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POMDR is a non-profit Corp.  
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## **POMDR Foster Dog Program**

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Thank you for choosing to foster a POMDR dog! We appreciate your help in caring for our animals and helping to save lives.

If you have not fostered a dog before we think you will find it very rewarding as well as challenging. What follows are some basic guidelines to help you take care of your foster dog. We understand that each volunteer has different levels of experience and you may already have certain things that work well for you. These are basic guidelines and procedures to provide you with support while you are caring for your foster dog.

### **Foster Candidates**

POMDR is dedicated to finding new loving homes for dogs whose guardians can no longer care for them due to illness, death, or other challenging circumstances, and to finding homes for senior dogs in animal shelters. We have a lifetime commitment to all the dogs that come into our care. POMDR primarily intakes dogs from Monterey County Animal Services, Salinas Animal Services, Santa Cruz Animal Services and the general public. Our volunteers stay in close contact with the shelters so we are ready to help out the senior dogs when they need us. When a dog needs a foster home, we will typically email out a foster request with a photo of the dog and as much background info as we can. If the dog is in the shelter, you can go to the shelter to meet the dog before committing to fostering him.

### **Supplies**

POMDR will do our best to provide you with any necessary supplies you need to foster including:

- Leash
- Collar or harness
- ID Tag
- Bed or Blankets
- Crate
- Food and Water Dishes
- Toys
- Flea control
- Medical Care

We do ask that our foster homes provide food for their foster dogs whenever possible. If this is a problem for you, please let us know. We do get donated food from time to time.

### **Collar and ID Tags - #1 Priority**

**Upon intake, a blue POMDR tag will be put on the dog's collar. The dog will then be issued his/her own personal silver id tag with his specific number, and that tag will remain with the dog for his/her lifetime.**

Dogs can “back out” of a collar that is too loose. Be sure the collar that is on your foster dog cannot slip over his head but is loose enough that you can slip two fingers under it. Some dogs may do better with a harness. We can help you make the best choice for your foster dog.

A foster dog can chew through a leash in a matter of seconds. Keep an eye on your foster dog to see if he's a “leash chewer”. If he is, we can give you a chain leash. Never leave your foster dog tied up unattended (even if it's just for a minute to run into a store). Never leave your foster dog unattended in a public place. Never let your foster dog off leash unless in a confined yard with a fence he cannot climb over. Do not leave your foster dog unattended in a yard.

Many rescued dogs are very, very shy, or they are wanderers by nature. It may take a few days or weeks for the dog to bond to you. Be very careful getting in and out of your car. Hold the leash tightly at all times. Assume your foster dog is an escape artist in all situations until he proves himself otherwise.

Depending upon the personality and history of your foster dog it may be best to let him get familiar with you, your routine, and your home for a few days before taking him to public places where he may be frightened. Once he feels secure you can start socializing him on walks and taking him on errands.

### **What to Expect the First Day/Night**

The first day and night, your foster dog may show signs of stress (panting, drinking lots of water, not eating, pacing, staring at the door). This is normal behavior for a dog going into a new situation. All these signs should clear up once the dog is feeling secure, knows your routine and what is expected of him.

### **Arranging Your Home**

When you first bring your foster dog home, you should have a foster area already set up with food, water, and several toys. Your foster area might be a crate with comfy blankets, a kitchen or laundry area. It should be an area that will keep your foster dog confined for his own safety and prevent destructive behavior in the house. The confinement area should be a dog proof area where the dog can stay when you are unable to supervise him. Ideally the confinement area should be easy to clean. As you get to know your foster dog, and he becomes comfortable in the house, you can give him more and more freedom.

### **Where to Keep Your Foster Dog**

Very often we have little or no history about the dogs we take in with regards to their behavior toward other dogs and even less info about their behavior with cats. If you have a cat, you will want to introduce your dog properly and do not leave your dog free with your cat until you are confident there are no issues between them. The same goes for your own dog and your foster dog. Monitor their interactions to be sure there are no issues, and do not leave them home alone free together until you are very confident they are getting along.

### **Initial Activities with Your New Foster Dog**

Many of our senior dogs need to get out frequently in order to prevent accidents, and even if they were house trained in their previous home, they need to get used to the new schedule and routine. They will need your help and guidance and patience for that. Take your foster dog out for several bathroom breaks. See more on house training below.

Give your dog a chew toy or stuffed Kong and leave him alone in the confinement area for a few minutes (approximately five minutes or so). If he barks, **wait** for a few minutes of quiet before returning. See below

When you return to the dog you can hang out for a while or take a tour of the house on leash. Watch out for potential signs of marking in the house (sniffing or leg lifts). Your foster dog should not be left unsupervised with the run of the house.

Repeat many absences of varying lengths throughout the rest of the day.

## **Preparing for the Night**

If you are fostering an energetic dog, provide ample opportunity for the dog to burn off energy to help him sleep peacefully through the night. (See exercise options below.)

At night you may choose to set the dog up in your room.

Put a stuffed kong or chew toy in the crate and then put the dog in the crate. He may have trouble settling in, but should eventually relax and go to sleep. Remember, don't let the dog out of the crate if he is whining (to do so will reinforce the act of whining.)

It is best to have your foster dog "earn" bed privileges if you are going to have him sleep in bed with you. This can cause some jealousy with your dog so to establish a leadership role from the beginning it is best not to have your foster dog in bed with you for the first few nights.

## **The Importance of Short Absences**

Dogs are highly social animals and most of them have to **learn** to be comfortable when alone. To facilitate this, leave your foster dog for short periods of time (1-10 minutes) in the confinement area. Once your dog is comfortable with short absences you may leave the dog for longer periods of time.

## **Housetraining**

The strength of a dog's housetraining behavior is strongly reflective of his life circumstances with the previous guardian.

To housetrain your foster dog, treat him like an 8-week-old pup, as if he is learning housetraining for the first time. Even senior dogs may need to re-learn appropriate potty behavior in a new environment.

Your foster dog should not be in the house unsupervised unless he is in his confinement area.

After he has gone to the bathroom outside he may hang out with you outside the confinement area, but he should be supervised.

**Whenever he goes to the bathroom outside, always reward him with praise and treats.**

If you see your foster dog sniffing and circling, indicating that he may need to go to the bathroom, rush him out immediately and praise and treat him for eliminating outdoors.

If you catch your foster dog going to the bathroom in the house, interrupt him with an “ahh-ahhh!” and rush him outside to finish. If he finishes going to the bathroom before you can catch him, clean it thoroughly with Nature’s Miracle, Petastatic or another enzyme cleaner and supervise MUCH more closely next time.

### **Crate Training**

A crate can be a very valuable tool for a new dog adopter. Crates facilitate house-training, chew training, alone time training and the adoption transition in general.

Feed your foster dog in his crate.

Toss treats into the crate for him to find later.

Remember, crate trained dogs generally do better in their new homes.

### **Exercise**

Your foster dogs must be on-leash at all times when outside (long lines and flexi leashes are fine).

We recommend the following options for you to exercise your foster dog depending upon his energy level and health status:

- Walking on Leash
- Hiking on Leash
- Jogging on Leash
- Playing Fetch in Fenced Yard
- Mental Stimulation - training for sit, come, stay, leave it

Foster dogs should never be let off leash outside other than in an enclosed yard. Your foster dog should not be left in an enclosed yard unattended. Even if you think your yard is escape proof, a nervous dog can often find a whole new way out!

## **Chew Training**

If you see your foster dog starting to chew on something inappropriate interrupt him with an “ahh-ahhh” and redirect him to one of his toys or chews.

## **Introducing your Foster Dog to a Potential Adopter's Resident Dog(s):**

Introducing dogs can range from a very easy proposition to a very difficult or impossible proposition, depending on the personalities and sociability of the dogs involved. While fostering a dog, it is important for you to note his response to other dogs, both your own pets and those you encounter while out with your foster dog. Note if he seems dominant or submissive, friendly or distrustful, interested, playful, scared or completely disinterested in other dogs. This information will be very helpful in determining if he will enjoy sharing his home with another dog or not.

Assuming your foster dog seems, at best, playful and interested in other dogs or, at least, indifferent to other dogs, you can encourage potential adopters with resident dogs to bring their dog over for a meet-and-greet. In general, dogs feel more at ease when meeting other dogs in a relatively open space as opposed to inside a closed room in your house. Introducing dogs outdoors is a good idea. If all goes well, you may proceed into the house and, hopefully, success will continue.

Your foster dog may show signs of being territorially protective over your home. This is important in determining where would be the best location to introduce your foster dog to his potential new "brothers and sisters." If your foster seems to be protecting your home, you will want to introduce him to his potential new family members on neutral territory (a park, a beach, a parking lot, etc.) It also seems to help if you walk the dogs, on-leash, together in a non-confrontational way. If all goes well, you may want to proceed to an off-leash encounter in a secure area. (See below.) If you aren't sure how your dog will react to another dog coming into your home, it may be best to err on the side of caution and use a neutral area also.

If your foster dog doesn't seem territorial, it is still a good idea to meet the potential family member(s) outside, either on loosely-held leashes or off-leash in a fenced area if all dogs are very friendly. If the dogs are on-leash, make sure to give them a little line so that they don't feel tension coming from you and interpret that as fear or nervousness. Make sure that there are no food treats or bones lying around which may spark resource-guarding. Encourage your foster dog to interact with the other dog. A game of fetch or tug can sometimes foster interaction between dogs but only if the toy is not your foster dog's treasured item which he doesn't want to share!

Keep a close watch over the dogs' interaction; some play-fighting is a good thing because it indicates trust between the dogs but it is important to break things up if they seem to be getting too aggressive. Look for quickly wagging, highly-held tails, play-bows and roll-overs; these are all signs of success between dogs.

### **What to Feed Your Foster Dog**

POMDR will make every effort to find out what your foster dog was fed in his original home. If that information is not available or was an inferior food, we can suggest foods that you can feed him. You may also consider feeding him whatever food you feed your personal dogs.

### **Behavior Issues**

Whenever you have any questions regarding behavior issues with your foster dog, do not hesitate to contact one of us from the contact list given to you. For urgent behavior issues that need attention during evening hours or weekends refer to the emergency contact list on the last page of this document.

### **Spaying/Neutering your Foster Dog**

Most foster dogs will already have been spayed or neutered before you get them. Otherwise POMDR will arrange to have that done shortly thereafter. Even senior dogs do very well under anesthesia after a full blood panel to assess their overall health is done. Spaying and neutering senior dogs can help prevent certain cancers. If the veterinarian believes that the surgical procedure would be unsafe for your foster dog, we would not have him altered. Many of the senior dogs will also get their teeth cleaned at the time of spaying.

The night before surgery, remember to NOT feed your foster dog food or give him water after 8:00 PM. Also, remember to NOT give him any food or water the morning of surgery.

### **Your Foster Dog's Health**

Whenever you have any questions regarding the health of your foster dog, Do not hesitate to call us. In a medical emergency, refer to the 24-hour emergency numbers on the last page of this document.

Things to watch for:

1. **Fleas** are common for neglected or stray dogs coming out of the shelter. If your foster dog is scratching or if you detect fleas on the dog contact us to get some Advantage for flea control.
2. **Kennel Cough** is unfortunately common. Kennel Cough is an airborne illness and can be spread easily. Quarantine your foster dog away from other dogs until the kennel cough is resolved. Most often dogs will get over kennel cough on their own in about 7-14 days (it is caused by a self limiting virus). Occasionally a secondary infection may occur and your foster dog will need antibiotics to help speed recovery. If your foster dog shows signs of yellow or green mucus - contact us to arrange for a vet appointment.
3. **Parvo** is caused by a virus that invades the intestinal wall and causes inflammation. Parvo can be deadly to dogs and is most common in puppies under 5 months of age. Parvo is highly contagious and the virus is shed in the feces. Initial symptoms of Parvo are severe diarrhea and vomiting. You may also notice lack of appetite, depression and fever. You may see blood in the stool and the stool may have a foul odor. If you suspect your foster dog may have Parvo contact us immediately. (This would be rare in senior dogs.)
4. **Matted Hair** - You may end up fostering a dog that has not been groomed in months and months. If your foster dog is severely dirty or matted he may need an appointment with a groomer. POMDR has volunteer groomers who can help your foster dog look better and feel better. If you think your foster dog needs to be groomed, contact us to have an appointment arranged. He'll feel much better once groomed and will be so appreciative! If you have a foster dog for several months, let us know when he is in need of grooming again (that can be as often as every 6-8 weeks for some breeds.)

If you are unsure about the health of your foster dog or have questions about the behavior of your foster dog call one of us to discuss the symptoms and to answer questions. In case of a medical or behavior emergency refer to the emergency contact list.

Please do not take your foster dog to the vet without prior approval from POMDR - many things can be treated without seeing the vet. If the dog needs to go to the vet, a board member or lead volunteer can let you know which vet is available and who works regularly with us.



## The Adoption Process

Shortly after getting your foster dog, POMDR will contact you to schedule a photo session. Getting a good photo of your foster dog can make a big difference in the number of calls we get for him. If you have a digital camera you can also take your own pictures of your foster dog and email them to **carie@peaceofminddogrescue.org**. Pictures taken in day light without a flash tend to come out better and prevents “red eye”. Photos of your foster dog sitting or standing with a nice background are also preferred. Both full body shots and nice head shots are helpful. Photos with his “adopt me” bandana on and some with bandana off are also helpful. The photos will be used to advertise the dog on our web site, the national PetFinder.org web site, and in newsprint ads. If you have the ability to take short video clips of your foster dog to send to us for his web page, that is great. You can send videos to same email as photos.

We ask that you bring your foster dog to as many adoption events as possible. We also do special events from time to time that fall on various days. It is best if you are able to stay with your foster dog since you are the person who knows him the best and can talk with potential adopters about his needs and personality. If you cannot stay at an event with your foster dog, we can assign a volunteer dog handler to stay with him. We ask that you wear an POMDR t-shirt or sweatshirt at events to identify yourself as a volunteer. We will also have an “Adopt Me” bandana for your dog to wear. When you walk your foster dog in public areas he should wear his Adopt Me bandana for additional exposure.

Potential adopters who see your dog on the web site or in an ad will contact POMDR. We will do the initial screening and then refer calls to you. We ask that you return calls or emails to potential adopters within 24 hours. In this conversation, you can tell the potential adopter more about your foster dog and ask any questions you might have of them. (See the adoption counselor manual for specific screening questions.) You know your dog’s needs the best. If in that initial conversation you know this is not a match, now is the time to tell them. This prevents you from getting their hopes up and causing ill feelings.

If the caller sounds like a good candidate, you can arrange for a time for him to meet the dog. If they have a dog or dogs of their own it’s a good idea for the dogs to meet to be sure they will get along. Meeting on neutral territory can be a good idea. **If you are a first-time foster and/or uncomfortable doing the meet and greet by**

**yourself with prospective adopters, a POMDR lead volunteer will accompany you.**

If it's a good match, let us know and we can arrange for a home inspection which you or another POMDR volunteer can do, and then we can arrange to have the adoption contract completed. Then your foster dog can go to his new home!

If you are not comfortable making a final decision we are here to support you. The POMDR staff and lead volunteers can help facilitate or deny the adoption at any point in the process. If you have any questions or concerns about the adoption, do not hesitate to contact us. It's better to be safe than sorry.

### **Adoption Follow Up**

We have volunteers who follow up with adopters on a regular basis throughout the dog's lifetime. Usually the day after adoption, two weeks later, two months later, six months later, and then annually. If you are staying in touch with the adopter, we appreciate receiving any updates or photos they may send you. Also if, at any time, you know of a behavior issue that has come up, please notify us so we can help trouble shoot any potential problems with a referral to an appropriate trainer.

### **Final Note**

We hope that this information will help you with your fostering experience. Please feel free to call with questions or concerns (refer to your contact list for numbers.) We are here to help you. Also let us know if you have any tricks that work well for you so that we can share them with other foster families. Thank you for caring enough to share your time with homeless dogs, they sure do appreciate the love and attention.