



## ARMAC FOSTER HOME GUIDELINES

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

### General

- 1) All rescue dogs must be fed a high quality, non-soy dog food. Even if you feed your dogs a "natural diet", most adoptive families won't or can't. Feeding the rescue dog a kibble diet will make their transition to their new home easier. Most of our volunteer foster homes donate the cost of feeding orphans they are housing. If this becomes a hardship, please let Puller, Jodi, or Betty know. We will provide food or reimburse you for the cost of food, or find another foster home for the dog. Over the years we have determined that one adult dog in good health consumes one 40-lb bag of dog food in 4-5 weeks. We will provide dog food based on this observation. Puppies and ill dogs will be considered separately. Water should be available to the dog at all times except in cases where it is being withheld for surgery, under a veterinarian's direction, or the dog continuously overturns the bowl in his crate. There are crate coops (bowls) available if the foster does not have one.
- 2) The rescue dogs should be bathed and groomed on a regular basis (brushed, toenails clipped, ears checked and cleaned). If potential adopter is coming to meet dogs, or the dog is being taken to a show or other event for showcasing, please brush them; a bath also would be a plus. Remember when trying to find a home for these dogs, presentation is the key: clean, well-behaved dogs are more attractive than dirty, wild dogs.
- 3) If you have other pets, you must have a means of keeping the rescue dog and your dog(s) separate. This can be accomplished with a crate, outdoor run, or a room with a **strong door and lock**. ARMAC will not be held responsible, monetarily or otherwise, for damage done to a house from a dog locked in a room. A crate can normally be provided at any

time. Should the crate be destroyed, ARMAC will provide another, or a dog run will be recommended. If the dog cannot be contained, this will be taken under discussion at that time. Read the "Introductions" handout (available at our website or from Jodi) if you want to commence introducing the rescue dog to your other pets.

- 4) If you have an escape artist who cannot be contained, arrangements will be made to find another foster home, or advice given on how to make your home/yard more secure.
- 5) If because of fence jumping, you must tie the dog on a line outdoors, the dog must be supervised at all times to prevent hanging, children from teasing the dog, loose dog encounters, or any other type of harm. The dog may not be left tied outside when no one is home. We do not permit our adopters to do this; we will not permit our foster homes to do it.
- 6) Rescue dogs must be maintained on heartworm preventative all year round. If you cannot afford this, contact ARMAC, and we will provide preventative for you. The same holds true if you need deworming medication, antibiotics, or other medications. We may have medications on hand for orphan use, so contact us before you purchase any.
- 7) The dog must be wearing a collar with the ARMAC ID tag and Microchip tag at all times.**
- 8) If the dog is acting abnormally or appears ill, call ARMAC for advice **immediately**. If you are unable to make contact or it is an emergency, take the dog to your vet...better safe than sorry. Things to watch for: not eating or drinking water for 48 hours, especially if it is coupled with diarrhea and vomiting; drinking huge quantities of water; abnormal eating patterns, diarrhea or diarrhea and vomiting that lasts longer than 48 hours; listlessness. **Make yourself familiar with the symptoms of bloat. This is a life or death emergency.**
- 9) If you have introduced your pets to the foster dog, remember not to leave any toys, food, or bones lying around. Avoid a rush to the water bowl. These things can all cause fights.
- 10) Never leave the rescue dog alone with your other pets without supervision. This means you are in the same room and actively **watching them**, not cleaning, watching TV, working on the computer, talking on the telephone, or reading a book. Akitas are predatory. Many consider small dogs and cats prey and will kill them. Two dogs or more are a pack. Pack mentality is a lot like mob mentality. They will do

things together they may not do alone. Pack hunting can be the death of small animals. Fights can cause serious injury to the dogs as well as to anyone who tries to break it up. Puppies of 4 months and up are as capable as adults of doing all these things. Use common sense and remember it is your job to keep the foster dog safe that is safe from hurting himself or others.

- 11) If, because of negligence, i.e., not paying attention while the dog is on a regular or flexi (not recommended) lead, the dog bolts out of the house, escapes over or under a fence, or is left attended or unattended with the resident dog(s), the rescue dog or another animal or person is injured, **the foster home will bear all veterinary and legal expenses.**
- 12) Fostered dogs are the property of ARMAC. They should be handled with the same sense and care you would give any other property you may have in your care that does not belong to you. ARMAC is to be notified prior to the foster dog being kenneled, left in the care of someone else or moved to any other location other than the foster home. Foster dogs are NOT to be left in the care of anyone under the age of 18. Foster dogs are not to be left in the care of anyone convicted of animal cruelty, spousal abuse or child abuse.

#### **VETERINARY EXPENSES**

- 1) ARMAC will pay all regular vet bills. (Vaccinations will be covered only if we don't have the vaccines,) heartworm checks, neutering, fecal tests; again contact us for meds, or will reimburse you when you present a receipt. If you are unable to pay for the treatment up front, have the vet send the bill to Puller. Prior to proceeding with any medical care, check with ARMAC first (except in cases of emergency). Whenever you go to the vet, please get a copy of the record for yourself and ARMAC and forward the ARMAC copy to Puller for our records.
- 2) Foster homes are responsible for keeping track of dates that the dog was immunized, spayed, etc. so they can pass this info onto the new owners.
- 3) ARMAC will pay for injuries from a dogfight only once, whether it results from an introduction gone awry, or an accidental meeting. We will not pay for fights resulting from carelessness, i.e., not having sufficient barriers to keep dogs apart, not making sure the crate is locked, etc.
- 4) If you prefer, use an ARMAC vet, but bear in mind the inconvenience of having to travel there.

- 5) If you utilize your own vet, ask if they will give a discount for rescue dogs. If you need a statement or proof of non-profit status, contact ARMAC.
- 6) If using an ARMAC vet, and you will be unable to make an appointment (especially for spaying, neutering, or heartworm treatment), make sure you notify the vet and ARMAC.

### **Training and Socialization**

- 1) If possible, take the dog to obedience class. (Contact ARMAC for referrals). If not, at least teach it to walk on leash without excessive pulling, and to sit on command.

It is the foster home's responsibility to determine the rescue dog's reaction to various stimuli: children, adult males and females, small dogs, teenagers, cats, bicycles, etc. Take them out and socialize them. Take them for car rides to parks, shopping centers and walk them around. Walk them around the neighborhood and encourage people of all types to pet them. When someone wants to pet the dog, have the person to approach smoothly and quietly, and extend his or her hand to be sniffed. No overhead gestures, no jerky movements, no snatching the hand back. Once the dog has sniffed them, they can pet or scratch under the chin, or on the chest. If this dog does not mind, head pats and scratches behind the ears are fine. Do not let a crowd of kids come up and surround the dog. Have them approach one at a time until the dog gets used to them all. If the dog resists or is obviously uncomfortable, don't force the issue. **Use common sense.** The same goes for letting ANYONE get in a new dog's face, or hug the dog...especially adult animals. Don't use strangers as guinea pigs! Until YOU get to know your new charge, don't let others take liberties with him.

### **BLOAT**

Bloat is a life threatening condition. There are two steps: 1) the dog's stomach fills with gas, water or food and swells; 2) The stomach flips over (torsion) cutting off the blood supply and starting necrosis (tissue death). **IF A BLOATING DOG IS NOT TAKEN TO THE VET IMMEDIATELY, HE WILL DIE !! IT IS BETTER TO MAKE MANY FALSE RUNS THAN TO MISS THE ONE TIME IT MATTERS. KNOW THE SYMPTOMS. THIS KNOWLEDGE COULD SAVE A DOG'S LIFE.** And better yet, KNOW your dog or foster, his usual routines and reactions. (See symptoms below)

## SYMPTOMS:

- Unusual behavior. If a normally laid back dog is pacing or acting agitated along with other symptoms, suspect bloat. Example: Gizmo, normally extremely laid back, was pacing back and forth in the front yard shortly after eating. He had a pain grimace (ears laid back, lips drawn back from the teeth), and was panting heavily. There was an imperceptible swelling just under his rib cage. He was bloating. If a normally active dog is lethargic, standing still in a painful posture, head hanging down, possible pain grimace, suspect bloat. Example: Abby, who normally ricochets off or jumps up on the fence when you talk to her on your arrival, was standing head down totally ignoring distractions, panting somewhat, swelling visible in stomach area, but not huge. She was bloating. Example: Shadow was sitting at the foot of the deck stairs, shifting his weight from side to side, obviously uncomfortable, assumed due to arthritis in his hips...until the slight swelling in his tummy was noticed. He was bloating.
- Inability to sit or lay down comfortably, exhibiting restlessness.
- Trying to vomit, but nothing coming up, except maybe saliva. Do not mistake the occasional yellowish bile or grass vomit as bloat.
- Swelling between the ribcage and hips. It could start in the lower rib cage and not be immediately visible.
- Sometimes if you are fortunate enough to catch it early by catching the symptoms, no swelling is visible. If you think the dog is in the early stages, INSIST the vet take an x-ray to verify.
- If your dog bloats and is deflated by means other than surgery, the stomach should be tacked as soon as the dog's condition permits to prevent future torsion. Many times a dog that has bloated will do so again.

Nothing has been proven to prevent bloat, but these suggestions may help:

- Feed twice daily instead of once
- There are pros and cons on whether to elevate or not elevate food bowls.

- Do not feed large amounts of gas causing foods: bean, cabbage, onions, etc.
- Do not let the dog exercise strenuously one hour prior to eating. A good rule or thumb: If he is panting from exertion or heat, do not feed until he stops panting. If he panting from heat, give ice cubes covered with a little water to prevent them gulping water and bloating.
- Do not let your dog exercise strenuously one or two hours after eating.
- Don't let him roll on his back after eating or drinking
- If he is being fed a food that swells in water, wet the food and let it absorb the water before feeding the dog.
- Bloat has a hereditary factor. If you know where the dog came from, check if any of his family, mainly mother, father, or siblings have bloated.

There is controversy about what does and does not cause bloat. Educate yourself , talk with your vet and select the best course of action.

#### ARMAC CONTACTS

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