**Dog Walker**

**Expectations & Best Practices**

**Daily Route Planning**

* When planning your route, make sure to consider the weather conditions that can affect drive times.
* Ensure you plan your route to arrive at each walk on time/ in the arranged time window. Arriving on time is very important and a responsibility of each walker. Notify the office ahead of time if you’re getting delayed in your route and need help to stay on time.
* We should not be regularly covering your walks. It's your responsibility to plan and get to your walks. Except for emergencies that occur during your day, we can not cover walks without advanced warning.

**Each Regular Visit**

* Visit durations should be from the time you enter the home to the time you leave the home.
  + For example, a Half hour walk for a dog may include about 24mins actually walking and the other 5mins disarming/arming alarm, getting leash on/off, leaving note, giving treat and checking water.
  + Take into consideration changes to time needed outside of walk due to weather, pet injury, mess clean up, etc. These should all be included in the service time.
  + Written in/out time in notes should be exactly accurate to real visit time. Most of our clients have home security systems and several check actual times against our notes.
* Leave a note including date, time in/out, whether each pet went #1/#2, brief detail of the day.
  + Try to make the note a little different each day – don’t just write, “Great walk, beautiful day!”
  + If the client doesn’t have a notepad available, text Office with summary to send to client with a reminder to leave a notepad.
  + Treat/water/etc. as clients request.
* Ensure all dogs are properly secured at all times out of the house.
  + Make sure collars/harnesses are properly fitted and leashes securely attached.
  + Never let dogs off leash outside of home or securely fenced in yard.
  + Be mindful of dogs/cats who might run out when entering/exiting homes.
* Messes
  + Clean up after pet messes and include in your visit time. Dispose in outside trash cans when possible.
* PetSitClick
  + “Complete” all services on the PetSitClick app in real time, or at least by the end of the day if necessary.
* Supplies - Always have with you:
  + Keys
  + Poop bags (backup roll)
  + S’wooft business cards
  + Pen/note pad or post-its
  + Optional items:
    - Travel water bowl
    - Spare leash
    - Towel

**Vacation Care/Cat Care**

* No per visit notes needed unless specified. Leave a Vacation Care Card on last visit with a summary of vacation care and date/time stamp. Contact the Office if you need cards.
* Make sure home is at least as clean as you found it on first visit. Do a last sweep before you leave on the last visit.

**Walking Etiquette**

* Use a short leash on walks, especially for more hyper/active dogs.
* Reinforce commands or behaviors as requested by clients.
* You can have dogs sit at intersections if they are hyper or need to be redirected.

**Security/Safety**

Keys

* Always double check that you have client key before exiting and locking behind you. Contact the Office if you are locked out, and know this should not be a regular occurrence.
* Keep all client keys together (in fanny pack, on a carabiner, etc.) so they aren’t misplaced or lost.
* Report any lost keys to the Office.
* Do not write down client addresses – utilize PetSitClick for address information. Keys and addresses being found together would be a serious liability, both for you and for the company.

Home Security

* Lock all doors behind you, including deadbolts and including locking as you enter the house (locking behind you as you get the dogs).
* Be mindful of homes with security systems and be ready with on/off codes.
  + IF an alarm is set off, call client (# in PetSitClick) or Office immediately. Stay near the home until alarm is off or otherwise resolved.
  + IF police arrive, let them know you’re with S’wooft and give them the Office contact info.

Wildlife

* You may run across wild animals such as coyotes and snakes. These are (for better or worse) a part of our habitat now so expect to see them around. In most cases, just walk away from them and keep client pets from trying to approach. As long as you don’t aggress or disturb them, they’ll generally leave you alone or even run away.

**Communication**

Contact the office:

* By text or email with any changes to routine such as feeding, harness, alarm/door code, time windows, pet injury/behavior changes observed.
* When you’re about to run out of bags so we can re-supply.
* To report any unsafe conditions including but not limited to gas smell, unsecure crates, broken fences, pet injury/health concern, etc.
* In the event of a personal emergency that might affect your route for the day.

Client Communication

* Do not call/text/email clients directly unless specifically approved by the Office.
  + Communications going through the Office prevents mixed communication/missed messages and keeps clients in the habit of making scheduling changes, etc. through the office.
* If clients write in the notes about a scheduling or routine change, refer them to the office ([schedule@swooftchicago.com)](mailto:schedule@swooftchicago.com)) rather than saying you’ll take care of it. Still send the message to the Office as a heads up.
* The only exception would be if a client specifically asks for a text, such as Bella/Ginger (daily text when arriving).

**Pet Rescue**

* In the event that you see a loose or endangered animal, contact the Office for assistance so we can provide rescue help.
* DO NOT place a client pet in danger in any way in an effort to help a loose animal.

**Emergency Contact Protocol**

In the event of an emergency, contact:

1. 911 (if applicable)
2. Call Office – 773.340.1775
3. If no answer, group text Leadership Team with a very brief SOS message
   1. Sarah – 815.531.4968
   2. Lisa – 773.562.3903
   3. Misty – 847.834.5443

**Grounds for Immediate Termination**

Include but are not limited to:

* Use of force on pets including hitting, kicking, excessive yanking on leashes, etc.
* Dishonesty about pet visit times and durations
* Multiple missed visits
* Multiple key losses
* Inappropriate conduct or communication with clients or staff

**Shadowing**

* A newly added step of our interview process is for an interviewee to shadow a walker (usually the Pack Leader) for a day of walks. If an interviewee is scheduled to shadow you on walks, please know that they:
  + Should not enter ANY client homes or be given security or other personal information (door/alarm codes, info about family/kids, etc.).
  + Should not hold dog leashes – they may interact with the pets but should not be directly responsible for their safety as they are not covered by our liability insurance.
  + Should not be mentioned in your notes to clients – they will be made aware already of our process.