

After the contract...

You've established your contract with the clinic, so what's next?

The time between establishing a contract with a clinic and actually working your shift may seem inconsequential with few details to be considered...but don't be fooled – the prep time prior to a shift is important! Keep reading and you'll learn a few tips that we've accumulated over the years...

Never assume that a clinic manager or owner has worked with a relief veterinarian before or that a prior relief vet has had the same requirements/expectations as you do.

Establish your "shift prep" routine and always stick to it.

It may seem redundant to cover the same ground with clinics that you've worked with previously, but it is easier to keep to a routine and you are less likely to forget to communicate a vital piece of information to those clinics that do indeed need it.

Confirmation

Send the clinic some form of confirmation prior to your shift. This may be as simple as a quick phone call or email. It is important to make sure that there is clear communication between your clinic contact and all the other clinic staff members. Having multiple people in charge of different parts of the scheduling process is very common and can frequently translate into mis-scheduling.

Find your own comfort level with frequency of notifications – a week prior? At the start of each month? One way to determine an effective frequency is based on how far in advance you are scheduling (and declining shifts if you are already booked).

The goal of sending out a confirmation is to make sure you don't get a last minute cancellation or at least have enough advanced notice to reopen those dates in your calendar.

Licensing and documents

Each clinic you work with should require, at minimum, your state license, proof of liability insurance, and a W-9 (if working as a contractor). Clinic managers may not be aware of which documents are needed when working with a relief veterinarian and may not know to request them in advance. Create a professional impression by providing your documentation prior to your shift and before being asked.

Here's a list of documents that you should ALWAYS provide to the clinic and some recommendations for optional additions to that list:

Required documents:

- State license – license number, expiration date
- Professional liability insurance – carrier, policy number, expiration date
- Completed W9 (if working as an independent contractor)

Recommended:

- Resume
- Rates & fees
- DEA license – license number, expiration date

Even if you have previously discussed your rates, cancellation and overtime policies with the clinic, providing the manager with a reminder can help avoid awkward payment questions and reduce the number of last-minute cancellations.

If you decide not to provide your DEA license in advance, but use the clinic's controlled drugs in ANY capacity (surgery, prescription, etc), you must provide them with your DEA license information during your shift.

Calculate your travel time

Plan your route in advance and ensure you are able to arrive well in advance of your shift start time. Plan for traffic delays and try to anticipate the traffic load at the time you will be traveling. Give yourself enough flex-time to still arrive in time for your shift even if you run into a few traffic snags.

For the first day at a new clinic, schedule time to introduce yourself to the staff, familiarize yourself with the clinic layout and pharmacy, and peek at the clinic schedule. Just 15-20 minutes of becoming familiar with the staff and facility can contribute to a smooth and successful relief day.

Check the schedule

Find out from the clinic manager for what types of appointments you will be scheduled during your shift - general practice, preventative care, critical care, emergencies and walk-ins, routine surgeries, etc. Be prepared to adapt to whatever drops onto your schedule during the day. However, knowing the approximate schedule outline can help you mentally prepare.

If you're scheduled for surgeries, find out how much time is blocked off for these and when the time block starts/end. Find out for what type of lunch break they have you scheduled. Do you have time to come home, find food nearby, or should you pack your lunch?

How can we help?

Although we don't always include this last portion on all of our articles, we did want to mention briefly a few ways in which Scheduled Relief can help in the prep for your shift.

- Track confirmed shifts from your account
- Both clinic and veterinarian receive email reminders with shift and contract details prior to shift
- Review clinic policies, clinic flow, and past evaluations for a clinic prior to scheduling
- Review shift again on the day of the shift for a refresher on clinic policy
- Adequately plan your travel time with access to the clinic's address prior to placing a bid

Remember that Scheduled Relief respects your privacy and status as an independent contractor at all times. Only clinics where you have submitted a bid can view your profile. When you indicate on your profile that you hold a license, the licensing information displayed to the clinics is limited to a "current" status and no license documents or license numbers are displayed to the clinic.

Prep work prior to a relief shift can make sure you create a great impression and reduce the likelihood of running into snares and miscommunication. Establish a routine prior to each shift so that it becomes a good habit.

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