

Friends of Homeless Animals (FOHA)

Animal Intake Manual – Public Version

Section 1: Purpose and Overview

Friends of Homeless Animals (FOHA) is committed to providing safe, compassionate, and efficient intake practices that prioritize the physical and emotional well-being of every animal entering our care.

Goals of FOHA's Intake Process:

- Selection of dogs and cats who will compliment our existing group of available animals and ensure maximum offering to the adopters who come for a new family member.
- Ensure each incoming animal receives proper medical and behavioral evaluation.
- Minimize stress during transport and arrival.
- Protect the health of animals already residing at FOHA.
- Maintain accurate and complete chain-of-custody and intake documentation.
- Support successful adoptions by gathering clear behavioral and medical information from the start.

This policy applies to all dogs and cats entering FOHA through transfer, foster/adoption return, or owner surrender.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Program Manager (Dog Intake) & Operations Manager (Cat Intake)

- Serve as the primary points of contact and decision-makers for all dog and cat intakes.
- Assess kennel or cattery capacity and confirm available space before scheduling intakes.
- Coordinate with the **Medical Manager** to review medical records, vaccination status, and any pending medical needs prior to approval.
- Communicate directly with rescue partners regarding potential animals for intake.
- Confirm final intake numbers and timing with the **Medical Manager** and **Executive Director (ED)**, who must approve any exceptions or special cases (e.g., seniors, heartworm-positive animals, medical or behavioral concerns).
- Ensure all required documentation is received and uploaded to ShelterLuv.
- Oversee arrival-day logistics and unloading coordination.

2.2 Medical Manager

- Reviews medical records for each incoming animal.
- Coordinates with FOHA's veterinarian (Dr. Foster) or approved local veterinary partners for intake exams and vaccinations.
- Schedules appointments for animals needing medical updates or spay/neuter or other procedures.

- Provides direction for quarantine care and medication administration
- Updates ShelterLuv medical notes and ensures compliance with intake standards.

2.3 Caregiver Staff and Volunteers

- Prepare kennels or cattery spaces in advance of intake.
- Follow assigned handling and sanitation protocols during and after intake.
- Report any concerning behaviors, illness, or injuries immediately.
- Respect quarantine protocols and limit cross-contact with new intakes.
- Use only approved cleaning and disinfecting procedures (Rescue solution).

Section 3: General Intake Policy

3.1 Intake Frequency and Scheduling

FOHA typically conducts group intakes every other **Saturday**, aligning with **Dr. Foster's Tuesday visits** for timely medical exams.

Exceptions occur when partner organizations transport animals directly to FOHA. The **Program Manager** and **Operations Manager** coordinate these flexible arrivals within a few days to one week prior to Dr. Foster's visit.

3.2 Intake Approval and Coordination

- The **Program Manager (dogs)** and **Operations Manager (cats)** oversee all aspects of intake coordination.
- The **Medical Manager** reviews vaccination records, testing results, and any pending or missing medical needs.
- The **Executive Director** approves all exceptions such as seniors, medical or behavioral cases, or heartworm-positive dogs - if the number exceeds the allocated monthly number.
- **Intake limits:** FOHA typically accepts up to one heartworm-positive and two senior dogs per month. Additional special medical or senior intakes must be reviewed and approved by the **Executive Director**.
- **Diversity in intake:** FOHA strives for breed, size, gender, and age variety in selection to provide adopters with diverse choices.
- Intake costs and medical fees may vary per partner. Negotiations are coordinated by the **Program Manager** and approved by the **Executive Director**.

3.3 Chain of Custody and Documentation

- All animals must have a completed transfer or ownership release prior to transport.
- **Any animal crossing state lines must have a current rabies vaccine and a valid health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian.**
- Required documentation includes: Rabies certificate, vaccination/testing history, spay/neuter verification, and behavioral notes.
- FOHA reserves the right to return any animal whose behavioral or medical history was significantly misrepresented by the sending organization.

- A **FOHA Arrival Assessment** must be completed upon arrival.
- All documents are uploaded to FOHA's shared drive and ShelterLuv within **10 days of arrival**.

3.4 Quarantine Standards

- **Dogs and Cats from Shelters:** 10-day quarantine minimum.
- **Owner Surrenders or Foster Returns:** Quarantine may be shortened if vaccines are current and cleared by **Dr. Foster** or an approved veterinarian.
- **Foster Return Flow:** Returning foster animals receive a brief health re-check and updated ShelterLuv verification before reintroduction.
- During quarantine, animals are handled only by staff or designated volunteers.
- Supplies and cleaning tools used in quarantine must not be shared with other areas.
- Veterinary clearance is required prior to public availability.

Section 4: Intake Criteria and Standards

4.1 Medical Criteria

Dogs

- **Required:** Rabies, Distemper, Bordetella, Heartworm test, medical disclosure.
- **Preferred:** 4DX or fecal, microchip, spay/neuter, preventatives, dog-dog interaction video,

Cats

- **Required:** FIV/FelV test, Rabies, FVRCP, medical disclosure.
- **Preferred:** Booster at 6 months, spay/neuter, preventatives, dental or medical documentation.

Age Guidelines

- Dogs: Prefer under 8 years old; older dogs considered case-by-case.
- Puppies under 6 months should go to a foster placement whenever one is available.

Vaccination status is critical: Young puppies have immature immune systems, and we want to avoid exposing them to preventable shelter-borne diseases. Ideally, puppies should have **at least two DHPP vaccines** and a **Bordetella vaccine** before entering the shelter environment.

Rabies exposure in the shelter setting is highly unlikely, so lack of a rabies vaccine does *not* impact placement decisions for this age group.

- Cats: Prefer young to middle age, at least 1 senior/month; pregnant or nursing mothers evaluated individually.
- Kittens: 4 months or younger require foster placement or specialized coordination. Older kittens (vaccinated, spayed/neutered) can be in FOHA's kitten room

4.2 Behavioral Criteria

Dogs

Preferred Behavioral Criteria

- Social and responsive to humans; able to be safely leashed and walked.
- Comfortable with basic handling (feeding, cleaning, medical exams).
- No history of severe aggression, fighting, unprovoked bites or bites over grade 3 on the dunbar scale (provoked or unprovoked).
- No history of killing another dog or cat.
- Able to be safely removed from or returned to a kennel by staff or volunteers.

- Displays manageable fear, shyness, or stress that can be addressed through decompression, training, or behavior support.
- Dog-friendly or tolerant of other dogs preferred; reactivity is considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Puppies and adolescents should be reasonably well-socialized or demonstrate potential for socialization
- Foster notes and/or notes from previous adopters.

Special Considerations

- Bonded pairs may be considered individually or together depending on their behavior and adoption potential.
- Dogs who are fearful or shutdown may be accepted if there is a clear decompression or behavior plan in place.
- Any bite records must include detailed context and be reviewed before approval.

Cats

Preferred Behavioral Criteria

- Socialized and safe to handle by staff or volunteers.
- Tolerant of human touch and not consistently defensive, fearful, or aggressive.
- Suitable for communal cattery housing if temperament allows.
- No history of severe aggression toward humans or other cats.
- Kittens should be hand-friendly and comfortable with gentle handling.

Special Considerations

- Shy or reserved cats may be accepted if foster or quiet housing is available for decompression.
- Bonded pairs may be approved together when it benefits their welfare and adoptability.
- FOHA does not intake feral cats unless as part of a pre-approved foster or socialization plan.

Section 5A: Dog Intake Procedures

Pre-Intake Preparation

- The **Program Manager** coordinates upcoming dog intakes based on kennel availability, medical readiness, behavior/trait needs and adoption flow.
- Intake is typically scheduled for **every other Saturday**, aligning with **Dr. Foster's Tuesday visits**.
- The **Transport and Intake Team** is notified of scheduled arrivals, including estimated times, dog count, and key notes (e.g., heartworm-positive, bonded pair, shy dog, etc.).
- Confirm all supplies are ready: clean kennels with bedding, water, treat bags, slip leads, quarantine signage, and Rescue disinfectant.

Transport Coordination

- The **Program Manager** coordinates directly with partner organizations and drivers.
- Dogs crossing state lines must have a current rabies vaccine and a valid health certificate.
- Volunteers assisting with unloading must be cleared to walk Yellow dogs and familiar with canine body language.

Arrival at FOHA

- Transport vans park at the rear of FOHA near the dumpster area.
- The **Transport and Intake Team** waits at the Welcome Center ramp for unloading.
- Assigned handlers bring dogs out calmly—no crowding or loud interactions.

- Slip leads are applied before removing dogs from crates.
- Do not force or drag a dog out of a crate; use treats and gentle encouragement.

Potty Breaks and Initial Decompression

- Allow dogs 5–10 minutes for a potty break in the side parking lot.
- Keep dogs separated from others to prevent stress and disease spread.
- Avoid hugging or leaning over dogs; allow them space to decompress.
- Use treats to guide, not pressure, behavior.

Photos and Initial Observations

- Take photos only if the dog is calm and receptive.
- If showing avoidance or fear, skip photos until later.
- Record observations (fearful, friendly, energetic, etc.) on Arrival Assessment.

Kennel Placement

- Place dogs in pre-assigned kennels (typically Lines 3–4).
- Toss treats to the back to encourage entry, remove slip lead, and secure gate.
- Open the guillotine for outdoor access.

Post-Intake Procedures

- Wash hands and disinfect shoes before leaving kennel area.
 - Program Manager reviews Arrival Assessments and updates Medical Manager.
 - The Medical Manager schedules all veterinary exams, coordinates any required testing, and ensures that all related medical information is entered accurately into the record system.
 - Upload Arrival Assessments and photos to ShelterLuv within 7 days.
 - Volunteers cannot interact with dogs until cleared from quarantine.
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Section 5B: Cat Intake Procedures

Pre-Intake Preparation

- The **Operations Manager** oversees all cat intakes, working with the **Medical Manager** to confirm readiness and available ISO/cattery space.
- Intakes are scheduled every other Saturday with Tuesday vet visits.
- When FOHA's van is used, the **Operations Manager** coordinates with the **Program Manager** to ensure the driver has a complete manifest.
- Notify staff/volunteers of arrival time, number of cats, and assigned spaces.
- **All cats are placed directly into assigned quarantine cages or rooms upon arrival.**
- Prepare ISO areas: disinfect, set up litter boxes, food, bedding, signage, and Rescue solution.

Transport Coordination

- Operations Manager coordinates directly with sending shelters.
- Cats crossing state lines must have health certificates, which includes rabies vaccination
- FOHA typically meets partners in Staunton, VA.
- Staff or trained volunteers assist with unloading as directed by the Operations Manager.

Arrival at FOHA

- Cats are unloaded quietly in a low-stress environment (ISO or cattery building).

- Both managers confirm all animals on the transport manifest have arrived.
- Carriers go directly to quarantine spaces.
- Open carriers only inside secured rooms; minimize handling.
- Allow cats to acclimate before assessments.

Post-Intake Procedures

- Both managers confirm all animals are accounted for and settled.
- Operations Manager reviews Arrival Assessments and communicates medical notes to the Medical Manager.
- Medical Manager schedules exams, vaccinations (including pending boosters), and any additional medical care required.
- Records and photos uploaded to ShelterLuv within 24-48 hours.
- No volunteer handling of ISO cats until medical clearance.