



Buffalo Pug & Small Breed Rescue, Inc.  
12405 Clinton St.  
Alden, NY 14004  
716-805-8314 / 585-598-6723  
Fax: (877) 2345-PUG / (877) 234-5784  
EIN: 68-0565691

## **BP&SBR Foster Care Manual**

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## BP&SBR Foster Care Manual

# 1. Introduction

Thank you for offering your home to needy rescue dogs and welcome to the **Buffalo Pug and Small Breed Rescue, Inc. (BP&SBR)** family. We hope you find fostering a great experience. A key component of BP&SBR's program is the foster home. Without sufficient foster homes, we are limited in how many dogs we can help at one time. It is a life or death situation for many of the dogs that come to us, so without you, these dogs could be without hope of ever being saved. The rewards of fostering are many, and sometimes there are heartbreaks too. We just need to focus on each dog individually and remember the happy endings in store for them. If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided in this document, please don't hesitate to contact a director or officer. It is important that you keep this document handy for review and reference.

# 2. Are you ready to foster?

You are ready to foster if...

- Your own pets are up-to-date on vaccinations
- Your own pets have been spayed/neutered
- You have adequate space (crates are highly recommended)
- You agree to keep your foster dogs as indoor pets
- You are ready to make a time commitment to each foster dog from day one through adoption
- You agree to follow the policies, procedures and guidelines that have been set for **BP&SBR** foster volunteers



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### **3. Benefits/Risks**

Dogs taken into foster care are often the most grateful of animals, but they can pose some risks to other pets and to your home. Please compare your facilities and time available to what is known about the animals' needs in making decisions as to what you can do comfortably and safely. It is important to understand that BP&SBR is not always 100 percent informed about a dog saved from a bad situation (shelter or surrender by previous owner). Most often, BP&SBR will not know if a dog is house trained before getting him or her into a foster home. There are also unfortunate times when we are not told the truth and a dog ends up being aggressive or a fear biter (should you ever get a dog like this, it is important to keep it in a crate until something can be done to get him or her into a boarding kennel or into another situation). Thankfully, the later situation does not occur often, but it is important to understand that it can happen.

Dogs may have illnesses/parasites (i.e. kennel cough or worms) that are common in the stray, uncared for population that can be transmitted to your own pets. BP&SBR can never be sure what breed of dog is involved in a 'mixed' breed. While we most often work with breeds under 30 lbs, there is always a possibility that a larger breed (such as Pit Bull, Rottweiler or Great Dane) are mixed in with a small breed and that the gene for small and lower weight was the dominant gene, thus exhibiting the small trait.

#### **Best Protection**

- Your own pets must be current on their vaccinations, parasite preventatives, etc. (this include Bordatella, which is a kennel cough preventative.)
- Isolate (confine/quarantine) new foster animals for a period of 10 days if possible.
- Pick up feces regularly to avoid contaminating your yard with worms.
- After each adoption, disinfect all bowls, bedding, crates, carriers, etc. with bleach.
- Keep dogs separated from one another (in crates, or gated areas) when there are no humans around to supervise their interactions.



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# 4. Foster Volunteer Responsibilities

The foster volunteers are expected to take their job very seriously. It takes a team to get each dog adopted but we depend on the foster homes to give each one the love and care they need in the meantime.

- Know your limits and stick to them. If you can only foster 1 or 2 animals at a time, please keep to that limit so that you will not burn out. Don't be afraid to say, "No, I cannot take in this dog. I am at my limit."
- Stay committed to your foster dog from beginning to end; adoption of your foster could take 10 days or 1 year.
- Take your dog to the veterinarian as directed.
- Get your foster dog to Rescue events for exposure! You will be notified when adoption events are scheduled.
- Work with your foster to make them feel safe and trusting of you. Basic training will also be very important for foster homes to accomplish. Many dogs will come with little or no training, and we will be much more successful in placing them if we can say they have at least learned their "house manners".
- Socialize your foster dog with as many other animals and humans as possible. But do so with care until you are confident in your foster dog's social graces.
- Promptly return phone calls and emails to potential adoptive homes, rescue officers and other volunteers. Some volunteers choose to not be as involved in screening applicants and potential adoptive homes. For those individuals, it is only important to promptly return email and phone calls to the other volunteers assisting with adoption of that particular foster.
- For those homes interested in being more involved with the adoption of their foster, they can help find new homes for foster dog(s) by:
  - Taking dogs for a walk, word of mouth and posters
  - Taking them to Rescue events
  - Sending digital pictures to the appropriate volunteer (see Contact List).



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### 5. Intake

Intake is the first step of the adoption process. All incoming animals must be coordinated in by one of the Directors. If you take in an animal without speaking with a Director first, you may have to pay for expenses yourself. If you know or hear of a dog that you think **BP&SBR** should bring into the rescue, please contact one of the Directors with as much information as possible.

### 6. Getting your foster dog

Most of the time dogs will come in to your home directly from transporters, surrendering owners, etc. If a dog comes direct to you, be aware that it has not been initially evaluated and little may be known by us about the temperament, health or personality of the dog. We will rely on you to make assessments and advise us of any issues or concerns.

### 7. Evaluating your foster dog

The next step is to evaluate your foster dog for all kinds of things. Firstly, you need to ascertain any medical issues that need to be addressed while the dog is in our care.

Evaluating Dogs Of course this list is not all-encompassing, just some helpful ideas for evaluating a dog.

- Spend time alone with the dog. You will want to see how the dog is one-on-one with you.
  - How is its mental stability?
  - Does it like petting, talking and affection?
  - Is it excitable and independent?
  - Does it overwhelm you?
  - Does it pant and act stressed?
  - Does it tense up at your touch and then relax?
  - Does it tense up at your touch, back away and growl? \*
- Walk the dog into a new area, is it concerned or stressed? Or does it start to explore its new environment?
- Does the dog check to see where you are at periodically?
- Take out a treat or toy...
  - Does the dog act eager but is well mannered about the new item?



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- Does it jump on you or try to snatch it from your hands? \*



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- How is the dog on the leash?
  - Scared with a tucked tail and won't move?
  - Calm and walks beside you?
  - Drags you down the street?
  - Very concerned and not used to a leash; fights to get out of it? \*
- How does the dog act when you talk to it?
  - Listens and is curious?
  - Scared and cowers?
  - Stands there and barks at you? \*
- When you approach the dog's space what happens?
  - Is the dog calm, appears socialized, and wants human contact?
  - Scared and cowers but stays in place?
  - Backs into a corner with tail tucked and ears back...may growl or snap? †
  - Is bold and jumps up?
  - Stands tall, barks and growls with ears forward? ‡
- If the dog is playing with the treat or toy, try to kick it away with your foot.
  - Does the dog back up and give it up easy?
  - Does the dog look up at you waiting for it to be given it back?
  - Does the dog guard it, lowering its body but gives it up eventually?
  - Does the dog guard it and growl? \*
  - Does the dog guard it and try to attack your foot? \*

† = would tend to indicate a fear aggressive dog

‡ = a dominate aggressive dog

Both have the potential to be dangerous. The difficulty is determining what triggers the fear or dominance response and if it is preventable or not. Both types of dogs have ability to bite first and ask questions later.

\* = If the dog tends to react like those that are marked with a "\*" especially on more than one instance, the dogs has the potential to bite. It, at the very least, would need training and understanding before any adoption. This is not to say that it would not be adoptable, but could very well be a challenge to the foster volunteer.

If anything makes you uneasy, contact your Volunteer Coordinator/Director immediately.



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# 8. Getting your foster ready for their new home

- Crate train all dogs/puppies: this helps with housebreaking when the pet can not be supervised, teaches the dog independence, helps reduce risk of separation anxiety, is useful when the dog needs to go to the vet or be boarded.
- Begin basic training and commands: walking on a leash, riding in a car, sit, down, come.
- Socialize: introduce dogs and puppies to other dogs (of all sizes), cats, people of all ages, sexes, and sizes and children. If you do not have all of this at your foster home, please see if family and friends can visit. Get dogs/puppies out for walks (on streets, pet stores). This is to give the most accurate description of the dog's behaviors.
- Do not allow foster animals to start behaviors that potential adopters might not approve of and may have to stop the dog from doing. Habits to avoid include allowing the dog to beg for food at the dinner table or jump up on people.
- Allowing a foster to sleep in your bed is not recommended. This promotes a behavior that may not be welcomed in a new home. This also promotes superiority in a dog that is already alpha or thinks that they are in charge.

# 9. Foster Care Supplies

The foster home is expected to provide and/or pay for the following necessities: crates, carriers, bedding, bowls, food, toys, bones, gates, etc. These items will stay with the foster home upon adoption of the dog for use with the next foster. Should assistance be needed in paying for any of these items, please do not hesitate to notify your Volunteer Coordinator.

**The Rescue will provide ID tags and pay all approved medical expenses.**

### Collars and Tags

- All Rescue animals must wear a collar and Rescue tag (please note that there are times when supply has run out on tags and they may not come to your right away. Please put them on if you receive them.)
- Collar and tag your foster dog immediately.
- The tags have the rescue contact number on them.
- The tag goes with the animal to his/her new adoptive home.
- Please encourage adoptive families to leave our ID tag on their pet even after they replace it with their own ID tag! In the commotion of going to a new home, dogs could





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run away from their adoptive families, and having double the protection never hurts!

# **10. Transferring a Foster Dog**

If you feel you need to transfer a foster animal to another foster home, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator/Director and they will do their best to accommodate you, but we can't guarantee that it will happen quickly. Your patience and help in finding another foster home to transfer them to is appreciated.

# **11. Veterinary Care**

All veterinary care provided for the rescue dogs must be authorized by one of the Directors. If you feel that your dog requires medical attention that was not authorized, please discuss it with the Director that placed the dog with you. No unauthorized procedures will be paid for and will become the responsibility of the foster. In an emergency, of course, seek medical attention for your dog immediately, but contact your Director as soon as possible. Please make every effort to use one of our approved veterinarians when seeking emergency care. The following procedures are authorized without question and should be among the first things the foster home attempts to take care of upon receiving their new foster dog. Please ensure with your Volunteer Coordinator that these procedures have not already been done prior to the dog entering our rescue program. All dogs should be heartworm tested, altered (spay/neutered), and administered inoculations (DHLPP, Rabies). No dog should be adopted out without these items having been taken care of. In the case of a young puppy under 6 months of age, the Rabies and alteration can not occur and will be put into the adopter's contract to have done at the appropriate time.

### **Fleas**

Please treat your foster animals for fleas when needed. If we have flea prevention drops available we can provide them to you, or if we are out, you may ask the vet to give you some (or apply it for you) at the time of the initial vet visit. Please read the directions carefully and also use a flea comb. Consult a vet before giving flea treatments to puppies and pregnant or nursing moms.

### **Grooming**

Please keep animals bathed and groomed, especially long-haired dogs. If you live in the Buffalo or Rochester areas, grooming will be provided by our volunteer groomers. Please ask your Volunteer Coordinator for a contact name.

### **Health Problems**

If your foster animal seems sick, injured or in severe distress or pain, take them to a vet



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promptly and contact your Director.

# 12. Adoption Screening

Foster volunteers who have Internet access are more than welcomed to get involved in the screening of adoption applications that are located on the web site. If you do not have access or are not able to get as involved, then your Volunteer Coordinator will screen applicants for obvious matches, send out e-mails and refer any interested applicants to the foster home for further information on the dog. No dog will be placed without a Home Visit being conducted and veterinary and personal reference checks being completed. If the potential adopter you are screening is out of your area and you are unable to conduct your own Home Visit, contact your Volunteer Coordinator for guidance on getting a Home Visit done by another volunteer.

*Note: Some volunteers prefer to take foster dogs to the potential home so that they can see where his/her foster animal may be living if the adoption goes through and to witness how the dog and people interact. This is up to the individual, but not a requirement. Discuss this issue with your Volunteer Coordinator.*

# 13. The Home Visit

Be Honest! -- Emphasize Good Points

Housebroken, people lover, behaves on command, fully vaccinated, spay/neutered, well mannered

Be Honest! -- Less Appealing Behavior

High energy, separation anxiety, jumps on people, chewer, door crasher, timid, marking, bad potty manners

The more prepared this family is prior to the adoption, the less chance there is of the animal being returned to us. **Important points should be written on the adoption contract as a reminder for the adoptive home.** For instance, if a dog is not good around cats or kids, verbally discuss this with the family and write it somewhere on the adoption contract (preferably in the remarks section).

- If you suspect that the foster animal is not what the family had in mind, encourage them to keep looking for a more appropriate pet.
- If they seem to like the pet but are still hesitant, you can say, "You seem to like him, but you're unsure. What are your concerns?"
- Give the family plenty of time to talk and question. You ask questions, too (do your own screening)!



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- The more information the family has going into the adoption, the more likely it will be successful.
- Assure the family that if they do not choose to adopt your foster animal, it will be adopted by another wonderful family (sometimes people feel guilty if they end up not adopting). Encourage them to visit the web site again.

### Evaluating Potential Adopters

- Be objective
- Ensure the adopter understands that even though a dog may be housebroken, he or she may need an adjustment period in a new environment, and accidents should be expected.
- Since most adopters are previous pet owners, we can use their pet history as a guide
  - Examples of good pet history:
    - last pet died of old age
    - past/present pet was a stray
    - past/present pet(s) were all up to date with shots and were spayed/neutered
  - Another way to evaluate a potential Adopter is to observe how they are with the animal.
    - Examples:
      - Do they let children mistreat the pet or do they supervise and correct them?
      - Are they physically able to handle the animal (example: older people trying to walk a large dog)
      - Do they hit the pet if it jumps or pulls while walking?
  - Is the potential Adopter inquisitive?
    - Examples:
      - When is his next shot due?
      - What should I feed it?
      - Do you have training classes?
      - Is there anything more I should know about this animal?
  - Is the environment of the home right for your foster dog?
    - Is there a fenced yard?
    - Is there adequate room for the dog to exercise, play and sleep?
    - Is the home neat and free of dangerous places and items that the dog could get into?
    - Is there white carpet everywhere that will necessitate the dog having to be confined away from the family?

### Is This The Right Family?

Should they be allowed to adopt your foster dog? You have the right to decide. If you are not comfortable with this family, then the adoption does not have to be granted. You can tell them



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that others have looked at him/her and that you will select the best fit for the dog. If you aren't quite sure why you are uncomfortable and it's just a gut instinct, you may want to call your Volunteer Coordinator for another opinion.

## 14. Potential Adoption

- All adoptions must be communicated to a Rescue Director before being finalized. Home visit results and foster's observations should be shared with your Director and comments written on the web application before notifying a potential adopter that they have been approved to adopt the dog.
- No animal may leave the foster home until an adoption contract is signed and the nonrefundable adoption fee is collected.
- Once the adoption contract is signed and the fee is collected, the foster animal is now owned by the adopters, and therefore, all responsibilities are that of the adopters (vet care, for example).
- We do not offer trial periods of any duration, but we must always communicate to the adopter that if for any reason they are not happy with the dog, it **MUST** be returned to us. This language is clearly stated in the Adoption Agreement.
- If a foster volunteer takes the dog back for any reason, the responsibility reverts back to Buffalo Pug and Small Breed Rescue.

## 15. The Adoption Agreement

Complete an adoption agreement with all the information needed. If you are unable to complete the Agreement yourself, contact your Volunteer Coordinator/Director for assistance. You need to prepare two copies and both copies need to be signed by you and the adopter. One copy should be given to the adopter with all relevant paperwork (most often the paperwork will reside with a director and will later be sent in the mail to the new adopter) on the dog, and you must send the other copy, along with the payment, to Buffalo Pug & Small Breed Rescue, Inc., 12405 Clinton St., Alden, NY 14004.

Review the adoption agreement thoroughly with the adoptive family.

The last thing you should say is this, "Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any problems or questions. We're here to help. Please be sure to either call or e-mail me in the next few days and update me. We like to follow up with our adoptive families to make sure that things are going well." You may also choose to tell them about our adopter mailing list that they will be introduced to soon after adoption.

**We do not adopt out animals without a fee...** they can't pay you on Friday after they get their



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check; they can't drop off the cash tomorrow. We don't hear from these people again! You can accept a postdated check, and you can hold the animal until the person gets paid on Friday if they seem to genuinely want to adopt. But never let an animal go without the completed forms or the fee. Once paid, ensure the adopter initials the next to last statement on the contract that relates to the fee being non-refundable.

Checks are made payable to: *Buffalo Pug and Small Breed Rescue, Inc.*

If the adoption fee is paid by check, please be sure that the adopter initials the final statement on the Adoption Agreement relative to checks.

## 16. Adoptions

Ideally, the adoptions should take place in your home or the adopter's home. Some fosters do not wish to have adopters come to their home, and this is a matter of personal preference. If you do not wish to have the adopter pick up the dog from you, contact your Director for assistance. Make sure they do not leave with your foster animal until they have signed the adoption contract and paid the fee.

We also encourage all placements to have a photo taken at the time they pick up their new dog. If you don't have a camera, contact your Director about using theirs. This is always nice to be able to showcase the adoption with the "before and after" pictures on the website.

## 17. After the Adoption

- Send adoption contract and adoption fee to: Buffalo Pug & Small Breed Rescue, Inc., 12405 Clinton Street, Alden, NY 14004
- Please write up a little "happy ending story" and send it, along with the picture(s) to the web site administrator so that it can be put on the web site. Also request that the dog's status be changed to "Adopted".
- Volunteers that do not have Internet access need to contact their Volunteer Coordinator. They can then update the web site on your behalf.
- Sanitize: crates, carriers, toys, floors, pooper-scoopers, bedding and bowls.
- **Get ready for your next foster dog (we hope)!!!**