

DROPPED DOG MANUAL



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The Iditarod Trail Committee exists to preserve the tradition of dog mushing in Alaska by staging the world premier sled dog race along the Iditarod Trail

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed as a quick reference to the functions and protocols of the Iditarod Dropped Program. Dropped Dogs are those that are discontinued from race participation for a multitude of possible reasons, including estrus, lack of speed, musher strategy, immaturity, attitude, fatigue, illness or injury. The Dropped Dog Program addresses the needs of those dogs pending return to their home kennels. This program has two distinct components which are of equal importance and must be closely coordinated. For purposes of discussion, the components are medicine (medical) and transportation (logistics). In general, medical topics are under the direction of the Chief Veterinarian, and transportation is included in the Race Director's/Marshal's role. Both the Chief Veterinarian and Race Director/Marshal are on the trail during the race, so ultimately, others need to be delegated for many of the important responsibilities in regard to dropped dog medical care and movements.

The Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program is based in Anchorage and is responsible for the continual assessment and overview of the function of the Dropped Dog Program. This responsibility encompasses dropped dog needs as a group and of individuals from the time that they are dropped until they are either safely under the supervision of their own handlers or in the appropriate medical facility as needed. The McGrath, Unalakleet and Anchorage Lead Dropped Dog Veterinarians direct the health care of dropped dogs in their respective locations.

McGrath and Unalakleet Hub Dropped Dog Coordinators are primarily responsible for housing, feeding and organizing the transportation of dogs from the locations of McGrath and Unalakleet, to Anchorage. The Anchorage Hub Dropped Dog Coordinator addresses the care and logistical needs upon return of the dogs from the trail to Anchorage, and ultimately to their home kennels. The Nome Hub Dropped Dog Coordinator role encompasses the same basic responsibilities as those in McGrath and Unalakleet, with the option of returning dogs to their mushers/teams after they arrive in Nome. All Hub Dropped Dog Coordinators work together under the direction of the Race Dropped Dog Coordinator.

Continual interactions will occur between all Hub Dropped Dog Coordinators regarding the logistical needs of dropped dogs. These communications will be overseen by the Race Dropped Dog Coordinator. In the event that problems may be identified, the Race Dropped Dog Coordinator will immediately notify the Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program. Similarly, Lead Hub Dropped Dog Veterinarians will be in communication about any dropped dog health needs. The Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program will oversee these communications and any concerns that may develop, as well. Ultimately, the Chief Veterinarian will be informed by the Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program of any health concerns, and the Race Director/Marshal will be notified by the Race Dropped Dog Coordinator, of any logistical issues.

As a volunteer for the Iditarod, you will be responsible for the well-being of dropped dogs that you may encounter. The following protocols have been established as general guidelines. Those volunteers working with dogs in Anchorage, at the dropped dog hubs of McGrath and Unalakleet, and in the Nome Dog Lot, will have more detailed instructions specific to their roles in those locations.

DROPPED DOG GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following topics will be addressed to better inform you of handling protocols for dropped dogs, regardless of your specific volunteer role:

- **Dropped Dog Overview**
- **Walking Dropped Dogs**
- **Dealing with a Loose Dog**
- **Feeding Dropped Dogs**

Dropped Dog Overview

Dropped dogs are those dogs the mushers leave at checkpoints for any number of potential reasons including health concerns, musculoskeletal injuries, females coming into heat, and/or general attitude problems, to name a few. These dogs are flown from the initial checkpoint to the hubs of McGrath or Unalakleet, or directly to Anchorage or Nome, depending on where in the race the dogs are dropped.

Iditarod Air Force (IAF) pilots and logistics personnel will make every effort to inform checkpoint volunteers of the scheduled arrival of an airplane to pick up dropped dogs. Checkpoint volunteers will assist pilots in moving dropped dogs from the checkpoint to an airplane. Every effort should be made to assure that pilots are not delayed in waiting for dropped dogs to arrive at the landing strip.

Volunteers who have gone through the dog handling workshop in Anchorage are preferred for transferring dogs either from an airplane to a truck or snowmachine or vice versa. In all cases you must communicate with the pilot or driver when you have a firm grip of the dog and he/she can release the dog to you. Once a dog has been transferred to you, YOU are responsible to get the dog safely to the next destination point. The dog may be carried, walked on a leash or guided with your hand securely under the dog's collar. Leashes should NOT be snapped to the collar, but rather, use a leash with a slip ring to prevent a dog from potentially sliding its head out of a collar. Remember you will be walking on snow packed and icy surfaces, and no cleats or snow grippers are permitted, to avoid injuring a dog by accidentally stepping on one of its feet.

Each dog will be assigned the status of “red”, “blue” or “white” to indicate its medical status. A “red” status indicates they may have a severe injury or life threatening condition that requires the attention of a veterinarian immediately. Red tagged dogs receive the highest priority level. “Blue” dogs are those that are need medication, but are stable. “White” dogs are healthy, but are likely tired and need some rest. However, because medical conditions may change over time and distance, all dogs are examined by veterinarians after every flight, including their return to Anchorage.

Each dropped dog must be accompanied by paperwork referred to as the “Dropped Dog Form.” It is imperative that this form moves with the dog, as it contains the records of its medical status, examination and treatment history.

Walking Dropped Dogs

Although a dog may have been dropped, it does not mean it is not ready to run! These are extremely powerful animals. Ideally, two leashes will be used with two volunteers to ensure if one person should fall, the second person will be able to take sole control of the dog. In cases when that is not practical and you are the only person, make sure that you are using a leash that has a slip ring which tightens in the event that a dog might try to back out and escape.

Dealing with a Loose Dog

Our goal is to have NO loose dogs, but we need to be prepared should it happen. During the course of the race, the dogs usually lose weight and their collars may not fit as snugly as they should, which could enable a dog to slip out of its collar. As a volunteer you should be watchful of any dog that appears to be sleeping beyond its normal radius or curled up with another dog. Or, sometimes you might notice a collar on the ground and a dog wandering around another team. At that point, get the attention of the other volunteers and anyone else in the lot by calling out "Loose dog!" If the musher is present at the checkpoint, notify him/her ASAP. Do not make any sudden moves towards the dog if you know you cannot take control of it on your first attempt, as it will most likely run off. Rather, crouch down and slowly move towards the dog until you are close enough to grab it. Another volunteer should have a leash ready to attach to the dog if possible. In the meantime, the rest of the volunteers should encircle the area ready to catch the dog if it should run towards them. Never, however, chase a dog!

In some cases, a dog might not be transferred correctly from one volunteer to another or wiggles out of his collar and may immediately run away. When this happens, the best option is to find the musher, if possible. In addition, a race official must be notified ASAP. Volunteers should try to track what direction the dog has run to the best of their abilities. Typically, local residents may be very helpful in finding the dog. At this point it is a "wait and see" situation. In most cases, the dog will be captured or might even return on its own. They are pack animals, and as such, like to be in the company of other dogs.

Feeding Dropped Dogs

Meal times for dropped dogs are officially scheduled for 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours. However, dropped dogs may be offered a snack following their initial check by the veterinarian(s), to assess appetites. Typically the feeding will consist of a frozen meat that has been soaked in hot water for approximately 30 minutes to make a "soup" which is then ladled over about two cups of kibble.

In the event that a dog is scheduled to fly within one to two hours, it may be permissible to withhold food in preparation for travel. Also, make every attempt to give a dropped dog the

opportunity to defecate and urinate before loading. The pilots appreciate this!

If a dog is not eating from the bowl, bring it to the attention of a veterinarian or other designated volunteer in charge of dropped dogs at that location. Sometimes sled dogs prefer eating right off the ground or need some extra coaxing with hand feeding. Canned food is also available to tempt them. If the dog continues to refuse food and water, it is important to let a veterinarian know so he or she can monitor the dog more closely.

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR TRAIL VETERINARIANS

This outline was developed to summarize the protocols for the ITC handling of dogs dropped from the race.

- 1) The first veterinarian to fly into a checkpoint will be responsible for moving in and/or documenting the presence of two Plano brand “vet boxes” (black color) containing veterinary pharmaceuticals/supplies and one “dropped dog box” (burgundy color) containing two dropped dog chains, two buckets, twenty food bowls and a feeding ladle.
- 2) A dog is dropped from the race for any reason.
- 3) A Checkpoint (Trail) Veterinarian performs a physical exam to assess for any abnormalities.
- 4) Dropped Dog Forms are in quadruplicate and documentation is made by a checkpoint veterinarian after their initial exam is completed.
- 5) The bottom copy of that form is left with the communications personnel to document dropped dogs and confirm the number of dogs remaining in the team upon leaving the checkpoint. The top two copies travel with a dropped dog, ultimately back to Anchorage. The remaining copy stays with the last veterinarian to leave the checkpoint. Forms are updated when treatments are completed.
- 6) The vast majority of dropped dogs are flown either directly back to Anchorage by the IAF or are flown to hubs by the IAF (McGrath, Unalakleet) where they congregate to await commercial transportation back to Anchorage. Those relatively few dogs that are dropped in Elim, White Mountain or Safety are typically flown directly to Nome by the IAF where they are reunited with their teams.
- 7) All dogs are re-examined by veterinarians after arrival in a hub and/or their return Anchorage. Veterinarians are assigned to the hubs and Anchorage that are dedicated specifically to the evaluation and treatment of dropped dogs. Any treatments are noted on the dropped dog forms.
- 8) Dropped dogs that are of concern must be brought inside a shelter for appropriate treatment.

- 9) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours, regardless of the checkpoint. Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 10) Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours.
- 11) All dropped dogs at all checkpoints must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 12) All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.
- 13) Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to communicate with Dropped Dog Veterinarians at the hubs and/or Anchorage regarding all dogs that they may have any concerns about.
- 14) Upon returning to Anchorage, the paperwork is reviewed and and veterinary exams are once again performed. Dropped dogs are the categorized by their needs. The general categories include: 1) normal dogs awaiting transportation to their home kennels; 2) dogs with non-serious conditions requiring treatment and follow-up medications that can be provided by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians at no cost to the musher; 3) non-serious conditions where a dog needs to be transported to the veterinary facility agreed to by the musher on their required Dog Care Agreement Form; and 4) dogs requiring critical care on a 24 hour basis which are transported directly to PET Emergency Clinic.
- 15) Normal dogs (category 1) that are not picked up during the day are transported by the ITC to the Hiland Correctional Center for boarding. When needed, dogs in categories 2 and 3 can be kept overnight under the direct supervision of the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians. Category 2 dogs are discharged to the musher's Local Contact person and are given paperwork listing instructions and recommendations. Category 3 dogs may be transported by the Local Contact person or ITC staff to the appropriate Dog Care Agreement Veterinarian during regular business hours. Category 4 dogs are taken by ITC staff directly to Pet Emergency Clinic.
- 16) Dogs boarded at Hiland Correctional Center are checked daily by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.
- 17) Basic information on all dropped dogs is entered into a computer database at the Lakefront Hotel by lay personnel. Lay personnel are also primarily responsible for contacting the Local Contact person for each dog and coordinating transportation. The database is presented to the Chief Veterinarian after the race is completed for the purpose of performing a post-race analysis, which is included in a board report.
- 18) Anchorage dropped dog personnel are instructed to send the top copy of the Dropped Dog Form with the dog when it is discharged from the ITC. The other copy that traveled to Anchorage with the dog is to remain with the ITC as a paper record.

19) All Dropped Dog and Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to inform the Chief Veterinarian of any dogs deemed to need critical care. As stated in the rules, the Chief Veterinarian has access to medical records on any dog sent to a veterinary facility for up to 72 hours after they are released from the direct care of ITC veterinarians.

Dropped Dog Checkpoint Protocols

Mushers must complete their part of the Dropped Dog Form before releasing a canine from competition. An explanation of their reason(s) for dropping is requested along with the musher's signature. Usually, if an illness or injury is present, a veterinarian has already examined the animal. If this has not yet taken place, an examination needs to be performed as soon as possible. It is not uncommon to identify conditions in addition to the ones listed as reasons for dropping. Space is provided for veterinarians to document previous relevant medications administered and current treatments, as well as their names, in the event that follow up verbal communications are needed.

The following list demonstrates the top five reasons for dropping dogs during a long distance race:

- Fatigue
- Shoulder injuries
- Carpal injuries
- Foot lesions
- Diarrhea

Certainly, we must be prepared to address any abnormality, but statistically speaking, these are the ones with the greatest frequency. Remember, "Fatigue" may be a manifestation of some other underlying illness or injury, so please make sure that you give those dogs a thorough exam.

We will have four staff veterinarians working with dropped dogs in Anchorage, on a rotating basis. They will be providing routine evaluations of all dogs as they return to Anchorage. Obviously, a dog's medical status can change while in transit. Please complete the information on the Dropped Dog Forms to the best of your ability to maximize communications. Also, make sure that you discuss any medical CONCERNS in regard to dropped dogs, DIRECTLY with these Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.

For checkpoints east of the Alaska Range (Yentna, Skwentna, Finger Lake and Rainy Pass Lodge), dropped dogs are flown directly back to Anchorage in the small private airplanes (Cessna 180s and 185s) of the Iditarod Air Force (IAF). Once teams have crossed the Alaska Range into the interior, most dropped dogs are flown by the IAF from the smaller checkpoints to the hubs of McGrath or Unalakleet, from which they are typically transported back to Anchorage by commercial carriers (Northern Air Cargo, Pen Air and others). In addition to the Anchorage staff, PLEASE keep the

dropped dog personnel at those hubs informed of dogs needing special attention/care. Checkpoint communications personnel will have all necessary phone numbers.

As veterinarians, we must obviously address illnesses and injuries affecting all dogs during the race. However, dropped dogs are also dependent on us for food and shelter in remote checkpoints. Musher are advised to provide for these needs while at the checkpoint, but once they depart, we assume this additional role.

As noted in the outline above, the first veterinarian into a checkpoint must have the dropped dog chains (2), bowls (20) and feeding equipment (buckets, ladles), as well as the veterinary supplies (two Plano brand “vet boxes”). Make sure the dropped dog chain is solidly anchored at both ends so as to prevent slackness from developing. A site should be chosen that is sheltered from wind as much as possible, and close enough to checkpoint activities to allow for frequent observation. Straw is available for bedding and serves as a great insulator. Musher are asked to write the dogs’ names on their collars for easy identification. Make sure the collars and cable snaps are secure before leaving a dog. Escapees are, at best, a major distraction! Dogs experiencing medical conditions that adversely affect their ability to withstand the elements must be brought inside. All dogs must be observed at least every two hours, and more frequently in inclement weather conditions.

Meals are to be provided at three times daily, specifically at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours. Since these dogs are resting, their caloric requirements will be significantly reduced. Commercial diets are adequate, but they do enjoy the addition of meats. Water should be heated separately and added to the kibble and meat immediately prior to serving. We do have injectable Vitamin B-complex, which may help stimulate marginal appetites. If a dog does not eat at the regular meal time, it must be noted on the dropped dog form.

When air travel is required, try to avoid feeding within one to two hours prior to a flight. Walking them for a few minutes before loading to allow for defecation and urination is also wise. The pilots are most appreciative of this!

Dropped Dog Locations Reporting

Dropped Dog Coordinators at hub locations and Communications Personnel at all other checkpoints will report dropped dogs located at their checkpoints to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours. Additional information shall include their tag numbers, sex and color of paper collar.

Dropped Dog Forms

Dropped dog forms are in QUADRUPPLICATE. The bottom copy (4th) needs to be given to the communications personnel shortly after the musher drops the dog. It is NOT NECESSARY that the bottom copy has your medical notations—its purpose is to help comms keep an accurate account of dropped dogs located at the checkpoint, as well as the number of dogs leaving a checkpoint with any given team. The top two copies (1st and 2nd) will travel with a dropped dog as it departs from a checkpoint, and the remaining copy (3rd) stays at the

checkpoint until the last veterinarian leaves, who will then take the 3rd copies for all dropped dogs with him/her. Those copies (3rd) need to be forwarded to me or hub dropped dog personnel at Anchorage, McGrath, Unalakleet or Nome. In addition to using the “paper trail,” please send copies via fax or e-mail to Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians in cases where the dog’s condition status may be serious or critical. DON’T forget to verbally communicate with the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians regarding serious or critical cases, as well.

A “Condition Code” system has been developed for the Dropped Dog Forms, whereby illnesses are designated by four letters, and musculoskeletal injuries by three letters followed by L, R, LF, RF, LH or RH to indicate the appropriate anatomical location.

Also indicated on the Dropped Dog Form is the “Condition Status” box. As presented on the form, there are three designated conditions shown, including “Red”, “Blue” and “White.” Dogs not in need of medications are officially considered to be “White.” Dogs with potentially life-threatening conditions are designated “Red” and are identified by red flagging placed around the neck.

A “Red” collared dog is in need of air transportation to a medical facility in Anchorage ASAP. The Iditarod Air Force (IAF) will divert flights as needed to accomplish this. Obviously, we will do what is best for the dog in all situations, but please do not be casual about such designation due to the fact that a “Red” designation can dramatically impact flight schedules and staff movements on short notice.

All other dogs that are being medicated have historically been classified as “Blue.” Obviously, the condition of dogs receiving medication, but not in need of critical (“Red”) care, may vary from very minor to more serious. In order to avoid having numerous category designations that take up space on the forms and involve too much “hair splitting,” we have for several years designated more serious “Blue” dogs, i.e., pneumonia, myopathy or gastric ulcer suspects, requiring very close monitoring, as “High Blue,” although that is not printed on the form.

Air Travel Requirements for Dropped Dogs

All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.

Summary

In review, the following protocols need to be closely adhered to:

- 1) As soon as possible, present the bottom copy (4th) of the Dropped Dog Form to the communications personnel, so that can keep a record of dropped dogs at that checkpoint.
- 2) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours.

- 3) Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 4) All dropped dogs must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 5) All jackets/coats must be removed from dogs before air travel.
- 6) Do not double box dogs for air travel.
- 7) Pilots need to be informed verbally of the need to maintain temperatures at zero degrees F for flights carrying dropped dogs.

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR ANCHORAGE VETERINARIANS

Topics

1. Anchorage Dropped Dog Protocol
2. Anchorage Discharge Instructions Template

So, you are going to be a Dropped Dog Veterinarian located in Anchorage, Alaska. What does this mean?????

The purpose of the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians is to triage and treat ALL dogs returning from the Iditarod trail before they are returned to local handlers, mushers, dog yards, and in some cases, other veterinary hospitals.

Before the Iditarod begins, all mushers must fill-out and sign an “Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race Dog Care Agreement” which designates both:

1. Local handlers that are responsible for picking up and housing any dogs taken out of the race until the dogs can be returned to their regular homes/dog yards.
2. A local veterinary hospital with whom they have left a monetary deposit for which continued care of injuries/illness/etc. can take place when released from the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.

The contact information for these local handlers and local veterinary hospitals will be generally kept on spreadsheets on the computer in the official dropped dog headquarters (2 portable trailers- Conex boxes- set up behind the Lakefront Hotel- one is the office and one is the medical trailer). This will be accessible to both yourselves as well as the Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator. You will have a key to these trailers.

Dropped dogs are collected from all checkpoints along the trail and flown back to Anchorage. Early in the race, small commuter planes (Iditarod Airforce planes) will bring small shipments of dogs to Anchorage directly from these checkpoints; however, as the race continues, dropped dogs may be brought from the checkpoint at which they were dropped, to a larger hub checkpoint (MacGrath, Unalakleet, Nome). These hub checkpoints have Dropped Dog Veterinarians to care for them until they can be shipped back to Anchorage (with the exception of Nome- these dogs do not always get shipped back to Anchorage). These dogs will likely arrive in larger shipments on cargo flights (sometimes up to 80 dogs at a time). Since the distance from Anchorage increases as the race continues, longer flights are necessary to get these dogs back to Anchorage. Subsequently, these planes generally come in the later afternoon to evening. However, Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians should expect to get multiple arrivals of dogs at anytime of the day (generally from 09:00-23:00 hours). The small

commuter planes do not fly at night, therefore small shipments of dogs coming in on these Iditarod Airforce planes will arrive during daylight hours only.

Animals that are dropped from the race will arrive to the Lakefront Hotel in one of several different ways:

1. In small commuter planes (Iditarod Airforce planes) on the frozen lake out behind the hotel
2. On trucks coming from the local airport where the dogs have arrived either on small commuter planes (up to ~7-10 dogs), or cargo planes (up to ~80 dogs)

The dogs will be unloaded from the planes and transported to the Lakefront by dog trucks by the Anchorage Dropped Dog team (Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator/handlers/volunteers) and tied up along a chain running along the fence at the back of the hotel. This is where the Dropped Dog Veterinarians will examine the dogs. Every dropped dog must be examined by an Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarian before it is released. The only dogs that are not examined (barring any injuries sustained during transit to Anchorage) are the scratched team dogs (dogs from a team that has quit the race). These scratched team dogs may be picked up directly from the airport in Anchorage by their local handlers, so you may not even see them.

While working in Anchorage, you will have numerous helpers with varying experience. Regardless of their experience, they are eager to help and are invaluable. All of them will have received, at minimum, a “crash course” in their Anchorage duties. New volunteers will be limited to helping shovel snow, clean up poop, bedding and feeding them once examined; while the more experienced volunteer (aka often as Handlers) can do this as well as help unload and load dogs on and off planes and trucks, and be holders +/- scribe for your exam. If a lay staff member is your scribe (since vet techs are not always available for this) is good to familiarize yourself with the best terms to help them write short-hand- terms that they should have be prepped for by the Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator (i.e. HR for heart rate, RR for respiratory rate, mm for mucous membranes, CRT for capillary refill time, LF/RF/LH/RH for each limb, etc.). Please refer to the “Dropped Dog Form” for areas that will need to be filled in to familiarize yourself with terms you will be dictating to them.

Each dog will have an ID tag hanging from its collar (team number and dog letter) which should match the number and letter on their paperwork (“Dropped Dog Form”) which should accompany them from the checkpoint from which they were dropped to Anchorage. Once an animal has been examined, straw should be placed on the ground by a volunteer for the dogs to lie down. Once all dogs have been examined, this is the best time to feed them. If you try to feed each dog as you go, neighboring dogs can be harder to examine as they try to get the other dogs’ food. Therefore, it is best to feed them in bulk after exams are completed.

Referring to the “Dropped Dog Form”, the top white and second yellow copy should accompany the dog back to Anchorage. However, sometimes the paperwork gets lost in the shuffle along the trail and there may be only the white or yellow copy that makes it back to Anchorage. If this is the case, just complete your exam on whatever is provided and photocopy

it. All of your notes should, ideally, be included on this “Dropped Dog Form” (except for “Discharge Instructions” that you may create- see notes later referring to this) including your signature at the bottom of the form before release of the dog.

Once all dogs have been examined, it is best to convene in the dropped dog trailer with your colleague(s) to go over paperwork (including signing the forms), dispense medication as needed. If medications are needed, they are dispensed into sandwich bags with an index card describing the drug name, tablets size, and instructions (i.e. Clavamox 250mg tablets- Give ONE tablet by mouth twice daily with food). It is a good idea to have a supply of these medications pre-made in their respective sandwich bags to make the process go more quickly. This is best performed on the 1-2 days leading up to the start of the race or during the down-time while awaiting shipments of dogs to examine. Try not to dispense more than a few days worth of medication so supplies do not run out (refer to supplies/medications normally provided in communications from the Chief Veterinarian). As some supplies come back from the checkpoints, feel free to use these from those checkpoint boxes as well. (**Remember, each dog does have a designated local DVM where they can be instructed to go for follow-up, including refill of medications**). The dispensed medications are then stapled to the white copy of the “Dropped Dog Form” and both the white/yellow copies and medications are given to the Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator. The Coordinator will have the local handler sign the “Dropped Dog Form” and give them the white copy with the medications attached. If a dog is getting discharge instructions (see notes about this form)- a photocopy of this must be made so we have one stapled to our copy of the “Dropped Dog Form” as well as one for the handler.

Triage aspect of the Dropped Dog position:

All dogs are designated a life color status when they are dropped (RED= critical, BLUE= stable but can become critical anytime, WHITE= stable).

Examples:

- RED status- weak/lethargic dog with pale mucous membranes- suspected GIT ulceration; coughing dog with increased respiratory rate and effort +/- purulent nasal discharge and lethargy- suspect pneumonia
- BLUE status- coughing dog that appears relatively normal otherwise; dog dropped for lameness that needs analgesia
- WHITE status- dog dropped for musher strategy; dog dropped for lameness that is no longer lame; dog in heat

When examining a dog, it is important to look at the entire animal, not just the area of the body for which the dog was originally dropped as their problems and status can change during their time of initial drop to their release from Anchorage. Ideally, every dog should have their temperature taken when in Anchorage.

Once dogs are examined by the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians, they will go to one of four locations:

Once dogs are examined by the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians, they will go to one of four locations:

1. **Released to the local handler/contact:** These dogs are picked up from the hotel. They are deemed healthy enough to be returned to a dog yard (where they will likely be chained outside with access to an individual dog house) and have minimal extra needs except for some PO meds or PT instructions.
2. **Hiland Correctional facility** (~30 min drive from the Lakefront Hotel- 9101 Hesterberg Road, Eagle River, Alaska 99577): These dogs are stable and are in similar condition as those that can just be released to the local handler, however they are the dogs that the local handler cannot come collect before nighttime. This happens often for the dogs arriving at the Lakefront Hotel late in the evening. If they go to the correctional facility, they will be picked up by the local handler at the correctional facility the next day. The correctional facility has a two-sided half-walled sheltered straw-bedded area for these dogs to stay. The inmates will be able to feed, apply ointments, and medicate these dogs as instructed.
3. **Overnight at the Lakefront Hotel Dropped Dog Facility:** These dogs should be kept in the Dropped Dog Medical Trailer only during the time needed to get them either to their dog yard the following day, or to their designated local veterinary hospital the following day (as selected by the Musher prior to the start of the Iditarod as previously mentioned). They are stable, but may need indoor shelter and closer supervision than can be provided by a local handler in the dog yard. These dogs will be supervised through the night by the Anchorage LVTs.

****REMEMBER**** If you get any dog to Anchorage during the early hours of the day and they are stable but need some diagnostics/treatment, please try to send them to their registered local DVM- the local handlers will pick them up from the hotel and be instructed to take them directly to this local DVM

4. **Pet ER** (2320 East Dowling Road, Anchorage, Alaska- a 24-hr Emergency Veterinary Hospital). Dogs requiring this care are deemed unstable and need emergency treatment, more than can be provided by the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians. They require 24-hr hospitalization/treatment/DVM supervision.

If an animal is taken to Pet ER, further treatment and hospitalization is at the discretion of the DVM at this hospital. The Anchorage Lead Veterinarian must be notified of any animals that need to be sent to Pet ER. They, in turn, will contact Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program with information about any PetER dogs. The Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program will be in communication with Pet ER for status

updates, keep local musher informed on those updates, and ultimately coordinate release of these dogs with the local contact once the dog is deemed stable (both by Pet ER DVM and Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program).

Every animal taken to Pet ER, once released to the local handler/DVM, will be followed for up to 72 hours (the required time we are responsible for following their health). Their information should be written on the **“Dropped Dog follow-up sheet”** and contacted at least daily.

Discharge Instructions

If, at any point, the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarian feels that more detailed information must be given to the local handler/contact, please give them a Dropped Dog Discharge Instructions Form (dogs on 2-3 medications or warrant more close watch once released). HOWEVER, it is unreasonable to assume there is time to give discharge instructions to every animal that requires treatment (ex. a dog released on a course of NSAIDs that is otherwise stable).

Hiland Correctional Facility

All dogs that are sent to the Correctional facility get their exam before they are sent there in the evening, and should receive an exam the following morning before release. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians to return the following morning (this may require one or multiple DVMs +/- vet techs +/- handlers/volunteers to go there in the morning- generally around 08:00 hours). It is best to touch base with the Dropped Dog Coordinator as to when to expect the next shipment of dogs arriving in order to know whether one vet should wait at the Lakefront Hotel for this, or if both can go to the correctional facility. You will find that each day will be different.

To summarize:

All dogs should be out of your hands within the first 12-24 hours of arrival to the Lakefront. They go either to:

1. Directly to local handler after arrival at the Lakefront
2. Hiland Correctional facility overnight and to local handler next day
3. At Lakefront in Dog Drop trailer
4. Pet ER

*** Any issues, contact the Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program.

Dogs to take special medical note of:

- Dogs that do not eat.
- Dogs whose temperature is above 102.5 F after being settled for more than 30minutes.

- Dogs that seem overly subdued and curl up immediately upon arrival to the Lakefront (with or without straw).
- Any dog that is coughing or has purulent nasal discharge.
- Any dog with an increased respiratory rate.
- Any dog with non-weight bearing lameness.
- Any dog dropped for ADR or not-pulling without any noticeable lameness or orthopedic problem.

Notes:

Always give your best recommendations when discharging these dogs. If you think the dog needs to be housed inside, then instruct so.

The most common injuries that you will see are described in previous communications from the Chief Veterinarian. Please review them.

Remember, these dogs are endurance athletes, and a lot of orthopedic injuries are immediately treated by rest associated with being dropped from the race. Not all lame animals require several days of analgesics (specifically NSAIDs). These animals are prone to gastric ulceration already, so barring the need for pronounced analgesia (maybe combining NSAID and opioid), try to use something other than an NSAID, like tramadol and gabapentin, if possible.

In theory, every dog should have a full TPR taken at every dropped dog location, regardless of the reason they were dropped. There have been cases where an animal was dropped for lameness, but developed pneumonia which is obviously more of an issue than the lameness.

Be systematic about your approach to each shipment of dogs- once you build a routine, it will help you process shipments of dogs faster. Unless a dog appears more critical, it is best to just start at one side of the line, and go dog-by-dog.

Do not let the volunteers or the dropped dog staff rush you. Often, the local handlers will show up to collect their dogs before you have finished examining them. Take your time to be complete- do not release a dog you feel uncomfortable releasing. Remember, you are a volunteer too, and need to be comfortable with your medical decisions.

You will be given a vehicle to travel around Anchorage between the Correctional facility, Pet ER, etc.

Lastly, but definitely not least, have fun!!! The dogs, Dropped Dog team, fellow veterinarians, volunteers, pilots, and all that make this race what it is, are enjoyable to meet and work with- take advantage of this and all they have to offer!!!

Critical Care Policy Explanation for Musers

Appropriate care of dogs dropped from the race is an important aspect of our roles as stewards of these animals. Every effort will be made by the ITC and the veterinary staff to achieve the best medical outcome, while attempting to minimize costs to mushers. Most dropped dogs are assessed, receive basic treatment when needed and are then released to a musher's local contact person by our staff, at no charge to the musher. However, some dogs require additional veterinary care beyond our staff capabilities. The Dog Care Agreement Form addresses non-critical veterinary care that may be needed during normal business hours. However, a very small number of dropped dogs require hospitalization in an emergency facility (PET Emergency). The following are potential reasons: serious/critical conditions requiring 24 hour treatment/monitoring and serious/critical conditions needing immediate treatment after arrival in Anchorage.

Obviously, the condition of a dog can change for the better or worse between the time it is dropped and when it arrives in Anchorage. All dropped dogs are examined by ITC veterinarians after their arrival in Anchorage. The decision to send a dog to PET Emergency will be made by the Chief Veterinarian and/or Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program. Reasonable efforts are made to inform mushers of situations where hospitalization at PET is needed.

As stated in rule 41, financial responsibility for dog care shall be borne by the musher. Please budget for this possible scenario.

IDITAROD 2018 - DROP DOG DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Date/Time _____

Dog ID Tag Number _____

Dog's Name _____

Musher Name _____

Your Dog has received medical evaluation and treatment from the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinary Team. You dog is deemed injured/sick enough to warrant these more detailed discharge instructions in addition to his/her ITC Dropped Dog form. If you have any questions regarding medical care, please call: 248-MUSH (6874) where you will be connected to the Head Veterinarian of Dropped Dog (Dr. Erika Friedrich).

Diagnosis when dropped: _____

Status when released from Anchorage: _____

We are releasing this patient: _____ to go home with Handler/Owner/Musher
 _____ to transfer directly to local veterinary care

If transferring directly to a local veterinarian, list name/address/telephone # of veterinary clinic below:

___ **No medications dispensed from Anchorage Dog Drop.**
 ___ **We are dispensing medication for this patient. See below:**

Medication #1		# Pills Dispensed		Give with food?	Yes	No
Instructions					Next dose due	

Medication #2		# Pills Dispensed		Give with food?	Yes	No
Instructions					Next dose due	

Medication #3		# Pills Dispensed		Give with food?	Yes	No
Instructions					Next dose due	

___ This patient **does need** a recheck exam at your regular veterinarian in _____ days.

___ New medications or refill/longer course of above prescribed medications will be needed.

Please recheck with local veterinarian clinic immediately if this patient has any of the following signs:

- labored breathing
- vomiting or progressive diarrhea
- new or progressive limp
- new or progressive cough
- not eating/not drinking
- painful
- congestion or nose discharge
- other _____

Veterinarian name: _____ Date/Time _____

(please print)

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR ANCHORAGE LAY PERSONNEL

As a volunteer for Iditarod Anchorage Dog Drop, you will work as part of a team on a shift caring for dropped dogs that are flown in from the trail. Your responsibilities may include assisting with unloading dogs from airplanes, loading & unloading dogs from dog trucks, caring for dogs outside (feeding, laying straw, covering them with blankets, shoveling feces), assisting the veterinarians as dogs are examined, checking microchip numbers of the dogs with a reader and/or maintenance tasks such as filling water buckets, paperwork, washing dog bowls, all while assuring the safety and security of the dogs.

This can be a physical job. Loading & unloading dogs that potentially weigh 60-70 pounds is not for everyone. For each shift, the dog drop coordinator will select who is allowed to do this. Keep in mind, this is not personal. It is first and foremost about the safety and security of the dogs. The majority of time is spent caring for the dogs AFTER they are safely secured to a line. It is important to inform the dog drop coordinator verbally or in writing, if you are uncomfortable with any task.

The shifts will be 4-5 hours long with the evening shift the second week often extending into the following morning. You will be working with 5-10 other volunteers as well as 2-3 veterinarians and 1-2 veterinary technicians. Tasks are shared so everyone gets experience with everything. All work is coordinated by the Anchorage Dog Drop Coordinator and any concerns and questions need to be addressed to him/her.

Most of the work is outside, so dress appropriately. It can be warm and sunny, but often it is windy and cold. Dress in layers and bring an outer layer you don't mind getting 'doggie.' Outer work gloves with a tight thin warm inner glove work best. Bring a headlamp for evening work.

Our volunteer location is at the Lakefront Hotel, Iditarod Race Headquarters, 4800 Spenard Road, Anchorage. The Dropped Dog Facility (mobile trailer- Conex box) is located in the Lakefront Hotel rear parking lot. Check with the Anchorage Dog Drop Coordinator for your assigned shift. The dogs are cared for in back on a low fence line in between the hotel and the lake.

One of our primary tasks is to help these dogs feel safe. When they are dropped on the trail, their musher and teammates have left them behind. They are left with strangers to care for them, and by the time they reach us, they likely have already travelled through one of the major hubs (McGrath or Unalakleet), where they were cared for by more unfamiliar personnel. Although their safety and well-being is a top priority, some will be afraid as a result of many new experiences. Take extra care in helping them feel safe and secure. Follow the lead of the experienced dog drop volunteers.

The following are our tasks listed in order of the process:

Unloading Dogs From Airplanes

Dogs arrive in Anchorage via smaller planes on Lake Hood directly behind the Lakefront Hotel, small planes on wheels that land on smaller airstrips and medium size aircraft that land at Anchorage International Airport. All are within minutes of the Lakefront Hotel. The smaller aircraft (Iditarod Air Force) can carry up to 10-12 dogs, and will typically land on Lake Hood. We will approach the airplane only when it is safely stopped, with propeller off, and after eye contact with the pilot has been made. The pilot will hand off a dog ONLY after you indicate you have a firm grip on the dog. A “firm grip” is defined as at least 2 fingers grasping from under the collar and/or the use of a choke leash. Dogs are walked quickly to the dropped dog line and secured by snaps to the “D” rings on their collars. Dogs are spaced about 20 chain links apart. The process continues until all dogs are unloaded.

If unloading from a larger freight plane, dogs are handed off from an individual located at the freight plane door to you, only you have indicated that you have established a firm grip. They are then immediately loaded into a dog box on a dog truck. There should always be an individual at the dog truck to help load dogs into boxes and confirm that the box door is closed and latched. The dogs are then driven to the Lakefront Hotel, unloaded and placed on line as explained above.

None of the above tasks are performed by anyone without approval and/or being assigned by Dog Drop Coordinator. Training for new volunteers will be provided if extra hands are needed.

Red, Blue & White Tagged Dogs

Each dog will be assigned the status of “red”, “blue” or “white” to indicate its medical status. A “red” status indicates they may have a severe injury or life threatening condition that requires the attention of a veterinarian immediately. Most often, the Dog Drop Coordinator and a veterinarian will already know that these dogs are coming. Red tagged dogs receive the highest priority level. When dogs are placed on the line, the left end, as you face the hotel from the lake, are for “Red” tagged dogs. “Blue” dogs are those that need medication, but are stable. Only red and blue dogs will actually have colored surveyor tape attached to their collars to indicate their medical status. “White” dogs are healthy, but are likely tired and need some rest. However, because medical conditions may change over time and distance, all dogs are examined by veterinarians after every flight, including their return to Anchorage.

Each dropped dog must be accompanied by paperwork referred to as the “Dropped Dog Form.” It is imperative that this form moves with the dog, as it contains the records of its medical status, examination and treatment history.

Lining The Dogs Out

Once the dogs are placed on the line, our task is to ensure the safety and security of dogs.

There will always be at least one volunteer patrolling the line to keep unknown people away, to watch for loose dogs and to be sure that no dogs are taken by handlers without signed paperwork. After securing a dog to the dropped dog line, time is allowed for the dogs to get used to their new surroundings, stretch and take care of business. The temptation will be to shovel up the feces, but unless it is healthy and solid, it needs to be left for a veterinarian to see. Diarrhea, loose stools and blood in the stool are something veterinarians will want to see when doing their evaluations.

Documenting Dog Microchip Numbers

We begin documenting the dogs' microchip numbers with a handheld reader. The purpose of this is to confirm their identities and to have a record of their order on the line. Two volunteers accomplish this as a team; one checks the dog collar tag number and letter and reads the microchip number, while the other notes numbers on a clipboard and moves down the line.

Veterinary Examinations

Once the dogs have had their numbers recorded, veterinarians utilizing dog drop volunteers as scribes, will perform their examinations. Veterinary Technicians will assist with medication and more technical support. Each dog should be accompanied by a Dropped Dog Form which originated from the checkpoint at which the dog was dropped. They contain the medical notes from previous veterinary exams, as well as any treatments administered. Veterinarians will not start their exams without the Dropped Dog Form. While a veterinarian examines the dog, scribes will assist in making additional notes on that form. Veterinarians may sign, date and attach any additional necessary information at later time. When the dog is later released, a copy (top) of the Dropped Dog Form goes with each dog. The remaining copy stays in the Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator's office.

Dog Care

After the veterinarians have completed their examinations, food may be offered. FYI, all checkpoints are scheduled to feed dropped dogs at the specific times of 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours, except for dogs that are within one to two hours of departing on a scheduled flight. A notation should be recorded on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that did not eat a regular scheduled meal.

Buckets of water are filled in the hotel. Dry food is measured into bowls and water is added. Each dog shall have its own bowl. For those with strong appetites, seconds and thirds are offered. Upon completion of the meal, dog bowls are picked up, stacked and washed later. If any dog doesn't eat, immediately inform a veterinarian and/or the Dog Drop Coordinator.

Next, straw is placed on the ground for the dogs to rest on. As dogs settle down, fleece blankets are available to lay over the dogs. Often, this is a time when some dogs may want to be rubbed or petted, but most will want to sleep or rest. It is important to monitor all dogs

from this point and alert a veterinarian and/or the Dog Drop Coordinator if coughing, raspy breathing, shivering, diarrhea, vomiting or anything abnormal is noticed.

Loose Dogs

The goal is to NEVER have a loose dog, but occasionally it happens. Everyone's first instinct is to chase the dog, but that is what we DON'T do. Whoever is closest to the dog or sees it first, yells "LOOSE DOG"!!! If dog stays in the area we carefully surround the dog and get low to see if it will approach anyone. If it approaches you, slowly reach for the collar while remaining in a low profile, and bring the dog back to the line. Check the collar and neckline for tightening or replacement. If the dog runs away, the Anchorage Dog Drop Coordinator needs to be contacted immediately. Monitor where the dog is going as much as possible, without chasing it. Often, the dog will return to the area, since it may have teammates on the line. If not, other techniques will be utilized by the experienced dog drop volunteers, so follow their lead.

Releasing Dogs To Handlers

Dogs will only be released to their handlers (Local Contact persons) after they come in to the office and sign the Dropped Dog Form. Once the dogs are released, they become the responsibility of the handlers. In cases where the dogs have been treated, follow-up calls are done by the veterinarians to assess their recovery. When a handler comes around to the back of the Lakefront Hotel, they must have a signed form for each dog to be able to pick them up.

Transporting Dogs To Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility

Not all handlers can pick up the dogs on the same day the dog arrives, and dogs are not routinely kept overnight at the Lakefront Hotel. For many years, inmates at the Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility have had the opportunity to care for the Iditarod dropped dogs who are otherwise healthy ("White" medical status). They earn the privilege to do this. Of the 400+ women incarcerated there, about 30-40 help with the dogs. Dogs are loaded into boxes on dog trucks by volunteers at the Lakefront Hotel, and are then transported to the facility, which is located 30-45 minutes north of Anchorage. Upon their arrival at the correctional facility, the dogs are unloaded and passed to an inmate who walks the dog to a line, after being informed of the tag number and sex of the dog. The area is well lighted 24/7 and located under a shelter filled with straw and parallel chains, which accommodates approximately 75 dogs. While there, dogs receive the same general care that is offered at the Lakefront Hotel. Veterinarians travel to the correctional facility daily to recheck each dog. The facility is behind a locked gate and patrolled by prison guards. There, these dogs are released to handlers by the prisoners and guards, usually within 24 hours.

The process starts again the next day with more dropped dogs. Keep in mind that we are subject to weather and there may be periods when airplanes are prohibited from flying. Idle times will occur, but all shifts must be staffed in case dogs fly in, since weather can change quickly. Patience is required. Most people will have at least two shifts, so they will have a

chance to experience caring for the dogs.

If you have any questions, please contact the Anchorage Dog Drop Coordinator.

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR HUB (McGRATH, UNALAKLEET) VETERINARIANS

Dropped Dog Program Overview

Thank you very much for volunteering to work as a Dropped Dog Veterinarian in the hubs of McGrath and Unalakleet! For those who have done this before, you are very familiar with the routine. A brief overview of the entire dropped dog program is as follows:

- 1) The first veterinarian to fly into a checkpoint will be responsible for moving in and/or documenting the presence of two Plano brand “vet boxes” (black color) containing veterinary pharmaceuticals/supplies and a “dropped dog box” (burgundy color) containing two dropped dog chains, two buckets, twenty food bowls and a feeding ladle.
- 2) A dog is dropped from the race for any reason.
- 3) A Checkpoint (Trail) Veterinarian performs a physical exam to assess for any abnormalities.
- 4) Dropped Dog Forms are in quadruplicate and documentation is made by a checkpoint veterinarian after their initial exam is completed.
- 5) The bottom copy of that form is left with the communications personnel to document dropped dogs and confirm the number of dogs remaining in the team upon leaving the checkpoint. The top two copies travel with a dropped dog, ultimately back to Anchorage. The remaining copy stays with the last veterinarian to leave the checkpoint. Forms are updated when treatments are completed.
- 6) The vast majority of dropped dogs are flown either directly back to Anchorage by the IAF or are flown to hubs by the IAF (McGrath, Unalakleet) where they congregate to await commercial transportation back to Anchorage. Those relatively few dogs that are dropped in Elim, White Mountain or Safety are typically flown directly to Nome by the IAF where they are reunited with their teams.
- 7) All dogs are re-examined by veterinarians after arrival in a hub and/or their return Anchorage. Veterinarians are assigned to the hubs and Anchorage that are dedicated specifically to the evaluation and treatment of dropped dogs. Any treatments are noted on the dropped dog forms.

- 8) Dropped dogs that are of concern must be brought inside a shelter for appropriate treatment.
- 9) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours, regardless of the checkpoint. Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 10) Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours.
- 11) All dropped dogs at all checkpoints must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 12) All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.
- 13) Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to communicate with Dropped Dog Veterinarians at the hubs and/or Anchorage regarding all dogs that they may have any concerns about.
- 14) Upon returning to Anchorage, the paperwork is reviewed and and veterinary exams are once again performed. Dropped dogs are the categorized by their needs. The general categories include: 1) normal dogs awaiting transportation to their home kennels; 2) dogs with non-serious conditions requiring treatment and follow-up medications that can be provided by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians at no cost to the musher; 3) non-serious conditions where a dog needs to be transported to the Dropped Dog Veterinary Facility agreed to by the musher on their required Dog Care Agreement Form; and 4) dogs requiring critical care on a 24 hour basis which are transported directly to PET Emergency Clinic.
- 15) Normal dogs (category 1) that are not picked up during the day are transported by the ITC to the Hiland Correctional Center for boarding. When needed, dogs in categories 2 and 3 can be kept overnight under the direct supervision of the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians. Category 2 dogs are discharged to the musher's Local Contact person and are given paperwork listing instructions and recommendations. Category 3 dogs may be transported by the Local Contact person or ITC staff to the appropriate Dog Care Agreement Veterinarian during regular business hours. Category 4 dogs are taken by ITC staff directly to Pet Emergency Clinic.
- 16) Dogs boarded at Hiland Correctional Center are checked daily by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.
- 17) Basic information on all dropped dogs is entered into a computer database at the Lakefront Hotel by lay personnel. Lay personnel are also primarily responsible for contacting the Local Contact person for each dog and coordinating transportation. The database is presented to the Chief Veterinarian after the race is completed for the purpose of performing a post-race analysis, which is included in a board report.

- 18) Anchorage dropped dog personnel are instructed to send the top copy of the Dropped Dog Form with the dog when it is discharged from the ITC. The other copy that traveled to Anchorage with the dog is to remain with the ITC as a paper record.
- 19) All Dropped Dog and Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to inform the Chief Veterinarian of any dogs deemed to need critical care. As stated in the rules, the Chief Veterinarian has access to medical records on any dog sent to a veterinary facility for up to 72 hours after they are released from the direct care of ITC veterinarians.

Hub (McGrath, Unalakleet) Dropped Dog Veterinarian Protocols

As Hub Dropped Dog Veterinarians, our first priority will be to perform a physical exam on each dog shortly after their arrival. Conditions can change during air travel from a smaller checkpoint to a hub location, so it imperative that they be re-assessed. Any treatments will be continued or initiated as necessary, then documented on the Dropped Dog Form that came with the dog. In the event that the Dropped Dog Form has not accompanied the dog in transit, you must contact the checkpoint from which the flight was initiated to get the information. You should already have been informed by a veterinarian from the originating checkpoint of any dogs that are of concern. Always, contact the Chief Veterinarian and the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians to inform them of any dogs deemed to be of concern, and especially those that might be in serious or critical condition. Make sure that the Dropped Dog Forms are in order and travel with the dogs on their return flight to Anchorage.

Beyond this, you will be ultimately responsible for the general care of dropped dogs while in the hubs. At these locations, you will be assisted by a staff of lay personnel. Although not veterinarians, some of these volunteers will be veterinary technicians, and the remainder will be people with strong backgrounds of working with dogs in the kennel environment.

Vehicles (snowmachines and/or four wheelers) will be designated for dropped dog personnel at the hubs. Specifically designed sleds will be pulled by these vehicles for the purpose of transporting dropped dogs at the hub locations.

Make sure the dropped dog chains are solidly anchored at both ends so as to prevent slackness from developing. The dropped dog chains will be located at a site that is sheltered from wind as much as possible. Straw will be provided for bedding and insulation for all dropped dogs. Make sure the collars and cable snaps are secure before leaving a dog. Always use a slip ring leash when moving dogs. Escapees are, at best, a major distraction!

Housing boxes have been constructed for all dogs that are to remain outside in inclement weather conditions. Dogs experiencing medical conditions that adversely affect their ability to withstand the elements must be brought inside, for which Sky Kennels will be provided. Remember, all dropped dogs must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in severe weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.

Meals are to be provided at the mandated times of 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours. For those of you who might not be familiar with the 24-hour time designation, learn it! Since we are working throughout the day and night, using the 12-hour time system can create confusion.

Any dog with a questionable appetite must be closely monitored for underlying health abnormalities. Commercial kibble will be provided by the ITC for hub dropped dogs. However, there will also likely be a variety of foods (kibble, meat, fish, fat) left behind by mushers at the hub checkpoint that might be helpful as “baits” to entice anorexic dogs. The commercial diets are adequate, but the dogs do enjoy the addition of meats. Water should be heated separately and added to the kibble and meat immediately prior to serving, unless ambient temperatures are warm, in which case a bowl of cool water might be more desirable. We do have injectable Vitamin B-complex, which may also help stimulate marginal appetites. Don’t forget to make a notation on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating sufficiently.

When air travel to Anchorage is scheduled, try to avoid feeding within one to two hours prior to a flight. Walking them for a few minutes before loading to allow for defecation and urination is also wise. The pilots are most appreciative of this!

Dropped Dog Locations Reporting

Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours. Additional information shall include their tag numbers, sex and color of paper collar.

Air Travel Requirements for Dropped Dogs

All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.

Summary

In review, the following protocols need to be closely adhered to:

- 1) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours.
- 2) Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 3) All dropped dogs must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 4) Dog boxes will be provided for dogs residing outdoors in adverse weather conditions.
- 5) All jackets/coats must be removed from dogs before air travel.
- 6) Do not double box dogs for air travel.
- 7) Pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain temperatures at zero degrees F in cargo areas holding dropped dogs.

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR HUB (McGrath, Unalakleet) LAY PERSONNEL

Dropped Dog Program Overview

An overview of the entire dropped dog program is appropriate prior to addressing the specific protocols for Hub Lay Personnel. The following summarizes the “big picture” of how the program works:

- 1) The first veterinarian to fly into a checkpoint will be responsible for moving in and/or documenting the presence of the two Plano brand “vet boxes” (black color) containing veterinary pharmaceuticals/supplies and one “dropped dog box” (burgundy color) containing two dropped dog chains, two buckets, twenty food bowls and a feeding ladle.
- 2) A dog is dropped from the race for any reason.
- 3) A Checkpoint (Trail) Veterinarian performs a physical exam to assess for any abnormalities.
- 4) Dropped Dog Forms are in quadruplicate and documentation is made by a checkpoint veterinarian after their initial exam is completed.
- 5) The bottom copy of that form is left with the communications personnel to document dropped dogs and confirm the number of dogs remaining in the team upon leaving the checkpoint. The top two copies travel with a dropped dog, ultimately back to Anchorage. The remaining copy stays with the last veterinarian to leave the checkpoint. Forms are updated when treatments are completed.
- 6) The vast majority of dropped dogs are flown either directly back to Anchorage by the IAF or are flown to hubs by the IAF (McGrath, Unalakleet) where they congregate to await commercial transportation back to Anchorage. Those relatively few dogs that are dropped in Elim, White Mountain or Safety are typically flown directly to Nome by the IAF where they are reunited with their teams.
- 7) All dogs are re-examined by veterinarians after arrival in a hub and/or their return Anchorage. Veterinarians are assigned to the hubs and Anchorage that are dedicated specifically to the evaluation and treatment of dropped dogs. Any treatments are noted on the dropped dog forms.
- 8) Dropped dogs that are of concern must be brought inside a shelter for appropriate treatment.
- 9) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours, regardless of the checkpoint. Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 10) Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours.

- 11) All dropped dogs at all checkpoints must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 12) All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.
- 13) Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to communicate with Dropped Dog Veterinarians at the hubs and/or Anchorage regarding all dogs that they may have any concerns about.
- 14) Upon returning to Anchorage, the paperwork is reviewed and and veterinary exams are once again performed. Dropped dogs are the categorized by their needs. The general categories include: 1) normal dogs awaiting transportation to their home kennels; 2) dogs with non-serious conditions requiring treatment and follow-up medications that can be provided by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians at no cost to the musher; 3) non-serious conditions where a dog needs to be transported to the veterinary facility agreed to by the musher on their required Dog Care Agreement Form; and 4) dogs requiring critical care on a 24 hour basis which are transported directly to PET Emergency Clinic.
- 15) Normal dogs (category 1) that are not picked up during the day are transported by the ITC to the Hiland Correctional Center for boarding. When needed, dogs in categories 2 and 3 can be kept overnight under the direct supervision of the Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians. Category 2 dogs are discharged to the musher's Local Contact person and are given paperwork listing instructions and recommendations. Category 3 dogs may be transported by the Local Contact person or ITC staff to the appropriate Dog Care Agreement Veterinarian during regular business hours. Category 4 dogs are taken by ITC staff directly to Pet Emergency Clinic.
- 16) Dogs boarded at Hiland Correctional Center are checked daily by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.
- 17) Basic information on all dropped dogs is entered into a computer database at the Lakefront Hotel by lay personnel. Lay personnel are also primarily responsible for contacting the Local Contact person for each dog and coordinating transportation. The database is presented to the Chief Veterinarian after the race is completed for the purpose of performing a post-race analysis, which is included in a board report.
- 18) Anchorage dropped dog personnel are instructed to send the top copy of the Dropped Dog Form with the dog when it is discharged from the ITC. The other copy that traveled to Anchorage with the dog is to remain with the ITC as a paper record.
- 19) All dropped dog and checkpoint veterinarians are instructed to inform the Chief Veterinarian of any dogs deemed to need critical care. As stated in the rules, the Chief Veterinarian has access to medical records on any dog sent to a veterinary facility for up to 72 hours after they are released from the direct care of ITC veterinarians.

Protocols for McGrath and Unalakleet Dropped Dog Lay Personnel

As a dropped dog volunteer for the Iditarod in McGrath and Unalakleet, you will be responsible for the overall care of the dropped dogs as well as the feeding, medicating, cleaning, strawing, safety, and the general well-being of all the dropped dogs at either McGrath or Unalakleet. The following protocols have been established for these responsibilities. Keep in mind additional duties may be assigned as required, and all tasks will be performed at the discretion of the Checkpoint Veterinarian(s) and Dropped Dog Coordinator. You have been chosen to care for the dropped dogs because of your skills and expertise in working with these very special athletes.

Upon arrival at the checkpoint, locate the equipment that has been shipped to the checkpoint for use with the dogs. Set up the drop line and locate straw, doghouses, a water source and dog food. Also, meet with the Dropped Dog Coordinator, Checkpoint Veterinarian(s) and Checkpoint Logistics Coordinator. The following guidelines will instruct you in the dog care protocols set for the Race.

- **Receiving Dropped Dogs from the Iditarod Air force**
- **Administering Medications to Dropped Dogs**
- **Feeding Dropped Dogs**
- **Dropped Dog Locations Reporting**
- **Walking Dropped Dogs**
- **Maintaining Dropped Dog Areas**
- **Providing Well Being and Safety Checks**
- **Capturing a Loose Dog**
- **Transferring dogs from the drop line to the plane**
- **Air Travel Requirements for Dropped Dogs**

Receiving Dropped Dogs From The Iditarod Air Force

Dropped dogs are those dogs the mushers leave at checkpoints for a variety of reasons ranging from health concerns, females coming into season, general attitude problems and other reasons. Upon their arrival from the checkpoints, the dogs are transferred to our care and are then flown to Anchorage or Nome to be cared for by the Dropped Dog Team there. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will be advised by Logistics the time that dropped dogs will be arriving from the checkpoints and the number of dogs on each IAF plane. Space will be designated on the drop line for the new arrivals, and crates or doghouses will be put out with straw for each dog. The Dropped Dog crew on duty will approach the IAF plane when it has shut down. Be sure to get the eye of the pilot before approaching for safety reasons. Also, bring 1 or 2 slip leashes with you to transfer the dogs from the plane to the drop line. When the pilot or passenger opens the door, be ready to slip a leash on the dog and carry it from the plane to a safe distance. **DO NOT ALLOW DOGS TO JUMP FROM THE PLANE TO AVOID INJURIES.** The dog may then be walked to the drop line. Remember you will be walking on packed snow and icy surfaces so watch your step. **TAKE NOTICE OF ANY FEMALES THAT**

MAY BE IN SEASON. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will take the paperwork (Dropped Dog Form) for each dog from the pilot. This is the Race's way of tracking the whereabouts of each dog and its care along the trail. Each dog should arrive with a metal neckline attached to its collar. If not, attach one from the supplies at the checkpoint.

Dogs will be designated as "red", "blue" or "white" to indicate its medical status, as marked on the Dropped Dog Form. A "RED" STATUS indicates they may have a severe injury or life threatening condition that **REQUIRES THE ATTENTION OF A VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY.** Red-tagged dogs receive the highest priority level. The Dropped Dog Coordinator and any Veterinarians available will already know if a Red-tagged dog is arriving and will have already followed protocol. "Blue" dogs are those that are need medication, but are stable. "Red" and "Blue" dropped dogs need to have a red or blue ribbon of tape attached to their collars, if not already present. "White" dogs are healthy, but are likely tired and just need some rest. However, because medical conditions may change over time and distance, all dogs are examined by veterinarians after every flight, including their return to Anchorage.

Each dog should be snapped by the metal neckline to the drop line a few feet apart to avoid fighting. Place medical tape around each snap (on the collar side and drop line side) to prevent dogs from escaping. Leave a small tab on the tape for ease of removal. Also check to make sure collars are not too loose so as to allow a dog to slip his or her collar.

Once the dogs are secure on the drop line the veterinarian in charge should then be notified that dogs have arrived so he or she can do an examination on each dog. A dropped dog crew member may be chosen to scribe for the veterinarian recording such information as heart rate, hydration level, temperature, what medications the dog is on (if any) and overall condition of the dog. All information should be written on the Dropped Dog Forms received from the pilots. The examining veterinarian will then decide if any dogs need to be housed indoors and the dropped dog crewmember will then prepare a strawed crate in the assigned indoor area. In some instances a second dropped dog crewmember may be required to hold a dog while its temperature is being taken or other examinations are being done by the veterinarian. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will add to a Master List the dog's tag number, sex, arrival date, any medications the dog is on (blue paper collar) and whether the dog is a female in season. Females in season will be separated from the other dogs and will be marked by a tag of bright pink duct tape on their collars. These females will be placed 10-20 feet away on then drop line from the other dogs. All dogs will be welfare checked every 2 hours around the clock. dropped dog personnel will be assigned duty hours by the Dropped Dog Coordinator.

Feeding Dropped Dogs

The dropped dogs will be fed 3 times a day at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours. The feeding will consist of frozen meat that has been soaked in hot water for approximately 30 minutes to make a "soup". Two to three cups of soup is then ladled over about 2 cups of kibble. Throughout the day the dropped dogs will receive "treats" of frozen fish, fat or meat at the discretion of the Dog Lot Coordinator. If a dog is not eating from the bowl, bring it to the attention of the Dog Lot Coordinator. Sometimes sled dogs prefer eating right off the ground or need some extra coaxing with hand feeding. Canned food is also available to tempt them. If the dog continues

to refuse food and water, it is important to let the Dropped Dog Coordinator and Checkpoint Veterinarian know so they can monitor the dog more closely.

Dropped Dog Locations Reporting

Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours. Additional information shall include their tag numbers, sex and color of paper collar.

Administering Medications To Dropped Dogs

If a dog requires medications, it will be noted on the Dropped Dog Form. The times the meds should be administered will be written on the Dropped Dog Form also. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will be responsible for dispensing and tracking medications per the veterinarian's orders.

Walking Dropped Dogs

As a rule, a dropped dog is not in our care for more than a day. However, in instances where 24 hours have passed, the Dropped Dog Coordinator or a veterinarian may ask if any volunteers want to walk the dogs. Although a dog may have been dropped, it may still be ready to run! These are extremely powerful animals. Typically, two leashes will be used with two volunteers to ensure if one person should fall, for example, the second person will be able to take sole control of the dog. Any walking of a dropped dog must be cleared with the Dropped Dog Coordinator.

Dog Housing

McGrath and Unalakleet will have constructed doghouses for sheltering during inclement weather. Utilize these as needed. Dogs must still be checked at least every two hours even when housed. Make sure that escapes do not occur when transferring dogs from houses to dropped dog chains!

Maintaining The Dropped Dog Area

It is important to keep the dropped dog area cleared of any feces or debris. The only time feces should be left on the ground is if a dog is exhibiting diarrhea or has bloody stools, especially prior to being checked by a veterinarian upon arrival to the drop line. Once the dogs have been checked, their areas should be kept clean at all times. It is not uncommon for the stools to be loose initially. The dogs have undergone a lot of stress and need to rest. If the problem continues, however, it should be brought to the attention of the Dropped Dog Coordinator who will then advise the Checkpoint Veterinarian. Once a dog leaves the checkpoint, the dirty straw should be cleared from the drop line and the area should be prepared with clean straw.

Providing Well Being And Safety Checks For All Dogs

Dropped Dog personnel will be checking the drop line every 2 hours around the clock to be sure all the dogs are safe and resting comfortably. If at any time you notice any dog exhibiting unusual behavior, raspy breathing, coughing, shivering, etc. notify the Dog Lot Coordinator immediately. A veterinarian will then examine the dog. If it is exceptionally wind, very cold or you see a dog's straw has been blown away, add more. Check with the Dropped Dog Coordinator to see if the dogs can be moved to a warmer location out of the wind. There are dog coats and dog blankets available for the dropped dogs. As the sun goes down, especially, the dogs will benefit from extra cover. Some dogs do not tolerate the blankets and will shake them off. In those cases, piling some straw over them is an option.

As you patrol the dropped dog line, pick up any debris such as paper wrappers, twine, plastic bags, dog booties, any sharp objects, etc. that the dogs could either swallow or step on. It is also important that no stray dogs enter the dog lot. If they do, try to coax them out. If they should come in contact with one of the Iditarod sled dogs, do not get into the middle of them if a dogfight ensues. Call for help!

Capturing A Loose Dog

Our goal is to have NO loose dogs, but we need to be prepared should it happen. During the course of the race, the dogs lose weight and their collars do not fit as snugly as they should. It is not uncommon for a dog to slip out of its collar. As a dropped dog crew member you should be watchful of any dog that appears to be sleeping beyond its normal radius or curled up with another dog. Or, sometimes you might notice a collar on the ground and a dog wandering around the other dogs. At that point, get the attention of the other volunteers and anyone else in the vicinity by calling out "Loose dog!" Do not make any sudden moves towards the dog if you know you cannot take control of it on your first attempt, as it will most likely run off. Rather, crouch down and slowly move towards the dog until you are close enough to grab it. Another volunteer should get a leash to have ready to attach to the dog if necessary. In the meantime, the rest of the volunteers should encircle the area ready to catch the dog if it should run towards them. Never, however, chase a dog. It most likely will keep running farther and farther away. Once the dog is apprehended, return it to its place on the line. All dogs have a microchip implanted, and a microchip reader will indicate whom the dog belongs to. In some cases a dog might not be transferred correctly from one volunteer to another or wiggles out of his collar and runs off. When this happens, one volunteer should immediately inform the Dropped Dog Coordinator. The other volunteers should try to track what direction the dog has headed. In the meantime, the Dropped Dog Coordinator will contact the Race Marshall to let him know what has happened. Some of the local people can also be contacted to aid in the search. In most cases, the dog will be captured or might even return to the drop line on its own. They are pack animals, and as such, like to be in the company of other dogs.

Transferring The Dropped Dogs To An Airplane

The Dropped Dog Coordinator will facilitate the dogs being transferred to Anchorage or Nome. The dropped dog crew will be notified of the approximate time that this will be

happening. Dogs should not be fed major meals within 1-2 hours of the flight. A small snack can be given up to 2 hours before the flight. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will decide which dogs will fly first, with red-tagged dogs having the highest priority, followed by blue-tagged dogs and females in season. Otherwise, every effort will be made to have dogs that have been in the checkpoint the longest fly first. Just prior to loading into the plane, all dogs will be walked to facilitate elimination. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will then stand by the loading area and call for the dogs. As the dogs are loaded into the plane the dropped dog crewmember will call out the tag number of their dog, lift the dog into the plane, allow the plane loader to get a firm hold on the dog then take the leash off and return to the drop line for another dog. Females in season will be secured into a drop bag with their head out. A cord will be lightly tied around the dog's neck to keep her in the bag until the flight reaches its destination. This protocol helps keep her calm and prevents her from being bred by loose males during the flight. Usually the females are loaded last and kept up near to the pilot. The Dropped Dog Coordinator will then pass the Dropped Dog Forms to the pilot and then call in to Logistics in Anchorage to inform the dropped dog crew there how many dogs will be arriving, their tag numbers, sex, any females in season and the arrival time of the plane.

Air Travel Requirements for Dropped Dogs

All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.

Summary

In review, the following protocols need to be closely adhered to:

- 1) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 0800, 1600 and 2400 hours.
- 2) Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 08:00 and 22:00 hours.
- 3) Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 4) All dropped dogs must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 5) All jackets/coats must be removed from dogs before air travel.
- 6) Do not double box dogs for air travel.
- 7) Pilots need to be informed verbally of the need to maintain temperatures at zero degrees F for flights carrying dropped dogs.

Thank you for applying to be part of the dropped dog crew on the Iditarod. Our volunteers help the Race happen and the dogs make the Race!

DROPPED DOG PROTOCOLS FOR NOME LAY PERSONNEL

As a volunteer for the Iditarod in the Nome Dog Lot, you will be responsible for the overall care of the dropped dogs as well as the security, general well-being and maintenance of the entire dog lot. The following protocols have been established for some of the primary responsibilities. Keep in mind additional duties may be assigned as required, and all tasks will be performed at the discretion of the Dog Lot Coordinator.

- **Receiving Dropped Dogs**
- **Administering Medications to Dropped Dogs**
- **Feeding Dropped Dogs**
- **Dropped Dog Locations Reporting**
- **Walking Dropped Dogs**
- **Maintaining Dropped Dog Area**
- **Providing Well Being and Safety Checks for All Dogs in the Lot**
- **Providing Security to the Dog Lot**
- **Dealing with a Loose Dog**

Receiving Dropped Dogs

Dropped dogs are those dogs the mushers leave at checkpoints for a variety of reasons ranging from health concerns, females coming into heat, or general attitude problems to name a few. These dogs are flown to Anchorage or Nome depending where in the race the dogs are dropped and logistics.

For dogs arriving in Nome by plane, a driver will be sent to the Nome Airport to receive dropped dogs from the pilot and then transport them to the dog lot. Dogs that are dropped at Safety (the last checkpoint of the race) are transported by snow machine to the dog lot in Nome. Upon their arrival, the dogs are transferred to our care until the mushers complete the race and the dropped dogs are reunited with their teams.

In most cases the Dog Lot Coordinator will be advised when dropped dogs are arriving and the number of dogs. Space will be designated for the new arrivals, and crates will be put out with straw in them.

Volunteers who have gone through the dog handling workshop in Anchorage are preferred for transferring the dogs either from the truck or snowmachine. In all cases you must communicate with the driver when you have a firm grip of the dog and he or she can release the dog to you. Once the driver releases the dog, YOU are responsible to get the dog safely to his crate on the line. The dog may be carried, walked on a leash or guided with your hand securely under the dog's collar. Remember you will be walking on snow packed and icy surfaces, and no cleats or snow grippers are permitted in the lot.

Each dog will be "tagged" with a red, blue or white ribbon to indicate its medical status. If there

are any red tagged dogs, they are dealt with expeditiously. A red tag indicates they may have a severe injury or life threatening condition that requires the attention of a veterinarian immediately. The Dog Lot Coordinator will handle all red tagged dogs. Blue tags are used for dogs that have required some medications on the trail, and the white tags are for dogs that for the most part are fine, but may be tired and need some rest.

Once all the dogs are secured, a volunteer will update the Dropped Dog Chart with each dog's tag number, its name if available and the musher's name. The paperwork that travels with the dog will be put in the order in which the dogs are on the line. At that time, the Dog Lot Coordinator will advise the veterinarian(s) on duty in the Mini Center that the dropped dogs are ready to be checked. A volunteer will be chosen to scribe for the veterinarian; recording such information as heart rate, hydration level, temperature, and overall condition of the dog. In some instances, a second volunteer may be required to hold a dog while its temperature is being taken or other examinations are being done by the veterinarian. The veterinarian(s) typically will take the paperwork with them to the Mini Center to make any additional notes and/or prepare any necessary medications.

A tent is pitched just outside the Mini Center for dropped dogs requiring extra shelter. The veterinarian(s) will decide which, if any, dogs will be transferred to the tent. A chart similar to the one used for the dog lot will be updated indicating which dog(s) are being housed in the tent.

When a dropped dog's team and musher arrive and the team is settled in, either the musher or a handler for the team will be advised that a dropped dog is in our care. The veterinarian will have indicated on the Dropped Dog Form whether the dog can be released without further consultation, or in some instances the veterinarian may want to discuss the dog's condition prior to releasing it to the musher. When a dropped dog is ready to join its team, the musher or his/her handler will sign the Dropped Dog Form showing they have taken possession of the dog. The yellow copy of the form and any medications will go with the dog and musher. The white copy of the form will be retained, and the Dropped Dog Chart updated.

Administering Medications To Dropped Dogs

If a dog requires medications, it will be noted on the Dropped Dog Chart. The times the meds should be administered will be written on the Dropped Dog Form, and the medication(s) will be stapled onto the yellow copy of the form. The Dog Lot Coordinator will be responsible for dispensing and tracking medications per the veterinarian's orders. Once the dog is released, it is the responsibility of the musher to continue any meds.

Feeding Dropped Dogs

Dropped dogs are to be offered food after the initial check by the veterinarian(s) to be sure that their appetites are not diminished. In addition, dropped dogs will be routinely fed three times daily at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours. Usually, the feeding will consist of a frozen meat that has been soaked in hot water for approximately 30 minutes to make a "soup" which is then ladled over about two cups of kibble. Throughout the day the dropped dogs will receive

"treats" of frozen fish, fat or meat at the discretion of the Dog Lot Coordinator. Under no circumstance are any dogs in the dog lot other than the dropped dogs to be fed.

If a dog is not eating from the bowl, bring it to the attention of the Dog Lot Coordinator. Sometimes sled dogs prefer eating right off the ground or need some extra coaxing with hand feeding. Canned food is also available to tempt them. If these efforts do not encourage a dog to eat the normal amount, a veterinarian must be immediately informed.

Dropped Dog Locations Reporting

Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 10:00 and 20:00 hours. Additional information shall include their tag numbers, sex and color of paper collar.

Walking Dropped Dogs

As a rule a dropped dog is not in our care for more than a day. However, in instances where 24 hours have passed, the Dog Lot Coordinator or a veterinarian may ask if any volunteers want to walk the dog. Although a dog may have been dropped, it does not mean it is not ready to run! These are extremely powerful animals. Typically, two leashes will be used with two volunteers to ensure if one person should fall, for example, the second person will be able to take sole control of the dog. Any walking of any dropped dog must be cleared with the Dog Lot Coordinator.

Maintaining The Dropped Dog Area

It is important to keep the dropped dog area cleared of any feces or debris. The only time feces should be left on the ground is if a dog is exhibiting diarrhea or has bloody stools, especially prior to being checked by a veterinarian upon arrival to the dog lot. Once the dogs have been checked, their areas should be kept clean at all times. It is not uncommon for the stools to be loose initially. The dogs have undergone a lot of stress and need to rest. If the problem continues, however, it should be brought to the attention of the Dog Lot Coordinator who will then advise the veterinarian.

Once a dog is released to the musher, the straw and crate should be cleared from the space. The musher may take the straw if he or she wants it.

Providing Well Being And Safety Checks For All Dogs In The Lot

Most of the time in the dog lot will be spent patrolling the lot checking to be sure all the dogs are safe, resting comfortably and have not slipped out of their collars. If at any time you notice any dog in the lot (not just the dropped dogs) exhibiting unusual behavior, raspy breathing, coughing, shivering, etc. notify the Dog Lot Coordinator immediately. A veterinarian will come out to the lot to examine the dog.

If it is exceptionally windy and you see a dog's straw has been blown away, add more. Check with the Dog Lot Coordinator for additional straw if you see the musher does not have any extra in his/her area.

There are dog coats and dog blankets available for the dropped dogs. As the sun goes down, especially, the dogs will benefit from extra cover. Some dogs do not tolerate the blankets and will shake them off. In those cases, piling some straw over them is an option.

As you patrol the dog lot, pick up any debris such as paper wrappers, twine, plastic bags, dog booties, any sharp objects, etc. that the dogs could either swallow or step on.

Other than the dropped dogs, do not, clean up any feces surrounding the teams that have completed the race. Many mushers evaluate the stools to determine how their dogs are recovering.

Providing Security To The Dog Lot

Only dog lot volunteers, mushers, their handlers and ITC authorized individuals are allowed in the dog lot. There are **NO** exceptions. As a volunteer, you have the authority to ask for identification of anyone entering the lot that is questionable. If you feel uncomfortable doing that, alert another volunteer, the Dog Lot Coordinator or someone in the Mini Center office. Do not use force or get into a shouting match. If necessary, the Nome Police Department will be called to handle the situation.

It is also important that no stray dogs enter the dog lot. Try to coax them out. If they should come in contact with one of the Iditarod sled dogs, do not get into the middle of them if a dog fight ensues. Call for help!

Dealing With A Loose Dog

Our goal is to have NO loose dogs, but we need to be prepared should it happen. During the course of the race, the dogs lose weight and their collars do not fit as snugly as they should. It is not uncommon for a dog to slip out of its collar. Some mushers like to extend the chains the dogs are attached to with nylon neck lines. After the dogs have had time to rest up and are getting re-energized, they begin to chew on the nylon lines and get free. In these situations, the dog often times does not know it is loose. As a volunteer you should be watchful of any dog that appears to be sleeping beyond its normal radius or curled up with another dog. Or, sometimes you might notice a collar on the ground and a dog wandering around another team. At that point, get the attention of the other volunteers and anyone else in the lot by calling out "Loose dog!" Do not make any sudden moves towards the dog if you know you cannot take control of it on your first attempt as it will most likely run off. Rather, crouch down and slowly move towards the dog until you are close enough to grab it. Another volunteer should get a leash from the office connex to have ready to attach to the dog if necessary. In the meantime, the rest of the volunteers should encircle the area ready to catch the dog if it should run towards them. Never, however, chase a dog. It most likely will keep running farther and farther away. Once the dog is apprehended, return it to its place on the line if you know

where it is, or take it to the dropped dog area where it can stay until the musher comes to claim it. All dogs have a chip implanted, and a chip reader will indicate who the dog belongs to.

In some cases a dog might not be transferred correctly from one volunteer to another or wiggles out of his collar and runs off. When this happens, one volunteer should immediately notify the Mini Center office and ask the ITC representative on duty to contact the Nome Police Department. The other volunteers should try to track what direction the dog has run so that the police officer responding to the call can take control of the situation. In the meantime, the Dog Lot Coordinator will contact the Race Marshall and to let him know what has happened. At this point it is a "wait and see" situation. In most cases, the dog will be captured or might even return to the dog lot on its own. They are pack animals, and as such, like to be in the company of other dogs.

DROPPED DOG OVERVIEW FOR MUSHERS

Rule 45

“All dogs that are dropped from the Race must be left at a designated checkpoint with a completed and signed dropped dog form. Any dropped dog must be left with four (4) pounds of dog food and a reliable chain or cable, drop cable issued by the ITC, and collar. Dropped dogs may be moved from the originating checkpoint to the closest dog collection area at Anchorage, McGrath, Unalakleet or Nome. Dogs may be shipped from the collection areas to a location designated by the musher at the musher’s expense.

- Dogs dropped in Anchorage, Nome and the re-start are the musher’s responsibility.
- Dogs dropped in ALL OTHER CHECKPOINTS will be transported by the ITC.

Dogs left unclaimed at Eagle River Correctional Center after four days after their arrival will incur boarding charges at the current rate, payable by the musher.”

Dropped Dog Program General Overview

This outline was developed to summarize the protocols for the ITC handling of dogs dropped from the race.

- 1) The first veterinarian to fly into a checkpoint will be responsible for moving in and/or documenting the presence of the two Plano brand “vet boxes” (black color) containing veterinary pharmaceuticals/supplies and one “dropped dog box” (burgundy color) containing two dropped dog chains, two buckets, twenty food bowls and a feeding ladle.
- 2) A dog is dropped from the race for any reason.

- 3) A Checkpoint (Trail) Veterinarian performs a physical exam to assess for any abnormalities.
- 4) Dropped Dog Forms are in quadruplicate and documentation is made by a checkpoint veterinarian after their initial exam is completed.
- 5) The bottom copy of that form is left with the communications personnel to document dropped dogs and confirm the number of dogs remaining in the team upon leaving the checkpoint. The top two copies travel with a dropped dog, ultimately back to Anchorage. The remaining copy stays with the last veterinarian to leave the checkpoint. Forms are updated when treatments are completed.
- 6) The vast majority of dropped dogs are flown either directly back to Anchorage by the IAF or are flown to hubs by the IAF (McGrath, Unalakleet) where they congregate to await commercial transportation back to Anchorage. Those relatively few dogs that are dropped in Elim, White Mountain or Safety are typically flown directly to Nome by the IAF where they are reunited with their teams.
- 7) All dogs are re-examined by veterinarians after arrival in a hub and/or their return Anchorage. Veterinarians are assigned to the hubs and Anchorage that are dedicated specifically to the evaluation and treatment of dropped dogs. Any treatments are noted on the dropped dog forms.
- 8) Dropped dogs that are of concern must be brought inside a shelter for appropriate treatment.
- 9) Feeding times for dropped dogs are at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours, regardless of the checkpoint. Notations must be made on the Dropped Dog Form for any dog that is not eating appropriately.
- 10) Dropped Dog Coordinators will report dropped dogs located at their hubs to a central database, at 08:00 and 22:00 hours.
- 11) All dropped dogs at all checkpoints must be visually inspected at least every two hours, or more frequently in inclement weather conditions, i.e., blowing snow and storms.
- 12) All dogs must have coats/jackets removed prior to air travel, and dropped dogs must never be double boxed. Prior to takeoff, pilots need to be verbally informed of the need to maintain air temperatures at zero degrees F for the cargo area that dogs are located in.
- 13) Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to communicate with Dropped Dog Veterinarians at the hubs and/or Anchorage regarding all dogs that they may have any concerns about.
- 14) Upon returning to Anchorage, the paperwork is reviewed and and veterinary exams are once again performed. Dropped dogs are the categorized by their needs. The general categories include: 1) normal dogs awaiting transportation to their home kennels; 2) dogs with non-serious conditions requiring treatment and follow-up medications that can be provided by Anchorage dropped dog veterinarians at no cost to the musher; 3) non-serious conditions where a dog needs to be transported to the veterinary facility agreed to by the musher on their required Dog Care Agreement

- Form; and 4) dogs requiring critical care on a 24 hour basis which are transported directly to PET Emergency Clinic.
- 15) Normal dogs (category 1) that are not picked up during the day are transported by the ITC to the Hiland Correctional Center for boarding. When needed, dogs in categories 2 and 3 can be kept overnight under the direct supervision of the Anchorage dropped dog veterinarians. Category 2 dogs are discharged to the musher's Local Contact person and are given paperwork listing instructions and recommendations. Category 3 dogs may be transported by the Local Contact person or ITC staff to the appropriate Dog Care Agreement Veterinarian during regular business hours. Category 4 dogs are taken by ITC staff directly to Pet Emergency Clinic.
 - 16) Dogs boarded at Hiland Correctional Center are checked daily by Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinarians.
 - 17) Basic information on all dropped dogs is entered into a computer database at the Lakefront Hotel by lay personnel. Lay personnel are also primarily responsible for contacting the Local Contact person for each dog and coordinating transportation. The database is presented to the Chief Veterinarian after the race is completed for the purpose of performing a post-race analysis, which is included in a board report.
 - 18) Anchorage dropped dog personnel are instructed to send the top copy of the Dropped Dog Form with the dog when it is discharged from the ITC. The other copy that traveled to Anchorage with the dog is to remain with the ITC as a paper record.
 - 19) All Dropped Dog and Checkpoint Veterinarians are instructed to inform the Chief Veterinarian of any dogs deemed to need critical care. As stated in the rules, the Chief Veterinarian has access to medical records on any dog sent to a veterinary facility for up to 72 hours after they are released from the direct care of ITC veterinarians.

Musher Dropped Dog Protocol

A dog may be dropped from your team for any reason, and at any checkpoint. Mushers must complete their part of the Dropped Dog Form before releasing a canine from competition. An explanation of their reason(s) for dropping is requested along with the musher's signature. Usually, if an illness or injury is present, a veterinarian has already examined the animal. If this has not yet taken place, an examination needs to be performed as soon as possible. It is not uncommon to identify conditions in addition to the ones listed as reasons for dropping. Space is provided for veterinarians to document previous relevant medications administered and current treatments, as well as their names, in the event that follow up verbal communications are needed.

The following list demonstrates the top five reasons for dropping dogs during a long distance race: Fatigue, Shoulder injuries, Carpal injuries, Foot lesions and Diarrhea. Certainly, we must be prepared to address any abnormality, but statistically speaking, these are the ones with the

greatest frequency. Remember, “Fatigue” may be a manifestation of some other underlying illness or injury, so please make sure that those dogs receive a thorough exam.

We will have four staff veterinarians working with dropped dogs in Anchorage, on a rotating basis. They will be providing routine evaluations of all dogs as they return to Anchorage. Obviously, a dog’s medical status can change while in transit.

For checkpoints east of the Alaska Range (Yentna, Skwenta, Finger Lake and Rainy Pass Lodge), dropped dogs are flown directly back to Anchorage in the small private airplanes (Cessna 180s and 185s) of the Iditarod Air Force (IAF). Once teams have crossed the Alaska Range into the interior, the vast majority of dropped dogs are flown by the IAF from the smaller checkpoints to the hubs of McGrath or Unalakleet, from which they are typically transported back to Anchorage by commercial carriers (Northern Air Cargo, Pen Air and others).

Typically, dogs dropped in Elim and White Mountain travel with the IAF to Nome, although some dropped in Koyuk may also go to Nome, depending on your position in the race. If your dropped dogs are flown to Nome instead of Anchorage, they are transported by Iditarod personnel to the Nome dog lot and cared for there by dog lot dog handlers. You are responsible for their routine care once you get to Nome, as well as for their transportation to your home kennel.

When staying at a checkpoint, mushers are asked to feed dogs that they plan on dropping, but once you depart, the dropped dog personnel/veterinarians will take over. Dropped dogs will be fed by ITC personnel at least three times daily at 08:00, 16:00 and 24:00 hours.

In addition, locations of all dropped dogs will be entered into a central database twice daily, at 10:00 and 22:00 hours. One of the primary purposes of this effort will be to update mushers and their local contact persons, when requested, on locations of dropped dogs from their team. This database will be accessed by select ITC personnel only. Mushers will be able to obtain the most current updates on their dropped dog locations by contacting checkpoint communications personnel. Local contact persons will be able to get the same information from the Anchorage Dropped Dog Coordinator.

Race rules require that mushers utilize the dropped dog cables which are provided to them by the ITC. These are of sufficient strength and dimensions to adequately attach an animal to the dropped dog chain. Mushers are also asked to write your dogs’ names on their collars for easy identification. Dogs experiencing medical conditions that adversely affect their ability to withstand the elements will be brought inside by staff veterinarians.

Dropped Dog Forms

Dropped dog forms are in QUADRUPPLICATE. The bottom copy (4th) will be given to the communications personnel shortly after you drop a dog. The top two copies (1st and 2nd) will travel with a dropped dog as it departs from a checkpoint, and the remaining copy (3rd) stays at the checkpoint until the last veterinarian leaves, who will then take the 3rd copies for all

dropped dogs with him/her. Ultimately, a copy of the Dropped Dog Form and discharge notes, if needed, will be sent with each dropped dog when your Local Contact Person picks them up in Anchorage.

A “Condition Code” system has been developed for the Dropped Dog Forms, whereby illnesses are designated by four letters, and musculoskeletal injuries by three letters followed by L, R, LF, RF, LH or RH to indicate the appropriate anatomical location.

Also indicated on the Dropped Dog Form is the “Condition Status” box. As presented on the form, there are three designated conditions shown, including “Red”, “Blue” and “White.” Dogs not in need of medications are officially considered to be “White.” Dogs with potentially life-threatening conditions are designated “Red” and are identified by red flagging placed around the neck.

A “Red” collared dog is in need of air transportation to a medical facility in Anchorage ASAP. The Iditarod Air Force (IAF) will divert flights as needed to accomplish this. All other dogs that are being medicated have historically been classified as “Blue.” Obviously, the condition of dogs receiving medication, but not in need of critical (“Red”) care, may vary from very minor to more serious. In order to avoid having numerous category designations that take up space on the forms and involve too much “hair splitting,” we have for several years designated more serious “Blue” dogs, i.e., pneumonia, myopathy or gastric ulcer suspects, requiring very close monitoring, as “High Blue,” although that is not printed on the form.

Anchorage Dropped Dog Veterinary Care

Veterinarians will be stationed at ITC headquarters (Lakefront Hotel), specifically for the purpose of caring for dropped dogs upon their return from the trail. Those chosen to serve in this role are delegated by the Chief Veterinarian with the responsibility of making appropriate decisions in regard to the treatment needs of dropped dogs, soon after their arrival in Anchorage.

Their duties will include the evaluation of all returning dropped dogs. Obviously, the condition of a dog can change for the better or worse between the time it is dropped and when it arrives in Anchorage. Appropriate care of dogs dropped from the race is an important aspect of our roles as stewards of these animals. Every effort will be made by the ITC and the veterinary staff to achieve the best medical outcome, while attempting to minimize costs to mushers. Most dropped dogs are assessed, receive basic treatment when needed and are then released to a musher’s local contact person by our staff, at no charge to the musher.

Dogs that have no medical condition for which treatments are necessary, will be discharged to the musher’s local contact person or taken to the correctional facility, at Eagle River, for boarding. Because of security issues, our staff will have limited access to these animals. However, we have been assured that twice-daily visits by ITC veterinarians will be permitted. This will enable us to monitor those animals for unexpected changes in their conditions.

Any dog that has a condition requiring non-emergency medical care during normal business hours will either be transported by ITC personnel to the veterinary facility so designated by the musher on their completed Dog Care Agreement form, or discharged to the musher's local contact person for transportation. The decision will be based on the clinical assessments performed by staff veterinarians. In the event that non-emergency treatment needs to be provided on an after-hours basis, our veterinarians will have the option of using the Dropped Dog Facility (mobile trailer) at the Lakefront Hotel.

Local Contact Persons

It is **IMPERATIVE** that those selected as local contact persons for your dropped dogs, are easily accessed, readily available and sufficiently knowledgeable about basic dog care. Please advise them to pick up dropped dogs, as much as possible, within 24 hours of notification by Anchorage dropped dog personnel.

Dropped Dog Policy For Serious/Critical Care Scenarios

Typically, a very small number of dropped dogs require hospitalization in an emergency facility (PET Emergency). The following are potential reasons: serious/critical conditions needing prompt treatment upon arrival in Anchorage on an after-hours basis and/or serious/critical conditions requiring 24 hour monitoring and treatment.

Obviously, the condition of a dog can change for the better or worse between the time it is dropped and when it arrives in Anchorage. All dropped dogs are examined by ITC veterinarians after their arrival in Anchorage. The decision to send a dog to PET Emergency will be made by the Chief Veterinarian and/or Veterinarian in Charge of the Dropped Dog Program. Reasonable efforts are made to inform mushers of situations where hospitalization at PET is needed. As stated in rule 4I, financial responsibility for dog care shall be borne by the musher. Please budget for this possible scenario.