

A Brief Overview of What you Should/Shouldn't Put on Kennel Cards

DO:

- Print kennel cards in color whenever possible.
- Use a plastic protection sleeve or cover over kennel cards to prevent water damage.
- Make them at least a half page (but preferably larger).
- Use icons or short expressions to let potential adopters know if the animal has lived with kids or other animals (and what kind), lived in an apartment, does well in play groups, is potty trained, and other positive information.
- Indicate any potential handling or safety issues on the back of the kennel card or the non-public side so that the information can be viewed by volunteers and staff when they get animals in and out.
- Use laminated signs to share additional information. These can be small or large and say things like, "Play group rockstar!" or "I lived with cats and dogs in my last home," or "I'm a lap cat!" or "I walk well on a leash."
- Have an internally recognized term on the front of the kennel card to indicate known behavioral or medical history that should be shared as part of the counseling process (e.g., "SNA" instead of "special needs adoption").
- Use the phrase, "Available as of xx date" for animals who come in with a stray hold.

DON'T:

- Allow anyone to write in pen, pencil, or marker on the front of kennel cards. Replace kennel cards if someone does write on them.
- Display negative information about the animal on the front of the kennel card.
- Use quarter page sheets or smaller for kennel cards. They're too small for most people to read.
- Display dog breed guesses.
- Display the words "unavailable," "hold," "rescue only," or "bite risk."
- Use directive signs unless you explain the reason. For example, instead of having a sign that says, "No treats," consider one that says "No treats! I'm getting spayed/neutered tomorrow!"
- Use various colors of paper to indicate status. This can get confusing very quickly and if the card is not reprinted when status is updated, it can result in a longer length of stay.