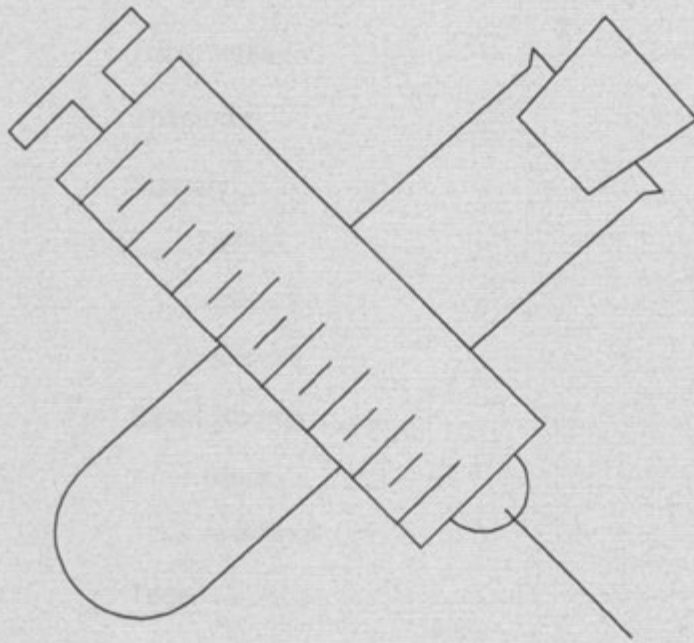


Living in the Lab
A Survival Guide to
East Orange Animal Hospital
For Technicians



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The logo for East Orange Animal Hospital, featuring the letters 'EOAH' in a stylized, bubbly font with a small animal silhouette integrated into the letter 'A'.
East Orange Animal Hospital

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Introduction

Welcome to East Orange Animal Hospital (EOAH). We have written this handbook to help you get acquainted with your new job. Reading this handbook, instead of learning our techniques randomly, will help you get settled faster.

Although this handbook contains a lot of information, don't feel intimidated. We understand that mastering new jobs takes time, especially when there is a lot of information to learn. You will learn the routine with practice. If you have questions at any time, please ask another employee for a hand. We've all been new once.

Your main duty as a technician is to help the vets care for our patients by performing laboratory tests, assisting surgery, and restraining the animals. You will also clean and perform basic chores, and you may sometimes help the receptionists.

We have two types of animals in the kennel: *boarders* who are basically healthy and are just here on vacation, and *hospitalized animals* who are sick. We call both types of animals *patients*.

Our main patients are cats and dogs. Occasionally we take in something unusual like ferrets or hamsters, but not very often. If you have to care for an *exotic*, check with a doctor for its requirements.

Because we deal with animal health, we need to be as careful as possible to follow the directions for each animal's care. If you make a mistake, or suspect a problem, please let someone know so we can correct it. We understand that mistakes sometimes happen, but please don't let an animal suffer when we can do something about it.

Safety

Your safety is as important to us as our patient's health. Although most animals are easily handled, some require caution because they are aggressive, or easily frightened. Often you can tell when an animal requires caution. Find someone to help you handle an animal if it

Chores

- backs away
- cowers
- flattens its ears
- growls or hisses.

Even if an unfamiliar animal does not show any aggressive signs, approach it slowly and gently. **Never put your face close to an animal's teeth or claws.** Let the animal sniff your fist (which is much harder to bite than your open hand) before you try to pet it. Talking softly to an animal often helps it to relax.

If an animal acts aggressively toward anyone, we write a warning on the *record* so everyone knows to handle the animal cautiously. We also attach *watch tags* on aggressive animals' cages as warnings, or write warnings directly on cage cards.

Many of our patients are friendly, loving pets. Because we take precautions, accidents happen very rarely. We don't want you to be frightened of the animals, but we want you to be aware that some animals may not react the way you expect them to, and could cause serious injuries to you or your coworkers.

Handling

Use different methods to restrain animals depending on what procedure the vet is performing. For instance, you would hold a cat one way if a vet was taking a blood sample, but you would hold the cat a different way if the vet was examining the cat's teeth.

Different people may restrain an animal with slightly different techniques. Your own technique depends a lot on your height and strength. Always remember the 2 reasons for restraining an animal:

- to hold the animal still enough to be treated
- to keep the animal from injuring you or those around you.

Be aware of what the animal is doing at all times. Notice where you are in relation to the animal's teeth and claws.

Dogs

Lead most dogs with a leash. If a small dog doesn't cooperate with you, instead of dragging it, tuck its body under one arm. Support the dog's chest with the same hand.

Lifting

Find someone to help you lift a dog whenever possible. **If any dog is known to be fearful or aggressive, muzzle it and get help before picking it up.** One person controls the head and supports the chest, and the other person supports the rear.

If you lift a large dog by yourself, gently curl one arm around the dog's chest and neck, and the other arm around the dog's rear end. Don't bend over—squat down to the dog's level, then lift with your legs.

Safety

General Examination

Small Dogs

- 1 Curl one arm across the dog's chest and gently hold the dog's chin.
- 2 Curl your other arm around the dog's back legs to control the rear.

Large Dogs

Hold the dog's head against your shoulder with one hand and the rear with your other hand.

Dogs are not predictable. When holding a dog's head, keep your face away from it, and be prepared for it to turn and try to bite you.

Intravenous—Front Leg

The (cephalic) vein is located on top of the forearm just below the elbow.

For all types of intravenous procedures you must hold the dog completely still, or the vet will have trouble drawing blood or administering medication.

Small Dogs

- 1 Curl one arm across the dog's chest and gently hold the dog's head against your shoulder.
- 2 Press the dog's body against you with the elbow of your other arm, and hold off the vein with your thumb.

Large Dogs

Have a second person hold the dog's rear.

Intravenous—Neck

The (jugular) vein is located to each side of the windpipe about halfway down the neck.

Small Dogs

- 1 Grasp the forelegs with one hand, and the chin with the other hand.
- 2 Grasp the chip from the top so that your hand covers the dog's face.
- 3 Scoot the dog to the edge of the table so that its chest is even with the edge.
- 4 Gently stretch the dog's head upward, exposing the throat.
- 5 Turn the dog's head so the nose points away from the vein.
- 6 Control the dog's rear end with the free arm.

Large Dogs

The dog remains standing while one person controls the head and another person would controls the rear.

Aggressive Behavior

We prefer to be safe rather than sorry, so if a dog hints at trouble, we muzzle it. If a muzzle does not calm the dog, we may either

- ask the owner to return at another time with the dog sedated
- inject a sedative and wait for the dog to calm down.

Cats

Because cats tend to struggle the more you restrain them, do as little as you need to keep the cat from escaping or from injuring anyone. With very docile cats you may only need to scratch the cat's head, but with very active cats you may need to use complete restraint. Use your judgement based on the cat's reactions, and the procedure being performed.

Carrying

Tuck the cat's rear under one arm and hold the front paws with the same hand. The cat will feel supported, you will be able to control the cat, and you will have one hand free to control the head if necessary. With nervous or aggressive cats, covering the cat with a towel is helpful.

General Examination

When holding an active cat on a table, gently grasp under the cat's chin, or the skin behind the neck, with one hand. Restrain the cat's rear end and back legs with your free hand.

Intravenous—Front Leg

The (cephalic) vein is located on top of the forearm just below the elbow.

For all types of intravenous procedures you must hold the dog completely still, or the vet will have trouble drawing blood or administering medication.

- 1 Gently grasp under the chin, or the skin behind the neck, with one hand, and hug the cat's hindquarters with your elbow.
- 2 Apply a little downward pressure on the cat's shoulders to keep the cat from jumping.
- 3 Stretch out the cat's foreleg with the other hand and hold off the vein with your thumb.

Check-ins

Intravenous—Back Leg

The (medial saphenous) vein is located on the inside of the rear legs in the thigh area.

Grasp the skin behind the cat's neck with one hand, gently stretch the cat's body along the table, and hold off the vein with the blade of your other hand.

Intravenous-Neck

The (jugular) vein is located to each side of the windpipe about halfway down the neck.

- 1 Grasp the cat's forelegs with one hand, and the cat's chin with the other hand. Grasp the chin from the top so that your hand covers the cat's face.
- 2 Scoot the cat to the edge of the table so that its chest is even with the edge.
- 3 Gently stretch the cat's head upward, exposing the throat. Turn the cat's head so the nose points away from the vein.
- 4 Control the cat's rear end with the elbow of the hand holding the chin.

Aggressive Behavior

Although we have muzzles for cats we do not use them often because muzzles usually excite cats more, and they don't control cats' other weapons—claws.

If a cat gives you trouble, wrap a towel around its body to control the claws. Keep a firm grip on the scruff of the cat's neck and apply downward pressure through the towel to keep the cat from biting you.

If a cat refuses to cooperate, we may send it home with sedative pills, or inject a sedative.

Treatments

Treat hospitalized animals in the morning and in the late afternoon. Check the treatment list to find out what medicine each animal receives, the dosage, and any special instructions. Medicines labelled with owner's last names are in a box on the treatment counter.

Look over all surgery patients from the day before. Take their temperatures, check their incisions for signs of bleeding or abnormal swelling, and notice if they are listless or in pain. Write your findings on the records.

The vets examine all hospitalized patients, but you can perform routine treatments before the doctors arrive. Look at the treatment sheet to see which medications patients are to receive. Write on the treatment sheet as you treat each patient. When the vets are ready to examine the patients, assist them.