Government Agency – Center Contact Procedure

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Purpose

This Government Agency – Center Contact Procedure aims to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations by facilitating organized, efficient, and legally sound interactions with government agency representatives. This Procedure provides guidelines for Destination Pet (DP) employees in managing government visits, inspections, or notices while safeguarding DP's legal and business interests. The Procedure establishes minimum guidelines for DP employees during governmental visits, inspections, or notices to protect regulatory compliance and the company’s interests.

Audience

This policy applies to all DP employees, including management and staff at all centers and corporate offices.

General Information

* Agency visits, inspections, and calls typically occur during the Center's regular business hours. However, there may be instances when agency representatives visit outside of these hours, and employees should be prepared for such occurrences.
* Upon entry, the Agency Representative must immediately display their official credentials. DP employees should verify these credentials to ensure the representative's authenticity.
* The Agency Representative must clearly state the reason for their visit, whether it is a notice of violation, routine inspection, or another purpose.
* Agency Representatives may use cameras and sampling equipment during their visit. DP employees should take note of any equipment used and ensure proper documentation.
* DP employees should remain courteous and cooperative throughout the agency process, and professionalism is crucial to maintaining a good relationship with regulatory agencies.
* The Agency Representative must always be escorted by a DP employee while on-site at the Center to ensure that the representative does not have unsupervised access to any part of the facility.
* A private office or designated area should be provided for the Agency Representative to review records or documents if requested. This area should be free from interruptions and equipped with necessary amenities.
* Employees should bring any requested records or documents to the Agency Representative rather than granting unrestricted access to files. This ensures controlled and monitored access to sensitive information.

Procedure

**For In-Person/On-Site Agency Inspections:**

1. Scheduled Visits:

* A manager should be on-site to lead the visit. The presence of a manager ensures that the visit is handled professionally and that all questions and concerns are addressed appropriately.
* The District Director (DD) must be notified of any scheduled visits as soon as they are scheduled. This notification allows the DD to partner with Center Management for the visit and ensure that all necessary preparations are made.

2. Unannounced Visits:

* The Person-In-Charge (PIC) should notify Center Management immediately when an Agency Representative arrives unannounced. This prompt notification ensures that the visit is handled promptly and professionally.
* If Center Management is on-site, they will lead the visit. Their presence ensures that the visit is conducted efficiently and complies with company policies.
* If Center Management is not on-site, the PIC should contact them via phone immediately to inform them of the Agency Representative’s presence.
* If Center Management can return to the Center promptly, the PIC can request the Agency Representative to wait for a manager. This ensures that the visit is managed by someone with the necessary authority and knowledge.
* If a manager cannot return to the Center promptly, the Agency Representative does not wish to wait, or if Center Management does not respond via phone, the PIC will lead the visit. The PIC should be trained to handle such visits and ensure compliance with the procedure.

3. During the Visit:

* Ensure the Agency Representative and any additional persons accompanying them complete and read the “Agency Visitor Form.” This form documents the visit and ensures all parties understand the rules and expectations.
* The Agency Representative must comply with all applicable facility safety rules and ensure no contact is made with pet guests at the Center. This rule protects the health and safety of the animals.
* Request the Agency Representative’s credentials and make a copy for DP records. If the Agency Representative does not wish for a copy to be taken, document all information on the credential on the “Agency Visitor Form.” If the person’s credentials are questionable, contact the appropriate government office to verify their identity before allowing them access to the facility.
* Immediately begin writing a log of the visit. Note the time of arrival and departure and any statements made by the Agency Representative. Take accurate and thorough notes of everything the Agency Representative mentions, states, or questions during the inspection, including any conversations with employees if not held in private. This log and any paperwork left after the visit will subsequently be relied upon in enforcement proceedings or negotiations if citations are issued.
* If the Agency Representative takes photographs, the PIC should take duplicate photographs for DP’s records. This ensures that DP has a complete record of the visit.
* If the Agency Representative identifies “a violation,” do not attempt to explain, state it is a violation, or defend the occurrence. This could be considered an admission of guilt.
* Alleged apparent violations should be corrected immediately if feasible. This is not an admission of guilt but demonstrates a good faith effort to comply with regulations and ensure the health and safety of employees and pet guests.
* If paperwork is left because of the visit, it should be given to Center Management as soon as possible if not onsite. Center Management should also ensure the district director is given a copy as soon as possible.
* Center Management and the DD will be responsible for ensuring that any action items or information requested by the Agency are completed by the requested deadline. If needed, contact the Safety Department for support and guidance.

**For Emailed/Written Notices:**

* Any emailed/written notices received at any Center should be directed immediately to Center Management or as soon as possible.
* Center Management and the DD will be responsible for any information requested and will contact the Safety Department for support and guidance if needed.

**For Verbal Communications via Phone Call:**

* If a phone call is received by the Center and the caller states they are from a governmental agency, the DP employee answering the call should forward the call to Center Management if on-site.
* If there is no Management on site, the DP employee shall give the call to the PIC on site.
* The manager or PIC shall document the following from the call:
* Date and Time of Call
* Agency Name
* Full Name and Job Title of the Agency Representative
* Call Back Phone Number
* Email Address, if applicable
* Brief Description of Reason for the Call
* After the call has ended, any documentation should be directed to Center Management immediately or as soon as possible.
* Center Management and the DD will be responsible for any information requested and will contact the Safety Department for support and guidance if needed.

**After Agency Contact:**

* Any in-person or onsite inspection, emailed or written notices, or verbal communications must be emailed to [safety@destpet.com](mailto:safety@destpet.com) within 24-hours.
* After the documentation is submitted to the portal, the Safety Department will review and collaborate with Center Management and DD if further action is needed.
* In the case that an agency has escalated a high-level issue, including but not limited to immediate facility closure, Center Management or the PIC shall utilize the Center Emergency Contact form to begin a call down until someone from upper-level management has been verbally contacted.

References

[Agency Visitor Form Link](https://destpet.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DPSafety2/ET6mQmsMLA1NkosSofOyThEB3Zbjri_wbc6tpjhmvYwMNQ?e=o0J5de)