

FOHA – Bringing Home Your FOHA Dog

Your FOHA dog's space

- Where will your FOHA dog stay during the day? Work time? Nighttime? A structured environment is helpful for new dogs. Unlimited freedom is not advisable at first. This structured environment will go a long way in the prevention and maintenance of behavioral problems.
 - Designate an area where your FOHA dog can go to be quiet and safe. This will be your FOHA dog's space! Put a dog bed or blanket, toys and water in this place, which can be a small room off the main living area with a baby gate, a corner of the family room, or similar area where he will be undisturbed. Dogs will establish a certain place as their "den" and will feel safe and secure when in this place. Get your FOHA dog used to spending time alone in this place; away from the family.
 - Daytime (while at home) – allow your FOHA dog to interact with the family while you are at home. However, allow your FOHA dog to retreat freely to and from his designated area. When your FOHA dog retreats to their designated area, give them space to adjust properly to their new home.
 - Work time / School time – a structured environment is especially important when your FOHA dog will be left alone for the first few weeks / months. Confinement to his designated area is suggested during this initial time period. A baby-gate is a good option to confine your FOHA dog to one area of the house (the same area to include his "space"). This should be considered temporary as a training tool; not a way of life. Gradually expand the area your FOHA dog has access to until you can rely on good behavior; with the final objective being to allow your FOHA dog free roam of the house.
 - Consider a pet-walking service to come in during the day to walk your FOHA dog if you are gone longer than 5 – 6 hours.
 - Nighttime – choose a place for your FOHA dog to sleep; preferably in the bedroom of a family member. Use a dog bed or blanket. Close the door at night at first or tether on a long leash until you can rely on good behavior.
 - Outside play - WE DO NOT APPROVE OF LEAVING DOGS OUTSIDE UNATTENDED - because of the risks: escape, stolen, or let out of the yard; or suffer other harm. Also, outdoor dogs become a magnet for potential behavior problems.
 - in fenced yard – if your yard is fenced, check it carefully for any gaps or weak spots. Also, make sure its high enough for your FOHA dog. Some dogs are expert fence climbers, so watch carefully at first. Also, watch for signs of digging. Check the security of the gate, and if possible, install a lock
 - invisible fences – for the same reasons we do not approve of leaving dogs outside unattended, it is never advisable to leave a dog outside unattended with an invisible fence. While your dog may learn not to run through the "wire," an invisible fence will not keep other animals out. An invisible fence will not protect your dog from being stolen or removed against his will. Also, some dogs will run through a live "wire" if spooked or scared of a thunderstorm.

- Dog Parks – Make sure that your FOHA dog interacts well with other dogs before letting him off-leash. Dog Parks are not for every dog.
- Other considerations – if a door is open, a dog will generally like to get to the other side. Monitor children’s play (especially younger children) and make sure they don’t leave doors open that lead to unsecured areas outside. Instruct neighbor friends to do the same thing.
- Never let your FOHA dog off-leash and in an unsupervised structure – many dogs have an uncanny ability to “find” their way back to a previous home; which means they could be in harm’s way around vehicles and traffic. Be especially diligent at first to ensure that your FOHA dog does not try to escape to find his way back to a previous “home.”
- Summer outings – dogs should never be left in a parked car in the summer. Please avoid the temptation to take your FOHA dog on errands with you in the summer where he will need to stay in the car. A closed car can escalate in temperature quite rapidly. Also, dogs left in a car with open windows are prime targets for theft.

Feed and Care

- Feed – we use Regal Dry Dog food. However, some dogs may be on a special diet; so please ask your home visit volunteer if this applies to your dog. We will provide you a list of high quality dog food recommendations that you can consider for your dog. Please ask your home visit volunteer for this list. In changing your dog’s food, make a gradual transition. FOHA has small bags of Regal available for sale at the shelter as transitional food.
- Please do not feed table scraps. This can only lead to health problems in your FOHA dog’s older years. Also, FOHA dogs have not dined on human food and a rapid introduction of human food can lead to diarrhea. This is NOT fun when housetraining your FOHA dog.
- Feeding Schedule – feed at a regular time; we recommend twice a day and will provide you their feeding schedule when you pick up your dog. Keep water available at all times. Feed separately from other pets AND children until you know how they will react. Do not be alarmed if your FOHA dog does not have an appetite initially – in many dogs that are stressed, they will not eat. If this is the case, a bland diet of boiled chicken and rice or hamburger and rice is recommended.
- Exercise – plan enough time for exercise. At least 30 minutes of active exercise in the morning is advisable; especially if the family will be away from home during the day. A period of exercise later in the day will also be necessary. A fenced-in yard for ball-playing is a plus; but should not be considered a substitute for daily exercise / interaction.

Veterinarian Considerations

Your FOHA dog will need to go to the vet to get his heartworm prescription and a baseline checkup. However, we do recommend that you wait a couple weeks before scheduling the first vet appointment. This will give you time to get to know your new dog and see if there is anything you want to have checked out; and it will also give your new dog time to settle in and get to know you. We will give you a copy of all the medical records we have; which you should take with you to the

vet. Ask the vet to take a fecal sample for parasites. Even though our dogs have been tested for heartworms and receive the monthly preventative, we recommend a new test before putting your FOHA dog on preventative medication. We also test most of our dogs for lyme disease.

Vet considerations:

- ❑ Heartworm medication – essential!
- ❑ Flea and tick control (Garlic Brewer’s Yeast Tablets, Frontline or Bio-Spot)
- ❑ Shots (although FOHA dogs are up to date on their shots, a dog requires yearly or 3-year rabies shot, 6 months or yearly Bordetella, and yearly Distemper)
- ❑ Fecal sample
- ❑ Lyme disease test (if not previously done by FOHA)

If you are not sure of the vet you will use, we have a list of recommended veterinarians on our website under Pet Care Information.

Training / Behavior

Training and behavior go hand-in-hand. Training will instill obedience, confidence and socialization outlets for your FOHA dog. Training will go a long way in the prevention of behavior problems. There is no such thing as “the perfect dog.” Behavior quirks will probably appear after your FOHA dog gets settled in and confident in his new surroundings. Knowing basic obedience commands and being socialized will help dramatically when working to resolve any of your FOHA dog’s behavior issues. We will be glad to offer ongoing support and referrals in such cases (through our Behavior and Advice Team reachable via FOHA’s main phone line), but if your FOHA dog has this training and socialization foundation, problems become much easier to solve. Studies have shown that adopted shelter dogs that go through formal obedience training have a much lower return-rate than dogs that do not. We have a list of recommended trainers and behaviorists available on our website under Pet Care Information.

- Obedience Training – all dogs benefit from obedience training. It helps establish communication as well as good behavior and socialization. Involve all family members if possible. Most dogs love to go to class, and you will probably find it’s the best money you ever spent. We generally recommend group classes, since the true test of a well-mannered dog is whether he obeys you when he would rather be playing with other dogs. We recommend “positive reinforcement” methods. We find a lot of success with County offered classes -- they tend to be reasonably priced and good instructors. We can recommend other good classes for this in your area.
 - Use positive-reinforcement techniques. Give your dog opportunities for success and treat rewards. Avoid punishment; especially late punishment for behavior that happened earlier. Dogs cannot make the association between the prior act and the punishment. Rather, the dog will learn to associate the owner’s presence with punishment that will instill fear of owner or cause the dog to quit performing ANY behaviors for the owner.
 - Instead, look for a positive way to instill the behavior you want. For example, one way of teaching your FOHA dog not to jump is to train a reliable “sit” command and then ask your FOHA dog to sit when you see the potential for jumping. Reward the sit.

- Housetraining

- Even previously housetrained dogs adopted from a shelter will often lapse in their housetraining. When dogs learn to eliminate, they are not learning an indoor vs. outdoor concept but something much more specific, such as “never eliminate in these rooms” (the particular rooms in their old house). The dog is unsure whether these rules apply in the new home. Humans, on the other hand, can distinguish where to go to the bathroom regardless of the home we are in. For example, if we visit a friend or hotel room, we know that bathrooms in general are the place to “go.” Since we are good generalizers, we fail to empathize with dogs and therefore don’t take precautionary measures.
- To begin the housetraining program, you will need the following:
 - ❑ Ability to confine the dog
 - ❑ A schedule for going outside
 - ❑ Treats for EVERY time you go outside with dog
 - ❑ Good observation skills
 - ❑ Patience
- Confinement - is the quickest way to train or re-train a dog; because dogs don’t like to mess in their “den” or space. It is for this reason that we recommend initial confinement (baby gate the kitchen area) for ALL recently adopted dogs. We do not encourage the use of crates. By confining the newly adopted dog, he will learn to hold it and then you can have a success outside later. If you find that your FOHA dog is soiling in his confined area, the likelihood is that it is too large: your FOHA dog can use part of it as his toilet.
- Schedule – you must set up a schedule for eating and going outside and keep to it. Try not to vary the times you set up for daily feeding and outdoor trips. If you are away for longer than 4 hours, have someone come to the house to take the dog out. Optimally, there will always be someone at home during the housetraining period. Typical schedule for trips outside looks like this (take treats with you so you can reward each and every time the dog eliminates. You can fade the treats after the dog is reliably eliminating outside and not inside).
 - ❑ Outdoor trip first thing in the morning (take treats!)
 - ❑ Outdoor trip a few minutes after each meal (take treats!) This is when most dogs will have a bowel movement. You will begin to learn your dog’s rhythm.
 - ❑ Outside when you return from work (take treats!)
 - ❑ Outside at bedtime (take treats!)
 - ❑ If your dog is under 1 year of age, the trips outside will need to be more frequent; as a puppy has not developed the physical ability to hold it.
- Treats – Every time your FOHA dog eliminates outside, lavish him with enthusiastic praise during the act and follow with an extra special treat. If you find that the praise makes him stop in the middle of eliminating, save it until just after he finishes. Also, it is imperative that the treat is given IMMEDIATELY after the behavior is completed; or you may inadvertently be rewarding another behavior (licking, sniffing, etc). Have treats ready at the back door so you can grab them on your way out the door.
- Good Observation Skills – your FOHA dog will give off signals that he needs to eliminate. It’s essential that you learn what these are so you can prevent mistakes inside. Common behaviors include circling, restlessness and sniffing. Whenever you see these, take your FOHA dog out.

- Patience – don't lose your cool. Many dogs have accidents, especially in the beginning of training. Since your FOHA dog should be supervised at all times when loose in the house, you will be able to provide the proper feedback as the dog begins to eliminate or, even better, take him out before he even starts. If you catch him starting to eliminate inside, interrupt him with a sharp sound "ah..ah...ah!" This may even prevent him from finishing. Urgently say "outside" and then get your FOHA dog there as quickly as possible (have treat ready). Stay outside for a 5-minute period and praise him and treat if he finishes eliminating. If not, bring him back inside and either supervise or confine him for another try later.

If your FOHA dog has an accident in the house and you did not see it happen, it is futile and even detrimental to punish him after that fact. Simply clean up the spot and then apply a commercial odor neutralizer. This will help prevent a certain location from smelling like an "indoor toilet." Most importantly, after the accident, vow to supervise more closely in future and / or another outing to your schedule.

- ❑ Jump start your training program when you first bring your FOHA dog home. Before bringing your FOHA dog in the house, stay outside with him (treats in hand) and leash-walk him until he relieves himself. Praise jubilantly!!!!!! Encourage use of a particular spot, and let him sniff and get acquainted with his new territory. If your FOHA dog sniffs the floor or circles inside, take him out immediately (have treats ready at the door). When he eliminates, treat him!
 - ❑ Eliminate opportunities for unseen accidents – dogs have very powerful noses and in their natural environment in the wild, seek out urine smells and "mark" it with their own. In order to prevent this possibility in your house, remove all traces of odors left from previous dogs or you WILL have a problem.
 - ❑ If your dog starts experiencing housetraining regression, it is most likely due to a medical condition (i.e.: infection). Take your dog to the vet immediately.
- Separation Anxiety – studies have shown that puppies and shelter dogs are at a higher risk of separation anxiety (sep-anx) than other dogs. Sep-anx is often triggered by either a high-contrast situation – months of the owner staying home all day followed by sudden eight-hour absences – or some sort of life change – re-homing, a stay at a boarding kennel, a death of a key family member or any change in routine. Furthermore, if a dog is abandoned or has lost its owner, they may develop overly intense and insecure attachments to subsequent owners. Sep-anx is both preventable and responds well to treatment. The first step is to recognize that dogs with sep-anx are not misbehaving out of boredom, spite or fun. Some dogs with sep-anx are fine when the owner leaves with slippers on to take out the garbage – they have learned the difference between "long absence" pictures and "short absence" pictures.
- Prevention – Newly adopted dogs are at a higher risk to develop sep-anx if they are smothered with constant attention their first few days at home. Small toy breeds are especially susceptible as they are easier to carry around all the time. It is much better to leave for brief periods extremely often (and to get the dog used to spending time in another room away from family members) so what the dog is learning about departures is that they are no big deal and predict easy, tolerable lengths of absence: "whenever she leaves, she comes back."

- Avoid dramatic or lengthy departures and arrivals.

Give your FOHA dog both physical exercise and mental work to do. Not only does problem solving increase confidence and independence, it is mentally fatiguing and so increases the likelihood that your FOHA dog will rest quietly when he is left alone. Teach him to play hide and seek with his toys, teach him tricks, get him involved in a sport like obedience, flyball or agility, let him free-play with other dogs, stuff all or part of his food ration into Kong toys, teach him how to play fetch and tug. The more activities and toys are incorporated into his life, the less he will depend on human social contact as sole stimulation. Supplies to have on hand before bringing your FOHA dog home.

- FOHA Emergency ID tag: Your FOHA dog will be fitted with a special FOHA tag when he leaves the kennel. Where possible, the collar you bring will be fitted with a plate that will have FOHA's emergency telephones # on it. This plate, in some cases a hang tag, will provide a FOHA ID number that is unique to each dog that is adopted from us. The unique number can help us match FOHA dogs to owners if they are ever lost.

- Dog I.D. Tag: We also require that you purchase and bring with you when you pick up your new dog an I.D. tag which has your last name and contact numbers (cell phone or other best number on which to reach you). Petsmart or Petco have machines that can make a tag while you wait. Please bring this new tag with you when you pick your FOHA dog up (***it will be placed on the FOHA collar in addition to the ID tag that we will place on the collar!***). This way, he will leave the shelter with two sets of identification. If you do not bring a tag, he will be fitted with a temporary tab with your name and number.

- Microchipping. All FOHA dogs are microchipped. At the time of adoption, you will need to fill out a microchip form to register your dog. FOHA will be listed as the alternate. After adoption, FOHA will register your microchip with HomeAgain (this process may take 2-3 weeks after adoption). Your dog will be microchipped for its life and you will need to only update the registration information whenever you change addresses. HomeAgain provides additional services that you can read about in your adoption folder. These services are free for 1 year and after that time, you can choose to continue them or not. If you choose not to continue these services, this will **not** affect your microchip registration.

- Leash and harness and/or slip collar: If the dog you are adopting walks with a harness at the shelter, you should purchase a harness, in addition to the collar, and bring it with you to pick up so we can size it for you. If the dog is a shy dog, we also recommend you purchase either a slip lead (which you can purchase online at www.dog.com or from us at the shelter for \$15.00) or a martingale collar for walking – in addition to the harness. Dogs can slip out of most harnesses and a slip lead or martingale will keep them from getting away. They are only for walking, though, and you will need a standard collar for the dog to wear 24-7 with its identification tags. We do not recommend pinch collars OR retractable leashes. In addition, you should have an extra leash to leave by every door in case the dog bolts out the door.

- Below are items you should have on hand before you bring your new dog home.

- ☐☐ Bed or special blanket
- ☐☐ Baby gate, if necessary
- ☐☐ Water and food bowls
- ☐☐ Brush

- ☐☐ Towel
- ☐☐ Stain cleaner (Nature's Miracle)
- ☐☐ Food (see section on food)
- ☐☐ Toys – LOTS of them; and Kongs. Prefer that you do not use rawhides but if you do, use them with supervision, as dogs can choke on them
- ☐☐ Training treats – lots of them and bring some with you!
- ☐☐ Bitter Apple repellent

Making the Successful Transition

- Some FOHA dogs may adapt so quickly that they fit in immediately and others may likely to be very stressed while making the transition to living in a home. In the latter cases, your FOHA dog may be very confused and anxious....“is this for real?” Your FOHA dog will probably behave differently than when you observed him at the kennel. Your FOHA dog will probably be on “best behavior” too, and some behavioral problems and also his true personality may not emerge for a couple of weeks. LET YOUR FOHA DOG PROGRESS AT HIS OWN PACE. It is detrimental to “force” a dog to exceed his own “threshold” of fearful stimulus (new people, kids, etc).
- Create that quiet environment for the first few days.
- Limit visits from outside family members, neighbors (especially children) and other pets at first.
- Don't invade your FOHA dog's “space” – let him approach others when in his space.
- Resist the urge to give your dog a bath immediately. A stressed dog in the confines of a tub can cause even the most docile dog's fear level to escalate to the point of growling or snapping.
- BE ESPECIALLY VIGILANT WITH CHILDREN – don't leave your FOHA dog and young, unsupervised children together for the first several weeks. Ask children to wait for your FOHA dog to come to them, try to avoid situations where your FOHA dog feels crowded and overwhelmed. It's also important to teach children the right way to relate to your FOHA dog – kindly and with respect. Simple rules may help; such as: talk to your FOHA dog when sleeping before touching him; don't bother your FOHA dog when he is eating or chilling out in his space; don't put your face right up to hers; don't sit on him or pull his ears, and remember, your FOHA dog is a family member and not a toy.
- Introducing your FOHA dog to other canine family members – a dog's natural introduction to another dog is not face-to-face but rather butt-sniffing. We humans often inhibit this form of introduction, which can lead to uncharacteristic growls, hackles and frustration. Arrange for the dogs to meet in a neutral place (park, sidewalk outside house) and allow them to take turns sniffing butts on leash. Then, walk them side-by-side for a while. Then, let them meet and play off-leash in a secure area (fenced backyard or room in house). Have some loud metal pans handy to make noise in the event of a fight.
- Introducing your FOHA dog to family cats –
 - Before bringing your FOHA dog home, make sure there is a “safety room” or rooms, places the cat(s) can access but the dog cannot. A baby-gate the cat(s) can jump over or a cat-door can accomplish this. It is important that the cat can retreat and regroup and relax in a place away from the dog and then venture forward into “dog territory” at her own pace. The cat

should have access to food, water and litter in this area so no interactions with your FOHA dog are forced. Never hold the cat into proximity by holding her or otherwise restricting her desire to escape.

- For the first introduction, have the dog on a leash in case he explodes into chase. If it seems to be going well, drop the leash (leave it hanging) and supervise closely. If the dog is behaving in a friendly and / or cautious way, try not to intervene in their interactions, except to praise and reward your FOHA dog for good behavior. Interrupt any chase and try to redirect your FOHA dog's attention to another activity (this is sometimes hard to accomplish and therefore "management" between dog and cat may be necessary until things are worked out).
 - Don't leave them together unsupervised until you are confident there is no potential harm to either.
 - Give plenty of extra attention to the cat so she does not associate this change with reduced attention and affection!
 - Dogs will eat cat food and may eat cat feces – keep both out of reach from your FOHA dog.
- Set the routine at once – especially to prevent the onset of sep-anx (see above). Establish the routine at once. We recommend picking your FOHA dog up on Saturday – and use Sunday to get acclimated before leaving for your normal routine on Monday. Spend Saturday night practicing semi-absences (alone time for dog in another room) and short absences (leaving for SHORT periods of time). Start with small increments (less than 1 minute) and progress from there. Do not make plans that will cause you to immediately leave your FOHA dog for a long period (i.e.: cancel or refrain from any dinner, shopping and movie plans).
- We are here to help. Call us @ 703-385-0224 if you have behavior problems; we will gladly assist in providing suggestions to correct such quirks; or recommend that you get professional help.

****** The home visit is the last step in the adoption process. If approved, you will be bringing your new dog home with you the following weekend. Please remember that all adults in the household must be present at the home visit. Briefly meeting your children would be appreciated, but your children's presence is not required unless the home visit volunteer specifically asks that they be present. A FOHA volunteer will be contacting you during the week to schedule your home visit at your and his/her convenience. If you have any questions regarding your home visit or application, please call 703-385-0224.**

Our entire operation is supported by donations and every donation counts toward medical care, shelter, food, and cleaning while our dogs wait to find their new home. If you would like to make an extra donation on top of the adoption amount, it would be appreciated greatly. Your donation (except the food fee) is tax deductible.

ADOPTION AMOUNT: \$325.00 + \$5 for bag of food to transition to the new food. We accept: Cash, Checks and Credit Cards (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover).