

Doctor’s Assistant Job Description

The veterinary doctor’s assistant is the doctor’s clinical right-hand person. The most important job of a doctor’s assistant is to anticipate the needs of the clients, patients, and the doctor and to facilitate the tasks that need to be completed that day. The assistant must enjoy working with diverse people and animals and be friendly and flexible in the face of varying expectations from clients and co-workers.

The doctor’s assistant will start the doctor’s appointments, educate clients, restrain pets during the doctor’s exam, complete patient invoices, care for hospitalized patients, and perform any number of other tasks that may present themselves on any given day. The assistant’s job is diverse and ever changing according to the priority of the moment.

Doctor’s assistants need to have a firm belief in the quality of care we provide and to communicate this sense of assurance to our clients. It is important to know and understand our services and recommendations and be able to clearly convey the value of the services to the clients.

The doctor’s assistant must be able to accomplish needed procedures while showing care and concern for the pet. They must be able to empathize with clients and remain compassionate if a client becomes emotional or difficult. The doctor’s assistant should remain calm and collected in the face of emergency situations.

Providing for patient and client comfort by keeping the hospital clean and presentable is part of the daily routine.

Education and Essential Qualifications

- Completion of a high school degree or further education.
- Employees must be responsible to work the schedule they are assigned. Excessive tardiness or truancy is disruptive to patient care and client service and can not be accommodated.
- All employees must be able to read, write legibly, and communicate clearly in English both in person and on the telephone. Employees must have good oral and written communication skills including the ability to listen, talk, write, type, and otherwise communicate with professionalism and tact. Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation are expected.
- Basic computer literacy including the ability to type on a computer keyboard, use a computer mouse, and view information on a computer screen is required.
- Must be able to read a street map and give directions to the practice.
- Employees must have the physical strength and ability to lift and carry a pet or other object weighing up to 50 pounds without assistance. Must be able to assist in lifting patients or other objects weighing more than 50 pounds.
- Must be able to work energetically for the entire assigned shift, sometimes exceeding 9 – 10 hours per day. The shift does not end until all duties are completed for the day or until a doctor or other supervisor dismisses the staff.
- Physical exertion will include repetitive standing, walking, stooping, bending, twisting, and lifting. Must be able to grasp, hold, and manipulate objects varying from small and fine to large and heavy with both hands.
- Assistants must be able to safely and competently operate equipment pertinent to carrying out their duties, including but not limited to laboratory equipment and the xray machine and processor.
- Assistants must physically hold and restrain pets who may struggle, scratch, or try to bite. This requires the emotional ability to remain calm and compassionate with animals who are reacting to fear and/or pain and the physical strength, dexterity, and reflexes to keep the pet, themselves, and other doctors or staff safe.
- Assistants must be able to view physical symptoms or medical problems, read medical instruments, and follow handwritten instructions.
- Assistants must be able to respond and quickly react to frequent auditory signals, warnings, or communication from other staff, animals, or medical equipment.
- Assistants must be able to make independent decisions, recall many facts and figures from memory, and solve complex problems.

General Job Requirements

- Read and comply with the policies of the Blue Springs Animal Hospital Employee Handbook
- Follow all hospital standard procedures and protocols, both current and future, as contained within the training manuals or as written or communicated by doctors or other supervisory staff
- Carry out all duties in a professional and courteous manner and remain respectful and polite in speech, tone, and actions under all circumstances
- Complete the employee training check lists and participate in performance reviews as requested
- Be teachable and accept performance critiques positively as a means to learn and grow
- Remain flexible and willing to implement new or changing procedures in the future
- Always be in position and ready to work promptly at the start of each scheduled shift
- Hourly employees must maintain accurate records of time worked by clocking in and out for each shift. Must track hours worked per week and inform a supervisor if extended shifts will result in over time.
- Maintain a groomed and neat professional appearance while at work, including a clean and unwrinkled uniform and a name tag.
- Every staff member is responsible to maintain the cleanliness and sanitary condition of the entire hospital, including the parking lot, side walks, and entries. Trash, urine, feces, blood or other such things should be cleaned and sanitized immediately.
- Employees of a veterinary hospital will encounter stressful situations including but not limited to emotional clients, pet emergencies, and managing multiple priorities at once. All staff members must be able to manage stress in order to carry out the duties of the job in a calm and professional manner.
- Employees will interact with many types of pets and should not be overly fearful of unfamiliar animals. All pets must be treated with kindness and respect at all times.
- Follow OSHA standards and be familiar with Material Data Safety Sheets. Occupational hazards may include but are not limited to animal bite or scratch wounds and exposure to x-rays, anesthetic gases, CO2 Laser, caustic or toxic materials, and zoonotic diseases. Employees must follow all safety guidelines contained in the employee handbook and posted in hazardous areas.
- Inform the Hospital Manager or a Doctor immediately of all bite or deep scratch wounds you suffer so that reports can be made and you can be referred for timely medical care by a physician if necessary. Clean all wounds quickly and thoroughly with surgical scrub.
- Remain productive during slow times by seeking additional duties such as cleaning, stocking, or other tasks. Ask your team coordinator or the hospital administrator for ideas.
- Learn and use BSAH language and abbreviations for describing common services
- Be willing to volunteer for various office management tasks or other duties that may be reasonably assigned from time to time
- Run miscellaneous errands if requested by a doctor or supervisor
- Attend staff and team meetings; provide advance written notice to the hospital manager if a meeting will be missed; retrieve and study notes from any missed meetings and ask for clarification if anything from the meeting is unclear
- Train other staff members or new employees in the skills listed on this job description or in the training manual
- Attend continuing education opportunities as requested
- Follow established security protocols including locking and setting the alarm to ensure the safety and security of patients, staff, and the facility.
- Use your own password identification to enter the practice-management software and your own unique initials on all paperwork, treatment sheets, etc to signify your work
- Maintain a pleasant and cooperative attitude toward co-workers. Be willing to help any staff member with a task if requested.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding clients, patients, medical and financial records, and hospital procedures, policies, and protocols.
- Maintain and project a positive attitude about the hospital, clients, patients, and co-workers. Avoid gossiping, condemning, dissension, judging, and making negative comments or participating in such discussions. Negative feelings or concerns should be discussed with the team coordinator or Hospital Administrator. Instead of complaining about problems, strive to be part of the solution. Help maintain a positive, supportive, and productive workplace culture.

Client Education & Service

Our goal when a client walks in the door is to WOW them with our friendly, professional service. Constantly be looking for ways to creatively accomplish this goal. The following tasks are the bare minimum in providing good customer service:

- Smile and project a polite, friendly demeanor during all client interactions
- Strive during the course of every client interaction to give a sincere complement or say something nice about them or their pet or children.
- Educate clients about common problems such as fleas, heartworm tests and preventatives, fecal tests and parasites, impacted anal glands, feline leukemia testing and prevention, and common behavior problems such as house training, chewing, etc.

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- Explain vaccinations, wellness care, and spay/neuter/declaw recommendations.
- Become reasonably familiar with dog and cat breeds and coat colors. Know and be able to communicate which species of pets are treated by our hospital.
- Be able to communicate and enforce the hospital's payment, held check, care credit, and finance charge policies with poise and tact.
- Give price quotes by explaining the services contained in standard estimates and educating the client about the value of following the recommendations.
- Communicate the information in the new kitten and new puppy handouts.
- Explain and answer questions about proper surgery aftercare.
- Listen actively and convey concern, empathy, and compassion to clients.
- Be patient, polite, and compassionate with a client who is emotional or discourteous.
- Be familiar with responses for client complaints or comments regarding their bill or their service. Immediately remove loudly complaining or angry clients to a private area where they may speak with a supervisor or doctor. Our goal is to listen, communicate, and make the client happy.
- Give progress reports on hospitalized patients as directed by the doctor.
- Know how to access and navigate the Internet to find veterinary websites and access information for clients. (Internet use should be limited to valid professional purposes only during work hours)
- Be familiar with the practice's website and direct clients there for more information on relevant topics or to download forms and estimates
- Convey information in an accurate and professional way between the doctor and the client when the doctor is unavailable to speak with the client directly
- Teach clients to administer oral, eye, and ear medications.
- Recognize the limits of your knowledge. If you are not absolutely confident that you know the answer to a client's question, do not answer it. Ask another staff member for help.

Telephone Skills

- Assist the receptionists as needed to answer the telephones by the 3rd ring in a courteous and friendly manner.
- Phones should be answered "Blue Springs Animal Hospital & Pet Resort. This is _____, how may I help you?"
- If a call must be placed on hold, ask for the callers permission: "Can you hold, please?"
- Callers should not be left on hold without checking back with them for more than 2 minutes. The phone will start to beep after the caller has been on hold for 1 minute.
- Smile while answering and talking on the phone to enhance the friendly quality of your voice.
- Use the caller and pet's name in conversations to personalize the interaction
- Learn and be able to efficiently use the telephone system features such as hold, paging, and voice mail.
- Become familiar with our products, services, recommendations, and standard estimates in order to convey value when communicating fee estimates to clients or potential clients
- Politely ask the client if they would like to schedule an appointment after giving a fee estimate or if a pet needs to be seen by a doctor
- Schedule appointments for the hospital and pet resort boarding and grooming
- Be able to recognize if a caller has an emergency situation and respond appropriately. If in doubt, ask. Real emergencies should be directed to come to the hospital immediately. Non-emergencies should be scheduled an appointment as soon as possible.
- Callers requesting to speak with a doctor must be politely and professionally identified so they may be properly routed. Learn and follow the procedure for how different types of calls should be handled.
- Staff must always respond positively to any caller who wishes for their pet to be seen. Staff members may not direct callers to the emergency clinic or another hospital due to closing time, a full schedule, etc. Check with the doctor for instructions if the schedule is full or the caller can not arrive prior to closing time.
- Do doctor's callback list to check up on previously treated patients.
- Assist doctor with routine lab call backs as requested.

Exam Room Procedures

- Evaluate the doctor's appointment schedule for the day to anticipate patient arrivals and efficiently plan tasks around the day's schedule
- As appointments arrive, view the patient's reminders and history and prepare the records and supplies that will be needed for appointments
- Anticipate what the doctor will need for appointments and do everything you can to set up and assist your doctor
- Monitor the schedule and keep clients informed of expected waiting time if the doctor is behind schedule.
- Smile, make direct eye contact, and greet clients and patients by name in a friendly and professional way, making them feel welcome and comfortable.

- If the pet's temperament allows, you should touch and talk to the pet within 5 seconds of greeting the client. Make every client and pet feel cared for and special.
- Assist clients into and out of the exam room by holding doors, helping with rambunctious pets or children, and carrying things when needed.
- Assist clients with unruly or unrestrained pets. Ensure that all dogs are leashed and that cats and smaller pets are caged. Isolate aggressive pets. Request assistance as needed.
- Assess emergency situations and bring the pet to a doctor or technician immediately. Assure the client the doctor will treat the pet and then speak with them as soon as possible.
- Recognize patients with contagious or potentially contagious diseases (coughing dogs, sneezing cats, puppies with bad diarrhea) and follow isolation procedures including escorting them immediately to an exam room.
- Assess patient needs and make recommendations for health care services and products in a way that educates and communicates value to the client
- Collect specimens such as stool samples, voided urine, ear swabs for analysis, cephalic or saphenous blood samples for heartworm tests, wellness and senior health plans, and feline leukemia tests.
- Perform outpatient procedures such as nail trims, expressing anal glands, suture removals, taking temperatures, cleaning ears, clipping and cleaning hotspots and minor wounds, etc.
- Safely and humanely restrain the pet for the doctor's exam and treatments
- Perform laboratory tests, complete treatments, and fill prescriptions for appointments as directed by the doctor
- Invoice services, medications, pet foods, and supplies. Look for opportunities to educate clients regarding our products and services and guide their buying decisions.
- Update client/patient records including contact information, reminders, and follow ups.
- Clean and freshen exam rooms between appointments
- Help receptionists process paperwork and admit or discharge patients
- Be able to complete new client or new patient paperwork and enter them into the computer if a client is late or a receptionist is unavailable
- Understand the medical record system and complete medical records as dictated by the doctor.
- Be able to complete an invoice and take all forms of payment including a held check in the event a receptionist is not available

Patient Handling and Care

- Assist doctor or technician with morning hospitalized patient treatments starting at 7:45 each morning
- Anticipate what the doctor will need for procedures and patient care and do everything you can to set up and assist your doctor throughout the day
- Prepare and update hospitalized patient's treatment sheets according to doctor's or technicians directions.
- Restrain pets for the doctor or technician for procedures and treatments
- Observe and provide care for the doctor's hospitalized patients throughout the day. Make sure they are walked, fed, clean, and that their treatments are completed.
- Administer oral, eye, and ear medications, and give subcutaneous injections (except insulin) according to a doctor or technicians orders.
- Monitor patients for vomit, blood, urine, and feces in the cage, and clean patients and cages as needed. Note incidents on treatment sheets or charts.
- Monitor changes in patients' conditions. Alert doctors to significant changes.
- Set up and assist with procedures such as IV catheters, euthanasia, minor surgeries, and other common treatments as directed
- Take, develop, and file routine radiographs.

Hospital and Bathing Admissions and Discharges

- Know and be able to communicate the health requirements for pets to be admitted to the Hospital or Pet Resort. Admitting patients should include an assessment of any services the patient may need (such as vaccinations, or a dental while boarding) and recommendations of such to the client.
- Ensure that all admission paperwork such as drop off forms have been completed. Note and follow through on any special instructions given by the client.
- During admission recognize symptoms of a critical illness or condition that needs immediate treatment and inform a doctor or technician immediately.
- Recognize patients with contagious or potentially contagious diseases (coughing dogs, sneezing cats, puppies with bad diarrhea) and follow isolation procedures including escorting them immediately to an exam room and having them examined by a doctor prior to admitting them to the hospital or pet resort areas where they may have contact with other pets.
- Take custody of pets from clients. Restrain dogs with the practice's leashes and return the client's leash to the client. Label and properly store food, toys or other belongs staying with the pet.
- Process paperwork and admit pets for drop off appointments or bathing according to standard procedures. Make sure every pet is identified and is written on the treatment board.

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- Prepare patients for discharge. Prior to discharge, remove patients' catheters and make sure they are dry, clean, and free of body fluids, excrement, or odors. Notify a doctor if the pet has any problems for which the discharge may need to be reconsidered or delayed.
- Communicate Discharge Instructions or Exam Checklists for hospitalized patients and make sure they go home with all medications, products, and personal items.
- Sincerely thank clients and tell them we look forward to seeing them again next time.

Laboratory and Pharmacy Procedures

- Fecal flotation and diagnostic fecal tests
- Ear discharge analysis
- Heartworm tests
- Perform in house lab chemistry and automated CBC tests
- Urine specific gravity and strips (Tech or Doc will do sediment)
- PCV and total protein tests
- Stain cytology preps
- Feline Leukemia, feline immunodeficiency virus, and parvo tests
- Enter lab results in appropriate log books
- Fill prescriptions and complete procedures for pets on long term prescription medications
- Complete forms and prepare samples for submission to outside laboratory

Anesthesia and Surgical Assistance

- Restrain patients for pre-anesthetic blood screen and anesthetic inductions.
- Learn and follow procedures to maintain aseptic surgical sites.
- Connect/disconnect and adjust anesthetic delivery as directed by doctor or technician.
- Ventilatory support (bagging) as directed by doctor or technician, especially for CPR.
- Aseptically supply surgeon w/suture, blade, etc.
- Monitor recovering patients, removing tube under direction of doctor or technician.
- Perform shear downs under supervision of the doctor or technician.
- Perform ancillary procedures on anesthetized patients as directed by doctor or technician, including subcutaneous injections, vaccinations, ear cleaning, nail trims, etc.
- Help maintain cleanliness of treatment area, surgery suite, and special treatment area

Cleaning and Stocking

- Keep the exam rooms and other work areas clean and neat. Keep reading and educational materials in the exam rooms orderly.
- Clean table, floor, ear cones, flea combs, etc. after each appointment.
- Dust shelves, wipe down seats, wash walls in exam rooms and lab at least once weekly and as needed daily.
- Restock supplies in the exam rooms, laboratory, radiology, and treatment areas.
- Note when supplies run low and add them to the want list.
- Fill vaccine syringes and prescription bottles during free time and before leaving at night.
- Unpack and stock supplies when daily shipments arrive
- Complete closing check lists each day.

Employees are expected to act in the best interest of the hospital, even if doing so requires actions or responsibilities not specifically listed in the job description.

The job description is subject to addition, subtraction, or revision by management as needed.

Worker Status for Payroll Over Time Considerations: Non-Exempt

I have read and understand the qualifications and requirements for the job I am accepting at Blue Springs Animal Hospital and Pet Resort. By signing below I testify that I have the educational qualifications and can perform the physical tasks described in the job description. Furthermore, I believe that I have the knowledge, experience, and aptitude to learn and proficiently perform every task listed in the job description.

I understand that the signing of this job description does not in any way create or constitute an employment contract or change my "at will" employment status under Missouri laws.

Date: _____ Employee Signature: _____