

Humane Society – In Shelter Volunteer Guide

Your help here is invaluable to the staff and to the animals, so we first want to thank you for taking your valuable time to volunteer at our shelter

A. Safety is our primary concern while you are here; if you are uncertain about a dog or cat, ask the shelter staff for advice or tell us if you are not comfortable with a particular animal

B. Animals in shelters are under a certain amount of stress due to the noise, the strange surroundings, the many and varied animals around them and the many people who go by them each day. Cats, in particular, are generally not happy campers when taken by barking dogs. Please keep these kinds of things in mind when moving dogs or cats around the shelter. All dogs should be on a leash and cats are best moved in crates for everyone's safety.

C. The "back" or "hold" building is off-limits to our volunteers unless specifically cleared by staff. While this building houses our strays hoping for their owners to claim them, it also houses animals brought in by animal control and we often do have mean or unhealthy animals whose behavior can be even more unpredictable. The animals in our "front" or "adoptable" building where you will work have been screened by the staff for their adoptability. Please help us also keep any visitors to our facility from going beyond the front building for their safety. If someone approaches you about wanting to look for their lost dog you can inform them that they can walk around the outside of the back building to look for their dog. In the event they are looking for a lost cat, a member of the staff will escort them into the cat holding area.

D. You can help us here in many ways:

1. Simply playing and loving our dogs and cats here in the shelter is of tremendous value to the health and well-being of our animals. Many have been with us quite a while and can use all of the love and attention they can get. Others have to learn how to trust humans since they were discarded and building that trust can help speed them on their way to a permanent home.

2. Dogs can be rotated into the play yard for some much needed physical activity. Ensure only one dog from the same kennel run are in the play yard together – never mix dogs from different kennel runs unless a staff member approves. Please move all dogs to/from the play yard by staying within the fence perimeter (gate behind the front building around the play yard side of the kennels). Do not take them in and out through the office and the outside gate as that greatly increases the chance of a dog escaping.

3. You can go inside our communal cat cages and play with the cats there. Please do not take them out of these cages or walk around the shelter with them as that is a sure way to get scratched, bitten or simply lose the scared kitty.

4. Many of our animals can use a bath, so bathing dogs is of great help to the staff (staff will bathe cats, if needed, for your safety). Consult a staff member for guidance on what dogs to bathe and any special shampoo/dip requirements.

5. Teaching dogs leash manners and such basic commands as sit and down can greatly improve their chance for a successful adoption. These are not difficult to do and as much as possible our staff will assist you if you do not know how to teach a dog basic commands.

6. If you are knowledgeable about dog and/or cats and dog and/or cat breeds, then assisting potential adopters pick the right pet for them is a very valuable service. The staff is responsible for screening potential adopters to ensure our animals get the best possible homes – if you hear something that alerts you to a possible ‘bad’ home please alert a staff member and they will make the final decision on the adoption. It is important to understand that simply wanting a pet does not guarantee we will adopt to that person. What matters most is the lifelong welfare of our animals, so we want to make sure that any potential home is the best possible home for that animal.

7. We can always use help with paperwork, computer data entry and manning the phone in the front office if you are so inclined. Let us know when you can help and we will be happy to show you the ropes.