



# Dog Walker Volunteer Manual



*Updated December 20, 2020*

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*PLEASE NOTE: Due to circumstances surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, the shelter is currently open to the public only on Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00-5:00 p.m., and appointments are mandatory for all potential adopters in order to limit the number of people on the premises at any given time. This will contradict with certain information in the manual that lists the shelter as being open to the public Friday-Monday during those hours, as that was the case prior to the pandemic (and may return to being the case at some point.) The hours listed in this manual for dog-walking are still accurate.*

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## **Purpose**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to walk dogs at Friends of Homeless Animals (FOHA)! The purpose of this document is to provide you with an overview of the dog-walking policies, procedures, and best practices at FOHA. Volunteers are welcome to provide feedback and add to the list of practices to help make the experience more enjoyable for volunteers and the dogs.

## **Overview**

While it can be challenging to be a dog walker at FOHA, it can also be highly rewarding. For example, you may help a shy dog transform from fearful to confident and affectionate. You may help an energetic dog learn to walk better on a leash and therefore help its chances for adoption. Or you may simply provide comfort to an older dog that was returned to us through no fault of its own. The physical conditions at the shelter are often demanding: Many of the dogs are not leash-trained and have an excess of energy to expend on their walks. Dog-walking occurs under all weather conditions and can be intense physical exercise.

You may find that those discomforts tend to be minor compared to the wonderful experience that can be had with FOHA dogs. We are their source of love, affection, and attention while they await their forever homes, and they are grateful for the time we spend with them.

Please know that walking dogs in a shelter environment is often different from walking your family pet in your own neighborhood. The dogs in a kennel environment have additional stress and may display aggressive reactions to people unexpectedly. Please always pay close attention to the dog you are walking and exercise additional caution when handling any of the dogs, especially around toys, food, grooming, etc.

## **Safety**

When walking dogs at FOHA, first and foremost, you should be focused on safety—for yourself, the dog you are with, other animals and the people around you. The majority of the guidelines outlined in the following pages are in place for the safety of everyone.

# THE FIVE BASIC RULES

There are five basic areas dog walkers are asked to pay close attention to:

- 1) Doors
- 2) Signs
- 3) Clips
- 4) Leashes
- 5) Distance

## 1) Doors

- Most of the buildings have double doors at each entrance. Only one door should be open at a time to prevent an escape route for a dog.
- All doors to dog containment areas have windows. Make yourself visible when you approach a door from the outside. Ensure other volunteers can see you as you get close to a door.
- Look through the windows carefully before going through each door. If you have a dog with you, do not proceed into the run area if someone else is getting a dog out or putting one away. If you do not have a dog, ensure any dog being taken out or put back in a run is secure (on a lead or closed in its run) before you open the door.
- Ensure the door is closed securely behind you.
- In the dog run areas, only one gate is to be open at a time. Dogs are most likely to slip away when they are coming out of their runs or being put away. To avoid the potentiality of two dogs getting loose at the same time, only one volunteer at a time should have a gate open to put a dog away or get it out.
- You may have to back away from a door to give another volunteer plenty of room to pass by with a dog.
- When you put your dog back in its run, ensure the gate is securely closed. Reattach the spring clip that keeps the gate closed.

## 2) Signs

- Each dog should have a clipboard on its run with a sheet containing its name, bio (if available), and a small photo. Be sure to note the dog's name when you take it out. The runs can all look the same, and you want to ensure that you put the dog back into the correct run. Occasionally a brand new or unexpectedly returned dog may not have a clipboard yet; in this case, the dog's run will at least have an index card or small sheet with its name on it.
- Other information about the dogs is provided by posting signs on their runs. Most signs are self-explanatory, but it is important to scan the front of a dog's entire run to make sure you see any and all signs posted on it.

- Particularly important signs include the following:

***"Quarantine"/"Staff Only"/"Do Not Walk"***

There may be several reasons for these conditions, but if a dog has a sign with any variation of these messages on it, it should not be walked by volunteers.

***"Senior Volunteer-Only"/"Designated Volunteer-Only"***

There may be variations of these signs saying things like, "Thanks, but I'm waiting for my designated volunteers" or simply "Senior Volunteers." When you first begin volunteering at FOHA, you are not allowed to walk senior volunteer-only or designated volunteer-only dogs. **Please do not walk any dog with this designation; doing so may put yourself or the dog at risk of potentially serious injury.** There are numerous reasons a dog may have these designations, and when one does, it means a volunteer must become familiar with the specific reasons for such and receive an introduction to that dog from someone who knows it well before ever walking it. After you have regularly volunteered at the shelter for several months, you may ask an experienced volunteer about the potentiality of being introduced to any dogs with these designations in which you are interested. (More information on the "senior volunteer" designation is in the FAQ section.)

- Other signs you may see are as follows:

***"Walk Me Gently"***

The dog may be recovering from surgery, heartworm treatment, or an injury. Take the dog out for a slow, gentle walk. Do not go into play yards. While its exercise is limited, its snuggle time is not. Find a quiet spot and spend time brushing, petting, or sitting with the dog.

***"Do Not Feed"/"No Treats"***

Dogs that are not to be fed treats may have a medical issue or allergies and require a strict diet to help them stabilize, or they may be on their way to surgery in the morning and need to fast. It may also indicate that special treats are available in the kitchen area for that dog. You may provide those if listed.

***"No Blankets"***

These dogs have demonstrated a tendency to chew on their blankets and may attempt to eat any blanket left with them. This is a potentially life-threatening issue for a dog.

***Litter-Mates or Pack Mates***

These dogs' signs will have the name of the dog they are to be walked with and a big red arrow pointing to the neighboring run where the pack mate or litter-mate is housed. Walking 2 dogs at a time can be very, very challenging, and if you have the slightest doubt regarding your ability to do so, then please do not attempt it. If you are not comfortable walking

both at the same time, find a buddy so the dogs can be walked together. This is an exception to the 15-foot distance rule (detailed on p. 6), as well as the "one dog in the play yard at a time" rule. Ensure you put each dog back in the correct run when you are finished!

- Dogs that are not to be walked are labeled as such due to a medical condition or temporary quarantine.
- Orange and Green Sticker Color Coding
  - As an aid in selecting a dog to walk, there are small round orange or green stickers in a bottom corner of each dog's bio sheet. A green sticker indicates that the dog is a bit less strong/easier to walk. An orange sticker indicates that the dog is energetic and/or strong and will pull a lot during your walk. On your first day, we generally ask that new volunteers only walk green-sticker dogs. When you are more familiar with the facility, dogs, and procedures, you may switch over to walking orange-sticker dogs in addition to green-sticker ones according to your comfort level. If there is no sticker, it is likely because the dog is new, and we have not gotten to labeling it yet. In this case, use your discretion. If you find a dog is too strong for you to handle, feel free to put it back—just indicate with the clip (next section) that it was indeed not walked yet.

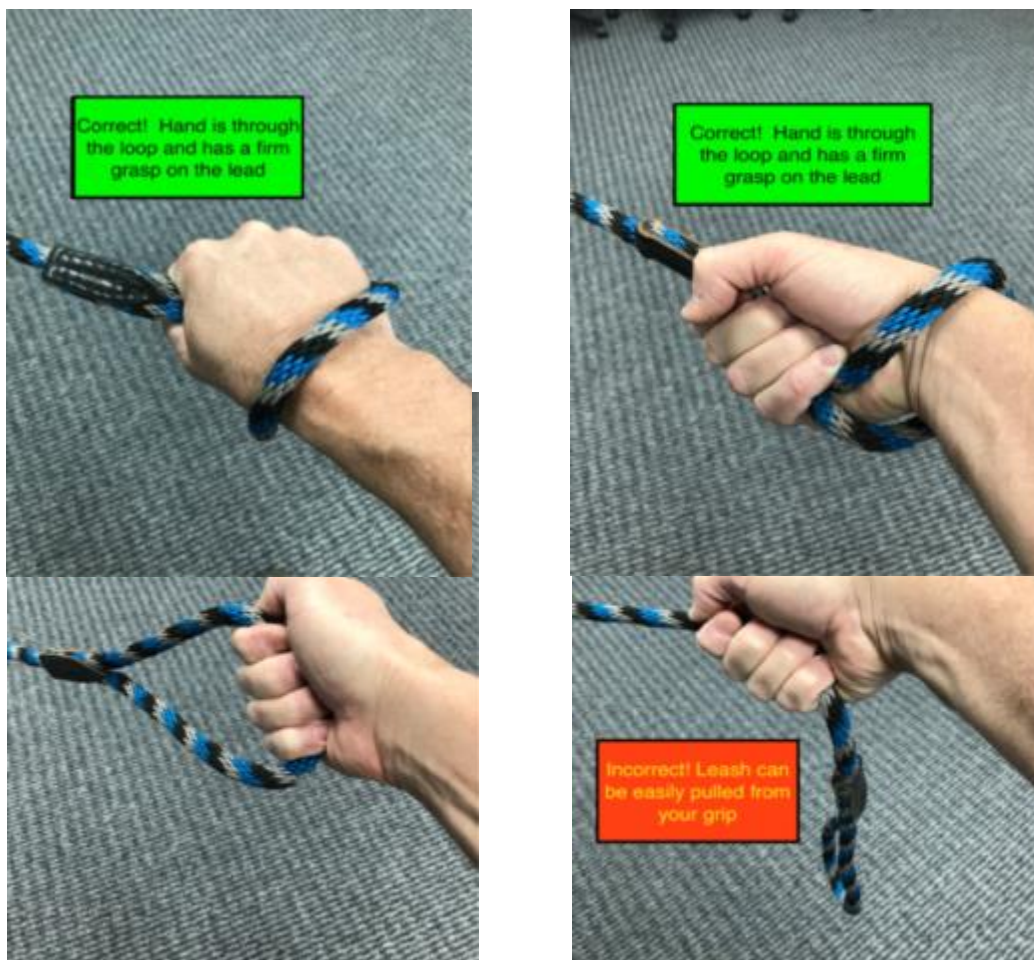
### **3) Clips (Clothespins)**

- It is our goal to walk every dog at least once every Saturday and Sunday. Weather conditions and holidays can make this challenging, but it is very rare when every dog does not get out at least once on each of those days.
- Clothespins help us keep track of which dogs have been walked:
- On Saturdays, after walking, please clip a clothespin to the bottom of the dog's name tag or clipboard/bio sheet. A clothespin on the bottom of the bio sheet indicates a dog has been walked on Saturday.
- On Sundays, please remove the clothespin after the dog has been walked. No clothespin on the bottom of a dog's bio sheet indicates the dog has been walked on Sunday.
- Frequently clothespins are used to temporarily attach signs to a dog's run. These clothespins will be on the top or sides of said signs. Please do not confuse them with the clips denoting whether or not a dog has been walked—the "walking" dog clips are attached to the bottom of the clipboard or name tag.
- There is a bin on the table outside of the 1/2 building for gathering or dropping off clothespins. You can also usually find a small basket or bin of clothespins outside the restroom in the 5-6/7-8 building.
- If you are walking on a weekday, please put a clip/clothespin on a dog's clipboard to mark that it has been walked. The staff then removes the clips at

the end of the day. The clips are less necessary on these days, since all dogs do not need to be walked (so volunteers are not so carefully trying to keep track of who has had a walk), but they help walkers gauge who has already had attention that day so they may choose to walk a different dog who has not already been out.

#### 4) Leashes

- A standard lead is required to walk dogs at FOHA. It is a six-foot nylon slip lead that may be purchased online at <http://www.dog.com> or in the office. No retractable leashes, choke collars, or prong collars are permitted.
- Please have your hand securely through the loop (so that the loop is around your wrist) when you have a dog on-leash. DO NOT grasp the loop using your fingers only. Your grip will be much more secure when your hand is through the loop and grasping the handle.



#### *How to Hold the Leash:*

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- After slipping the lead over the dog's head, slide the leather locking tab down to hold the noose in place. Tighten the noose with the locking tab until you can slip two fingers underneath it. This is loose enough for the dog to easily breathe and secure enough that it will not inadvertently slip off. If you don't do this, the noose can loosen, and your dog can back out of its leash and escape. Please routinely check the tab to ensure that it is not coming loose during your walk. If it appears to be loosening, readjust it accordingly.
- If you need more control, pull the leash closer to your body and hold it with two hands. You might need to do this when moving through a congested area.
- Do not jerk and yank the leash, snapping the dog's head and neck. For energetic dogs that are pulling steadily or lunging, do your best to maintain a steady pressure on the leash.
- The leashes are very durable, but if yours is frayed or damaged, replace it. There are a few spare slip leads in the office if you forget yours or need an urgent replacement for some reason.
- If there is a harness hanging on a dog's run, you must walk the dog with that harness in addition to the slip lead. Usually harnesses are kept in silver metal buckets that hang on a respective dog's run. Unless otherwise posted, use both the slip lead and the harness. (A very few dogs are harness-only; this will be noted via sign.) This means you will be holding two leashes (the slip lead plus the additional leash attached to the harness) when you walk the dog. If you walk a dog with no harness that is a strong puller and you feel a harness would benefit that dog, ask someone in the adoption office to help fit the dog for a harness. Leave new harness at the dogs run at the end of the walk.

## 5) Distance

- Maintain a 15-foot distance between you and other dogs at all times. This ensures that dog-reactive dogs do not come in contact with other dogs. The rough estimate for judging 15 feet is that your dog is at the end of your extended arm and extended leash, and there is still a significant distance between you and someone else under a similar condition so that the dogs may not reach each other.
- It may be necessary to shorten up your leash to facilitate this distance as you move through congested areas.
- While out on the trails, you can either move off the trail into the brush to give someone a clear avenue to pass (be mindful of briars, poison ivy, and the like when you leave the trail), or you can double back and take a different route in order to maintain the proper distance.

- If the shelter is busy and the area around the Welcome Center or adoption office is crowded, feel free to take the long way around the parking area and up the hill to reach the 5-6/7-8 building.
- If your dog is known to be dog-reactive or leash-reactive, it is prudent to maintain a greater distance than 15 feet. Feel free to warn other volunteers about the dog you have so they give you an extra buffer of space.
- There are a few exceptions to the 15-foot rule:
- Litter-mates or pack mate pairs who may be walked together will have signs on their runs that clearly identify their walking buddy (these dogs are generally housed next to each other). Find a friend and walk these dogs together. Otherwise do not walk any dogs together.
- Occasionally, you may observe senior volunteers walking certain pairs of dogs together or taking them together into a play yard. These dog pairs are carefully orchestrated among dogs who have already met each other during weekday dog play groups. On weekends, this is only done under the careful supervision of volunteers who have already overseen these dog introductions and know the dogs in question have shown the propensity to get along.
- An additional exception is dog introductions with potential adopters' dogs. Senior volunteers conduct these introductions in a play yard.

## General Walking Guidelines

**NOTE:** As you pass through the buildings where the dogs reside, please **keep your fingers out of the dogs' runs at all times**, even with dogs you know or whose runs you are about to open. Passing your hand/fingers through the chain link puts you in an unnecessarily vulnerable position and should be avoided.

### *Upon Arrival*

- Please sign in using the sign-in sheet in the corner of the adoption office (also referred to in this document as “the office”) near the far door. The sheet asks for your name, the date, and your arrival time.
- Please also put on a "Volunteer" badge from the basket next to the sign-in sheet. This ensures staff and lead volunteers can identify you as a volunteer who has completed either the dog-walking or cat-snuggling volunteer orientation and differentiate you from visitors/potential adopters.
- You may bring a visitor with you to walk dogs, but they may not handle the leash if they have not completed the dog-walking orientation. Please ensure any visitors you have with you sign in and complete a waiver form (please ask a dog adoption lead if you don't know where these are kept) in the dog adoption office.
- Children 13 - 18 may accompany dog walkers but are not allowed to have control of the leash at any time, even if they have been through orientation. This is for insurance liability reasons.
- There are poop bags in a large bin near the sign-in station if you need them. Please feel free to gather some at this time (remembering to check them for holes if they are recycled/donated bags!) to prepare for your walks.

### *Shelter Personnel*

- Staff: FOHA has about 10 - 15 paid staff members who work full-time cleaning, feeding, medicating, and maintaining the animals and grounds at the shelter. You are likely to encounter them at times when you are on-site. Feel free to introduce yourself, and if you need urgent help with something, you are welcome to ask them, but please also remain aware that they tend to be busy doing a job and are likely concentrating on such. Staff members usually wear royal blue T-shirts or sweatshirts with the word “STAFF” on them in large white letters.
- Please defer to staff members if they ask you to avoid a certain area while they clean it, etc. or make other requests having to do with the execution of their duties.

- Dog adoption leads/lead volunteers: Any time the shelter is open to the public (i.e., Fridays through Mondays from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.), at least one dog adoption lead will be staffing the adoption office (on Saturdays and Sundays, there are generally at least two lead volunteers on duty). These Dog Squad volunteers are trained to work in the office helping prospective adopters meet dogs and find the one(s) they would like to adopt.
- Lead volunteers in the adoption office are the default individuals at the shelter to whom you may go for help when walking dogs. They are likely to be in the actual office, where you may go for help any time.
- Please defer to adoption leads if they ask you to vacate the play yard or hand your dog over to them. In both cases, this will be because a potential adopter wants to use the play yard to interact with a potential new pet or is interested in meeting the dog you're walking.
- Especially when the office is busy, adoption leads may ask you to "pull" a certain dog, which means to go to its run and bring it out for a prospective adopter to meet. You are welcome to do this if a lead volunteer asks. It is recommended you grab a slip lead from the office for this purpose, as the adoption lead will likely then take the dog (and slip lead!) from you to give to the potential adopter to walk.
- Please do not give a dog to a potential adopter or pull one from its run to give to a potential adopter unless instructed to do so by a dog adoption lead. The office needs to keep track of which dogs potential adopters are walking—if a potential adopter asks you to get a dog for them, please politely direct them to the office and explain that the office will go over the dog's file with them and then ask someone to get the dog for them.
- Team Meow Volunteers: Volunteers working in the catteries are also likely to be on-site, especially on weekends. Please be respectful of such volunteers who may feel uncomfortable around dogs if they ask you to give them a wide berth when you have a dog with you.

## *Trails*

- It is recommended that you remain on the trails while you are walking to avoid potential hazards in the woods, such as poison ivy. This will also help keep you from getting lost—as long as you are following a trail, you will eventually emerge either at the driveway or one of the open areas of the property within view of the 5-6/7-8 building or the Welcome Center.
- Please do not run with the dogs. The trails are rough and uneven with roots, rocks, and holes all throughout them. The possibility of falling and/or losing control of your dog is considerable if you are running.
- You may want to apply insect repellent prior to walking in the woods and check for ticks after you are done walking for the day.

- If you walk through any parking areas be sure to not let the dogs jump on parked cars.

## *Play Yards*

- There are three fenced play yards where dogs may play/run off-leash under supervision.
- Only one dog at a time is allowed in a play yard on weekends (with the exception of the aforementioned occasional pairings by senior volunteers). Litter-mates and pack mates are an exception to this rule. The other exception to this rule is when dog introductions are being performed with potential adopters.
- A good practice with an energetic dog is to let it burn off some energy in the play yard prior to your walk. Some of the dogs have an excess of energy that needs an outlet.
- Ensure both gates are closed securely prior to turning your dog loose. You may remove the slip lead if you want, but with a dog you don't know well, it's often a good idea to leave it on and just drop it in case you have a hard time "catching" the dog when it's time to go.
- In general, please do not leave a dog unattended in a play yard.
- If your dog knocks over or empties the water bowl or bucket in the yard, please feel free to return and refill it after you put your dog back in its run.
- If a lead volunteer from the office indicates that a prospective adopter would like to use the play yard to interact with their potential pet, please surrender the play yard to them.
- Please be mindful to not monopolize the play yards.
- Please pick up any toys you use in the play yard and return them to the bin where you found them when you are finished playing with your dog.
- If your dog picks up a toy in the play yard and does not seem to want to give it up, use caution in trying to take the toy away from the dog—some dogs may not respond well to this. If needed, you may try exchanging a treat for the toy: show the dog the treat, and if it drops the toy to eat the treat instead, kick the toy away or pull the dog out of the toy's reach. If you need assistance with this (if the dog does not drop the toy even in the presence of a treat), feel free to ask another volunteer or staff member for assistance, or take the dog to the office to ask a lead volunteer for help. If a dog carries a toy along on your walk, please return to ensure the toy is picked up and not left along the trails.
- If your dog eliminates while in the play yard, please pick up after it.
- If you brush a dog in the play yard, please pick up and dispose of the fur before you leave the yard.

## *Welcome Center*

- You may use the Welcome Center to take a break from the elements. Many dogs enjoy the cool tile floor in warmer weather.
- Keep your dog under control and on-leash while in the Welcome Center. You never know when someone may open the door to enter.
- Check to see if another dog is present prior to going in (you may do this by cracking the door and calling out, "Is there a dog in here?" before opening the door further). It is not recommended to have two dogs in there at the same time.
- Do not leave a mess in the kitchen or bathroom. There is no cleaning service at FOHA, so please be responsible for your own mess.
- As a volunteer, please use the bathroom at the top of the hill in the 5-6/7-8 building. We reserve the Welcome Center bathroom for visitors and potential adopters.

## *Interacting with Visitors and Adopters*

- While we all wish for the dogs to find their forever homes, please be careful when interacting with visitors.
- If a potential adopter is interested in your dog, please refer them to the adoption office. Accurate and up-to-date information regarding the dog's availability and temperament is on file there. Providing well-intentioned but inaccurate information to potential adopters can hinder the adoption process.
- Please do not allow the dog you are walking to approach small children or vice versa. Politely keep your distance and refer them to the adoption office.
- Do not get dogs out for potential adopters unless asked to do so by a lead volunteer. Please do, however, direct visitors and potential adopters to the adoption office if they have questions or if they've just arrived (all visitors are asked to check in with the adoption office upon arrival). If you would like to go further, walk them to the office. We wish to maintain a friendly environment for visitors.
- If you encounter potential adopters walking a dog out on the trail, please give them a wide but friendly berth. While they have been cautioned to keep 15 feet from other dogs, they are generally not as conservative as trained volunteers are.

## *Scooping Poop*

- It is an unpleasant task, but you must clean up after your dog. Pet waste spreads disease, encourages flies, and is unpleasant to step in.
- There are plastic bags in large bins outside the Welcome Center and office for you to use. Feel free to bring your own biodegradable bags if you wish.

- Check your recycled/donated bag for holes prior to use! Holes can provide an unpleasant surprise when you are picking up.
- If you encounter poop along the trails or in the play yard left by another dog, please feel free pick it up.
- There are trash cans along the trails where you may dispose of the waste.
- For dogs with diarrhea, do your best to either pick it up or sweep it off the trail using a stick.

### *Community/Outdoor Cats*

- The FOHA property is home to a community of outdoor cats (sometimes called feral cats). These cats live outside and are often not interested in being inside or around people. While FOHA's adoptable cats live exclusively inside the catteries, the community cats wander freely on the property, so please be watchful for them as you're walking. These cats all have names and are a beloved part of the FOHA community.
- Avoid walking your dog in or near the general area of the catteries.

### *Reporting Medical Concerns*

- If you notice a health-related issue with your dog, please write it on the Medical Log in the adoption office (located on the table with the sign-in sheet). Provide as much detail as you can regarding the condition.
- If a dog is suffering from very watery diarrhea, please bring it to the attention of a lead volunteer or staff member. The dog may require prompt attention.
- During warm weather, educate yourself regarding the signs of heatstroke in dogs and people. You may need to take action quickly to ensure a dog's health.
- If you see, or suspect, an acute medical condition, or if a dog is in distress, please bring it to the attention of a lead volunteer in the office.
- Please familiarize yourself with the symptoms of bloat, heatstroke, and hypothermia in dogs. There are several good articles online that are easy to find. On several occasions a dog's life has been saved by an observant volunteer who acted quickly and brought an animal's distress to the attention of staff.

### *Reporting Incidents, Safety Issues, or Inappropriate Behavior*

- If your dog receives or causes an injury to anyone—person, dog, or cat—while you are handling it, please see a lead volunteer in the office for an incident report, and fill it out as completely as you can. (Please see the "What to Do in Urgent Situations" section for more information on this.)
- If you notice a volunteer mistreating a dog or acting in an inappropriate way, please notify the lead volunteer(s) immediately and e-mail the volunteer coordinator.

dinator at [volunteercoordinator@foha.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@foha.org) with as much detail as you can so we can address the issue.

- If you are treated inappropriately by a staff member or another volunteer, please bring that to the volunteer coordinator's attention (email address immediately above) also.

### *The “Dog Log”*

- The Dog Log is a new system intended for volunteers to communicate about the dogs at FOHA. It is a large black binder kept in the dog adoption office on the table with the sign-in sheet and Medical Log. In the binder, you will find a page dedicated to each dog at FOHA (when it is up to date), or at the least, you should find a page dedicated to each dog that is designated senior volunteer-only.
- If you have been walking dogs regularly at FOHA for some time (at least several months) and are interested in meeting a particular dog designated senior-volunteer only, please consult the Dog Log for information about why that dog is designated as such and to see who is listed as regularly walking that dog. You may then approach any of those volunteers to ask about meeting and/or potentially walking that dog. (Please know that sometimes doing so may be rejected as an idea for the sake of everyone's safety. There are dogs at FOHA that have exhibited behavioral challenges that make them unsafe for many volunteers to walk.)
- If you walk a dog and have a note about its behavior (it seemed reactive around toys, doesn't like having its paws handled, wanted to chase an outdoor community cat, etc.), feel free to locate its page in the Dog Log and write it down. Other volunteers and adoption leads reference the information in the Dog Log in discerning whom to walk and in helping potential adopters find the best fit for what they're seeking in a new canine family member.

### *Helping Dogs Get Adopted*

- If you get to know a dog (especially one new to FOHA) or simply walk it once and notice particular or endearing traits (loves to chase balls, enjoys the water, walks well on the leash, etc.), please feel free to email [petbios@foha.org](mailto:petbios@foha.org). The dog bio team always welcomes information that can help compose or update dogs' bios on the FOHA website.
- You may also go directly to the FOHA website and find the specific pages of any of the dogs up for adoption and leave comments, pictures, or video you've taken of that dog on its page. Potential adopters do visit the site, so this information is often helpful to them in choosing what dog they'd like to take home! Comments are moderated, so it may take a day or two for them to be approved and show up on the site.

- FOHA also has both a group and a page on Facebook (please see the "Contact Information" section for the respective addresses). You are welcome to post pictures, videos, etc. on either or both of particular dogs you walk.

# What to Do in Urgent Situations

## *Escaped Dog*

- If your dog gets loose while you are outside, please do not chase it in a panic (especially if it is a fearful dog). It seems counterintuitive to not do so, but dogs are often either playfully or fearfully triggered into running away when they feel chased. There are a few general guidelines to follow when a dog has gotten loose that may be adjusted according to the dog's temperament, if known.
- If the dog sprints off into the woods, note the direction of the dog's escape while shouting, "Loose dog, loose dog!" "XYZ has escaped!" Use the dog's name when calling for assistance so people know who is on the loose. After alerting others to the situation, calmly follow along after the dog and try to keep it in sight.
- If the dog is close by and running around playfully, try to engage it in play and entice it into an open play yard with treats.
- If the dog is fearful, respect its fear when approaching. Running and shouting will likely spook it and make it very difficult to capture. Slow down and approach it quietly and indirectly. Again, try using treats to entice it.
- Direct someone to report the escape to the office. If others have taken over the recovery, report the incident yourself: go to the office and tell the lead volunteer(s) who escaped and in roughly what direction they were headed.
- Notify other volunteers in the area that a dog is loose.
- Notify the office when the dog has been recovered.
- Have the adoption office direct phone number programmed into your phone so you can ask for assistance and provide updates if the incident occurs far from the office on the trails. This number is 703-327-4530.

## *Dog Fight/Attack on Another Dog (or Cat)*

- The 15-foot distance rule is in place to significantly decrease the chances of dog-on-dog injuries or incidents while volunteers or potential adopters are walking dogs. If an incident involving aggression with the dog you're walking does occur, pull your dog back and away immediately if you have control of its leash. Loud clapping or sharp commands may help separate the dogs, which may make it easier to pull yours away.
- If the incident seems to be escalating or difficult to control, yell "Dog fight!" to elicit help from nearby volunteers.
- If your dog appears to need medical attention, alert a staff member or take the dog to the office so the lead volunteer(s) may contact shelter management and/or veterinary personnel if necessary.

- If the attack involved one of the outdoor community cats, report it immediately to the adoption office so the lead volunteer(s) may begin the process of ascertaining whether the cat needs medical attention. Describe the cat's appearance as best you can to help identify which cat it was.
- Fill out an incident report, available in the office.

## *Bites*

- Dog bites may happen for a variety of reasons, and there will be some discretion in how a bite situation is handled. If the dog you're walking bites you, if you can safely put it away (e.g., if it happens as it's already in its run), please do so. If not, you may call for help from other nearby volunteers or staff. If you and the dog are in the play yard and you can vacate the play yard safely, you may do so and find a staff member or experienced volunteer to help you as quickly as possible.
- If the dog you're walking bites another person, if you feel you can put the dog back safely, please do so. Otherwise, call for help or ask the person who was bitten (if urgent medical attention is not needed) to find a staff member or experienced volunteer to help you. You may consider the dog adoption office the default place to find help if you cannot locate an experienced volunteer or staff member right away.
- If you or someone else needs medical attention, please see the attendant section below.
- After the issue has been resolved, please fill out an incident report, which you may find in the adoption office, and give it to the adoption lead(s).

## *Medical Attention*

- Many dog-related medical issues may be noted in the medical log in the office (next to the sign-in sheet). If, however, a dog appears to be in immediate need of medical attention, bring it to the office if possible to alert the lead volunteers. If you cannot move the dog, call the dog adoption office direct line at 703-327-4530 and describe what is occurring and your location.
- If you yourself receive an injury or become incapacitated during a walk, call for help if there is anyone nearby; if you need someone to come get your dog and/or help you, call the office and report your location to the answering volunteer.
- If you need medical care, the facilities nearest FOHA are as follows:
  - Dulles Urgent Care Center at 42010 Village Center Plaza #100, Stone Ridge, VA 20105 (12 minutes from FOHA)
  - Inova Urgent Care Center - Dulles South at 24801 Pinebrook Rd #110, Chantilly, VA 20152 (12 minutes from FOHA)

- HOSPITAL/EMERGENCY ROOM: StoneSprings Hospital Center at 24440 Stone Springs Blvd, Dulles, VA 20166 (10 minutes from FOHA).

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **Q: When may I come out to walk?**

A: The shelter is open for dog-walking volunteers Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Tuesdays through Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### **Q: What about holidays?**

A: Most holidays, the shelter is open during select hours to volunteers who have undergone dog-walking and/or cat-snuggling orientation. Information about specific hours will usually be posted in/on the public FOHA Facebook group and page, the FOHA volunteer forum group, the FOHA website, and/or the weekly FOHA volunteer newsletter.

### **Q: Where should I park?**

A: Volunteers are asked to park on the grass to the left of the driveway (the driveway extends up past the Welcome Center). The parking lot in front of the adoption offices is reserved for visitors and potential adopters.

### **Q: What should I wear when walking?**

A: Wear clothing that is appropriate to the season, and anticipate getting dirty/muddy. Many light layers are recommended in the wintertime instead of a single, heavy layer. Walking is vigorous, and you will easily sweat. Dress as though you were going for a hike in the woods. Closed-toe shoes are required, even in the summer. It is recommended that you wear something comfortable that also has a good tread. The trails are frequently muddy and slippery. Consider dedicating a pair of shoes to FOHA dog-walking and bringing a second pair to change into for the ride home.

### **Q: May I use my cell phone while walking dogs?**

A: The short answer is no. Please refrain from using your cell phone/smartphone when you have a dog on-leash unless it is an emergency. It is prudent to have both hands available to attend to the leash if needed, and the preference is for your full attention to be on the dog. In addition, please do not use earbuds to listen to music while walking a dog. It is important to be able to hear and communicate with other volunteers regarding things like passing each other on the trails or if an urgent situation arises. If, however, you take a dog into a play yard and would like to take pictures or video of the dog when you do not need to have control of its leash, please feel free!

### **Q: May I bring a friend/family member/my kids with me?**

A: Yes, you may bring a friend or family member with you. They may not handle the leash, though, unless they have gone through orientation. Please ensure they accompany you to the office so they can sign in and complete a waiver. Parents or guardians may bring children who are at least 13 years old with them to walk dogs. Please note

that underage children may not have control of a dog's leash at any time. This is a requirement of FOHA's insurance coverage, and deviating from this policy could result in serious liability for the shelter.

**Q: What type of treats should I bring with me?**

A: You are not required to bring treats when walking dogs. If you would like to do so, try to bring healthful treats, and please ensure they are made in the USA. The best treat is plain cooked/boiled chicken. The dogs' diets are regulated, and indulgent treats can make them sick. If you do give treats besides plain cooked chicken or turkey, please limit them in size and amount, as the dogs' digestive systems can bear repercussions of excessive treat intake over the weekends.

**Q: How long should I walk a dog?**

A: That depends on you, the dog, and the weather. An energetic dog would love as long of a walk as you can give it. If the weather is poor (excessive heat, cold, precipitation, etc.), your walk might be a bit limited. An older dog may get a shorter walk but longer snuggle time. At the very least, have your dog out long enough for it to do its business. Approximately 20-30 minutes is an average time to aim for. Take cues from your dog as to how it is doing on your walk. Do not hesitate to cut a walk short if the dog is struggling in the heat, limping, or moving stiffly. On the other hand, feel free to recall that for some of the dogs, walks with volunteers are the only significant time they have out of their runs and with human company for the week. They appreciate the time we spend with them!

**Q: What things can I do with the dog?**

A: Walk, play, and snuggle. Some people put a blanket in the back of their SUV and sit in there with the back hatch open. If you do that, ensure you retain positive control of your dog (maintain your hold on the leash at all times) and anticipate other dogs passing close by your car. You may also put a blanket in a grassy area and sit with a dog in the shade or sun.

**Q: May I groom the dog?**

A: If you feel so inclined, and the dog is comfortable with it, you may brush your dog. Brushes and combs are available in the office. Please return them when you have finished using them. Please also clean up the fur after you have finished brushing the dog.

**Q: What if I notice something wrong with the dog?**

A: If the condition is not severe, note it in the medical log (located on a red clipboard next to the sign-in sheet in the dog adoption office). If the dog is in distress, ensure staff or someone in the office is made aware.

**Q: What if the dog has already been walked and I want to take it out again?**

A: If we have a lot of other dogs that still need to be walked, please walk some of them before coming back to this dog. If all the dogs have been walked (or all the dogs you are eligible to walk have been walked) on a Saturday or Sunday, you are welcome to take a dog out for a second walk if the weather conditions do not seem overly taxing for a dog to be out again (e.g., extreme heat or cold; please be mindful of the dog's condition related to these conditions when you go out for a second walk). You do not need to use the clip/clothespin system to indicate a second walk.

**Q: Do I need to pick up after the dog?**

A: Yes. Nobody likes getting dog poop on their shoe, and it helps with the condition of the shelter. Bags are available in a large bin outside the Welcome Center and in the office.

**Q: What if I need help putting a harness on a dog?**

A: Ask another volunteer or staff member for help. If you see someone struggling with a harness, offer to help them, because someday that person may be you. If the dog has a harness, you must use it! Do not walk the dog on only the slip lead because you can't get the harness attached. If no one is around to help you and you can't get the harness on a dog, please choose another dog to walk.

**Q: How do I become a senior volunteer?**

A: Dogs are labeled "Senior Volunteer-Only" for a variety of reasons. The time at which you may be eligible to walk some of these dogs will depend on the dog and its reason for having this designation. In general, senior Dog Squad volunteers have volunteered regularly walking dogs for a period of at least several months and feel comfortable and familiar with the procedures, rules, and layout of the shelter and trails.

If those considerations are satisfied, when you are interested in meeting/walking a senior volunteer-only dog, please approach a volunteer you know walks that dog, or ask an adoption lead in the dog adoption office if they know who walks that dog. You may also reference the Dog Log for this information. The Dog Log should additionally contain a description about why each senior volunteer-only dog has been labeled as such.

Individual introductions to senior volunteer-only dogs are paramount, as dogs with this designation have it because there is something(s) a volunteer should know about that dog before attempting to walk it. A senior volunteer-only dog's regular walkers may introduce you and instruct you in the dogs' quirks and offer tips for their safe handling.

Please note that at times it may be deemed not prudent for new people to be introduced to a dog at a given time, or that at times, the introduction may not seem to start off well, at which time it may just not work out for you to walk a certain dog. Some dogs have demonstrated serious or unpredictable behavior challenges and may simply not be a fit for some volunteers. This is not an indication of any volunteer's capability in handling dogs; it is solely up to the dog in question, whose motivations likely remain mysterious to us. The volunteer conducting the introduction has the discretion to choose to end the

introduction at any time, and/or to advise that the dog does not seem amenable to interacting with you. Senior volunteers may also decline to conduct an introduction for any reason; please know that asking to meet a senior volunteer-only dog does not necessarily mean that the request has to be granted.

Volunteers are not to be accompanied by friends or children when walking senior volunteer-only dogs.

# FOHA Contact Information

39703 Goodpuppy Lane  
Aldie VA, 20105  
<https://foha.org/>

**Adoption Office Direct Number:** 703-327-4530

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Facebook:

FOHA Facebook public group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/843946305684797/>

FOHA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/foha.org>

There is also a closed Facebook group for active FOHA volunteers who have undergone cat-snuggling and/or dog-walking orientation or who volunteer at the Treasure Hound. To join this group, please submit a request at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fohavolunteers>.

**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/foha\\_va](https://www.instagram.com/foha_va)

**Twitter:** [https://twitter.com/foha\\_va](https://twitter.com/foha_va)

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/FOHApets>

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/friends-of-homeless-animals>

## EMAIL

**FOHA Board of Directors:** [bod@foha.org](mailto:bod@foha.org)

**Executive Director:** [executivedirector@foha.org](mailto:executivedirector@foha.org)

**Director of Operations:** [opsdiretor@foha.org](mailto:opsdiretor@foha.org)

**Volunteer Coordinator:** [volunteercoordinator@foha.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@foha.org)

### Team Meow/Cat-Snuggling:

If you would like to sign up for cat-snuggling orientation, please email [volunteer@foha.org](mailto:volunteer@foha.org).

## **Appendix 1 — Further Dog Squad Volunteer Opportunities**

Once you've completed dog-walking orientation, a whole new world of volunteer opportunities opens up for you! As a volunteer-run organization, FOHA is deeply grateful for all the supporters who offer their time and talents to help care for our dogs and cats while they wait for their forever homes.

Below are the dog-related activities and opportunities Dog Squad volunteers are eligible for once they've completed the dog-walking orientation, along with whom to contact to sign up or learn more about what's involved. Training for volunteer jobs that require training beyond attending orientation usually involves shadowing an experienced volunteer performing that job once or twice and then performing it yourself while being shadowed by an experienced volunteer. You will have the opportunity to shadow until you feel comfortable with what you're doing, and you will have continued support from the respective committee/team lead(s) as you perform the volunteer duty in question on your own. Thank you for volunteering!

- Dog Adoption Events
- Intake Transport
- Medical Transport
- Home Visitors
- Dog Adoption Office Leads
- Dog-Walking Orientation Leaders

To learn more about each role and to sign-up go to

- <https://foha.org/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities/>