

Oregon
Worksite Redesign Program
Final Report
March 11, 1999

Project Applicant: Multnomah County
Project Title: Redesign of Animal Shelter Animal Disposal Process
Application Date: 3/22/96; Acceptance Date 5/20/96; Worksite Redesign Project Agreement Date 8/20/96

Multnomah County applied for this project grant in order to reduce the back-intensive activities required by our Animal Care Technicians. The goal was to: address the bending, twisting, kneeling, crouching and danger of being bitten by the animals when transferring them from the holding cages to the surface table where they will be euthanized; address the continued bending, twisting, kneeling, crouching, and lifting required as our staff move the bodies of the animals to the back of the shelter, and; finally eliminate the bending, twisting, crouching and lifting required when loading the incinerator.

After extensive analysis three items were identified, purchased, and are now in operational use at our animal shelter. The hydraulic lift table, a transporting cart with a presto scissors lift, and a conveyor have been very successful in decreasing injuries. The items purchased are used and appreciated in the following ways.

1. Hydraulic Lift Table:

This table is the item most appreciated by the staff. The hydraulic lift table goes from ground level to varying heights. A concrete pit was built in the fall of 1997 that allows the table to be lowered to ground level. The table arrived in mid-December 1997, and has been operational since that time. It is used daily by staff and supervisors; they report back that they "love" their hydraulic lift table. The table can be lower it to ground level, eliminating the need to lift a "big" dog unto the table. Staff height and weight vary and the availability to move the table to accommodate the height of each staff working at the table has been helpful. Two staff varying in height by over one-foot are now able to both work in comfort together using the hydraulic lift table. Staff reports that bending, twisting, crouching and lifting are not required while working with the table.

2. Transporting Cart with Presto Scissors Lift:

The transporting cart was first suggested to move the dead animals from the euthanasia room to the incinerator at the back of the shelter area. Prior to this purchase they were transported by a wheelbarrow. The cart arrived in September of 1997; it is used daily and appreciated by staff not only for moving the dead animals but also for moving deliveries of food, cat litter and other supplies to the shelter. The cart can be hosed down and disinfected as often as necessary; it will not rust. The use of our transporting cart has reduced considerably the lifting required by the staff. It has also reduced the bending, twisting and strains to the back that occasionally occurred when using a wheelbarrow to transport dead animals.

3. Conveyor:

Multnomah County is responsible for incineration of dead animals from veterinary clinics and from the department of transportation (i.e., animals killed on the road), as well as the animal population of its own shelter. Our incinerator is loaded three times per day and can hold up to 2,000 pounds of dead animals. The conveyor was installed in October of 1997. Once installed staff immediately found a weight problem that caused the conveyor to tip when the poundage exceeded 50 pounds. Counter weights were added to the rear of the conveyor; this has solved the problem. The County's incinerator is a 14-foot long, barrel type device that by EPA standards must be loaded from back to front. The use of the conveyor has allowed our staff to load our incinerator while continuing to address proper body mechanics.

It has now been fifteen months since the entire redesign program was completed. The County is very satisfied with the Worksite Re-Design program. This past August (1998) we met with Animal Control to tour

the completed project. Staff has let us know that their jobs are more comfortable, they are able to work with ergonomic correctness, the worksheet is now safer both for the worker and the animal.

In the fifteen months since the equipment has been used we have had four work related injuries involving our animal control technician. None of the accidents recorded occurred while the workers were working either with the new equipment, or while they were working in the euthanize program.

In December of 1998 we published an article in "Risky Business" the newsletter for the Risk and Insurance Management Society Inc, Oregon Chapter on the Worksite Redesign Grant Program. Sharyn Middleton, Multnomah County Animal Control Supervisor, who is active in many organizations regarding animals and animal care, has shared this information on the Grant with her colleagues through out Oregon, Washington, and Montana, Idaho and Utah. The County will continue to review our claims for animal care technicians over the next four years. We will evaluate the number of claims that have occurred each year, and then compare dollar cost and days lost for any claims that occur while the staff is working in the of the worksite design to determine if our claim and claim cost decline.

We appreciated the added safety that this grant has provided us. We expect that our injuries will continue to decline. Thank you for extending the grant opportunity to Multnomah County. If you need additional information please call me.