



# **Humane Society of Greenwood**

## **Rescue Railroad FOSTERS**

### **Program Manual**

## Overview: RESCUE RAILROAD FOSTERS

- Rescue Railroad Fosters is a foster program at the Greenwood Animal Shelter specifically for dogs and cats who will be leaving Greenwood soon for their new Rescue Group.
- Your foster dog/cat is NOT available for adoption, **because they're on their way to rescue!** Their rescue group has paid their fees and is already promoting them for adoption. The 'safe harbor' you're providing for them is CRITICAL for keeping them healthy as they await their ride to freedom in a rescue transport within the next few days/weeks. **Thank you for providing them with safe shelter as they await the next step in their journey to a loving, forever home!**
- Overview of your 'things to do'
  - Pick up foster(s) and supplies
  - Enjoy your foster(s)
  - Contact shelter if any questions or concerns arise
  - Return foster(s) on scheduled date
  - Get ready for your next foster(s)



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## Welcome!

Thank you for participating in the “Rescue Railroad Fosters” Foster Care Program for the Humane Society of Greenwood (HSOG) and Greenwood County Animal Shelter. Fostering is a wonderful way to contribute to the shelter and its mission by providing love and care to sick, injured or underage animals. “Rescue Railroad Fosters” is a foster program specifically for dogs and cats who will be leaving Greenwood soon to be cared for and adopted out by various rescue groups. Our partnership with rescue groups in many states has dramatically increased our success in placing animals, and you’re providing safe harbor for your foster dog or cat until their “rescue train” leaves the station for brighter days! By you temporarily caring for these animals in your own home, more kennel space is available for pets ready for adoption and your foster dog/cat will stay healthy and happy until leaving for rescue. The individualized attention you provide your foster animals is priceless - you are making a lasting impact on their physical and emotional well-being.

This manual is a guide to provide you with important information about caring for your foster animal(s) and will clarify many questions or concerns that you might have along the way. Feel free to email the Foster Care Coordinator with additional questions or concerns. Our goal is to make your foster care experience enjoyable.

If you have a friend or family member who is interested in becoming a Foster Care Volunteer, please direct them to the Humane Society website at [www.gwdhumanesociety.org](http://www.gwdhumanesociety.org). Again, thank you for accepting this important responsibility. We truly appreciate your commitment. Good luck and happy fostering!

## HSOG Foster Care Contact Information

### **Foster Care Coordinator (questions of a non-emergency status):**

Email Foster Coordinator at [ahall@gwdhumanesociety.org](mailto:ahall@gwdhumanesociety.org)

### **Medical concerns when the shelter is open:**

Call the shelter at 864-942-8558.

The Shelter office is open for business Monday through Friday from 8:30am-4:30pm and closed on Sunday.

### **Emergencies after hours:**

For after hour emergencies and authorization for emergency medical treatment call Chiquapin Animal Hospital at 864.223.6600 and email [ahall@gwdhumanesociety.org](mailto:ahall@gwdhumanesociety.org).

## PREPARING FOR YOUR RESCUE RAILROAD FOSTER(S)

Before you pick up your foster pet(s), you will want to prepare your home for its stay. If you have other pets in your household, you must provide a separate room for your foster animal for the safety of all animals involved. No matter how friendly your dog or cat may be, you never know how the new foster will react to your pets. Although our shelter animals are examined by our staff when they arrive, they may be harboring an illness that could be contagious to your own animals. We encourage you to keep your foster animals away from your pets.

The room you keep your fostered animals in should be free from valuables that may become damaged.

For the safety of the animals, please take the following steps:

- Remove any potentially toxic items (page 7)
- Close toilet bowls
- Check for exposed electrical cords
- Remove breakable items that could be knocked off shelves
- Remove small, ingestible items such as rubber bands or pieces of string

If you are fostering a pregnant mom or a very young litter, you will want to create a nesting box (instructions below).

Always provide your fostered animals with access to fresh water (bottle-feeding infants excepted). Litter pans should be placed away from food and water; if you have kittens under eight (8) weeks of age, do not use clumping litter.

When fostered animals are not being supervised, you may crate them to prevent damage.

HSOG will provide bedding, crate, litter pan, food dishes and any necessary medication for the animals for the duration of their stay. If needed, an initial supply of donated food or litter is available. The shelter may be able to continue to supply food and litter if the resources are available.

When you pick up your foster animal, an HSOG staff member will go over the specific needs of that animal, instruct you on how to administer medicine (if needed), give you feeding guidelines and answer any other questions that you may have.

Staff will also discuss a timeline for the foster animal(s) to be returned to the shelter. A rescue group has committed to caring for your foster animal, and your foster will be scheduled for transport soon – usually within 14 days. Our Foster Care Coordinator will contact you to schedule the day and time for returning your Rescue Railroad Foster to us. We appreciate you being flexible on the return date. If you need the animal(s) out of your house by a certain day, please let the staff know when you pick up your fosters and we will set a specific date.

**Cats must be kept inside.**

**Dogs must be on a leash when outside unless they are in a secure fenced enclosure.**

## **Nesting Box Environment (Nursing mothers)**

A clean, warm, dry, quiet site should be provided for the mother to raise her young. A queening (cat)/whelping (dog) box is essential for optimum survival of the mother and her babies.

The box should be large enough for the mother to comfortably lie away from her babies if she chooses, but small enough so the babies are easy for you to reach. The sides need to be high enough to prevent the young from wandering, but low enough for the mother to be able to come and go with ease. Kiddie pools are a good option for larger dogs.

The box should be lined with appropriate materials. If you are using a cardboard or wooden box, line the bottom with heavy plastic. Then, several layers of clean newspaper should be laid on the box floor to absorb moisture and odor. Next, clean, dry, soft, non-ravel material should be placed on top of the newspaper (disposable diapers, blankets, mattress pad, etc.).

Examine towels or blankets after each washing to ensure they remain free from any holes or frayed edges. Having towels or blankets in the nesting box provides good traction so the young ones can crawl around without slipping.

It is important that the area where the infants are kept is warm and smooth, so that the area around the umbilical cord does not become infected. Never place babies in deep, loose bedding (straw, hay or shavings). These might obstruct breathing or be inhaled and cause respiratory infections.

**The temperature near the young should be 85-95 F. Be VERY careful using heating pads. They can become too hot and cause burns. If used, it should be on the lowest setting and placed underneath only half the nesting box space. The cord can be placed inside PVC pipe to prevent electrocution from biting the cord.**

Drafts/dampness will chill neonates (very young babies) even when room temperature is sufficient. Do not place cardboard boxes housing the young on concrete; this will draw a large amount of heat away from them. Babies are not able to maintain their own body temperature until they are 4 weeks old.

## HOUSEHOLD ITEMS THAT ARE POISONOUS TO ANIMALS

(Those printed in all capital letters can be fatal)

Alcohol	CHOKE CHERRY	Lupine species
ALMONDS	Chrysanthemum	MACADAMIA NUTS
Amaryllis bulb	Clematis	MARIJUANA OR HEMP
Anthurium	Crocus bulb	MILKWEED
APRICOT	Cretan	MISTLETOE BERRIES
ASPIRIN	Daffodil	MORNING GLORY
AUTUMN CROCUS	Delphinium, larkspur	Mountain laurel
Avocado	Dumb cane	Narcissus
Azalea	Elderberry	OLEANDER
BEGONIA	English Ivy	ONION
Bird of paradise	Fig	PEACH
Bittersweet	Four-o'clocks	PENCIL CACTUS
BLEEDING HEART	FOXGLOVE	Philodendron
Boxwood	GARLIC	Poinsettia
Bracken Fern	GRAPES	Potato
Buckeye	Hyacinth bulbs	RAISINS
Buttercup	HYDRANGEA	Rhododendron
Caffeine	Holly berries	Rhubarb leaves
Caladium	Iris corms	Rosary Pea
CALLA LILLY	JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT	Schefflera
Castor bean	JIMSONWEED	Shamrock
Cherry	Kalanchoe	Spurge
CHINESE SACRED	LANTANA	Tomatoes
OR HEAVENLY BAMBOO	Lilly	YEW
CHOCOLATE	LILLY OF THE VALLEY	

*Remove any rat or mouse poisons and windshield wiper fluid from your house before fostering!*

## **PREGNANT ANIMALS**

Fostering an expecting animal is a wonderful experience. You will be able to witness the miracle of life right before your eyes.

Pregnant mommies need extra care and consideration while they are preparing to give birth. They should be kept in a room or enclosure where they can be quiet and comfortable. Food and water should be available at all times. Moms should be eating kitten or puppy food for the extra fat and nutrients.

Please provide a nesting box space for the mom to give birth. They like to hide and have privacy while they are giving birth to their infants. In most cases, infants will be born in the middle of the night and mom does all the work. A detailed list of issues mother cats and dogs face can be found in the cat and dog supplements.

Our staff will give you an estimate as to when the mom may give birth. If it seems that the mother is having trouble going into labor, please contact the shelter. After the infants are born, please contact the Foster Care Coordinator to report how many offspring were born and how they are doing. Please let the Foster Care Coordinator know the following for each kitten: the length of the coat (short, medium, long), coat color and pattern and the animal's gender. There is a graphic on how to tell the sex of a cat in the cat supplement. For puppies, let the Foster Care Coordinator know the color, most likely breed(s) and sex.

## **MOMS WITH LITTERS**

When a mom first comes to your home with her babies, allow her to have some time and space to get used to her surroundings and reduce her stress. Do not touch the babies for the first 2-3 days until the mother is more trusting with you. Have patience. Take some time during the day to sit in the room with mom and babies and let the mother come to you.

Mothers with their litters should be kept in a relatively quiet environment to reduce stress. A nesting box should be provided for moms with very young litters or a large bed should be for moms with older babies. Food and water should be available for mom at all times.

The room or enclosure where the litter is kept should be baby-proofed. Even kittens and puppies with their eyes still shut are very mobile and can easily find themselves in harm's way.

Please monitor mom's nursing. If one particular baby is not eating enough, place it right up to mom's nipple. If mom is not doing a good job nursing her infants, please contact the Foster Care Coordinator. Infants can continue to nurse up to 6-8 weeks of age. Instructions on weaning and feeding kittens and puppies can be found in the cat and dog supplements.

Occasionally give mom some time away from her infants, but bring her back shortly because she helps provide the warmth they need. Be cautious of allowing mom to get anything on her that could cross-contaminate to babies.

Always be cautious around moms with their litters as they can become protective of their babies. Watch for warning signs such as growling or hissing. Children should not be allowed unsupervised around mom and her litter.

Nursing mothers must never be around non-neutered males! A nursing mother is most fertile at this time and will get pregnant.

## ORPHANED INFANTS UNDER 4 WEEKS

Fostering infant puppies and kittens is challenging, but extremely rewarding. Animals of this age (up to 4 weeks old) are completely dependent on their “surrogate mother” for safety, warmth and food. By following the guidelines below, you will be able to nurse your infant into a playful adolescent, right before your very eyes.

### Location

Infants should be kept in a quiet, confined space such as a small carrier or nesting box. Always have blankets or towels down and a “rice sock warmie” (see info below) for warmth. Infants need to be kept clean and dry. Please wash bedding as needed. A small stuffed animal may be used for the infant to snuggle. Infants should never be outside, except when being transferred to and from HSOG.

### Warmth

Keeping infants warm and free from drafts is very important because babies under 4 weeks of age are not able to regulate their body temperature and are incapable of shivering. The safest method is using a “rice warmy, which is a long sports sock with 12 to 16 oz. of uncooked rice inside and tied on the end and warmed in the microwave for 45 to 60 sec. You do not want it hot to the touch, since the animal will “cuddle” up to it as a source of heat. Overheating will cause burns to the pet. This method of heat is preferred since it will not chill after heat dissipates but will only cool to room temperature.

As a last resort, a heating pad may be used. Heating pads should be placed on the lowest setting and anchored so that the infant cannot crawl underneath. Place the heating pad under half the box or crate so that the infant can escape the heat if needed. **Please use extreme caution when using a heating pad! This should only be used in cases of emergency when a rice warmy is not available.** Infants should feel warm, not hot or cold to the touch.

### Handling

Refer to kitten or puppy development in the cat and dog supplements.

### Feeding

When feeding infants, always pay close attention to feeding guidelines. Dilute formula carefully according to the directions, and NEVER give cow’s milk to any animal as it can cause severe stomach trauma. Use good hygiene/cleanliness with all food supplies. Avoid overfeeding and make all food changes gradually. The following is a breakdown of what you need to know in order to feed infants according to their age:

#### **Infants 0-2 weeks old**

- Should be fed every 2-4 hours (KMR milk replacement for kittens or Esbilac formula for puppies)
- Mix formula according to directions. Opened formula cans must be stored in the refrigerator.

- Formula should be fed at room temperature. You can mix the formula with warm water or reheat refrigerated formula by placing bottle in a pan or mug of warm water. Test the milk on your wrist for correct temperature. **Do not heat bottle in microwave.** Microwave heating causes nutrient loss in formula and hot spots can develop.
- If there is not an opening in the nipple already, make a small hole with a hot needle or a cross cut with small scissors. Nipple opening should be only large enough for a few drops of milk to drip out when the bottle is held upside down and squeezed gently. Milk should NOT stream out. This is important so that the infant does not inhale formula into the lungs and develop pneumonia. Bubbles of milk coming out from the nose indicates that the animal is aspirating. In this case an adjustment must be made in the nipple size or the thickness of the formula.
- The best method of feeding is for the infant to lie on its belly as it would when nursing on mom. Lightly grasp the infant around the head with one hand, then place the tip of the nipple to the infant's mouth and squeeze a little milk into the mouth with your other hand. The infant should latch on. Do not hold the infant too far upright or tip the infant's head as this can cause the infant to choke or aspirate.
- The amount of formula the infant should eat depends on its weight. Please refer to the directions on the can for the correct amounts. Some infants will want to eat more than is listed on the can. This is okay, but please be aware that this can cause diarrhea.
- **If an infant refuses to eat for 2 consecutive feedings, call the shelter.**

#### **Infants 3-4 weeks old**

- Should be fed every 4-6 hours.
- At this stage you can start introducing the infant to soft food: baby food and wet puppy/kitten kibble. Mix formula and kibble to introduce soft food. It will look like gruel. Introducing wet food sometimes gives infants diarrhea.
- Encourage infant to lap from a shallow dish. Put some of the gruel on your finger, put it in the infant's mouth, then lower your finger to the food dish and encourage infant to lap from the dish. Don't be alarmed if the infant is not interested; it can take a couple of days.
- After infant is eating from a dish, start reducing the amount of formula and increasing the amount of soft food. **The goal is to wean the infant off of formula all together.** Once weaned, dry food should also be made available. Full details on the weaning process can be found in the cat and dog supplements.

#### **Urination and Defecation**

Infants 1-2 weeks old need to be stimulated in order to urinate and defecate before and after every feeding. Gently pat its anal area with a cotton ball or soft toilet paper that has been moistened with warm water. Gently rubbing the infant's belly also encourages movement. Be sure to keep the anal area clean and dry by sponging with warm water and patting with a soft towel. Don't panic if it does not defecate every time. Once a day is fine; although, they may defecate as frequently as after every meal. Consistency of stool can vary from quite loose to toothpaste and can range in color from yellow to dark brown.

When infants first begin to eat solids, the time has come to begin potty training.

**Kittens:** Place litter pan in a convenient place where the kitten is familiar. Try to find a quiet area so that the kitten will not be stressed or too distracted. In the general area of the kitten's bedding and food is a good place. Simply place the kitten in the litter pan and pat anal area with a moist cloth.

When kitten starts to urinate or defecate, remove the cloth and allow the kitten to use the pan. Instinctively, the kitten should start scratching and burying waste. Repeat these steps until the kitten goes into the litter pan on his own. It usually takes about 1-3 times. Never rub the kitten's nose in their urine or feces when they relieve themselves in the wrong place.

**Puppies:** A few minutes after feeding, puppies should be taken outside to the area where you would like them to go potty. Pat the anal area with a moist cloth to stimulate movement. Take puppies out often. When not being supervised, crate puppies (they don't like to relieve themselves in a confined area where they will have to lie in their own waste), then walk them as soon as you let them out of the crate. If the puppy has an accident inside, do not punish the puppy. Take the fecal matter outside and place it in a spot where you would like the puppy to go potty. They will go where they smell their feces. When puppy goes potty outside, reward with praise and affection. Note: puppies this young should not be walked outside of your yard. They will not be vaccinated yet, and could catch a disease.

## SELF-SUFFICIENT KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Once kittens and puppies are eating on their own, around 4 weeks of age, they are considered self-sufficient. At this age, they no longer need to be kept in a confined space and should be in a room where they can run and play.

A bed should be provided along with food and water and a litter box for kittens. Make sure their space is completely baby-proofed and damage-proofed. They will want to play and be held and cuddled often. Don't be afraid to have fun!

Kittens should continue to be kept inside, and puppies should only be walked outside in your yard. These animals are still too young to be vaccinated, so keeping them away from other animals and possible exposure to disease is key.

## RECOVERING ANIMALS

Shelter animals that are recovering from an illness or operation may be placed in a foster home until they are completely recovered and able to go to rescue. These animals will be handled on a case-by-case basis and HSOG staff will make sure you are aware of all of the specific needs of the animal.

If medicine is to be administered, it will be provided for you and instructions given as to dosage. Please follow instructions carefully and be diligent about medicating. It is important that your foster animal receives medication on schedule.

It is imperative that these animals be kept away from other animals, both to prevent the spread of illness and disease and to lessen the stress on the foster animal. If any conditions get worse, please contact the shelter. The animal may need to be brought in for a check-up.

## BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION/SOCIALIZATION

Certain animals may need to be placed into foster care for modification of unwanted behaviors or general socialization. For example, a dog that is so nervous that he is constantly hiding in the back of his

cage and refusing to eat will benefit from individualized love and attention in a foster home. Likewise, a kitten that is just a little bit “feral” will benefit from spending time around humans in a home environment.

Volunteers that take in these special assignments must be prepared for a little extra work. These animals need extra time spent building their trust (sometimes through hand-feeding) and possibly some minor training. These animals will be handled on a case-by-case basis and any specific handling instructions will be relayed to you when the animal is picked up.

Any ideas or suggestions you may have that you feel will benefit the animal in your foster care should be approved by the shelter staff before any changes are made to the initial socialization/behavior modification plan made for that animal.

## COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS

While the shelter checks animals over to make sure they appear healthy upon arrival, most illnesses have an incubation period between exposure and the onset of symptoms. Please watch your fosters carefully for any changes in their normal behavior or habits (eating, drinking, energy level, urinating and defecating). If your foster animal shows any of the following symptoms, please call so we can start the appropriate treatment.

- **Loss of appetite** – Can be normal the first day as foster adjusts to a new home. If your foster is not eating the second day- call that day.
- **Diarrhea** – If stools are soft but not watery, monitor for two days. If there is no improvement- call the third day. If stools are watery- call that day.
- **Blood in stool** – call that day.
- **Difficulty urinating** – call immediately.
- **Vomiting** – If your foster throws up food two or more times- call that day. If it vomits bile or liquid- call that day. If vomiting is frequent or projectile- call immediately.
- **Dehydration** – Dehydration is generally associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, pinch the animal’s skin gently just above the shoulder blades. If the skin springs back slowly (takes more than 1 second), it is dehydrated. Call immediately – dehydration can be fatal to animals!
- **Sneezing** – More than three times a day- call that day. (If you are fostering cats, check the litter box to see if the litter is overly dusty as this may be the cause of the sneezing.)
- **Runny nose or congested-sounding breathing**- call that day. These are often signs of an Upper Respiratory Infection or Kennel Cough (a fancy way to say “cold”).
- **Coughing** – call that day.
- **Hair loss**, even in very small patches – call immediately.
- **Watery, goopy or red eyes** – call that day.
- **Itchy/dirty/smelly ears** – call that day.
- **If your foster animal is on medication but is getting worse or not getting better as expected** – call that day.

Some animals do not show traditional signs of illness. They may be less active than normal, have a loss of appetite, avoid their litter box or avoid other animals or people. Please call us if you notice any of these changes.

### **External Parasites**

**Flea** infestation, particularly in very young animals, can lead to anemia and even death. To check for fleas, part the animal's hair, especially on its back near the rump, or its stomach and look for flea dirt, a gritty, black substance that is the feces of fleas. You can also run a flea comb through the animal's hair to check for signs of fleas. Topical flea treatments can be used on animals over 6 weeks of age, but can be very toxic to infants. Ignoring a flea infestation can be deadly as infants can become anemic to the point of death from just a few fleas. Infants can be washed in warm water with a gentle kitten or puppy shampoo. Make sure to dry them thoroughly with a towel and a hair dryer set to low. (If you use a hair dryer, be VERY careful- make sure it is constantly in motion and not close to the animal.) Use a flea comb to brush their hair after they are dry. If you find evidence of fleas, call the shelter for advice. Once treated, you will need to thoroughly wash all bedding and toys.

**Ticks** carry diseases and must be monitored for. If you notice a tick engorged in your animal (it will feel like a small, soft bump), wrap a piece of tissue or toilet paper around it, pinch it firmly as close to the animal's skin as you can and slowly pull out the body and head. If the body breaks off, the tick will die. Don't worry if the head is left in the body- the animal's body will push it out on its own eventually. If you are able to pull out the entire body, the tick will still be alive. Dispose of it in the toilet. Do not squeeze it or it will pop and you could risk exposure to disease from the blood. There will be a scab on the animal for a week or two. You can put a little antibiotic ointment on it.

**Ear mites** live in the ear canals. Though microscopic, they leave behind a chunky brown residue- their fecal matter. The fecal matter must be cleaned out. You can use cotton balls dipped in a small amount of mineral oil to clean out the ears. Then the ears must be treated with ear mite medication. If you suspect an ear mite infestation, please contact the shelter.

**Ring worm** is a contagious infection caused by a fungus that grows in the dead, superficial layers of the skin, hair or nails. Animals and people may become infected either by direct contact with an infected animal or by exposure to a contaminated environment or object such as grooming tools, clippers or bedding. Spores in the environment are very robust and without treatment can remain infectious for up to two years. The appearance of animals with ringworm is very variable. Some have severe skin disease while others have only very minor lesions or no lesions at all and look completely normal. Typical skin lesions are discrete, roughly circular areas of hair loss, particularly on the head, ears or extremities of the paws. The hairs surrounding affected areas appear broken. The affected skin is often scaly and may look inflamed. If you see any of these signs, notify the shelter immediately.

### **Internal Parasites**

If **worms** are seen (they often resemble spaghetti or rice) in the stool, vomit or around the anus, call the shelter. It may be necessary to collect a stool sample for analysis. When bringing in a stool sample, only a small amount is needed and it doesn't matter if litter is attached to it. All animals that come into the shelter are dewormed immediately if they are over 4 weeks old; however, it is common for kittens and puppies to have worms and they need to be dewormed multiple times. After we determine what type of worms your foster has, we can give you the dewormer to administer at your home. We will need to know the weight of the animal to determine the correct dosage. If you do not have a way of weighing your foster, please bring it to the shelter and we can weigh it here.

**Coccidia** is a protozoal parasite that can cause sudden bouts of vomiting, diarrhea and listlessness collect a stool sample and call the shelter for advice.

### **Contagious Diseases**

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that are transmittable from animals to humans. The following is a list of common transmittable diseases:

- Roundworms can be transmittable, but infrequently- mostly a problem with children handling feces;
- Coccidia/Giardia (internal parasites) can be transmittable through fecal exposure;
- Toxoplasmosis, transmitted through fecal exposure, can be serious to a pregnant woman;
- Ringworm skin lesions transmitted through contact and handling;
- Fleas transmitted by proximity;
- Sarcoptic Mange (Scabies) is a contagious skin condition transmitted by handling an infected animal.

### **Animal to Animal Disease Transmission**

- Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)- Highly contagious. We test our cats and kittens before placing them in foster homes; however, kittens under 6 months of age may test false negative, so keep them isolated from your cats. It is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, urine, feces and milk from infected cats;
- Feline Retro Virus (Feline Aids)- It is transmitted through bite wounds and bodily fluids;
- Respiratory Virus/ Kennel Cough- Highly contagious. Vaccinations protect against most of them. Your pets should be currently vaccinated. Sick animals must be kept isolated from other animals;
- Parvo-Highly contagious. It is transmitted through fecal matter;
- Rabies- Your pets should be current on their rabies vaccinations;
- Parasites- External and Internal;
- Ringworm skin lesions- Transmitted through contact and handling;
- Fungal infections.

**To prevent transmission of these diseases to your pets,  
we recommend that your pets be kept separated from your foster pets and up-  
to-date on all vaccinations.**

## **FIRST AID EMERGENCY CARE**

An animal's health can deteriorate rapidly. If you discover your foster is in a very weak condition, here are the things you should immediately do while waiting for medical attention:

1. Check body temperature. Animals should be warm, not hot or cold to the touch. Warm up a cold animal gradually with a rice sock "warmy" or heating pad. Cool off your foster by placing ice water in a water bottle or giving the animal a tepid bath. Do not bathe the animals in ice water.

2. For infants, force-feed carefully a small amount (1 to 2 ML's) of a sugary solution such as corn syrup or maple syrup that is warmed up in a little water. Pedialyte can also be used. Continue this every 15 minutes or so until the puppy or kitten is strong enough to nurse on their own.
3. Seek immediate medical attention. Refer to the front of this manual for the correct phone numbers for assistance.

**Remember: Do NOT take the animal to your veterinarian unless you take responsibility of costs incurred.** We cannot reimburse you. We have veterinarians that we work with and will instruct you on what you should do in case of illness or injury.

In the unfortunate event that a foster animal passes away at your home, please call and inform us. We require that the body be brought to our shelter for proper disposal.

Death generally occurs because of one of the following: congenital defects, low birth weight, diseases resulting from inadequate diet fed to the mother, infectious diseases, lack of antibodies from mother, severe intestinal parasites or other causes.

**Please understand that death is an unfortunate possibility when fostering animals, especially infants. Usually the circumstances are unavoidable. REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT! Also remember that you gave that animal every opportunity to survive.**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CLEANING PROCEDURES

The most common disease organisms dealt with at the shelter are viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi. It is important to consider all objects with which a foster animal may come into contact and disinfect accordingly. This will help protect your companion animals and any future fosters.

### Cleaning Agents

It is important to consider which cleaning agents are safe to use on certain surfaces. All surfaces may not be able to be cleaned, but thorough washing and/or vacuuming helps in decreasing the numbers of environmental pathogens. In order to decide on the effectiveness of a particular cleaner, it is important to determine the active ingredients, strength and proper contact time.

**Using bleach as a disinfectant** - the recommended dilution is 1 part bleach to 30 parts water (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon water) and the recommended contact time is 10 minutes. **Color-Safe bleach does not disinfect like regular bleach.**

Wash animal laundry in a separate load from family laundry. Don't use a fabric softener. Use **unscented** dryer sheets only to cut down on static cling if desired.

**CAUTION: DO NOT USE TILEX®! IT CONTAINS ANTIFREEZE AND IS DEADLY IF INGESTED BY ANIMALS.**

### Reading Labels

It is important to read the labels on non-toxic, environmentally friendly products like Simple Green®. **It is not a disinfectant.** The company does make a Simple Green D®, which is a disinfectant. This also applies to newer products, including Clorox Wipes®. **Bleach is not an ingredient in this product!**

Products like Febreze® are generally safe to use in a home with animals; although, some animals can have allergic reactions. Use these products with discretion.

## CLEANING TO REMOVE PET ODORS AND STAINS

Has your foster animal left “scent marks” of urination and/or defecation on your floor or furniture? To successfully retrain the animal to avoid these areas and remove these smells/stains, follow these basic steps:

**Find all soiled areas using your nose and eyes.** (Hint: A black light will show urine stains. Turn out all lights in the room, use the black light to identify soiled areas and lightly outline the areas with chalk.)

### Laundering

1. Machine wash as usual, adding a 1-pound box of baking soda to the wash along with your regular detergent. Air dry if possible.
2. If you can still see or smell the stain, machine wash again and add an enzymatic cleaner. Follow the manufacturer’s directions carefully. Enzymatic cleaners can be purchased at pet supply stores.
3. To discourage future accidents on bedding, cover the bed with a vinyl, flannel-backed tablecloth. They are machine washable and inexpensive.

### For carpeted areas and upholstery

1. Soak up as much urine as possible with a combination of newspaper and paper towels. The more fresh urine you can remove before it dries, especially from carpet, the simpler it will be to remove the odor. Place a thick layer of paper towels on the wet spot and cover with a thick layer of newspaper. Stand on this padding for about 1 minute. Remove the padding; repeat until the area is barely damp.
2. If possible, take the FRESH, urine-soaked paper towel to the area where it belongs – such as your dog’s designated outdoor “bathroom area” or the cat’s litter box and let your foster watch you do it. **Act happy!** This will help to remind your animal that eliminating is not a “bad” behavior as long as it is done in the right place!
3. Rinse the affected zone thoroughly with CLEAN, COOL WATER. After rinsing, remove as much of the water as possible by blotting or by using a vacuum designed to pick up liquids.
4. **Neutralizing (enzymatic) cleaners will not be effective on the area if you have previously used cleaners or chemicals of any kind on it until you have rinsed every trace of the old cleaner from the carpet.**
5. To remove all traces of an old chemical, consider renting an extractor or wet-vac from a local hardware store. This machine operates much like a vacuum cleaner and is an efficient, economical rinsing method.
6. Now that the area is clean, use a high-quality pet odor neutralizer available at pet supply stores (look for “enzymatic” cleaners). Test the affected surface for staining first, then read and follow the instructions carefully.
7. If the area still looks stained after it is completely dry from extracting and neutralizing, try any good carpet stain remover.
8. If the urine has soaked down into the padding underneath your carpet and/or into wooden baseboards, cleaning will be more difficult. You may need to remove and replace that portion of your carpet padding.

9. Make the appropriate “bathroom area” attractive and teach the animal where you want it to urinate/defecate. The retraining period may take a week or more. It took time to build the bad habit and it will take time to replace that habit with a new, more acceptable one. Treat your foster with patience and lots of encouragement!

### **For Floors and Walls**

If the wood in furniture, walls, baseboards or floors is discolored, the acid in the urine has affected the varnish or paint. The layer of varnish or paint may need to be removed.

Washable enamel paints and some washable wallpaper may respond favorably to enzymatic cleaners. Read the instructions carefully and test in a less visible area.

## **NO-ADOPTION POLICY**

Our Rescue Railroad Fosters program is very special because you’re giving safe haven to your foster dog or cat as they await rescue transport. The dog or cat you’re fostering is on their way to a wonderful new life! Once your foster reaches their rescue group, they will have a safe foster home, medical care, and adoption promotion to find their forever home. By fostering, you are providing a life-saving service – keeping your foster dog/cat safe and healthy outside of the shelter environment until they depart Greenwood, SC. You also allow us to bring in more animals in need by fostering your Rescue Railroad foster, because another animal can take their place with us. Rescue Railroad Fosters are NOT AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION. If after fostering a specific dog or cat you would like to adopt a similar animal from us, please let us know – we have so many wonderful animals waiting for their forever home that you’re sure to find another perfect match!

## **RETURNING ANIMALS TO THE SHELTER**

The Foster Care Coordinator will schedule a final drop off date and time. When you bring your foster(s) back, please come to the Animal Shelter Receiving Office.

Adopters enjoy information about the animals we have available for adoption, so please consider doing a write-up about your foster(s). Include photos and information about your foster animal’s daily life! Amusing anecdotes about his/her quirks, stories about habits, tricks, favorite toys and treats and “action shots” really generate interest amongst prospective adopters.

We recognize that returning a foster animal to the shelter can be very emotional, even under the best of circumstances. Many foster volunteers say their least favorite part of the Foster Program is returning the animal and losing contact with it. Several staff members are also foster volunteers and are always available to offer emotional support to you. **You are not alone!**

The shelter’s staff works diligently to place all adoptable animals in a loving home. You are always welcome to call the Foster Care Coordinator to find out the adoption status. After returning a foster animal to the shelter, please be sure to thoroughly clean any items of your own that the animal(s) used to prevent spread of infection from one foster to the next. It’s also important to clean the floor of foster room. Please refer to pages 15 for suggestions on cleaning procedures.

**As Rescue Railroad Foster volunteers, you have given  
the animals you cared for and loved a very special gift:  
a second chance at a full and wonderful life.**

***THANK YOU FOSTER VOLUNTEERS!!***