

**FOSTER CARE HANDBOOK**

**FOR**

**NEW MEXICO ANIMAL FRIENDS**

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you very much for volunteering to provide foster care for New Mexico Animal Friends, Inc. (NMAF). Foster care is critical to the success of our organization since we do not have a central shelter. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with contact information, veterinary care information, adoption clinic information, and medical and training tips.

## FOSTER CARE CONTACTS AND EMERGENCY NUMBERS

**New Mexico Animal Friends**  
2917 Carlisle NE #212, 87110

(505) 881-7297  
Fax: (505) 884-9226  
[info@nmaf.org](mailto:info@nmaf.org)

### **Office Hours**

8:00am-12:00pm (Tuesday-Friday)

### **EMERGENCY CELL NUMBER**

(505) 550-1280

### **Foster Care Coordinators (FCC) and Clinic Coordinators**

Foster Care Coordinators are available to answer any questions or help you solve any problems that might come up while you are providing foster care.

Alan Duhon (dogs)	294-2790 (h) 550-1280 (c) NMAF emergency #
Jeri Ramrath (cats)	292-6114 (h) 350-7463 (c)
Jessica Reeb (cats)	553-1436 (c)

### **Additional Emergency Contact Numbers**

Patty Bolnick	301-7344 (c)
Sherry Vasquez	238-8849 (h)

## VETERINARY CARE AUTHORIZATIONS

### **Authorization Required for All Medical Care and Treatment**

Contact the NMAF office to request approval and authorization for any vet visit. The foster parent should provide the office staff or the FCC with information on the animal's health problems or needs. The required medical authorization form will be faxed to the veterinarian clinic and it is then the foster parent's responsibility to call the clinic to schedule the appointment for treatment. The foster parent is also asked to call the office or the FCC to report on the results.

### **Vet Visits**

Please keep in mind that NMAF is the client and you should not make demands or requests of the vet. It is not appropriate for you to question the vet about treatment, so please refer all questions and concerns to your FCC. Please don't expect to have a conference with the vet, but do expect take home instructions and, if you have any questions, ask the vet tech for clarification. If you have any additional problems, or if a follow-up appointment is needed, call your FCC.

## Emergency Medical Care

**In case of emergencies, please call the NMAF Office (881-7297) immediately** to arrange for medical treatment. If the office is closed, please contact one of the NMAF contacts listed under “**Contacts**” above. If time is critical and the foster determines that the animal’s life may be in danger and he/she cannot wait for office authorization, the foster parent may take the animal to the nearest **authorized veterinary facility (during daytime hours) or the nearest authorized veterinary facility with emergency hours (during weekends or evening/night hours)**. Authorized veterinary clinics are listed below. Upon arrival at the veterinary clinic, the foster parent may request services to stabilize the animal; however, **more complicated procedures will require appropriate authorization**. The veterinary clinic personnel and/or the veterinarian providing treatment will usually offer to contact one of the NMAF emergency contacts listed above.

## Authorized Veterinary Clinics

TLC Veterinary Hospital	275-3647	2632-A Pennsylvania NE (north of Menaul)
VCA Montgomery Animal Hosp.	292-5353	9901 Montgomery Blvd. NE (east of Eubank)
VCA Wyoming Animal Hosp.	298-7444	2740 Wyoming Blvd. NE (at Candelaria)
Taylor Ranch Vet. Hospital	792-9666	9401 Golf Course rd. NW (near Paradise)
Corrales Veterinary Clinic	899-0999	015-A Marcos Lane, Corrales
Uptown Cat Hospital	271-2287	2632-C Pennsylvania NE (north of Menaul)

## Veterinary Clinics with Weekend and Emergency Hours

VCA Montgomery	292-5353**	9901 Montgomery Blvd NE (east of Eubank)
West Mesa Emergency Clinic	314-8024***	373 Unser Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho
Albuquerque Animal Emergency Clinic	884-3433***	4000 Montgomery Blvd NE (east of Carlisle)

**\*\* (Gives “limited” discounts to NMAF – Use ONLY if other clinics are closed or are too far from foster’s home and time is of the essence.)**

**\*\*\* (Does NOT give discounts or rescue rates to NMAF – Use ONLY if other clinics are closed or are too far from foster’s home and time is of the essence.)**

## **SO I’M A FOSTER PARENT, NOW WHAT?**

**YOU** are the most important link between our organization and the adoptive parents. Aside from providing food and shelter, you will provide love, socialization, training and stability that would not be available to the animal if it were in a kennel. We strongly believe this makes for more successful adoptions. This next section briefly outlines the process for introducing your foster animal to your home, training and safety tips, and adoption clinic information. Please note that NMAF may require a quarantine period before a dog or cat can attend an adoption clinic. In addition, animals that have not yet been spayed or neutered will not be allowed to come to clinic or be placed in a potential adopters home unless Ok’d by the FCC. To know when you can bring your foster dog or cat to the adoption clinic, consult with NMAF’s Foster Care Coordinator. NMAF requires that all vaccines be current before bringing any foster pets to the adoption clinic.

Please review your foster agreement. **Remember that the agreement is to foster indefinitely or until the animal is adopted.** It is important to notify the FCC in advance of any changes in status. It is extremely difficult to move or switch fosters as the individual needs and requirements of the animal and fosters differ tremendously.

## Introducing Your Foster Animal to Your Home

If you have pets of your own it is important that you properly introduce your foster animal to them.

**DOGS:** Note, NMAF requires a quarantine period for new dogs in our program. If your foster dog has not been seen by a veterinarian, it is best to keep him/her separate from your other animals until the vet has pronounced him/her healthy. Then you can do the introductions. Take your dog outside to a park or next door to a neighbor's front yard or driveway on a leash. This will allow your resident dog to feel more at ease. Have someone else meet you there with the foster dog (on a leash), and let the dogs take a short walk together. Assuming there are no signs of aggression, you can give them a little more leash to sniff one another. If tails are wagging and there are no signs of aggression, proceed to the backyard and let them get acquainted there. Keep the leashes on and let them drag the leashes around while the new dog explores and they sniff and get to know one another. If they continue to look comfortable with each other, remove the leashes for playtime. Sometimes, as with people, introductions must go more gradually; if there are signs of aggression, anxiety or standoffishness, put them in separate areas (i.e., crates, separate rooms or separate parts of the yard). Let them warm up to each other gradually. Of course, if there are real signs of aggression or fighting, contact an FCC or the NMAF office immediately for advice, training, support or another placement for the dog.

**CATS:** NMAF requires a quarantine period for new cats in your home. Please keep the foster cat completely separate from your pets during this period. This will allow the new cat time to get used to the smells, sounds and routine of your home in a stress-free environment. Assuming your foster cat receives a clean bill of health you can slowly start to introduce your animals. For details of introduction please see our hand out "The New Cat in Your Home".

## HOUSETRAINING DOGS/PUPPIES

1. Puppies up to about three months of age need to eliminate eight to 10 times a day. Scheduled times usually include:
  - First thing in the morning
  - Ten to twenty minutes after eating (puppies need to have three meals a day)
  - After play or other excitement
  - When you get home for work
  - Early evening
  - Just before bed
  - During the night (if necessary)
2. Always take your dog to the same location to eliminate (using a leash is helpful).
3. Create an elimination behavior word. Encourage him with a *friendly* voice saying, for example, "Go potty." As soon as your dog *finishes*, praise him.
4. Manage your environment. Keep your dog in a kennel or tethered to you by attaching her leash to your waist (the "umbilical cord" effect) so she can't make a mistake.
5. Keep the elimination time envelope short. Give him 10 minutes to go. If he hasn't eliminated during that time frame, bring him back in the house and put him in the kennel, or tether him to you in the house. Try again 15 minutes later.
6. If you walk in the room three *seconds* after she has peed on the carpet, she won't associate a reprimand with the behavior. So don't reprimand her at all. If you catch her **in the act**, startle her with excitement, but **don't scare** her or say "No, bad girl!" Say, for example, "Oh, my gosh!" and run to her. The idea is to have her stop what she's doing *without freaking her out*. Pick her up or head her toward the door (use the same door for exiting to the potty area **every** time). As soon as you are outside, act thoroughly relieved. Relax your voice and body. Then encourage her to "go potty" or "outside" (use whatever your elimination word is).
7. Don't give your dog any food or water after 8:00 p.m. in the evening. A couple of ice cubes are OK.
8. A morning and an evening meal is the preferred feeding schedule. Do not free-feed your dog (leave food in the bowl all day and full to the brim). Routine eating times will regulate your dog's eliminating habits as well. If you dog has not finished all his food within 20 minutes, pick it up and throw it away.

## **When Dog Eliminates in the House**

- Clean up the urine with a non-ammoniated cleanser.
- Don't let her see you clean it up. Some behaviorists think you might be giving your dog a message that you're accepting her little "gifts."
- Once a day, put a few pieces of kibble on a paper plate and place it on any spot where your dog eliminated previously in the house. Dogs hate eliminating where they eat.

NOTE: If you bring your dog in the house after she eliminates and then you rush immediately to leave for the day, your dog will quickly learn that eliminating is associated with your leaving. As a result, she'll start procrastinating while she's outside. Instead, once you're back in the house, let her spend 10 minutes or so playing with you or a chew toy before you leave.

Excerpts from: *The Dog Whisperer, A Compassionate and Nonviolent Approach to Dog Training*

## **CRATE TRAINING**

Use a crate that is the appropriate size for your dog so the dog won't be tempted to eliminate in an unused corner. If you have a large crate and a small dog/puppy, put a cardboard box in the rear of the crate to reduce the interior space. As the puppy grows, you can put smaller boxes inside as appropriate. **Puppies should be left no longer than three hours in the crate at a time (except overnight).**

Always make going into the crate a positive and rewarding experience. Be sure that it is clean and comfortable, and that the dog has at least one blanket and one toy. Food given upon entering the crate is a good reward. A hollow toy "bone" filled with a treat can ease the stress once the dog is in the crate. The dog will be busy extracting the treat and you can leave in peace. When you release the dog, remove any uneaten treats from the bone and remove it from the crate. The dog will soon associate going into the crate with the treat and not your absence.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 1) **No chaining – EVER**
- 2) **No roaming unattended**
- 3) **Must be on leash or confined to your yard at all times .**
- 4) **Supervise the dog around other animals (horses, chickens, geese, dogs, cats, birds, etc.)**
- 5) **Use caution when opening doors so the dog does not bolt outside**

## **CATS/KITTENS**

**For behavior and training issues refer to "The New Cat in Your Home".**

**Darting outside** is a common danger, especially with a new foster cat. Please be cautious with opening doors and windows.

**All NMAF foster cats are to be kept indoors *without exception*.**

**SPECIAL NOTE WHEN YOU HAVE VISTORS:** Please be sure to take extra precautions when family or friends visit, as cats often manage to get outside when company comes. If possibly keep cats in a locked room so they cannot accidentally get out during parties or when you have out-of-town guests.

## **Feeding**

A morning and an evening meal is the preferred feeding schedule. Do not free-feed your cat (leave food in the bowl all day long and full to the brim). Routine eating times will regulate your cat's eliminating habits as well.

**Common Household Hazards.** Use the same guidelines as you would with small children when it comes to common household substances. Anything you would consider harmful to a child will also be harmful to your pets (antifreeze, paint thinner, garden and cleaning chemicals, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and insect or rodent killers). Contact a vet if your pet has come into contact with a hazards or toxic substance.

*The National Animal Poison Control Center is available 24 hours a day. If you can't reach your veterinarian or other local expert, national resources are available. You will be charged a per minute fee when you call (900) 548-2423 or \$30 per case when you dial (800) 548-2423. Calls typically run five to six minutes.*

## **ADOPTION CLINICS**

The dog and cat adoption clinics are held every Saturday of the year except when we close for special events or holidays.

### **Clinic Locations**

The Dog and Cat Adoption Clinics are held at the PetsMart at Academy and Wyoming.

### **Clinic Hours**

Dogs (winter)	11:00-2:00	(Saturday)
Dogs (summer)	10:00-1:00	(Saturday)
Cats (winter & summer)	11:00-4:00	(Saturday)

Please try to arrive prior to clinic "start" time to help set up a crate for your foster. We also appreciate your help in breaking down your crate when you come for pick up.

Since we have many dogs and cats attending the adoption clinics each week, it is important that only healthy animals come to the clinic. If your foster animal is exhibiting any signs of illness, i.e. lethargy, sneezing, runny eyes, or diarrhea, please contact the office or a Foster Care Coordinator for guidance,

### **Attendance at Adoption Clinics**

***NMAF requires that foster animals attend at least three (3) clinics a month.***

### **Vacations and Special Events**

Please let the office or your FCC know in advance of upcoming vacations. Please give at least one (1) week's notice if you cannot attend a clinic but would like to arrange for another volunteer to transport your foster animal.

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** If you are planning to be out of town during a major holiday and do not have alternative care arrangements for your foster animal, please let us know as far in advance as possible.

**Kennel reservations for most holidays must be scheduled months in advance.**

## **First Time at an Adoption Clinic**

The first time you bring your foster animal to the clinic, we ask that you stay for the entire clinic. If this is not possible, a minimum of two hours is requested. This will help make the animal more comfortable and give the regular clinic volunteers a chance to get as much information as they can about the animal.

Revised 2/28/2012