Isle of Wight County Animal Services
Volunteer Manual

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(757) 357-2151

Welcome to Isle of Wight County Animal Services

The Isle of Wight County Animal Services (IOWCAS) is much more than just an animal shelter or animal control facility. It is a place where dedicated professionals and volunteers share their commitment, their passion, and their talent to help the animals and people of Isle of Wight County, Va.

Your desire to help lost and abandoned animals is greatly appreciated! With the dedicated assistance of our volunteers, IOWCAS is able to maintain high quality care of the animals and continue its lifesaving work through innovative programs and services to the community. We have many fabulous opportunities in which people can participate, i.e., socializing cats; exercising, training & grooming our dogs; helping in the office; working on special projects or fundraisers; being an advocate for spay/neuter; humane education; or adoptions.

We accept volunteers 16 years of age and older and request a commitment of 4 hours of volunteer service per month. If at any point a volunteer reaches four months of inadequate volunteer time, that volunteer will become inactive.

Parents or guardians of volunteers under the age of eighteen (18) years of age must sign the volunteer application giving permission for the individual to perform volunteer service. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian.

Our Mission

We are committed to public safety and animal protection through sheltering, adoption programs, education, and animal law enforcement.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to provide responsible, effective, and quality animal care and control services that protect public and animal safety.

Our Philosophy

Our philosophy is to promote responsible pet ownership and provide care of all animals with a commitment to professionalism, integrity, and compassion.

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Introduction

As an organization, the IOWCAS is concerned with the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers and the pets we serve. For this reason, we feeling that is important to meet you to review shelter policies, safety and health issues as well as share other volunteer opportunities available to you. We hope the information you receive during orientation, along with this handbook will enhance your experience as a volunteer with the IOWCAS and the pets we serve. If at any point in time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to give us a call. Thank you for lending us your time and talents!

Animal Acceptance

The IOWCAS is an open access shelter and accepts all animals from Isle of Wight County, Va.

Adoption Policies

All adopters are required to sign an adoption contract and pay the required fees. Virginia State law, 3.2-6546 requires that any dog or cat adopted from a shelter must be spayed or neutered before it can leave the county or city. For this reason, pets that are too young to have surgery cannot be adopted out to those living outside of your jurisdiction or an adjacent jurisdiction.

Services Provided

- Temporary refuge and humane care for lost/abandoned pets
- Adoption of companion pets into loving, responsible, and stable environments
- Reduction of pet overpopulation via a proactive spay/neuter program
- Promotion of responsible pet care and behavior
- Prevention of cruelty to animals; cruelty investigations
- Lost/Found reporting services, identification
- Animal Disaster Plan

Volunteer Objectives

- Provide socialization to the shelter's adoptable animals
- Distribute and return dog and cat toys to adoptable animals
- Spot clean kennels and cages when necessary
- Brush and groom animals
- Clean up after animals both in the shelter and in the fenced walking area
- Share information about behavior and health issues observed with staff
- Provide canines with regular walking opportunities on leashes

- Bathe and feed animals
- Assist citizens with visiting with animals at the shelter
- Clean lobby, kitchen, visiting areas
- Clean windows to cat display, visiting rooms, lobby area
- Wash, dry & sort laundry
- Wash, dry & sort dishes
- Assist with adoption events and/or fundraising events

Requirements

- Complete a volunteer application and be approved
- Sign a waiver of liability
- Sign the volunteer requirements
- Attend orientation and any required training
- Parents of volunteers under eighteen (18) years of age must sign the volunteer application giving permission for the individual to perform volunteer service. Youth under the age of 16 must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian.
- All of the above must be completed prior to performing your first day as a volunteer
- Support and respect the shelters policies and procedures
- Notify us promptly if you need to resign from service
- All dogs taken out by volunteers must enter and exit the facility through the Sally Port/Back Gate.

Volunteer Schedules, Training, Orientation, Assignments

- The volunteer hours are flexible to accommodate regular employment or personal commitments. *However, the volunteers must recognize that some volunteer assignments require availability during certain periods, and therefore volunteer availability shall be considered when making an assignment.
- Orientation shall include the following:
    - Tour of the facility
    - Brief overview of procedures
- Training shall be commensurate with the volunteer opportunity desired
- Volunteers may sign up to assist with off-site adoption events. These events are held throughout the year at other locations.
- All volunteers must wear the identification tag if provided i.e. shirts or hats
- When you sign in, please print both your first and last name, even if you will not need to track your time. The volunteer coordinator, and staff members, need to know who is volunteering each day.
- Volunteers are required to record hours worked (including training and meeting attended) through the facilities preferred tracking method.

Dress Code

Volunteers must help the shelter convey a professional public appearance. Volunteers shall wear appropriate shirts, and jeans or khakis without holes. Socializing animals requires stooping and bending, so please be certain that shirts fully cover the body and clothing is loose fitting to allow for movement. For health and safety reasons, open-toed shoes. Dangly earrings and other loose-fitting jewelry are prohibited. Finally, our facility uses bleach for sanitizing and disinfection, so please be aware that bleach spots are a possibility when choosing what you will wear.

*Safety Recommendation: If you are working with cats, long sleeves will help protect you against cat scratches. If you are walking dogs, long pants will help protect you against any scratches you may receive from dogs that may jump on you. We also ask that you wear close-toed shoes, preferably tennis shoes with non-skid, rubber soles that will protect you against falls on slippery floors. *

Professional Attitude, Conduct and Communication

- Volunteers are always expected to conduct themselves, in such a manner as to reflect most favorably on the organization. Conduct that may adversely affect the morale, operations or efficiency of the organization or any conduct that may adversely affect lower or destroy public respect and confidence in the organization or volunteer shall be prohibited to include any social media post of animals at the facility.
- Keep all client data they encounter confidential including the names of clients
- Be friendly, warm and courteous to the public, and make every attempt to put them at ease.
- Refer any visitor asking detailed questions about pets or policies to a staff member
- Report any accidents or injuries immediately to the IOWCAS staff. No exceptions. Bites or scratches are considered an injury and must be treated immediately.
- Not smoking anywhere but outside of the building
- If a volunteer has concerns regarding the conduct of a potential adopter or a previous adopter of an animal from IOWCAS, the volunteer shall notify the Chief Animal Control Officer or Shelter Manager. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer confront a previous or potential adopter regarding their care of an animal
- The use of alcohol and illegal drugs is strictly prohibited. Any evident of their use while at the shelter or while representing the shelter (i.e., off site event) will result in the dismissal of volunteer status and removal from the premises.
- Volunteers who interact in social networking sites, including but not limited to Facebook are encouraged to abide by the standard of this handbook
- All volunteers serve at the pleasure of Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Department

Restrictions

Restricted Areas:

Areas of the shelter that are restricted are clearly marked. Volunteers should not enter those areas. To ensure the safety of our pets as well as volunteers, admission to these areas must be limited to staff exclusively.

Volunteers are not permitted in any animal intake area, court holding area, stray holding area, rabies/quarantine holding, medical isolation area, euthanasia area, incinerator bay or freezer area without instruction/approval from the staff.

Volunteers are not permitted to, under any circumstance, participate or be involved in any type of official duties of the IOWCAS (i.e. animal seizures, the capture of animals, official court cases or posting said information on any type of social media platform.

Volunteers shall not contact animal rescue groups on behalf of the animals of IOWCAS, unless given specific directions to do so by the Chief ACO, Shelter Manager or Rescue Coordinator.

Telephone Calls:

IOWCAS telephone lines are for business calls only. Personal phone calls will be directed to volunteers only in an emergency situation. If for any reason you feel you may need to communicate with someone away from the shelter, please bring your cell phone. Volunteers are prohibited from talking on cell phones while handling the pets. If you must make a call, please put the pet back in the kennel/cage before doing so.

Understanding Cage and Kennel Sheets: (READ BEFORE HANDLING ANIMALS)

Basic information about the pets is provided on the cage cards. The initial kennel sheet is completed by staff, and new information is added by them as we become more acquainted with the pets. Please share anything new that you observe with the staff. Information found on these sheets may include:

- Intake Number
- Pets Name
- Breed (“best guess” by staff when the animal came in)
- Color
- Gender
- Spay or Neuter status
- Age
- Date of intake

- How the animal was acquired (stray, surrender, etc.)

Zoonotic Diseases: Transmittible from animal to human

The most effective means of preventions are:

- Vaccinations-tetanus and pre-exposure rabies (recommend but not required)
- Wash hands frequently with antibacterial soap – especially prior to eating or smoking
- Wear long pants and sturdy closed-toe shoes or boots
- Disinfect scratched and bite wounds thoroughly
- Tell your physician that you work closely with animals
- Avoid contact with cat litter boxes if you are pregnant or suspect you may be pregnant

Zoonotic Diseases: Found in shelter environments are:

- Bartonellosis (Cat – Scratch fever)
- Brucellosis (Malta Fever)
- Bubonic Plaque
- Ringworm
- Campylobacteriosis
- Cryptosporidiosis
- External parasitic infections (caused by lice, mites and fleas)
- Giardiasis (Beaver Fever)
- Leptospirosis (Weil's disease)
- Lyme Disease
- Nematode (worm) infections
- Pasteurellosis
- Rabies
- Salmonellosis (Salmonella)
- Toxoplasmosis

Please do not be alarmed by this list of diseases but be aware that you are volunteering in an environment where that often exist. For this reason, we strongly encourage all volunteers to make sure that their own animals have all of their vaccinations up to date. For this reason, we also suggest that you always change clothes before socializing with your own animals at home.

Canine policies

Only those dogs currently available for adoption may be socialized. For safety and health reasons, volunteers will not be allowed to enter the stray hold or isolation/quarantine areas of the facility. At no time should a dog be allowed to run freely. So, if someone accidently lets a dog loose in any of the kennel areas, please notify staff right away. Read all information on the cage car before interacting with the animal. Meet the dog by standing outside the kennel door. Although animals up for adoption are put through behavior tests, we can never predict for sure when an animal's behavior will change. For this reason, please note of the following:

- If the dog gives even the slightest hint of aggression, volunteers should notify staff and leave it for someone else to work with.
- If the dog appears to be scared, proceed cautiously. Remember, to a dog, there is little difference between a real threat and a perceived threat.
- Threatening human body posture includes:
    - Direct Stare
    - An arm raised, with or without a weapon (or perceived weapon)
    - Rapid movement towards the dog
    - Shouting, growling commands

Volunteers under the age of 18 cannot remove dogs from their kennels, so if someone asks you to assist with that, you will need to tell them to seek a staff member. Visitors do not know who can help and who cannot, so refer them to a staff member for assistance. For safety reasons, volunteers should always be aware of their surroundings. Remember, not everyone visiting out pets is a volunteer-some are potential adopters and may not know the rules. Please refer anyone with questions to our staff member for further information.

Puppies under the age of 6 months or those that are not known to be vaccinated, are susceptible to germs and therefore are NEVER ALLOWED TO BE TAKEN INTO THE DOG RUNS. Please ask one of the staff members before removing a puppy from its kennel.

Volunteer Personal Property

IOWCAS is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage of personal items. Volunteers are advised not to bring excessive amounts of cash or valuables with them while working on-site. Although we do provide lockers in our breakroom, we cannot provide a secure place for handbags, wallets and other valuables, so please leave them locked in your vehicles.

Grounds for Dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol or other intoxicant use while volunteering
- Mistreatment of any animal
- Rudeness
- Misrepresenting IOWCAS policies
- Disseminating privileged information
- Not fulfilling tasks or duties
- The volunteer no longer meets the needs of IOWCAS
- The volunteer fails to abide by the policy, procedures of requirements of IOWCAS
- The volunteer fails to follow instructions or otherwise impedes staff in the performance of duties
- Breaking any of the requirements and/or restrictions described in this manual
- IOWCAS may dismiss a volunteer for any reason at any time
- When a volunteer resigns or when he/she/they are terminated, the volunteer shall return any issued identification card and any IOWCAS property.

Social Media Guidelines

IOWCAS encourages our volunteers to participate in social media and post positive information about their experiences while volunteering at the shelter. When engaging in social media, volunteers are to be clear about what they are representing and take responsibility for ensuring that any reference to the facility or staff member are factual, complete and accurate.

IOWCAS depends strongly on community support and our partners. Volunteers will consider- before posting- whether the content of their social media posts being shared will potentially be damaging to our reputation or have an adverse effect on the services we provide.

IOWCAS encourages our volunteers to engage on social media in the following ways:

- Post positive comments regarding our adoptable, foster or potential foster animals as well as animals available for rescue
- Celebrate our successes in the adoptions of our animals
- Share, like, comment on IOWCAS social media posts
- Ensure that any reference to IOWCAS or staff is factual, complete and accurate
- Respect the individuals, shelter partners and communities that we serve
- Display contact information “Contact Isle of Wight County Animal Services at (757)365-6318 for additional information” at the end of any posts of our animals
- If requested by the Chief Animal Control Officer or Shelter Manager – remove or modify post(s) on social media

IOWCAS discourages our volunteers to engage on social media in the following ways:

- Do not post photos or videos of shelter animals that are not available for adoption or transfer
- Do not voice grievance or make disparaging remarks about IOWCAS or staff
- Do not breach the confidentiality of private information about IOWCAS or any other county department
- Do not disclose personal information of IOWCAS staff, volunteers or partners
- Do not damage the reputation of IOWCAS, staff members, volunteers or partners by posting critical, obscene or defamatory information

If volunteers are uncertain regarding a potential post, we ask that you please contact the IOWCAS staff.

Failure to follow IOWCAS guidelines may result in probation and/or dismissal from volunteering.

IOWCAS has a volunteer page on Facebook where updates and requests for assistance are posted. Please feel free to join, after the application has been approved and your tour is complete. If at any point you decide to resign as a volunteer, please remove yourself from the group. You will be asked a series of questions at the time of joining. These are meant to prevent spam accounts entering the group. Please complete the provided questions to ensure staff can verify you as a volunteer. Group name to search: IOWCAS VOLUNTEERS on Facebook.

We thank you for making the choice to help our agency! We are honored to have you and look forward to working together to better the lives of the animals in Isle of Wight County, Va.