

SENIOR ANIMAL CARE SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs animal intake operations; feeds and provides medical care to animals in accordance with established policies and procedures; places animals in the appropriate kennel areas; cleans, disinfects, and maintain sanitary conditions of kennels, cages, food dishes, vehicles and equipment; evaluates, monitors and documents animal health and temperament; assists with animal enrichment including exercise and socialization consistent with the animal care plan; provides lead direction and training to assigned staff and volunteers; performs the most complex duties; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED/EXERCISED

Receives supervision from the Animal Center Supervisor. Exercises no supervision, provides lead direction to Animal Care Specialist I/II incumbents and volunteers.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Senior Animal Care Specialist is the advanced and lead level class in the Animal Care Specialist series. Responsibilities include performing intake and processing animals as they arrive at the Animal Center; feeding animals and providing medical care in accordance with established policies and procedures including administering vaccinations, medications and basic first aid; monitoring and documenting animal behavior, temperament and health; ensuring that kennels, cages and equipment remain clean and sanitized; assisting the public with meet and greets with adoptable animals; assisting with animal enrichment activities including social and mental stimulation and physical exercise consistent with the animal care plan; and performing related work as required.

Senior Animal Care Specialist is the advanced and lead level in the Animal Care Specialist classification series. Incumbents provide lead direction and training to Animal Care Specialist I/II staff and volunteers and perform the most complex duties. Senior Animal Care Specialist differs from Animal Care Specialist II in that the latter is the experienced level and incumbents are not responsible for providing lead direction or training.

Incumbents will be required to work nights, evenings, weekends, and holidays and respond to after-hours emergencies as needed; will be exposed to a working environment with animals (primarily dogs and cats) which may lead to possible exposure of unpleasant odors and noises, allergens, interactions with animals, and possible exposure to zoonotic diseases; and will be required to handle and restrain animals humanely and safely using approved protocols and practices.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES

May include, but not limited to, the following:

Provides lead direction in coordinating and monitoring the work of assigned staff and volunteers; provides training in work procedures and methods; performs the most complex duties requiring initiative, discretion and advanced knowledge of Animal Care Specialist functions.

Performs the intake of animals arriving to the Animal Center including completing a basic health assessment and referring to Veterinary staff when necessary; scans animals for microchips to reunite with registered owners and may implant microchips when appropriate; administering flea, tick and parasite treatments and vaccines as needed; reviewing and documenting for temperament and behavior considerations and referring to an Animal Behavior Specialist when necessary; placing animals in the appropriate kennel area; and entering information into the kennel management software system.

Feeds animals; administers medications and treatments; monitors health and behavior of animals and reports signs of illness or distress to a supervisor and/or Veterinary staff; handles animals and performs basic grooming or bathing as needed.

Cleans and disinfects equipment and areas such as kennels, cages, food dishes, blankets and vehicles.

Assists with animal enrichment activities as directed including taking animals to facility play yards and daily exercise or walks; providing socialization with other animals and mental stimulation through the use of appropriate toys or training exercises; and ensuring a safe environment.

Assists the public in claiming impounded animals, interacting with adoptable pets, surrendering, and fostering; transports animals throughout the Animal Center, to/from vehicles and other off-site facilities and events as needed.

Maintains daily logs including care, feeding schedules, medications and treatments administered, temperament and health; enters information into the kennel management system as needed.

Responds to inquiries from the public; maintain effective community relations; participate in special community events; advise/explain proper medical care and treatment of animals and pets.

May utilize equipment such as a two-way radio, cellular devices, computer hardware and software, an animal catch pole, leashes, muzzles, harnesses, physical restraints and animal traps when necessary.

May lift and carry animals, food bags, cat litter, animal beds and other equipment up to and over 50 pounds; may operate a forklift in moving heavy equipment and supplies as needed.

May assist Veterinary staff with pre-operative and post operative medical or surgical procedures including preparing supplies and disinfecting and sanitizing equipment in accordance with established policies and procedures.

May assist in performing humane euthanasia and handling deceased animals under the guidance of Veterinary staff.

May assist in completing adoption transactions which include processing payments including cash, checks, and credit cards and issue receipts; receives in kind donations and provides donors with forms; receives monetary donations from donor, enters information into the kennel management software system; prepares and issues receipts; balances receipts and provides to financials staff for processing.

Performs related duties as required.

JOB RELATED AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Applicable Federal, State and local laws, codes, regulations and ordinances governing the treatment, care, impounding and licensing of animals.

Principles and safe work practices of humane animal care and handling including the use of equipment.

Sanitation and disinfectant practices for kennels, cages, food dishes and other equipment.

Animal behavior, health and symptoms of common diseases; Rabies controls laws and principles of public health related to animal diseases.

Various breeds and behavior of dogs, cats, and other domestic animals.

Biohazard waste disposal and procedures.

Safety policies and safe work practices.

Principles and practices of effective customer service.

Basic recordkeeping practices and computer applications.

Current trends and issues affecting animal services.

Skill/Ability to:

Provide lead direction and training in work procedures and methods to assigned staff and volunteers.

Read, understand, interpret and apply ordinances, laws, departmental policies, rules and regulations affecting animals.

Administer basic health assessments, medical care and treatments including vaccines and humane euthanasia as necessary.

Maintain sanitization and disinfection standards of kennels, cages, food dishes and other equipment.

Monitor animal temperament and behavior for symptoms associated with aggressive or sick animals.

Engage with the community in education and awareness on animal resources such as licensing, vaccinations, rabies control, pet ownership responsibilities, spay/neuter, rescue and adoptions.

Physically restrain, apprehend and handle a wide range of animals including aggressive wild, under-aged or deceased animals safely, properly and humanely.

Lift and restrain animals, equipment and supplies up to and over 50 pounds; walk, sit and/or stand for extended periods of time with or without reasonable accommodation.

Observe and maintain a safe working environment in compliance with established safety programs and procedures.

Safely and effectively operate the tools and equipment used in the care and handling of animals including a two-way radio, animal catch poles, leashes, muzzles and harnesses.

Establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, community members, organizations and stakeholders in the course of work.

Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

May work outdoors and in various weather conditions.

Operate modern office equipment including computer hardware and software applications and kennel management software systems.

Operate a motor vehicle safely including a forklift as necessary.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education:

High School diploma or GED equivalent.

Experience:

One (1) year of experience equivalent to that gained as an Animal Care Specialist II with the City of Fresno.

Special Requirement(s):

Possession and continued maintenance of a valid California Driver's License may be required at time of appointment.

Incumbents must have completed Euthanasia Training consistent with California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 2039 at time of application.

A valid Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit (VACSP), issued by the Veterinary Medical Board of the State of California, may be required upon direction of the appointing authority.

Depending on assignment, complete training and obtain certification to operate a Forklift.

APPROVED: (Signature on File)
Director of Personnel Services

DATE: 3/30/2026

NEW: TJM:vp 11/6/2023

Revised: SM:vd 3/26/2026