



## RIAR FOSTER HOME GUIDELINES

RIAR is an all-volunteer organization and relies heavily on these volunteers to house homeless dogs. RIAR's funding comes solely from private donations and adoption fees. Since RIAR is a 501c(3) organization, and is answerable to its donors, it has outlined what the responsibilities and duties of its foster homes are in relation to fostered RIAR rescue dogs.

### General

- 1) All rescue dogs must be fed a high quality, non-soy dog food. Even if you feed your dogs a "natural diet", most adoptive families won't or can't. Feeding the rescue dog a kibble diet will make their transition to their new home easier. Most of our volunteer foster homes donate the cost of feeding orphans they are housing. If this becomes a hardship, please let RIAR know. We will provide food or reimburse you for the cost of food, or find another foster home for the dog. Over the years we have determined that one adult dog in good health consumes one 40-lb bag of dog food in 4-5 weeks. We will provide dog food based on this observation. Puppies and ill dogs will be considered separately. Water should be available to the dog at all times except in cases where it is being withheld for surgery, under a veterinarian's direction, or the dog continuously overturns the bowl in his crate. There are crate coops (bowls) available if the foster does not have one. Read the "Transitions" article or ask Kira. It offers advice on easing the foster into your home.
- 2) The rescue dogs should be bathed and groomed on a regular basis (brushed, toenails clipped, ears checked and cleaned). If potential adopter is coming to meet dogs, or the dog is being taken to a show or other event for showcasing, please brush them; a bath also would be a plus. Professional grooming and de-shedding can be arranged through Fur Frenzy Pet Spa by appointment only. Please notify Kira of all grooming appointments. Remember when trying to find a home for these dogs, presentation is the key: clean, well-behaved dogs are more attractive than dirty, wild dogs.
- 3) If you have other pets, you must have a means of keeping the rescue dog and your dog(s) separate. This can be accomplished with a crate, outdoor run, or a room with a **strong door and lock**. RIAR will not be held responsible, monetarily or otherwise, for damage done to a house from a dog locked in a room. A crate can normally be provided at any time. Should the crate be destroyed, RIAR will provide another, or a dog run will be recommended. If the dog cannot be contained, this will be taken under discussion at that time. Read the "Introductions" handout (available from Kira) if you want to commence introducing the rescue dog to your other pets.
- 4) If you have an escape artist who cannot be contained, arrangements will be made to find another foster home, or advice given on how to make your home/yard more secure.

- 5) If, because of fence jumping, you must tie the dog on a line outdoors, the dog must be supervised (this does not mean from indoors) at all times to prevent hanging, teasing from children, loose dog encounters, or any other type of harm. The dog may not be left tied outside when no one is home. We do not permit our adopters to do this; we will not permit our foster homes to do it.
- 6) Rescue dogs must be maintained on heartworm preventative all year round. If you cannot afford this, contact RIAR, and we will provide preventative for you. The same holds true if you need de-worming medication, antibiotics, or other medications. We may have medications on hand for orphan use, so contact us before you purchase any.
- 7) The dog must be wearing a collar with the RIAR ID tag and Microchip tag **at all times**.
- 8) If the dog is acting abnormally or appears ill, call RIAR for advice **immediately**. If you are unable to make contact or it is an emergency, take the dog to your vet...better safe than sorry. Things to watch for: not eating or drinking water for 48 hours, especially if it is coupled with diarrhea and vomiting; drinking huge quantities of water; abnormal eating patterns, diarrhea or diarrhea and vomiting that lasts longer than 48 hours; listlessness. **Make yourself familiar with the symptoms of bloat. This is a life or death emergency. The "Transitions" article lists some common symptoms of bloat. Read it.**
- 9) If you have introduced your pets to the foster dog, remember not to leave any toys, food, or bones lying around. Avoid a rush to the water bowl. These things can all cause fights.
- 10) Never leave the rescue dog alone with your other pets without supervision. This means you are in the same room and actively **watching them**, not cleaning, watching TV, working on the computer, talking on the telephone, or reading a book. Akitas are predatory. Many consider small dogs and cats prey and will kill them. Two dogs or more are a pack. Pack mentality is a lot like mob mentality. They will do things together they may not do alone. Pack hunting can be the death of small animals. Fights can cause serious injury to the dogs as well as to anyone who tries to break it up. Puppies of 4 months and up are as capable as adults of doing all these things. Use common sense and remember it is your job to keep the foster dog safe, meaning he is safe from hurting himself or others.
- 11) If you can no longer foster the dog for whatever reason, please notify us immediately and if possible, keep the dog until we can make other arrangements.

## **VETERINARY EXPENSES**

- 1) RIAR will pay all regular vet bills. Vaccinations, heartworm checks, neutering, blood work, fecal tests; again contact us for meds, or we will reimburse you when you present a receipt. If you are unable to pay for the treatment up front, have the vet send the bill to RIAR. Prior to proceeding with any medical care, check with RIAR first (except in cases of emergency). Whenever you go to the vet, please get a copy of the record for yourself and RIAR and forward the RIAR copy to Kira. All of our fosters are required to obtain all routine medical care at Pet Care Veterinary Hospital, 757-473-0111. If an emergency arises, we prefer the dogs be taken to Bay-Beach Veterinary Hospital, 757-340-3913.

- 2) RIAR will NOT pay for injuries from a dog fight, whether it results from an introduction gone awry, or an accidental meeting or is resulting from carelessness, i.e., not having sufficient barriers to keep dogs apart, not making sure the crate is locked, etc.
- 3) RIAR will NOT pay for injuries resulting from foster inattention/carelessness – i.e., eating/drinking/ingesting something they should not, injuring themselves playing with something they should not have (metal, wood, non-toy objects, etc), injuring themselves during normal course of play/interaction. Treat your fosters as if they were your own!
- 4) If you utilize your own vet, ask if they will give a discount for rescue dogs. If you need a statement or proof of non-profit status, contact RIAR. If they do not give a discount, RIAR will reimburse up to what one of our vets would charge.
- 5) If using an RIAR vet, and you will be unable to make an appointment (especially for spaying, neutering, or heartworm treatment), make sure you notify the vet and RIAR.

### **Training and Socialization**

- 1) If possible, teach your foster dog(s) to walk on leash without excessive pulling, and to sit on command.
- 2) When the dog first arrives, let it chill out. Do not try lots of socialization, obedience, etc. Let him get to know and trust you and your household first. Read the “Transitions” article (available from Kira) and use it as a guide.
- 3) It is the foster home’s responsibility to determine the rescue dog’s reaction to various stimuli: children, adult males and females, small dogs, teenagers, cats, bicycles, etc. Take them out and socialize them. Take them for car rides to parks, shopping centers and walk them around. Walk them around the neighborhood and encourage people of all types to pet them. When someone wants to pet the dog, have the person to approach smoothly and quietly, and extend his or her hand to be sniffed. No overhead gestures, no jerky movements, no snatching the hand back. Once the dog has sniffed them, they can pet or scratch under the chin, or on the chest. If this dog does not mind, head pats and scratches behind the ears are fine. Do not let a crowd of kids come up and surround the dog. Have them approach one at a time until the dog gets used to them all. If the dog resists or is obviously uncomfortable, don’t force the issue. **Use common sense.** The same goes for letting ANYONE get in a new dog’s face, or hug the dog...especially adult animals. Don’t use strangers as guinea pigs! Until YOU get to know your new charge, don’t let others take liberties with him.