

What is the best way to clean effectively but minimize stress?

Double-sided compartment housing of dogs is the ideal housing situation to minimize stress and reduce infectious disease exposure when cleaning kennels in a shelter setting. Spot cleaning and or having the dog out for a walk during cleaning time is also a good way to reduce stress during the cleaning of single sided housing as long appropriate infectious disease and safety precautions are observed.

Question:

I have watched one of your videos on reducing stress in shelter animals and the speaker mentioned how moving animals to a new cage every day during cleaning can increase their stress. Our staff is debating on whether or not it is wise to move the animals to a new cage everyday to facilitate cleaning. If we don't, then while one student is walking the dog, the other student can clean the run so it's ready when the dog comes back. If we do it that way, then the last dog to be walked waits...maybe up to an hour just to be walked, which is less than ideal especially in the AM when they've been locked up since 6pm the night before. What is the best way to clean but minimize stress?

Thank you.

Answer Date:

July 31, 2014

Answer:

Thank you for writing in. Effective daily cleaning procedures uphold the same concepts we are concerned with upholding throughout any kennel or shelter, namely promoting animal well-being, reducing stress, preventing infectious disease transmission, and maintaining the safety of staff members.

Our primary recommendation for efficient and effective dog kennel cleaning is to use double-sided housing (ie. placing one dog per double-sided kennel with an open guillotine door in between). This allows for daily cleaning that is safe, efficient, and low stress. Using the guillotine door, a dog can be segregated to the back side of its kennel while the front side can be cleaned and dried. After this, the dog can be moved to

the now clean front side while the back side is similarly cleaned. The main reasons this is the most effective cleaning protocol is because it requires minimal handling of dogs, which reduces animal stress, keeps your staff safe, and limits infectious disease transmission. Additionally this system is efficient so routine care can be completed in a timely manner – keeping the noise and commotion of cleaning time to as short a duration as possible further reduces stress. Understandably, if your facility does not have double-sided housing for dogs, then this cannot be accomplished.

If you don't have double-sided housing, deciding what cleaning protocol to use is a trade-off between upholding adequate infectious disease control and reducing stress for animals. It would be great if you could get everyone outside for a morning walk as soon as possible upon arrival at the shelter but you may need to make adjustments that work for your system. If you have double compartment housing units then there is less of a need to get them outside right away, if you have single kennels then the priority for this will rise.

Spot cleaning (similar to what's recommended for cat cages) could be done if the dog kennels aren't heavily soiled. This works better for double-sided housing, but can also be done if dogs are walked during morning cleaning. As long as dogs are walked with infectious disease control kept in mind, walking is a good trade-off since it provides enrichment and allows for each dog to return to its own kennel, which, in this case, doesn't need to be deep cleaned on a daily basis.

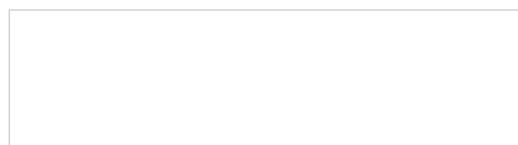
Conversely, moving each dog to a new kennel requires thorough cleaning of all the kennels on a daily basis. This can result in increased infectious disease transmission and increased stress levels.

I hope this helps – please let me know if you have other questions.

Here are some resources from our website regarding housing, spot cleaning, and sanitation:

[Sanitation in Animal Shelters](#)
[Facility Design and Animal Housing](#)

Chumkee Aziz, DVM
Resident, Koret Shelter Medicine
Program
Center for Companion Animal Health
UC Davis School of Veterinary
Medicine



www.sheltermedicine.com
www.facebook.com/sheltermedicine

Koret Shelter Medicine Program