

WESTIE RESCUE MICHIGAN POLICY
MAJOR POINTS OF INFORMATION FOR FOSTER HOMES
7/21/12

CONTRACTS

1. Foster home must be approved in advance with a signed application and contract on file with the coordinator.
2. Foster homes will all be asked to sign a new contract with the new organization called "WESTIE RESCUE MICHIGAN" prior to the official start date of the new organization.
3. Foster contracts will be resigned periodically, possibly as often as annually, as deemed necessary by the board.
4. Foster contracts will be required for all fostering personnel including those who "babysit" rather than foster.
5. A special contract will be used when a foster home asks a non-member* to take care of the dog at any time. (*Vet's, groomers and professional kennels are excluded as they will have their own paperwork/processes and are not required to sign ours. They must always be informed that they are dealing with a rescue dog and asked to take appropriate measures such as a muzzle if they deem it necessary for their own safety.)
6. All adult members of a foster home will sign the contract to better position ourselves for insurance coverage. Note: All foster homes are encouraged to maintain a personal liability policy to cover any situations that Rescue insurance doesn't cover or might not cover sufficiently.

FOSTER HOME VOLUNTEERING

1. Foster home requests are posted via the email list.
The surrender coordinator does not have the time to call individually to ask.
2. To make this fair and efficient to all, foster homes and other foster volunteers are asked to read email at least once a day to keep on top of needs.
3. To allow us to work as a team and learn from each other, foster homes with foster dogs must post status to the email list at least twice a week and more frequently if possible.

PHOTOS

Take many photos and maintain a diary. These efforts are as important to the overall success of our group as is the actual fostering. They allow us to learn from each other and to support each other; they allow us to advertise the dogs; they give the eventual adopter a good understanding of their new dog and a good impression of our work; they assist greatly in our fundraising efforts.

1. Photo Album and Diary
These two items are to be created and provided to the adopters at the time of adoption. The photo album may be a CD of photos rather than a book.
2. List Photos
Photos must be posted to the list several times during the stay of the dog so that the entire team can get a feeling and understanding of the dog, learn from your experiences and offer assistance from their experience.
3. Web album, Events, Petfinder Photos

Several small but very good photos should be supplied early on in the foster stay so that the photo album can be posted on line and photos can be used for events. Foster home should be continually trying to get a good photo for purposes of "advertising" the dog.

4. Annual Calendar

A very good, post-grooming photo must be submitted prior to the dog leaving foster care and as early in the process as possible.

If the foster home does not have a digital camera capable of large photos, please let us know and we will arrange something, possibly a camera loan or a professional photo.

PAPERWORK

Please see the Foster Guide Basic for the paperwork process.

MULTIPLE FOSTER HOMES

1. At any time, the Board may determine that a particular dog must go to a second or third foster home for observation prior to placement. This should never be considered an insult to the foster home.
 - a. This will almost always be done if the dog came in with any notes suggesting that the dog might be a biter, nipper or otherwise aggressive. This is for liability purposes and is no reflection on the foster home.
 - b. This might happen due to foster home posts suggesting a possible problem. It may also happen due to incidents observed by other members.
 - c. It may happen if there have been items missed on previous foster dogs. It would be intended as a help and not a punishment.
 - d. All foster homes are encouraged to suggest a 2nd foster home if they find they have a dog they are not totally sure of. It will be considered a positive thing if a foster home recognizes this need!
 - e. If the coordinator or any other member feels that a dog in another foster home's care should be kept for a 2nd observation, that person will document their concerns and present them to the Board. The Board will then make the decision and inform the foster home involved.

At no time, should anyone feel punished or demeaned because a dog they have fostered is kept for a 2nd environmental experience. In fact, if we had the personnel, we would benefit to do this with almost all dogs.
 - f. Remember to prepare the Information for Foster Home form whether the dog is transferring permanently or for a short time. ALL of the dog's records and belongings must go with the dog even if the dog is only being babysat for a short time. They may be needed in an emergency.

TIMING OF GROOMING, MEDICAL/DENTAL, ETC.

1. The dog should go to the vet as soon as possible. This means the same day, or next day if at all possible. Until this happens, the dog should be isolated. Not isolating the dog is at the foster home's own risk. If the dog comes from a shelter, consider extending this isolation period, especially if you hear anything that indicates kennel cough or other disease is present at the particular shelter.
2. When the appointment is made for the first medical visit, spay/neuter (if applicable) and a dental appointment should also be made. If the dental turns out not to be needed, it can always be cancelled but it can sometimes be hard to get on the schedule so it should be made as soon as possible. But PLEASE do get that dental done quickly. We have had too many dogs with behavior issues that went

away when we finally did the dental. Get it done ASAP in case there is a problem lurking that may be painful for the dog.

- a. Get the dog microchipped the first time the dog is under anesthesia. This can also be a good time to get some of the shots done as long as it is done early in the foster stay. (These are things that can be done outside of the anesthesia but if they can be done while under, the dog feels that many fewer needles.)
 - b. To the extent possible, all the medical, dental and grooming should be done during the honeymoon period (first 2 weeks). Once done, it allows the dog to settle in without constant stressful situations hitting them.
 - c. It is simply more sanitary for most dogs to be groomed right before they are neutered/spayed. Unless your vet uses laser and glue, there are likely to be bathing restrictions after surgery which will delay this process so get it done before if it is possible. Further, the dog represents our Rescue to others who see the dog. It is important to the reputation of the Rescue that our dogs looked clean, groomed and well cared for. This may mean more than one grooming visit if the dog is in foster care for any length of time.
 - d. At the first visit, explain to the vet that we want the dog to be in the best possible condition before going to the new home. This means that unless the teeth are pristine, we would prefer to do a dental despite the extra expense. We feel this will help the adopter understand the value we place on regular dental care.
 - e. Ask your vet to do the spay/neuter and dental at the same time. If the vet will not do this, explain to the vet that this is a rescue existing on donations. Ask if the vet will donate the cost of the extra anesthesia and related expenses caused by doing this in two separate procedures. If the vet will not, we will authorize the expense but hopefully the vet will respond by agreeing to do them together with appropriate precautions.
3. Visits to parks, with friends, around children, etc. must be delayed until the dog has settled in and appears to be comfortable. First occurrences of these types of visits should be made with extra vigilance. Time around children must always be supervised. Dogs may never be left alone with children.

This document will be expanded and updated as we recognize the need.