the patient.
- Patient struggling for procedures
  - Struggling of a dog for more than 3 seconds and a cat for more than 2 seconds requires that the staff reposition, reassess handling techniques or overall handling plan.
  - If after 3 tries for dogs and 2 tries for cats, the patient still struggles, the procedure will be stopped and the need for the procedure today will be reassessed and the handling plan modified to prevent struggling and escalating FAS.
- The patient emotional record is included in the completed medical record.
- Ending the visit
  - Review discharge instructions and check client out in room
  - Alternatively, after reviewing discharge instruction, allow pet to stay in exam room, with supervision, and owner to check out with CSRs

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Shreyer, Barrett “Environmental Management Checklist – Exam Room” Clinical Animal Behavior Conference, 2015



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- If patient is feline and is from a multi-cat household, re-introduction counseling provided to minimize risk of inter-cat aggression

### **Scoring**

#### Observation

- Use of script for phone screening for previous FAS
- Client handouts
- Scheduling management
- Admission management
- Lobby environment management
- Exam room environment management
- Patient discharge