

## **Dogs Deserve Better Blue Ridge - Intake Policy**

When conducting community outreach to provide food, shelter, water, and over-the-counter flea and tick prevention for community pets, we may encounter pet owners willing to surrender their dogs for a chance at a better life. Through education, owners may decide to surrender their dogs if they feel unable to provide proper care. Additionally, animal control may seize dogs from similar situations and request assistance from Dogs Deserve Better Blue Ridge (DDBBR).

We collaborate with animal control agencies across various counties to respond to hoarding cases, either by bringing dogs directly into our program or by facilitating transfers to other reputable rescues. DDBBR also partners with rural municipal shelters when overcrowding leads to potential euthanasia for space, stepping in to rescue dogs in urgent need.

In some cases, DDBBR may intervene to rescue dogs found in immediate physical or medical danger. In such situations, we contact the appropriate animal control department for the county or town where the dog was found. The dog is then held for the required legal holding period—typically 5 to 10 days—while animal control attempts to locate the owner and publicize the lost pet. Once the holding period expires without an owner coming forward, DDBBR assumes guardianship of the dog and proceeds with necessary steps to prepare the animal for adoption by an approved adopter.

Upon intake to Dogs Deserve Better Blue Ridge (DDBBR), all dogs are scanned for a microchip to check for existing ownership. Since DDBBR does not have a physical facility, intake dogs typically go directly to a veterinary clinic. Here, they are provided with isolation from other animals for decompression and prevention of contagious illnesses, a secondary microchip scan, vaccinations, deworming, and any additional medical care necessary to ensure they are healthy and safe for transfer to an approved DDBBR foster home.

DDBBR follows all veterinary recommendations regarding the health and behavior of newly intake dogs. Whenever possible, the current name of the dog is retained unless there is already another dog in the program with the same name, in which case a new name may be assigned to avoid confusion.

### **Protocol for Incoming Dogs**

1. **Microchip Scanning:** Upon arrival, all Dogs Deserve Better Blue Ridge (DDBBR) dogs will be scanned for a microchip to confirm and determine proper ownership.
2. **Veterinary Assessment and Care:** All DDBBR dogs will be taken to a veterinary clinic for assessment and treatment of any injuries or illnesses. They will also receive standard veterinary care, including vaccinations, deworming, and blood testing. If spay or neuter surgery is needed and the dog is deemed healthy, the procedure will be scheduled.
  - a. **Dogs Over 6 Months with No Vaccination History or Unknown History:**
    - **Vaccinations:** Rabies, Bordetella, 1st DHPP - DHPP booster will be scheduled at this point

- Deworming: Deworming medicine will be started according to veterinary prescription
- Blood Test: Heartworm and tick-borne disease screening
- If heartworm/tick-borne disease test results are negative:
  - Heartworm preventative will be administered
- Dogs will be checked and flea-combed for fleas and ticks:
  - If fleas or ticks are present, Capstar will be given, and ticks will be removed. The following day, regular flea and tick preventative will be started.
  - If no fleas or ticks are found, flea and tick preventative will be applied immediately.

**b. Dogs Under 6 Months with No Vaccination History:** Puppies under 6 months of age will not be permitted to interact with other non vaccinated animals.

- Vaccinations: Puppy distemper and bordetella, 2-3 more distemper vaccines will be scheduled for follow up when time appropriate.
- Rabies vaccination may be administered if deemed appropriate by the veterinarian based on the puppy's age and health status
- Deworming: Deworming medicine will be started according to veterinary prescription
- Flea and Tick Treatment:
  - If fleas or ticks are present, Capstar will be given, and ticks will be removed. The following day, flea and tick preventative will be administered.
  - If no fleas or ticks are found, flea and tick preventative will be applied on the first day.

3. All dogs will be fitted with a well-fitting collar with a DDBBR tag attached (only exception is young puppies still with their litter due to strangling hazard)

4. Proper paperwork, which includes surrender form, any immunization records including rabies certificate from prior vet, State Animal Custody Record, Health Certificate (if out of state) will be finalized for intake, making sure all paperwork is present and correct.

5. Within 72 hrs, if no hold on dog by ACO, A profile in shelterluv, our shelter management software, will be created for the dog, all of dog's information will be put into ShelterLuv

including a current photo, with all information pertaining to dog in the past as well as vaccines, diagnostics and medications received upon arrival. All future vet checks and procedures will be entered into ShelterLuv.

6. Once the proper vetting and isolation period is complete, DDBBR staff member will help the dog to be placed in a fully vetted DDBBR foster home. Staff members will assist in proper introduction to resident pets, assisting with setting up management inside the fosters home for decompression and slow introduction to the animals new home, along with coaching the foster on any behavioral or medical concerns for the animal.