



UPDATED 10/21

DOG+PUPPY FOSTER MANUAL

SFC VIRGINIA ANIMAL RESCUE

welcome!

Thank you for joining the SFC foster family! In becoming an active part of our foster care program, you are extending our ability to take in homeless pets across Virginia and offering them a new chance at leading healthy, happy lives in forever homes. You are helping to avoid unnecessary euthanasia, and are providing us with valuable information to place animals in the homes best suited for them.

Foster parents give SFC animals a place to stay in their home until they are adopted. As a foster, you agree to provide a safe area of your home (with separate spaces from existing pets) for your foster to stay. You also agree to provide socialization, transportation to appointments and events, and quality care while your foster pet looks for a new home. You can even help by becoming an adoption advocate for your foster pet and play an active role in finding that new home!

This manual is meant to build on the information provided in the training videos and help you properly care for your foster pets. It is also intended to explain the policies and procedures of SFC's foster program. This manual is not all-inclusive; your volunteer case managers and the Foster Manager are available to provide further assistance as needed. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback related to our foster program. We are here to help you.

If you have not already, please watch the training video(s) below and send your certificates to foster@sfcva.org once completed:

Dog Training: <https://bit.ly/3pFddlf>

Cat Training: <https://bit.ly/3BfOSEY>

table of contents:

Welcome to SFC

PAGE 01

Types of Fostering

PAGE 02

Taking Home A Foster Pet

PAGE 04

Caring for Your Foster Pet

SUPPLIES PAGE 06

FOOD/SHELTER PAGE 07

SOCIALIZING PAGE 08

Health and Disease

PAGE 09

Cleaning Up

PAGE 12

Dog / Dog Introductions

PAGE 13

Decompression

PAGE 14

Canine Body Language

PAGE 16

Adoptions, Contact Info &

FAQ

PAGES 18-22



types of fostering

TRADITIONAL FOSTERING: Select an animal in need, and provide quality love and care while you help find his/her forever home. Our typical length of stay in foster care from intake to adoption is approximately two weeks for most pets.

BEHAVIOR FOSTERING: These animals need a little more help in learning to become a perfect house guest. Areas of opportunity can range anywhere from just needing to re-acclimate to living in a home versus a shelter environment, to fostering a dog who does not like other dogs, to resource guarding or separation anxiety.

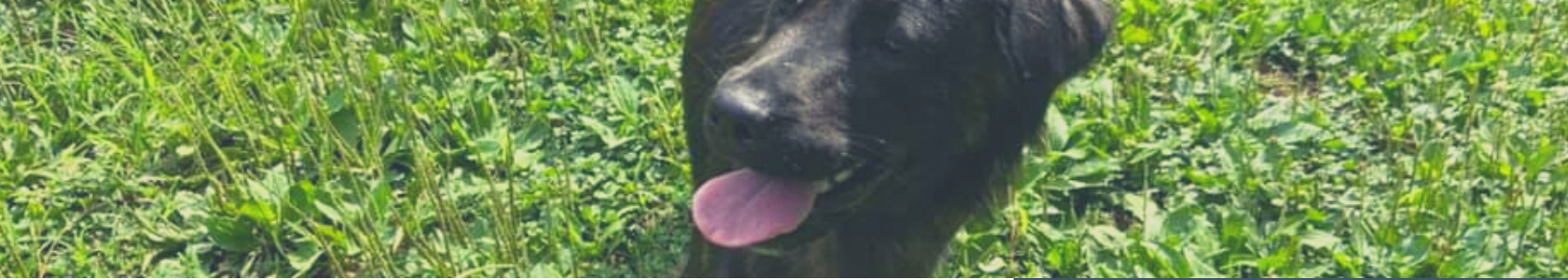
MEDICAL FOSTERING: Fostering animals with medical needs. This may include recovering from surgery, heartworm treatment, or any other variety of medical needs. Examples include:

- Ringworm- a 4-6 week commitment requiring quarantine in a cleanable space, twice-weekly lime sulfur dips, and daily oral medication.
- Demodex mange - length of stay depends on severity. Foster responsibilities include twice weekly medicated baths and once/month oral medication. Demodex is not contagious.
- Broken Bones - usually a 4-6 week commitment. These pets will likely need to see a vet during the foster time period for a recheck and may or may not be on daily medications. Most have exercise restrictions and/or require crate rest.
- Heartworm Treatment - usually a 4-6 week commitment. These pets need daily medication and crate rest/exercise restriction for 30 days after receiving their injections.
- Extensive Wounds - the time commitment varies depending on severity, but most will need several weeks to months of foster care. Responsibilities may include frequent bandage changes and daily medication.
- Kennel Cough - usually a 1-2 week commitment. These pets need daily medication and isolation from other canines until symptom resolution.
- Pets in need of special monitoring for medication conditions, appetite, weight loss/gain, etc -- timeframe and needs will vary on a case-by-case basis.



Join our SFC Fosters
Facebook Group!
Search "TEAM
SQUISHYFACE" on
Facebook or scan the
QR code with your
smartphone's camera





types of fostering, cont.

DOG FOR A DAY AND SHORT-TERM FOSTERING: Daytrips, overnights, or weekends - come and take a dog out for lunch or a sleepover, or bust one of our HQ dogs out for the weekend! Studies have shown that any time away from a shelter environment helps reduce stress levels, and helps provide valuable information about how the dog will do in a home.

MOMS + PUPPIES: Fostering a new family is an amazing experience. The time commitment varies from 6-10 weeks depending on the stage of pregnancy at intake and/or the age of the pups. SFC's practice is to keep puppies with their mother for at least 6 weeks, and then split them into pairs in new foster homes for the last two weeks before spay/neuter. A foster family interested in this type of fostering will need a totally separate space for mom + babies so they can grow big, strong and socialized in a safe place.

PUPPIES ONLY: We frequently receive litters of puppies old enough to be split from their mother on intake. It is our practice to keep puppies in pairs or trios until they are spayed/neutered and ready to be adopted. A foster family interested in fostering puppies must have a clean, separate space for the pups to live and play and must ensure they are kept in your home/backyard and not brought to public, multi-dog areas where they could be exposed to disease. Puppies are highly vulnerable to deadly illnesses such as parvovirus until they are fully vaccinated.



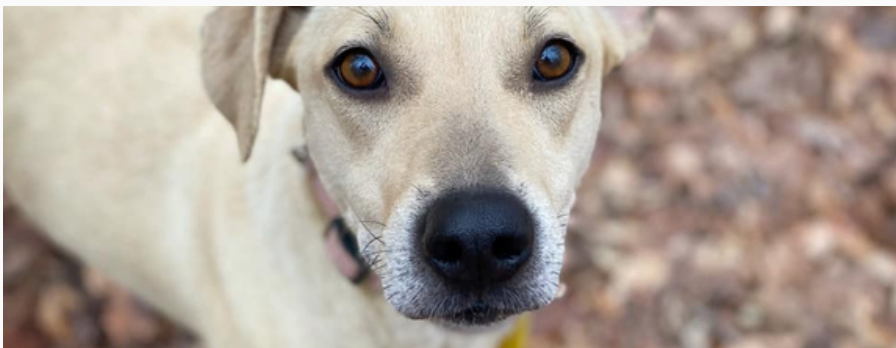


taking home a foster pet

When you are ready to foster a pet, talk to our Foster Manager or email foster@sfcva.org to see if we have any pets in need that match your area of interest. You can also keep an eye on our Trello board, which has photos and information about incoming pets and pets that have already arrived that are still in need of foster parents. If you see someone you're interested in, let us know!

When you agree to foster a pet, please be mindful of what you can realistically commit to. Some considerations to help you include:

- Reliable transportation to and from SFC HQ. Animals still in need of spay/neuter will need to be returned on a Thursday before their surgery date, and pets in care longer than two weeks will need to come back every two weeks for vaccines and treatments. In an emergency or illness situation, you will need to be able to bring the pet back to us ASAP.
- The length of time you are available to foster. If you can only keep a pet for two weeks, a litter of 3-week-old puppies or a pet with long-term medical needs may not be the best candidates for you at this time.
- The ability to separate your foster pet from your resident pets. We recommend quarantining all puppies from resident pets for at least 7 days to ensure that they do not break with contagious illness and expose your personal animals. Adult dogs may need time and slow introduction before they are able to be free together while supervised in your home.
- Supplies and other expenses. SFC will provide all vet care and will provide food, toys, litter, and other supplies as we are able to - however, this is dependent on what we have donated at the time.



scan for our
trello board

tips and tricks for pickup

When you come to pick up a foster dog, it is super helpful if you bring your own leash (non-retractable). All adult dogs will be outfitted with a martingale collar before they leave SFC HQ. Do not remove this collar during the foster period.

Cats, kittens, and puppies must be transported in a carrier. Our pets should be transported securely in a vehicle, not a truck bed, and pets should not be removed from the carrier until they are safely in your home.

Foster pets will be picked up from SFC HQ at 9916 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania VA 22553. Every time that you pick up a pet, you will need to sign a new foster agreement. We will go over any medications/treatments and expected length of stay at this time.

FINDING WHO NEEDS FOSTER

Trello Board

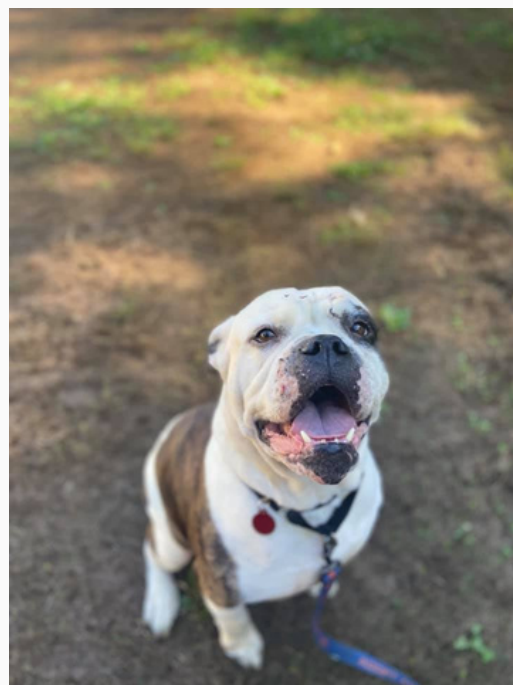
The majority of incoming animals are posted to our Trello board at least 24-72 hours before arrival. If you see a group you are interested in fostering, please contact the Foster Manager via facebook messenger or email at foster@sfcva.org. Please note that the majority of puppies need to be fostered in pairs (or as an entire litter).

Foster Facebook Group

On Facebook.com, search "TEAM SQUISHYFACE" to join our group. You must provide the name used on your foster application, and answer the subsequent questions for admittance. This group is private and is a place to post photos of your foster, ask questions and engage with other caregivers. We will also place photos/information about animals needing fosters here.

Photos you share on the group may be used on your foster's adoption profile as well as in educational and promotional material throughout the organization.

Along with intermittent emails, the Foster Facebook Group is the best way to keep up to date on any changes happening in the program.



CASE MANAGERS

SFC uses volunteer Case Managers to help provide support for each foster caregiver. Our case managers are experienced fosters able to provide mentorship and answer all of your canine-related questions.

The CM can answer questions for you regarding puppy proofing your foster space, behavioral and dietary concerns, and basic health and medical questions.

You should contact your CM with ANY questions or concerns you may have about your foster's health or well-being. If you are worried that one of your foster may be sick, try to get some information together before you call:

- How long have the symptoms been going on?
- Is s/he eating, drinking, pooping, peeing, playing?
- Any vomiting?
- Diarrhea?
- What is the dog's temperature?

If you don't have a CM you typically work with, one will be assigned and should reach out within 48 hours of you picking up your foster. If you do not hear from someone, please contact the Foster Manager at foster@sfcva.org. She will also be your interim mentor if you have any questions and your backup mentor if yours is not available.

CARING FOR YOUR FOSTER PET: SUPPLIES

We will provide you with all medical care and medical supplies needed for your foster pet. When possible we will provide other supplies. We will do our best to provide as donations allow, but we cannot guarantee to have everything you might want in stock! Remember - any money spent on foster care may be tax deductible as donations, so feel free to ask the Foster Manager for a donation receipt.

If you intend to foster more than once, we recommend investing in some of the items below and/or asking for these items at the time of pickup.



RECOMMENDED SUPPLY CHECKLIST

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

- Food
- Food Bowl(s)
- Dog Food Storage Bin
- Food Scoop
- Leashes
- Crate
- Dog Bed, Towels, Other Linens
- Poop Baggies
- Toys - hard and soft
- Animal First Aid Kit

NOT NEEDED- BUT MAY MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER!

- Baby Gates
- Play pen
- Dog Brush
- Dog Shampoo/Conditioner
- Nail Clippers
- Ear Cleaner
- Potty Pads
- Chews - rawhides not recommended
- Treats
- Kong



CARING FOR YOUR FOSTER PET: FOOD AND SHELTER

FEEDING: We recommend feeding twice a day, in the AM and the PM. Dry food should be left down for puppies, kittens, and cats at all time. Puppies and kittens should also get wet food 2-3x a day. Please observe puppies and kittens while eating to ensure that everyone gets equal opportunity to eat, and separate as needed. Please do not feed table scraps, a raw diet, or other unique foods without consulting SFC. Fresh water should be available for your foster pets at all times.

GROOMING: Please keep the pet clean, comfortable and safe. We recommend Dawn dish soap as a shampoo, especially if you see signs of fleas. Lather and leave soap on for 5 minutes before rinsing. Please bathe your foster pet prior to returning to SFC for spay/neuter or before adoption events.



HOUSING

We recommend keeping foster pets in an area that is isolated from your other pets for 7-14 days until the incubation period for diseases such as kennel cough, parvovirus, ringworm etc has passed. We want to minimize risk to your personal pets.

Areas such as bathrooms, laundry rooms, kitchens with tile floors, etc. work well for housing foster pets. Try to use a space that is easy to sanitize, without carpet or easy access to couches, beds etc. in case of infectious disease.

If you are fostering a litter of puppies, keeping them in a playpen, whelping box, or children's pool may help limit the amount of cleanup required. This type of enclosure will also allow you to make observations while providing plenty of room for mom and her litter.

Remember: the foster area must be sterilized between groups to minimize risk of your new foster pets getting sick. Use 10% bleach/water solution. If you have fostered pets that break with ringworm or parvovirus, and the pets have not been in an isolated, bleachable space since the time of arrival, you will be unable to foster for 3 months or as determined by our foster team.

Dogs and puppies should be housed indoors. When taken outside, dogs must be leashed at all times unless in a fenced-in yard. Never leave foster dogs outside unsupervised. Please do not take your foster dog to a dog park or any place where dogs are off leash, as we do not want to put our dogs in a position in which they may get into a fight or exposed to disease. Underage, not fully vaccinated pets must be kept in your home/yard and off of any public surfaces as they are not fully protected.

Adult dogs should be kept in a crate while unsupervised or while you are out of the home. Please ask for a crate at pickup if you do not have one available.

CARING FOR YOUR FOSTER PET: SOCIALIZING

One of the most important parts of your job as a foster is to show your foster pet(s) that humans are kind and loving, and that the world isn't such a scary place. Some pets will adjust quickly to you and their new environment, but others will take plenty of time and patience. Allow your foster time to acclimate to the new surroundings, and give them plenty of love. An outgoing, affectionate puppy can be cuddled and played with freely, while the less social animals will need some encouragement. Socializing fearful puppies in a timely manner is especially important, as if they are not well socialized during their critical developmental stages, they may develop aberrant social behavior later in life.

A good puppy socialization checklist can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3pFId4B>



TIPS AND TRICKS

- If your puppies are fearful and run away from you when you approach, try sitting on the floor near them and let them come to you. This is a lot less intimidating to them. Looking away and not holding eye contact can also calm them and make them less afraid of you.
- Discourage puppies from mouthing or biting your hands by distracting them with an appropriate toy. This will make them much more adoptable. Never engage in hand play with pets.
- Be patient with scared adult animals. They will need more time to adjust. Be calm, talk quietly, move slowly, and sit low. The more approachable you are, the more likely a scared animal is to come out of its shell.
- Mentor dogs that can model appropriate behavior can be an amazing asset to fearful or shy dogs. This can be a well-behaved foster dog or a resident dog that can take them on and show them the way.
- Use appropriate equipment for managing fearful adults. A martingale collar with a drag line or long leash attached to it at all times will aid you in controlling the dog's movements and recovering them from hiding spots. A harness with a front attachment for a leash is also recommended.
- Make sure that your environment for a scared adult dog doesn't allow them places to hide. Make their world small at first until they have gained some confidence before you allow them access to a wider space in your home. Many fearful dogs are flight risks as well; we recommend leash walking only to avoid an escape.
- Help socialize puppies by exposing them to the sights and sounds of a normal household, including vacuuming, items dropping, introduction to people of all shapes and sizes, differently textured floors and thresholds, the great outdoors (in a contained safe space), children, and other pets.
- Struggling with socialization? We are fortunate to have a dog trainer on our board who will be happy to give you some advice. Talk to your case manager or the Foster Manager to get some help!
- Don't be afraid to ask for help! We have a wide array of experienced folks on our Facebook page who can tell you what has and hasn't worked for them.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

CHECK UP APPTS AND VACCINATIONS

Upon intake, your fosters were given their initial round of dewormer, vaccines and other treatments depending on their age and condition. Your foster case manager will schedule their booster appointment 2-3 weeks from their intake date and every 2-3 weeks thereafter until they are adopted or have completed their vaccine series. All of these vaccine appointments are typically done at SFC HQ in Spotsylvania. Your Case Manager will be in touch with you to schedule this in advance.

Your fosters will receive the following treatments and vaccines dependent on their age:

0-4 weeks:

- Dewormer (Pyrantel) every 2 weeks

4 weeks - 4 months

- Dewormer
- Monthly Ivermectin starting at 6 weeks (heartworm preventative)
- Monthly Flea/Tick Preventative
- Plus DappV vaccines every 2-3 weeks

4 months+

- The above treatments and vaccines
- Plus a Rabies vaccine

The DappV shot vaccinates for canine Distemper, Adenovirus (a hepatitis virus), Parvovirus and Parainfluenza (a flu virus). Pyrantel is for worms. You might see these pass in the stool after treatment - they will look like spaghetti.



SIGNS OF ILLNESS

We do our best to ensure that medical concerns are addressed prior to a pet leaving for foster. Please make sure to give all doses of medications and come back to HQ for any required rechecks.

Pets that come from a shelter environment have been exposed to many germs, do not have an established vaccine history, and their immune systems may be suppressed due to shelter stress. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a pet to become sick shortly after arriving in a foster home. Please watch for the following symptoms:

Dogs/Pups under 9 months of age:

- diarrhea lasting longer than 1 day
- vomiting and diarrhea for > 6 hours
- Vomiting more than once/hour
- not eating for more than 12-24 hours
- lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours, or lethargy with fever
- sneezing, coughing, goopy eyes
- areas of crusty skin or hair loss
- lameness paired with discomfort or pain

Adult Dogs:

- not drinking for more than 24 hours
- diarrhea that lasts longer than 1-2 days
- vomiting more than 2-3 times/hour
- Not eating for > 72 hours
- Lethargy sans fever for more than a day, or lethargy with fever
- Sneezing, coughing, goopy eyes
- Lameness paired with discomfort or pain.

If you notice any of these symptoms, please contact your case manager for guidance and/or an appointment to be checked out by us at HQ or at a local veterinarian. Remember that SFC provides approved care at no cost to you, but if you go to an outside vet clinic without prior approval, you will have to pay for the visit and will not be reimbursed.

GENERAL AND EMERGENCY CARE

Most common ailments and illnesses can be handled in-house with guidance from our veterinarian partners. Contact your Case Manager or the Foster Manager at 540-376-5558 if you have concerns about illness or emergencies.

Once a foster is in your care, you are responsible for transporting him or her to SFC or an approved veterinarian for necessary and scheduled medical care. Always use a secure carrier, designed specifically for companion animals, when transporting puppies, and ensure dogs are on leash.

Emergencies that may need after-hours attention include continuous diarrhea coupled with lethargy, continuous vomiting, bleeding, any trauma such as being hit by car, dropped, stepped on, seizures, and difficulty breathing. If your pet is exhibiting any of these symptoms, get in touch with us immediately!

If emergent care is needed then you may be able to seek medical care with VVC Fredericksburg or another vet partner. Emergency care must be approved PRIOR to the vet visit. Call the Foster Manager at 540-376-5558 or the Executive Director at 540-369-3553 for guidance and approval. **Otherwise, SFC will not reimburse the veterinary expenses.**



VVC Fredericksburg
1301 Central Park Blvd,
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
(540) 372-3470

Lee's Hill Pet Hospital
10693 Spotsylvania Ave,
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
(540) 710-7111

The Spay Spot
3750 Brown Station Rd,
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
(301) 780-7203

FOSTERS PASSING AWAY

Sadly, puppies can be fragile, so it is always possible for them to become ill and pass away while in a foster home. Losing a foster pup is hard and feeling sad or guilty is normal but do not let this discourage you from continuing to foster. If this is something you don't wish to encounter, fostering underage puppies may not be right for you; But keep in mind that without foster homes most of these pups would not have stood a chance at survival. Whether it is one day or many months, the warmth and love you provide is worlds better than the life they had before. What you are doing is an irreplaceable service and means the world to these tiny creatures and so much to us. We appreciate you, and thank you for saving lives.

If you do have a foster pass away in your home, wrap up the pet in a towel and bag and bring to HQ or freeze until you are able to bring to HQ. We will have the pet cremated. Make sure you let us know you are coming!



PET POISON

CONTROL CHART



Most Common Causes of Pet Poisoning

	Human Medications	Plants	Household Chemicals	Human Food
EXTREME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood pressure pills Heart medication Opiates & pain meds NSAIDs (e.g. Aleve, Advil, Motrin, Aspirin) Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sago Palms Castor Beans Poinsettia Azaleas Lilies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleansers Fire logs Rat poison Anti-freeze Fertilizers Weed killer Insecticides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee Chocolate Baker's chocolate Sugar-free candy & gum Grapes & raisins Alcoholic drinks
VERY HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tricyclic antidepressants (e.g. Asendin, Elavil, Etrafon) Methylphenidate (ADHD medication) Decongestants (e.g. NyQuil, Sudafed, Theraflu) Vitamin D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amaryllis Cyclamen Oleander Tulip bulbs Autumn Crocus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mothballs Paint thinner Batteries Bleach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mushrooms Yeast dough Raw meat Raw eggs Bones Onions Garlic
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth control pills Sleep aids (e.g. Restoril, Ambien, Lunesta) Codeine Melatonin Bupropion (e.g. Wellbutrin, Zyban) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Ivy Peace Lily Pothos Schefflera Chrysanthemum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-icing salts Liquid potpourri Fabric softener Glow jewelry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk Dairy products Fatty foods Fat scraps Avocados
	Human Medications	Plants	Household Chemicals	Human Food

EARLY SIGNS OF POISONING

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Drooling
- Depression
- Agitation
- Seizures
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to urinate
- Nosebleeds
- Bleeding gums
- Black or bloody stools



GET HELP!

Call for help **IMMEDIATELY** if you suspect your pet has been poisoned!

BE PREPARED!

Keep Hydrogen Peroxide and Activated Charcoal on hand in case of poisoning.

Call your vet or the **ASPCA® National Animal Poison Control Center** at **800-548-2423**.

The joy of letting go of one foster group is knowing you soon will be able to take in another set that may not otherwise be able to find a place to grow in such a loving environment. Please consider the following guidelines when transitioning between groups.

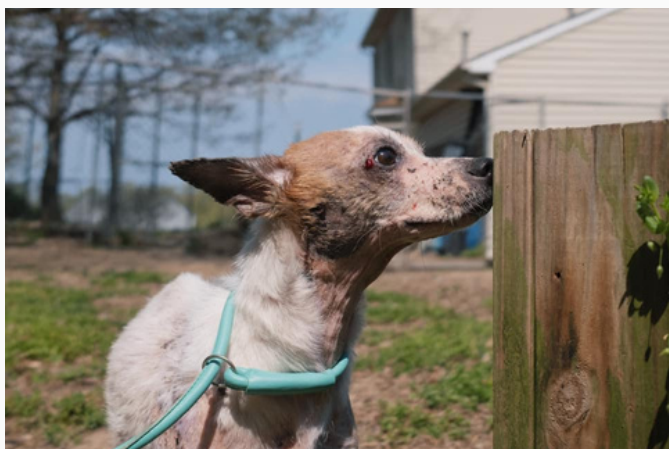
Once you have taken your foster back to SFC, it is time to clean and prepare your kitten room for your next foster group. You will need to remove all bedding, and wash it in hot water with bleach added. Follow your machine's guidelines for adding bleach to the wash load.

You will also need to clean any non-porous supplies (kongs, toys, etc.). Empty all contents, and wash with hot soapy water. Rinse well and then fill with hot water, add one cup of bleach and let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Rinse and dry well.

For food and water dishes you can run them through the dishwasher, and they will be cleaned for your next group.

If you have carpeted floors you will need to vacuum well and spot clean any areas that need it. If you have a carpet cleaner you should use it between groups. If you do not have carpet, sweep and mop the floor. Once the floor is dry, mop again with a bleach water solution (1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) and let it sit for ten minutes. Afterwards you will want to rinse with clear water and then let it dry.

You will need to wipe down all surfaces with a bleach water solution or Clorox Cleanup. You should also wipe the walls down. You do not have to do all of the wall but at least the bottom 3 feet. If you have a bed in the room, change the covering on it. If you have a chair or couch or cat tree in the room you will need to vacuum it and spot clean if needed. Ideally, your foster room will be void of anything covered in material like a chair or couch unless it is covered with a plastic sheet designed to protect them.



CLEANING BETWEEN YOUR FOSTER GROUPS

DISINFECTING YOUR SPACE

If you were fostering animals with a contagious illness, a more thorough cleaning process is warranted.

Quarantine of animals with contagious illness is essential to the prevention of large outbreaks and effective treatment. Disinfection procedures should be used in quarantine areas twice weekly to help prevent reinfection of pets as they recover.

1. Contagious animals should be housed in a room with tile or linoleum flooring (such as a bathroom).
2. Follow strict handwashing procedures and consider keeping specific clothing or footwear to help prevent spread of illness throughout home.
3. Quarantining in open areas using baby gates or kennels is non-ideal.
4. If fostering both healthy and sick pets, they must be kept strictly in separate areas. Foster parents must take care not to transfer bacteria or spores on their clothing or skin. Tie long hair back and consider changing clothes between groups. Wash hands up to elbow in hot water and soap for at least 30 seconds after contact. Sick animals should be the last animals contacted.
5. Hard scrub regular enclosure/space while animals are in a kennel. Remove everything, scrub all surfaces with detergent, then spray all surfaces with 1:10 bleach solution and let sit for 10 minutes. Dry and set up the space. All laundry must be washed with bleach.



dog to dog introductions

There may be situations where you need to introduce your foster dog to another dog - ie, walks in the neighborhood, hiking in a park, or even to your resident dog. It's important to understand that not all dogs will be best friends, and some dogs just aren't very social at all. Safety should always be your primary concern, though accidents can happen and we cannot always prevent them. Always work within your comfort zone. If you are uncomfortable about any given situation, seek the guidance of your case manager or someone with more experience to help you through the situation.

1. In order for two dogs to greet, the dogs must be relatively calm. If either dog is excited and pulling, wait to bring them close to each other. We recommend a "parallel walk" where the dogs can see each other from a distance until everyone is calm.
2. Once everyone is calm and has good focus, have the dogs greet each other so their noses and rear ends are together so they can smell each other. The entire process should not take more than three seconds. After three seconds, mark the pleasant encounter by saying "yes" (or whatever your mark happens to be) and offering a treat away from the other dog. You will be able to extend the time that your foster interacts with that dog with every encounter, Initial brief introductions are always better than extended ones.
3. If the dogs appear to get along, arrange a play date in a neutral location to eliminate the risk of one dog guarding a familiar territory. ALWAYS supervise the play with two people present and keep drag lines/leashes on both dogs. Do not drop the leashes until you are comfortable with the nature of the play. If it begins to escalate, step on the leashes and create space between them to give them a break.



**we highly
recommend
beginning with
a managed
household.**

CREATE SEPARATE SPACES FOR YOUR FOSTER AWAY FROM RESIDENT PETS. THE GOAL OF FOSTERING IS TO PROVIDE A SAFE, TEMPORARY HOME FOR A PET IN NEED - NOT TO GIVE YOUR DOG A BFF FOR A FEW WEEKS. FOSTER DOGS MAY NEED DECOMPRESSION TIME AND MAY NOT LIKE OTHER DOGS OR CATS. PROTECT THEM AND YOUR OWN ANIMALS BY GIVING THEM SEPARATE SPACES AND TIME SPENT WITH YOU. IF THEY GET ALONG WELL AFTER A PERIOD OF DECOMPRESSION AND A PROPER INTRODUCTION, WONDERFUL! MAKE SURE YOU SUPERVISE PLAY AND NEVER LEAVE YOUR FOSTER UNATTENDED WITH YOUR RESIDENT ANIMALS.

When fostering a rescued dog, it's a happy time for you and a relief for the dog. You've taken them away from a loud, scary place, and you're excited about a new (even if temporary) family member! This new situation is exciting for everyone with new interactions and adventures to come.

But WAIT! Before you show off your new foster to your family, friends, and resident pets, please give the new dog time to relax for a while. The last thing you should do at this point is to rush them into a new interaction that could get them in trouble if they aren't ready for it.

Decompression can easily take 3-5 days depending on the length of stay in a shelter and their prior history, known or unknown. Dogs that have been in a shelter for an especially long time need to decompress and get themselves back into a calm state of mind, away from the worry and stress of the typical shelter environment.

Keep your new dog/foster in a crate or their own space during decompression time, and always when you're not home. Create a routine that involves walks and playtime, followed by resting in a crate with a filled kong or chew toy to get the dog's mind working. It can take days for the true personality of the dog to resurface, and until they feel comfortable and safe with you and their new environment, it is best to keep their world small. When you feel they are gaining confidence and are back to being themselves, you can begin the slow introduction to your own dogs by going on walks together outside the home. Once this is successful, you can graduate to socializing in the backyard, and then to time spent together inside the home. Make sure that YOU are comfortable with the interaction before you progress to this step - dogs can sense when you are uncomfortable, and your resident pets may infer that they need to protect you against the newcomer.



DECOMPRESSION



Decompression times varies with each and every dog. Some need more time than others, but it's safe to recommend around a week for each new dog you bring into your home. Always treat the dog with respect and give them guidance, exercise, and time alone with you to bond and get the experience of being part of a family in a typical home environment.

One of the top reasons dogs end up in a shelter is because their owners didn't train them, or rarely interacted with them. It is best to approach each new foster dog as though they are a blank slate, and not make assumptions about what they do or do not know. Some of these dogs have never been inside a home, or were not properly socialized with people or other animals at critical development windows in their lives. They may not be potty trained or even crate trained. The bath you give them may be their first bath. They may not have any idea what typical dog food is, or how to eat it. Please be patient with them and don't give up when they don't understand the rules right away; you are giving them an opportunity for a new life, and they're right at the beginning of their journey.

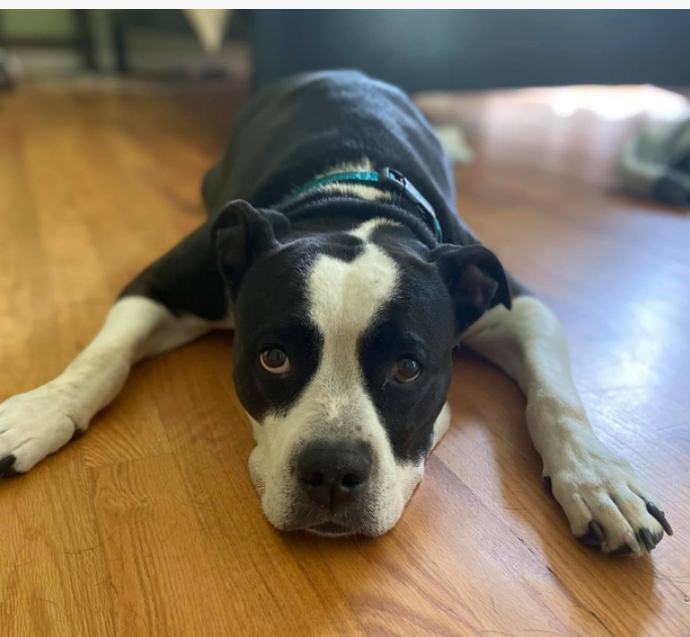


TIME - SPACE - UNDERSTANDING!

Decompression Checklist for Foster Dogs

When a dog suffers from kennel stress, it can take from several minutes to 48+ hours for that pet's anxiety to return to normal levels. It takes time to build trust, and trust is the basis for obedience. The more a dog trusts their foster, the more likely that s/he will learn and follow the rules. In some cases, the buildup of shelter stress can make a dog difficult to tire out. This will improve with time, but there are several things you can do to make the process go smoothly.

- ☐ Prepare needed supplies in order to mentally engage your foster dog. You may want to use food-filled frozen Kongs, puzzle toys, etc.
- ☐ When you first get your foster dog, take a walk outside SFC HQ for 10-15 mins before leaving to get comfortable with the dog.
- ☐ Continue walking, either at a park in your neighborhood or your yard until your foster dog appears to relax.
- ☐ When you enter the home, ensure that any family members who are meeting the dog for the first time are seated, and let the dog come to them for attention.
- ☐ Keep your foster dog separated from your own pets until your foster is comfortable in his/her new environment and you have time to do a proper introduction.
- ☐ If your foster is unable to settle dog, channel their energy into a task such as fetch, puzzle toys, or any game that engages their brain until they are able to relax.
- ☐ Do only essential meet-and-greets for the first 48 hours to a week, depending on the dog's comfort level.



scan the QR code for a short video on decompression!



Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



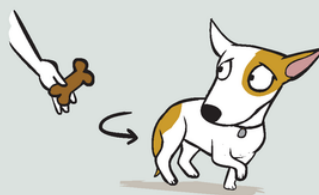
Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



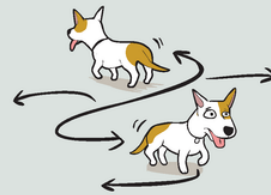
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"

ADOPTION FROM FOSTER CARE

- Puppies are available for adoption after 8 weeks of age if they are healthy, and spayed/neutered.
- Puppies under 4 months old must be double vaccinated prior to the time of adoption, and have been in care for at least 2 weeks.
- We do NOT adopt sibling puppies together. This is due to the risk of littermate syndrome. For more information on this, search online or check out <https://thebark.com/content/dont-take-two-littermates>
- Foster caregivers get first choice on adopting, and are given the opportunity to "network" their fosters among friends, family, and coworkers before they are placed online for public applications. If at any point they are returned to SFC or transferred to another caregiver, the original caregiver no longer will have "first dibs".
- Foster parents who wish to adopt their foster pet are required to pay the adoption fee.
- All puppies and dogs must be spayed or neutered before they go home with adopters. No exceptions.



Adoption Fees:

Puppies (2-6 months): \$325

Adult Dogs (6 months-7 years): \$225

Senior Dogs (7+): \$150



MEET & GREETES

Helping find an adopter for your foster pet is a tremendous help for the SFC team, and allows you to see and play a role in the entirety of their journey from intake to forever home. If meet and greets aren't your thing, that is totally fine. Pets without adopters will go to one of our adoption events after spay/neuter to look for a new home.

- Pets must be at least 7 weeks old and in care for at least 7 days before meeting prospective adopters.
- If you have networked your pet and found an adopter on your own, have them fill out an application online at www.sfcva.org and give the name of the confirmed adopter to your case manager as soon as possible. SFC must be informed of networked adopters by the time of dropoff for spay/neuter, or as advised by your CM.
- If you are not interested in networking your pet or do not have an adopter in your network but are willing to conduct meet and greets, please let your CM know. We will make your pet live on our website and collect applications.
- Your CM will send you 1-2 applications at a time to contact. Meet and greets can be done at your home, at the SFC HQ, or in a mutually agreeable public location depending on the age of the pet. Once you have a confirmed adopter, please communicate with your CM.
- Remember that SFC is a low-barrier organization and to approach each meet and greet with an open mind. The important part is to find an appropriate match for your foster pet's personality and needs.

SFC FOSTER CONTRACT

SFC VIRGINIA - FOSTER CONTRACT

Animal Name: _____

Foster Start Date _____ Foster End Date _____

1. I hereby acknowledge receiving the above-named animal(s).
2. I agree that the animal(s) will at all times remain in the sole property of SFC Virginia.
3. I agree to provide the animal(s) with good loving care, including but not limited to companionship, food, water, shelter, and medication when required.
4. I understand that the medicines and other supplies provided by SFC Virginia are for use with foster care animal(s) only, and will not be administered to pets that do not belong to SFC Virginia.
5. I understand that SFC Virginia must authorize all veterinary care in advance. I agree to personally incur the cost for any treatment that has not been authorized.
6. I understand and acknowledge that I do not have any right of authority to transfer or place foster animal(s) in other homes or with other individuals without involvement of SFC Virginia.
7. I agree that every animal I provide foster care for must be physically returned to SFC by the date set above or at any time upon the request of an SFC case manager or staff member. I also agree to contact SFC and return the animal(s) immediately if I am no longer able to provide adequate care.
8. I agree to provide reliable transportation of the animal(s) to and from SFC HQ or to any necessary appointments. I agree to assume all liability while transporting the animal(s).
9. I agree to hold SFC Virginia harmless from any direct or consequential damages arising out of this foster care arrangement including, but not limited to, property damage and personal injury.
10. I acknowledge and agree that SFC may terminate this foster care arrangement at any time, with or without cause.
11. I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect or abandonment.
12. I understand that SFC Virginia holds regular office hours at 9916 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania VA 22553 between 10-6 Monday-Friday, and that after-hours and weekend support, supply pick-ups, and dropoffs must be coordinated through my volunteer case manager or the Foster Manager.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SFC CONTACT INFO

FOSTER CARE CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Foster Program: If you have general questions about our foster program, please email foster@sfcva.org.

Routine questions about your Foster Pet: For general questions or non-emergency questions regarding your foster pet, please contact your assigned case manager. This can include concerns, supply requests, behavioral consult requests, to schedule a vaccine appointment or non-emergency vet visit, or to schedule returns if needed. Your CM should be in contact with you within 48 hours of receiving your foster. If you do not know who your CM is, please email the foster@sfcva.org account and someone will get back to you ASAP.

Emergency Situations - call Ashley at 540-376-5558 or Ryan at 913-530-0487

- Please do not text if it is a true emergency. Refer to the chart below for definitions of emergency.
- If you do not receive a response within 15 minutes, call the secondary option:
 - Stephanie Hubbart (Board Secretary/Medical CM) at 540-424-2923

Reminders:

- Decisions on the care of foster pets are made by SFC leadership
- SFC will not be held liable for any medical costs incurred that were not approved by SFC leadership. If you have a medical concern, please follow the steps outlined above.

EMERGENCY- Contact Ryan/Stephanie

- Diarrhea not responding to treatment
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Sudden non-weight-bearing lameness
- Difficulty/inability to breathe or shortness of breath
- Seizure or loss of consciousness
- Persistent vomiting
- Swollen face or eyes
- Sudden weakness or collapse
- Hit by Car
- Intense Pain

Urgent Health Concern- Contact Ryan/Stephanie/Ashley

- Mild difficulty breathing
- Acting painful
- Large open wounds
- Limping/looks broken
- A combination of any of the following: lethargy, inappetance, diarrhea, vomiting

Health Concern-Contact CM

- Cough, discharge from eyes/nose
- Abrasions and minor cuts
- Eye, ear, or skin infections
- Limping
- Small amount of blood in urine
- Diarrhea (diarrhea lasting longer than 24 hours is upgraded to URGENT health concern)

A pet that gets loose or is missing in foster care MUST be reported ASAP to Ashley at 540-376-5558 and to Spotsylvania Animal Control at (540) 582-7115 or Stafford Animal Control at (540) 658-7387. Please do not wait to report!

QUICK FAQ

How do I become a foster parent?

You will need to fill out the SFC Virginia foster application online. For more information you can visit www.sfcva.org/foster

How do I get a group of foster puppies or a foster dog?

After you have completed foster application you will be prompted to add yourself to the foster facebook page. As fosters become available, staff will contact caregivers who have indicated an interest in fostering puppies or dogs. We also post foster opportunities on the facebook page "Team Squishyface" and on Trello. Once contacted, our staff will coordinate pick up and provide additional details with you.

What is required of me as a foster parent?

Providing a safe, 'doggie-proofed' room in your home that contains the pup's necessities; food, water, bedding, crate, toys, etc. You are responsible for ensuring that your pup receives any scheduled medical treatments on time, is healthy, and well socialized.

What are the requirements for a foster room?

The foster room needs to be a designated place for your foster to live the entire time. A spare bedroom, basement, or other room could work as well. This room will need to be 'doggie-proofed' and have plenty of space for a crate, playpen if you are fostering puppies, and food and water dishes.

What supplies do I need to provide myself?

SFC will provide you with food, toys, puppy pads, and a crate if needed. With supplies in limited quantities, it helps when foster parents can supply food dishes, toys and scratching implement, bedding, and other small incidentals. However, if you need help with some of these supplies, we will do our best to provide them.

How much do I need to supervise my foster group?

You need to do welfare checks on your foster group several times a day. This is to make sure everyone is healthy, eating, and eliminating appropriately - and to clean up the mess! You should spend about 1-2 hours per day interacting with your foster group so that they become well socialized.

Can my foster interact with my resident pets?

We recommend a quarantine of 7-14 days before allowing your foster pet to be with your resident pet, especially in the case of puppies, who typically have only just received their first vaccine and are highly vulnerable to illness. Adult dogs should be given decompression time away from your resident dogs before introduction. Use caution before introducing your foster pet to cats and other small pets, as we do not often know ahead of time if the dog will be friendly with smaller animals.

Can my children interact with the foster?

We encourage your children to have supervised interaction with your foster dog or puppies once you (and the pet) are comfortable.

Children should not be permitted to handle newborns or very young pups, and should not be responsible for holding the leash of an adult dog. Caution and direct supervision is a must!

Who do I call for help?

If at anytime you have non-emergent questions or concerns you can text, message, or call your volunteer case manager. For after hours emergencies please call the foster manager at 540-376-5558.

If my fosters get sick do I take them to my own vet?

All veterinary care will be provided through SFC. Foster parents are not permitted to seek veterinary care from outside clinics. Any visits to outside veterinarians that are not pre-approved will be the financial responsibility of the foster parent.

What do I do if my own pets get sick?

Your foster puppies and dogs should be housed separately from your resident animals. However, we do recognize that cross contamination can happen. If your own pet gets sick it is your responsibility to seek veterinary treatment. Remember there is always an inherent risk of disease when you bring new animals into your home. This is why we highly recommend that all animals in the home are current on vaccinations.

Do my resident pets have to be up to date on their vaccines?

For everyone's protection and safety your resident pets are highly recommended to be up to date on vaccines.

What if I have to leave out of town unexpectedly?

Contact your case manager as soon as possible so that we can find alternate placement for your foster pet. Please do not place your fosters in an alternate home without permission.

THANK YOU for helping save lives!
We look forward to working with you.

