

# HOW TO COLLECT VIDEO OF YOUR PET

Collecting video of pet behaviors can play a critical role in making a diagnosis of a behavior problem, especially when attempting to diagnose separation related distress. If any behavior problems are suspected, video can be shared with the shelter veterinary behaviorist who can then help you develop an appropriate management and treatment plan for your pet.

## SUPPLIES & SET-UP



**Smart phones and iPads make collecting pet video easier than ever**, you just need to follow instructions so as to get useful video in a safe manner.

When separation related problems are suspected, the camera (phone or iPad) should be set up so as to capture the widest possible view around the departure area. Even if the dog goes out of view, vocalizations, if present, can still be heard. Typically, the dog will return to the door often enough to determine if a separation related problem exists. If the dog doesn't spend time in that area, try again on another day by aiming the device at a different area where the pet appears to be going based on the first video, or where you suspect the pet is spending time. In some cases, it may take a couple of attempts to collect useful video.

## DON'T SPY ON YOUR PET

Be aware however, that **everyone must leave the home in order to capture accurate behavior**. It does not matter if other pets are home, but your dog knows when you actually leave. You cannot just step outside and then return or spy on them through a window. You must get in your car and drive away. Many dogs do not reveal the intensity of their distress until they hear the car drive away.



## THE PERFECT VIDEO



In most cases, 10-20 minutes of video will help make a diagnosis. However, if you only feel safe collecting 5 minutes of video because you are afraid to leave the dog longer than that, then that amount of video can still be very useful. **Video should never be collected if it puts the pet at risk.**

Video can and must be used later to monitor the results of different treatment strategies so it is important that you determine what works for you when collecting video.

## USEFUL BEHAVIORS TO CAPTURE

**Videos of the pet performing normal day to day activities**, such as playing in the yard, eating a meal, taking a walk, playing with a toy or interacting with family members can also be very useful to the behaviorist. By observing the dog's body language in these varying situations, the behaviorist can learn a lot about how the dog views interactions with both known and unknown individuals. Observing how dogs cope with novel situations is also very informative. Then, if necessary, detailed instructions for additional videos can be shared by the behaviorist.



## DEALING WITH AGGRESSION



When the dog behavior problem includes aggression to either animals or people, it is critical that you understand **there is absolutely no need to get video of your dog performing its aggressive behavior!** In these situations, observing the dog behaving normally is as revealing and useful to the behaviorist, if not more so, than seeing it behave in an inappropriate way. It is never worth putting someone or something in harm's way in order to get video!

Videos of the pets' normal environment and behaviors can be extremely useful in confirming diagnosis of some behavior problems and in monitoring the results of different treatment strategies. It cannot however be overemphasized that video should never be collected if it puts any animal or person at risk of any injury!

