

## **BORROW-A-BUDDY POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

All foster parents are required to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this document. Failure to do so may result in the animal needing to be returned/confiscated, the inability to foster with SPCA of Texas in the future, or other courses of action. These policies are in place to keep you and your foster pets safe and set you up for success. The most updated Policies & Procedures can always be found on the website at: <https://spca.org/adopt/foster/foster-resources/policies-procedures/>.

### **Communication**

Urgent or not, e-mailing the foster team is the preferred form of communication and the best way to ensure your message is read and responded to as quickly as possible. Having an electronic paper trail helps us keep track of all foster animals, foster parents and actionable items that need completing. Medical related e-mails can be sent to [fostermed@spca.org](mailto:fostermed@spca.org) while all other communications can be sent to [foster@spca.org](mailto:foster@spca.org).

### **Health & Wellness**

All foster animals shall be provided with proper food, fresh water and proper shelter. The foster animal will stay indoors except for potty breaks. **Under no circumstances will your foster be left outside unleashed, on a chain, or in a dog house.** The animal will be treated humanely by all members of the foster household.

### Medications

Foster parents are required to administer all meds given exactly as prescribed by the shelter veterinarian.

### Medical Emergencies

Please call 214-608-8073 if your foster pet is having a medical emergency. If you have an emergency between the hours of **8:30am and 6pm**, you may immediately bring your foster pet to the shelter regardless of whether you are able to reach someone beforehand.

**We DO NOT have 24 hour services available.** If the emergency is after-hours, you may take your foster pet to a 24 hour animal hospital if:

- You have attempted to contact SPCA of Texas staff via e-mail ([fostermed@spca.org](mailto:fostermed@spca.org)) and phone with no response, AND
- You feel that urgent and immediate care may be necessary for the animal's survival.

Follow this chart to determine whether an issue is urgent or needs monitoring:

<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Monitor Until Business Hours</b>
Excessive vomiting + lethargy/not drinking/not eating	Vomits once or several times but still behaving normally
Dehydration-not eating or drinking at all, gums white, skin sags when pinched	Eating or drinking very little
Extreme lethargy – not getting up when roused	Sleeping a lot
Serious Injury or Pain	Cuts, scratches, minor limping
Difficulty breathing, open mouth breathing, gasping when no strenuous activity has occurred.	Fecal issues – Diarrhea, blood in stool, worms

## Safety

### Preventing Escape

Under no circumstances should your foster pet be outdoors unsupervised, even in a backyard. When out in public, your foster pet should be on leash at all times.

**Dog parks are strictly prohibited.**

Please make sure your foster pet is safely contained (on a leash, in a crate, behind a barrier) when entering or exiting the home, as many pets will door dart when given the chance. For dogs, please ensure side gates are closed, and that there are no gaps or loose boards in your fencing before letting them loose in the yard. Do not open side gates while your pet is in the yard.

If your foster pet manages to escape, you must notify the foster department **IMMEDIATELY**. The foster team will report the animal lost with the microchip company. After notifying the foster team, proceed with the following steps:

1. Put food out in your front and back yard, and some bedding that smells familiar. Leave your back gate open in case the animal returns.
2. Post the lost animal on NextDoor. If you don't have an account, please create one and post immediately.
3. Call your local animal shelters and vet offices to report the animal missing. Also be sure to browse the shelter websites regularly to see what animals have come in.
4. Post the animal on local Lost and Found Facebook groups and other social media platforms.
5. Print and post flyers around your community. Ask neighbors for assistance.

### Animal Gear

Any harnesses, collars or leashes provided for your foster animal should continue to be used exactly as instructed. If the gear you are provided does not work effectively or gets destroyed, please notify the foster team and arrange to pick up replacements. In general, dogs should never be walked with a standard collar and leash, and will usually require a harness, martingale collar and/or Weiss walkie. **Retractable leashes are dangerous to use and strictly prohibited.**



## **Other Animals**

If you have dogs at home, we do recommend bringing them to the shelter for meet & greets with potential foster dogs. Nonetheless, it is still very important to use caution and follow recommended procedures when introducing a foster animal to your resident pets. Also, please follow guidelines below when introducing your foster dog to other dogs out in public. All interactions must be on leash and supervised. **Dog parks are strictly prohibited.**

<https://spca.org/file/Dog-to-Dog-Introductions.pdf>.

<https://spca.org/file/Introducing-Cats-and-Dogs.pdf>.

## **Child Safety**

Animals and children should never be alone together unsupervised. It is important to observe animals' body language for signs of distress and ensure children give them plenty of space when displaying these signs (ears pulled back, tight mouth, panting, pacing, cowering, hiding, barking etc). In general, animals should not be pet unless they solicit the interaction themselves. Regardless of an animal's temperament or body language, children should not be allowed to hug, lay on, or kiss animals on the face.

## **Liability**

You are liable for any damage or injury caused by the foster animal while in your care. The SPCA of Texas will not cover the cost of damage to your property, public property, or the property of others, nor the cost of medical care sought out for injuries.

## Training

### Training

The SPCA of Texas practices positive reinforcement training only. As such, your foster pets should **NEVER** be punished, scolded, or physically reprimanded for unwanted behavior, nor should they witness these types of corrections with resident pets.

### Behavior Concerns

If there are any behavior concerns observed with your foster animal, it is crucial that you notify the foster team right away so that assistance can be provided before the issue escalates. Examples of concerning behavior are:

- Barking/Growling/Hissing at known people or strangers
- Cowering or hiding from people
- Aggression toward people or other animals (lunging, snapping, baring teeth, biting)
- Destructive when left alone or in your presence
- Pacing or whining
- Crate/Separation anxiety
- Urinating or defecating when being pet or when scared
- Easily overstimulated (overly jumpy/mouthy or swatty during play or interaction)
- Hiding all the time
- Won't go outside or come inside
- Inappropriate urination or litter box issues
- Guard resources from other pets or people (i.e. food, toys or guards people)

### Bites/Scratches

If your foster animal bites or scratches a person and breaks skin, it must be reported to the foster team **IMMEDIATELY**. Texas law requires that the animal be quarantined for 10 days post-incident. You will be asked to bring the animal to either the Dallas SPCA location or to a shelter within the city that the bite or scratch occurred. If unable to bring the animal due to schedule or safety concerns, an animal control officer or staff member may need to retrieve the animal. The victim of the bite or scratch will need to provide details of the injury, what led to it, and be willing to provide photos.

## **House Training**

Due to the situations the majority of our animals come from, it is not likely for them to be housetrained when they get here, nor is the shelter environment conducive to house training-that is what a home is for. We generally don't know whether certain dogs are housebroken and that is why we rely on fosters to find out and to house train the animals to help make them more adoptable. With frequent potty breaks and positive reinforcement, most adult dogs take to housetraining much more quickly and easily than puppies.

## **Adoption Interest**

### **Adoption Interest For Available Animals**

As you take your buddy around town, you may receive adoption interest for your buddy. You can share any photos or videos that you have taken to promote and get them adopted! We also ask, that while you have your buddy, that you take photo's and video's and send those to [foster@spca.org](mailto:foster@spca.org) so we can post on the animal's bio on the website. This really helps their adoptability for people to see how they are in a home and out on the town!