



# Operation Paws for Homes

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## Animal Intake Policy

Updated May 2025

Owner: Executive Director [director@ophrescue.org](mailto:director@ophrescue.org)

Operation Paws for Homes Rescue (OPH) partners with numerous shelters across the southern United States and other areas of need, including a small number of organizations from our international program. Our goal is to provide a second chance to adoptable dogs and cats of all breeds, ages, and sizes. OPH works closely with shelter partners to ensure that dogs and cats receive a basic level of veterinary care prior to transport to include the following:

### **DOG VETTING**

- Health certificate (state/country specific) for any animals coming from outside Virginia. If coming from a VA Shelter we only need this if the dog is going to a foster home in PA.
- Rabies vaccine for all animals 16 weeks of age or older
- DHPP vaccine for animals 4 weeks of age and older
- Second DHPP vaccine for animals that have been in care longer than two weeks
- Bordetella vaccine for animals 6 weeks of age and older
- Spay/neuter for all animals 4 months of age or older
- 4DX test for heartworm, Lyme disease, Ehrlichia and Anaplasma for all dogs 7 months of age and older
- Microchip
- Special considerations can be made on a case by case basis - reach out to the shelter pulling team leads and director for consideration.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PUPPIES**

We would prefer the following vetting for puppies but special considerations can be made by reaching out to the pulling leads and director. We always need to consider the risks of leaving puppies in a shelter environment and our ability to have vetting done once puppies are in foster.

- No shots - under 4 weeks
- 1 shot minimum (prefer 2nd has been done)- 4-8 weeks
- 2 Shots minimum - 8-16 weeks
- 1 shot & 2 weeks post vaccine- over 16 weeks
- Special considerations can be made on a case by case basis - reach out to the shelter pulling team leads and director for consideration.

- Keep updated on the latest cases of Parvo in your shelter  
[📄 Parvo Tracking Sheet](#)

### **CAT VETTING**

- Health certificate (state/country specific) for any animals coming from outside Virginia.
- Rabies vaccine for all animals 16 weeks of age or older
- FVRCP vaccine for animals 8 weeks of age and older
- Second FVRCP vaccine for animals in care longer than two weeks
- Spay/neuter for all animals great than three pounds or three months of age or older
- Microchip
- Special considerations can be made on a case by case basis- reach out to the shelter pulling team leads and director for consideration.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR KITTENS**

- No shots - under 4 weeks
- 1 shot minimum (prefer 2nd has been done) - 4-8 weeks
- 2 Shots minimum - 8-16 weeks
- 1 shot & 2 weeks post vaccine- over 16 weeks
- Special considerations can be made on a case by case basis - reach out to the shelter pulling team leads and director for consideration.

### **CONTINUED CARE**

For ongoing medical issues and routine preventative care, our Medical Coordinator manages care and a treatment plan with OPH approved local veterinarians as needed. OPH does not employ or have a resident veterinarian.

### **BEHAVIOR**

Operation Paws For Homes accepts pets that do not have a known history of aggression, or extreme fear/feral type behavior. Shelter staff from partner shelters have agreed to send video of dogs interacting with other dogs, and interacting with people, without other dogs present.

OPH shelter coordinators liaise with shelter staff to select rescue candidates for the OPH program based on the aforementioned criteria.

The shelter staff will provide a signed statement for each dog verifying that there is no history of aggression before acceptance into the OPH program.

### **BITE/AGGRESSION**

Dogs with a bite history and/or known history of aggression toward other animals or humans are not candidates for OPH.

On rare occasions, an exception can be made by the Executive Director or a member of the Board of Directors under majority consideration by the Executive Committee.

For these exceptions, the dog in question must have a designated volunteer to serve as an ambassador for the dog for the life of the dog while in the care of OPH. This includes circumstances where the dog is returned. The dog ambassador is responsible for fostering the dog, finding a foster for the dog, or supplying 50 percent of all boarding fees if no qualified foster is available.

The designated volunteer must sign an agreement acknowledging and agreeing to these terms.

An exception can be made by the Executive Director if the dog in question was protecting puppies or in pain from an active injury or illness at the time of the bite or aggression. A full report of the incident must be submitted, documented in the dog's DMS profile, and disclosed to any potential fosters and adopters via contract addendum.

Puppies under 5 months of age, with no signs of aggression, are not considered aggressive when play biting.

### **BULLY BREEDS**

OPH does not discriminate against breeds, but extra dog testing videos need to be sent to the shelter pulling leads for consideration.

### **OWNER SURRENDER**

OPH does accept animals via owner surrender. The medical and behavioral criteria for accepting owner surrender animals into the program are the same as previously described.

Owners are responsible for completing all vetting prior to intake to OPH. Exceptions can be made with approval from the Executive Director.

### **RETURNS**

Return requests to the program are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Bite, aggression, and other behavior exceptions can be made by the Executive Director. These cases will often involve behavioral evaluation or consultation.

All bites and aggression must be disclosed to the foster and any potential adopters via a disclosure statement or contract addendum which must be signed prior to a foster or adopter taking custody of the dog or cat..

### **SHELTER PARTNER APPROVAL**

OPH does not generally accept dogs and cats from shelters that have not gone through our partnering process.

Special requests from volunteers to take in a specific USA-based shelter dog or cat from an organization that is not an OPH shelter partner, must be approved by the Executive Director

Special requests for importing International Dogs must be approved by the Executive Director

Requests for partnerships with additional international entities beyond the established relationships in India and Kosovo and Albania must be reviewed by the Executive Director then recommendations should be submitted to the OPH Board of Directors for approval.

For new partnerships, a team and lead must be identified to oversee imports under the direction of the International Program lead and the Executive Director.