



VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION MANUAL



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Volunteer Orientation Manual

Thank you for your generous offer to volunteer your time at the Oakland Pet Adoption Center. We'd like to start by providing you some general information about the shelter and its responsibilities:

The State Legislature passed into law the Animal Control Act of 1919. This law mandates the following responsibilities to all Michigan Counties.

- Animal [bite investigations](#)
- Enforcement of [stray dogs and livestock](#)
- [Licensing of dogs](#) for [28 municipalities](#)
- Investigation and payment of **livestock kills**
- Coordinating local rabies vaccine clinics
- Conducting annual **dog census**
- [Cruelty complaints](#) against animals
- Operating and maintaining an [animal shelter](#) for our service areas and additional contracting municipalities

🐾Also provides:🐾

- [Adoptions](#) of animals at the shelter
- [Education presentations](#) at local schools
- [Tours](#) of the animal shelter
- [Citizen Outreach](#)

Additional information about each individual service is available on the Oakland County website: www.oakgov.com/anmlctrl, under the Animal Control Department.

You, as a volunteer to the shelter, are essential in maintaining the health and well being of our shelter pets by giving them the human contact they need. This contact can include exercise by walking a dog, brushing a cat or dog, or just affection by petting, holding, and giving attention to an animal. These acts keep the animal's spirit alive until they find a new permanent home. This is one of the main purposes for the volunteer program... to maintain the animal's spirit by preparing with socialization and, when appropriate, training, while pursuing a permanent forever home.

I. SHELTER POLICIES

Safety First – above everything else...we want this to be a safe environment. For this reason we ask that the following rules be followed at all times:

1. Please enter the shelter through the Administrative entrance, the door located on the far right of the building, in the Administrative office area. This is where the volunteer's log is located, on the main counter in the hallway. . All volunteers must sign in and sign out on the volunteer log. This ensures that OCAC staff knows who is in the building at all times. We are also eligible for additional funding based on the shelter's volunteer staff numbers.
2. All volunteers must wear a nametag in the shelter at all times. One will be supplied to you during your orientation with a staff member. Names tags can be stored on the large pegboard in the office area provided for this purpose, or to keep with you to bring with to the shelter when you volunteer. The nametag identifies you as a volunteer to all staff members, and provides customers with someone to turn to for questions. If you misplace your name tag, please write your name on a blank nametag until a replacement can be provided.
3. Once you sign in and have your nametag, please enter the shelter through the cafeteria/garage area or you may go back outside, down the sidewalk and go through the Shelter's main entrance. The quarantine hallway is off limits as it is used for surgery prep and other duties that can be of a sensitive nature.
4. Please be aware that the shelter has a staff of Trustys from the Oakland County Trusty Camp (a minimal security detention center), located behind the shelter. All Trustys have been sentenced to the camp for non-violent offenses. As a privilege, a select group, are chosen to work at the shelter. The Trustys are assigned to every area in the shelter, whether a specific row of animals or other duties to assist the shelter staff. Please keep your contact with the Trustys to a minimum. If you need help, please contact a staff member. **DO NOT INSTRUCT THE PRISONERS.**

SHELTER POLICIES

5. Volunteers are not allowed in the area marked “Employees Only”. If you are in need of something in one of these areas, please ask a staff member for assistance.

6. Please dress appropriately. This includes:
 - a. Closed toe shoes
 - b. Long shorts or pants
 - c. Clothing that you don’t mind getting hairy, muddy, wet, etc.
 - d. Oakland Pet Adoption Center Volunteer’s shirt, when available.

7. If you volunteer with your minor children (under 18 years of age), you must supervise them at ALL times and the parent must have control of the animal at ALL times. Remember, safety is our first concern.

8. When handling any animal, please ensure you wash your hands with soap or hand sanitizer (located in most of the rows). This should be done before and after handling any animal. This helps to minimize the spread of upper respiratory and other infections that are always a risk of in a shelter environment.

9. Please alert staff immediately if you see an animal that needs to be attended to for sickness or cage cleaning.

10. Please share any and all ideas for improvement with the Shelter Director and myself either in person or by email (suepudlo@charter.net). We greatly appreciate your caring opinion, and will definitely make every effort to initiate changes to improve the shelter.

II. VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Volunteer Greeter

Purpose - Welcome the public as they enter the shelter, and assist them with the issue that brought them in (front desk, kennels, etc.).

A General Overview of the Shelter Layout is as Follows:

Adoptions:

- CATS and DOGS available for adoption have a colored adoption label, **pink** (for female), or **blue** (for male), on the front of their kennel. The adoption card should provide information on the animal's age, breed, and other specific details about the animal (i.e. name if the animal is an owner give up, declaw for cat, health issues, exclusions for adoption if they don't like other animals, kids, etc.)**UPDATE** – we have just added a **green** information tag with each colored cage card which provide additional information more specific information about the animal include what manners the animal has, what kind of home environment would be best for the animal, etc.

- DOGS with the colored adoption cards can be taken out on a leash (available at the front desk) by prospective adopters to outside fenced areas for evaluation. CATS with colored tags can be taken out and held or petted, and if available, can be taken to our get acquainted room, which is located to the right of the front desk, 1st hallway on the right, room on left side (not always available as this room is also used for CAT cage overflow)

- Folders with additional information are located at the front desk, and can be identified by the control number located on the colored adoption card, and also on the collar of the animal. Please direct the potential adoptee to the front desk staff, who will review this information with the prospective adopter.

- Prospective adopters will fill out an application at the front desk. Animals may or may not be available for immediate adoption.

Lost Cat:

- The lost CAT area is, to the left of the main lobby desk, second room on the left. Overflow to this room is located along the hallway as well as the room at the end of the hallway. Lost cats are kept in this area for 4 – 5 days. These cats will have only a white tag at this time. Once the stray time is up the animal is vet checked, aged, vaccinated, spay or neutered when required, then placed up for adoption.
- The most recent arrivals, if not logged into the system, may still be in the garage, along the far left area. CATS that are feral or sick will also be located in the garage.
- CATS that have been missing for more than 5 days could be located in any of the adoptable CAT areas, which include , through the glass doors, Row A and sometimes Row D, and the room on left across from Row A, labeled Kitty City.

Lost Dog:

- Lost DOG areas are the Side Kennel Area (left of the Men's Room in the lobby), which hold larger DOGS, and Rows B and C (through the glass doors). DOGS in stray time will have white cage cards only, no colored adoption tag. The DOGS are held as strays for 4 - 7 days. Once the stray time is up the animal is vet checked, aged, vaccinated, spay or neutered when required, then placed up for adoption.
- Most recent arrivals, if not logged into the system, may still be in a kennel in the garage. As well as injured DOGS and DOGS whose owners are on the way to pick them up.
- DOGS that have been missing for more than 7 days could be located in any of the adoptable dog areas....Rows C, D, E, F, Side Kennel, and the Adoption Room.

Licenses:

- The front desk staff can issue a DOG license with the customer providing current proof of rabies vaccination.

Bark Park Passes:

- The Bark Park pass allows the purchaser to take their pet(s) to one of the area Bark Parks. Passes can be purchased at the front desk for a cost of \$30.00. The customer would need to supply the license number of the vehicle that will be driven to the park.

Dog Walker

1. Please remember to sign in and put your badge on before performing any volunteer duties. It is very important that the shelter know at all times who is coming and going from the shelter.
2. PLEASE REMEMBER – ONLY DOGS THAT HAVE A COLORED (PINK, BLUE, GREEN, OR OTHER VARIATION) KENNEL CARD ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VOLUNTEERS TO WALK. ALL OTHERS ARE BEING HELD THEIR STRAY TIME AND CANNOT BE WALKED.
3. Please take a moment to read the information on the cage card so that you know what to expect when walking the DOG. Obviously a large younger DOG will require more control and skill to walk/exercise than an older “mellow” DOG. Please pick a DOG according to your size and skill level. If you are an inexperienced dog walker, please start out slowly with the “easier” DOGS until you know what your capabilities are. Please also make a note of which area you take the DOG from to ensure you return him/her to the same kennel. PLEASE ONLY TAKE ONE DOG PER WALKER. DOGS SHOULD ONLY BE TAKEN OUT FOR A HALF AN HOUR AT A TIME SO AS TO BE IN THE SHELTER FOR VIEWING BY POTENTIAL ADOPTERS. ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE LEASHED DOG UNATTENDED AT ANY TIME.
4. Leashes are available at the front desk. The nylon leash should be used as a “choker” style (shelter employees can demonstrate the proper way to put the choker on). Your hand should be placed through the loop on the other end of the leash and should grasp the leash to ensure you have control over the animal. Volunteers that wish to use their own leashes should have the Shelter Supervisor assess the leash prior to use to ensure there are no issues using that leash style.

5. For reasons of safety and health, don't let the DOG you are walking approach another volunteer's DOG. Try to maintain a 6- foot distance between your DOG and any other DOGS.

6. If for some reason your DOG gets into a fight with another DOG, please do not attempt to break up the DOGS by getting your hands in the way. Try pulling the DOGS apart using the leashes, if applicable. Contact a shelter employee immediately to handle the matter.

7. The primary duty of a DOG handler is to provide exercise and socialization for the shelter dog. Please practice basic "good manners" training techniques, which provide stimulation and improve the adoptability of the DOG. Assess the temperament and personality traits of the animal, to report on the DOG'S kennel tag. Any and all information you list will help to adopt the DOG to the right family.

8. Exercise pens are located on the opposite of the shelter parking lot (3 pens) as well as in the "Bark Park" which is at the end of the sidewalk in front of the building, past the gazebo. Please ensure that all other doors are closed to the pen before releasing the DOG. You are free to let the DOG off the leash once the area is secured to brush, play, and work on skills.

9. Please return the DOG to the same kennel when you have finished exercising the DOG. Please remove the nylon leash from the DOG to avoid the DOG getting tangled and possibly injured by the leash in the kennel.

10. Before handling another animal, please remember to disinfect your hands with soap or gel.

Volunteer Lost Animal Recovery

1. Review public documents for lost animals. The documents can include the lost bulletin boards at the shelter (located directly inside the glass doors – on the right for CATS and on the left for DOGS), lost and found books on table in front of main desk, newspapers, websites, vet clinics, etc.
2. Attempt to match lost animal information with animals presently at the shelter, or listed in the lost and found book, or the lost animal boards at the shelter, as described above.
3. If you find a match, please notify the staff immediately so the owners can be contacted.



Volunteer Cat Socializer

1. Duties of a CAT volunteer are to interact and provide socialization for the CATS and Kittens in the shelter. This can be done by touching, brushing (available at the volunteer sign in desk), cuddling, which will improve the adoptability of the CAT. When/If you become comfortable, please record temperament and personality traits on the CAT'S file (attached to the CAT kennel).
2. The shelter environment is often a very stressful experience for CATS and KITTENS, especially those animals that were in a home environment. The shelter environment lacks the affection, freedom and regular stimulation that felines require to lead satisfying lives. The role of the CAT socializer provides a vital outlet helping the CATS to better cope with the temporary restrictions of the shelter lifestyle. In addition, consistent interaction, temperament observations, and the tenderness that they receive from you, has proven to increase the rate of successful adoptions.
3. Please report any health problems immediately to the staff (running nose, running eyes, cough, etc.). Many viruses are too easily transmitted from animal to animal, therefore the quicker we can isolate and treat a sick animal, the better chances of the sickness being an isolated incident.
4. Please wash your hands between handling all CATS to help decrease the risk of spreading upper respiratory and other infections.

Volunteer Adoptions Counselor

1. Greet and assist the public interested in adopting a pet. In a conversational manner, screen potential adopters to ensure that you can match them with the proper pet.
2. The knowledge gained from this interaction should give you the information to recommend animals that match the adopter's lifestyle.
3. Introduce available animals to interested parties and discuss potential challenges and rewards of adopting the pet.
4. Direct the adopters to shelter staff to discuss adoption fees and contract obligations.

Volunteer Public Awareness

1. This position assists in developing, implementing and coordinating public awareness programs about the shelter.
2. This awareness promotion can be accomplished by the distribution of flyers listing upcoming events, spay/neuter clinics/programs, donation programs, how, what, and when to adopt programs, etc.
3. Public presence is vital to all non-profit organizations. Attending community events provides the shelter with greater exposure and promotes more support for all other projects. The role of a volunteer promotions person can have a variety of positive results – whether someone adopts a DOG or a CAT, becomes a new volunteer, makes a monetary contribution, remembers the shelter in their estate planning, or merely talks to friends about the shelter. These are all positive endeavors for the shelter.

THANK YOU!!

Thanks again for making Oakland County Animal Care a better place because of your involvement and dedication.

Once again, I'd like to stress how important the volunteer staff is to the shelter, and the well-being of the animals. The contact given by volunteers sustains the animal's spirit while they wait for a new forever home.

Please feel free to contact anyone listed below if you have a questions concerns or ideas about the shelter.

Larry Obrecht, Shelter Director obrechtl@oakgov.com	248-391-4100 x224
Sgt Joanie Toole, Administrative Supervisor toolej@oakgov.com	248-391-4100 x222
Sgt. Heidi Hawley, Kennel Supervisor hawleyh@oakgov.com	248-391-4100 x223
Shelley Gray, Licensed Vet Tech	248-391-4100 x277
Sue Pudlo, Volunteer and Events Programs Suepudlo@charter.net	248-391-4100 x231 248-310-5808 (Cell) 248-627-2625 (Home)
Tammy Ybarra, Kennel Attendant	248-391-4100 x232
Ruth Martin, Kennel Attendant	248-391-4100 x232
Steve White, Kennel Attendant	248-391-4100 x231

We look forward to working with you to make the shelter the best environment possible for animals in need.

Thanks again,

Sue Pudlo and OCAC Staff