

“AAR VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK”

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read the Abandoned Animal Rescue (AAR) Volunteer Handbook. The rules are for your and the animals’ protection and safety. AAR wants the volunteers and animals to have a safe, enjoyable, and rewarding time while they are here.

The AAR SOP Volunteer Handbook documents AAR's general policies for the volunteer program. But the Volunteer Coordinators acknowledge that it cannot anticipate every unique situation. We count on volunteers being familiar with AAR’s rules and, when in doubt, acting as you would want someone to treat you or your pet.

VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION CONTACT: volunteer@aartexas.org

ABOUT AAR

AAR's Mission

AAR's mission is to work towards ending pet overpopulation that results in the euthanasia of unwanted cats and dogs. We do this by providing a rescue and adoption center, by emphasizing the importance of spaying and neutering and by educating on humane animal ownership. AAR is committed to the emotional, physical, and behavioral well being of each animal in our care.

Animal Intake

AAR is a limited-intake shelter; all animals are evaluated for health and temperament before being accepted into the AAR adoption program. Animals with treatable health conditions will be treated before adoption, and animals with behavioral issues will be taken to a trainer. Healthy, behaviorally sound animals will be placed into our adoption program. An animal that is deemed a risk to humans or other animals will be professionally evaluated to decide on the best course of action. Euthanasia is AAR’s last option; it is used only for animals that are terminally ill or considered dangerous. No animal is ever euthanized to make room for incoming animals.

Although AAR never euthanizes to make room, the other side of that decision is that animals remain in our care until they are adopted. If an animal is not adopted quickly, it stays with AAR using up resources and preventing other more adoptable animals from coming in. Determining factors:

- **Space available:** the first consideration is whether AAR has a space for the animal. This is not just a cage, but also depends upon the current number of

volunteers and the number of animals in foster care that are waiting to be brought into the shelter. It also depends on what size cages are available.

- **Health of the animal:** AAR must consider how much the animal will cost them to make it adoptable.
- **Breed/Size/Age:** Although AAR accepts all breeds, sizes, and ages, we do strive to have a balance of adoptable animal sizes, breeds, & ages.
- **Why is the animal being surrendered?** What is its temperament? Is it friendly with other animal, kids, and people? Does it bark, dig, and bite?
- **The actual decision** to accept an animal is made by AAR's trained intake team.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- **If an animal is dumped on AAR's premises, get a senior volunteer immediately. AAR is not responsible if a volunteer handles a stray animal and gets bit or injured.**
- **If a volunteer rescues a dog or cat, there is no assurance that it will be accepted into AAR's Adoption Program**
- **NEVER bring a rescued animal (stray) into AAR without an appointment with the appropriate intake coordinator.**

Animal Adoption

The AAR Adoption Team is a board-designated, trained group of senior volunteers who have the responsibility of approving all adoptions. Using the Adoption Application and face-to-face interviews, the AAR Adoption Team makes the adoption decision based on the best interest of the animal. AAR does not have a "first-come, first-serve" or a "hold" policy on adoptable animals. In order to avoid conflict between potential adopters or misunderstanding about the adoption status of an animal, do not take photos, or in any way promote the adoption of an AAR animal (unless it is on AAR's Adoptable Pets web-page) to the public, family or friends without approval. AAR volunteers and/or their family must go through the same adoption process as any member of the public.

Operating Hours

Public Operating Hours: Tues-Fri 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. & Sat 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Dog Care Hours: Mon-Sun— Start at 8:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.

Cat Care Hours: Mon-Sun: 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Goals of the Volunteer Program

AAR receives no local, state or government funding, or tax dollars. It is dependent on volunteers to achieve its mission. There are no paid positions at AAR. AAR does pay for professional help as needed (veterinarians, lawyers, accounting, real estate, architecture, etc.).

The goal for the volunteer program is to clearly state the needs and expectations for all volunteers, to provide for the volunteers' comfort and safety, and to insure the health and welfare of the animals. In order to achieve this goal, volunteers will fill out an application, train with a senior volunteer, and receive this handbook. In return, AAR will keep volunteers informed about changes in the organization, explain the jobs, provide and ask for feedback, keep communications open, hold volunteer meetings, and give meaningful assignments. AAR maintains a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Manual detailing its policies and protocols.

Rewards of the Volunteer Program

AAR's volunteers are part of an organization that each year finds loving families for over 500 homeless animals, and spays/neuters over 1000 dogs and cats. AAR's volunteers work in the shelter with the animals, foster animals in their homes, support fundraising events, meet regularly to share ideas or cry together when a rescued animal cannot be saved.

Volgistics - VicNet and VicTouch

AAR USES VOLGISTICS VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE. VOLUNTEERS INTERACT WITH TWO VOLGISTICS MODULES: VICNET AND VICTOUCH.

PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE BELOW INFORMATION!

VicNet is a Volunteer Information Center (VIC). We encourage all volunteers to become comfortable with using VIC as soon as possible. With VIC volunteers can . . .

- View and manage their volunteer schedules
- Sign-up for vacant schedule openings
- Print their schedules
- Keep their personal information up-to-date
- Post their hours
- Receive news and messages from the volunteer office
- Open links to copies of the Volunteer Handbook, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual, a list of current board members, officers, and operation team members
- Check their service records, and print their own service reports
- Change their VicNet passwords
- Opt-in or out of text messaging and update their message preferences

For more information on how to use VIC,

OPEN THIS LINK: <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/Help.dll?ACT=21&HID=2pW612ks&TOPIC=1148>

TO ACCESS VIC after you are an approved volunteer

OPEN THIS LINK: <https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll/?from=272104>

1. Use your email as the “login name”
2. Enter your Password or Click on “need a password” if you don’t have one.

VicTouch is the optional Volgistics module used to provide interactive onsite touch-screen kiosks for volunteers. Among other features, VicTouch provides a time-clock function volunteers can use to check in and out when they arrive and depart.

INSTRUCTIONS for using VICTOUCH to log in and out.

When you arrive at the shelter use your PIN to log-in and out using the touch-screen computer. It is a simple 4-step process. Just follow the instructions on the screen. If you don’t remember your PIN, contact volunteer@aartexas.org

Volunteer Job Descriptions, Risk & Safety

Job Description:

Overall: Requirements of volunteering at AAR include following the directions of the shift leader, handling animals of various sizes and temperaments, and representing AAR to the public in a positive manner. The work can be physically demanding; it is often messy, wet, and smelly. Animal care and some cleaning processes are outdoors in rain or shine. Animal shelter work means you must be prepared to cope with the presence of injured or ill animals, euthanasia, turning away animals due to lack of space, dog fights, and other mental stress. If some of the work is too physically difficult, AAR will make every effort to find volunteer work that you can do, but cannot guarantee we will be able to do so.

Dog Care: Requirements of volunteering in the Dog Kennels include being able to read cage tags & follow directions, reach into cages to remove & carry puppies to outdoors, deal with dirty bowls & bedding, use a pressure sprayer. You must be able to carry laundry, stand and do dishes, sweep & mop the floor, and deal with bleach and other cleaning products. Volunteers may be required to read the Med Chart, and give medications including pills, eye drops, creams, etc.

Cat Care: Requirements of volunteering in the Cattery include being able to read cage tags & follow directions, reach into cages, lift out cats, remove dirty bowls & litter boxes. You must be able to carry laundry, stand and do dishes, sweep & mop the floor, and deal with bleach and other cleaning products. Volunteers may be

required to read the Med Chart, and give medications including pills, eye drops, creams, etc.

Volunteer Agreement:

Volunteers work for AAR and do so of their own free will. Volunteers are not an employee or agent of AAR. Volunteering at AAR does not include compensation or payment of any kind. AAR does not offer health insurance, workers' compensation insurance or any such employee benefit to volunteers.

Risk Agreement:

Volunteers recognize and accept that volunteering has risks and unforeseen dangers (such risks could be, but are not limited to: mental/emotional stress or physical injury). Volunteers have the right to review each activity prior to their participation and choose to participate of their own free will. Although AAR makes every effort to temperament test all animals prior to accepting them into the shelter, there is always an inherent risk in dealing with animals (including, but not limited to, for example, dogs may bite, cats may scratch or bite). AAR does its best to evaluate the health of all animals in its care and alert the volunteers of any potential issues or dangers. However, there is always a risk of getting ringworm or other diseases from animals. AAR highly recommends a tetanus shot for all volunteers. If you have animals at home, AAR recommends alerting your veterinarian that you are volunteering at an animal shelter.

Volunteer Responsibilities at the Shelter

- All volunteers must log-in to VicTouch when arriving and out when leaving.
- All volunteers must wear clothing appropriate to the handling of animals, cleaning cages, and being in the public. Wear close-toed shoes and clothing that protect from scratches, sunburn, ants, etc. Latex gloves are provided for cleaning, handling animals and washing dishes & animals.
- Respect all "QUARANTINE" "do not enter" "no smoking" "no eating" and other signs.
- If injured, report immediately to a board member or senior volunteer.
- If an animal appears sick or distressed, do not approach but immediately notify a board member or senior volunteer.
- Do not feed, water, bathe, walk or medically treat any animal without permission from a board member or senior volunteer.
- Report any animal's skin problems, hair loss, loose bowel movements, worms in bowels, or vomiting to a board member or senior volunteer.
- Obey all signs about not touching, walking or any other directive about an animal. This is for your safety. Strays often may have mange, ringworm, etc.

Interacting with other AAR Volunteers and the Public

- At all times, AAR volunteers will speak with respect about other volunteers, AAR's policies, and other organizations while at the shelter or when representing AAR to the public.
- AAR respects all organizations and members of the animal rescue community. Volunteers should not express negative opinions of and should be careful not to give out misinformation about other shelters or rescues.
- If you believe someone is misspeaking about an AAR animal, policy or other issue, ask to speak to them in private. Do not contradict another volunteer in public or in front of other volunteers.
- Do not discuss an animal's condition, past health, or express opinions about an animal or AAR's policies in front of visitors or other volunteers. In order to ensure accuracy and appropriateness, information shared should come from or have the approval of a senior volunteer, shift leader or board member.

Office Work

Office volunteers are needed for filing, calling clients, adopting animals out, accepting surrendered animals, and many other tasks. Volunteers must be trained in these procedures by a board member or senior volunteer and then interned until deemed ready to work on their own.

If you are in the office area, DO NOT offer any advice on AAR's services or the health of any animal. Welcome the person and say that you will get someone to help them. NEVER contradict what another volunteer is saying in front of a client. If you disagree, ask to speak privately with the other volunteer.

Pet Food

AAR has a designated food-control manager who is responsible for receiving, dating, rotating, and mixing food in the proper order. Follow all written instructions regarding feeding. NEVER feed an animal food that is found in the lobby or brought in until the food manager has checked it. AAR does not use certain brands of foods and treats, or those with red dye.

Cleaning Supplies, Chemicals, etc.

For the safety of volunteers and animals, AAR uses carefully chosen cleaning supplies and chemicals. Do not bring your own supplies without board approval. OSHA safety sheets on the chemicals are on file.

Record Management

The Volunteer Management maintains records on each volunteer throughout the organization. Records may include dates of volunteer service, positions held, duties performed, training attended. Volunteer records, including applications, release form, and court-mandated community service forms, are confidential. Volunteers

are responsible for submitting and updating information contained in their files to the Volunteer Management Office. AAR uses Volgistics software to maintain records.

Dress Code

Volunteers are representatives of AAR and are responsible for presenting a positive image to the community. Volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Animal care volunteers must wear clothing appropriate to the handling of animals, cleaning cages, and being in the public. Wear close-toed shoes and clothing that protect from scratches, sunburn, ants, etc. Short shorts, crop-tops, flip-flops, open-toed sandals, t-shirts with political or obscene sayings are not acceptable. Latex gloves are provided.

Attendance and Time

Volunteer attendance is important to the animals' welfare and AAR's operation. Volunteers should notify the volunteer scheduler in advance if they are unable to be present on their schedule day. If you must cancel within 48, text or call the volunteer coordinator; if you must cancel outside of 48 hours, then email the volunteer coordinator. It is your responsibility to make sure the volunteer coordinator receives and acknowledges the message.

All-Volunteer Facility

- We've been operating as an all-volunteer shelter since 2002.
- It takes 25-30 volunteers each day to run the shelter.
- Volunteers for our animal areas: Dog Barn and Cattery
 - ages 14-15 must be accompanied by a parent who is also volunteering
 - ages 16 and older may volunteer without a parent
- We run two animal care shifts 365 days a year: Cattery-8 am and 2 pm; Dog Barn 8 am and 3 pm.
- Volunteering at the shelter involves CLEANING the kennels, exercising and providing affection to the animals, preparing food, giving medication, mopping, cleaning dishes, doing laundry, etc. It is noisy, smelly, dirty work and we work in hot or cold weather, rain or shine. It is NOT JUST PLAYING WITH PUPPIES and KITTENS!
- Parents of volunteers 14-15 years old must DIRECTLY SUPERVISE their child (one per adult) at all times. There is only general supervision on each shift so we rely on both parent and child to do the work required on their shift.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Conduct

Volunteers must accept the responsibility of being on-time for their shifts, notifying their volunteer coordinator if they must cancel a shift, and following the instructions of the shift leader.

Volunteers are expected to follow rules of conduct that will protect the safety and interests of all volunteers, staff and animals.

The following are some examples that could lead to dismissal:

- Theft or inappropriate removal of AAR property or that of any AAR volunteer or visitor.
- Altering AAR reports or records.
- Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Creating a disturbance on AAR property or sponsored activities
- Lack of cooperation, or other disrespectful conduct.
- Violation of AAR, federal, state, or local safety and health rules.
- Inappropriate use of telephones, computer equipment or systems, mail, e-mail or other AAR owned equipment.
- Unauthorized disclosure of AAR proprietary or confidential information, including unauthorized photographs of animals or volunteers.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

Smoking

AAR intends to provide a safe and healthy environment. Smoking is prohibited except in designated outside locations.

Drug-Free Environment

AAR provides a drug-free, healthy, and safe environment. While on AAR premises and while conducting AAR-related activities off AAR premises, a volunteer may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Occasionally, AAR may sponsor events where alcohol is served. In such situations, AAR volunteers who consume alcohol are expected to act in a responsible manner.

The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted during volunteer service only if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform the essential functions of the volunteer position effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals or animals in the workplace. Volunteers must advise their shift leader if they are taking any prescription or over-the-counter drug which could adversely affect safety or performance.

Safety

If a volunteer is injured in the course of the volunteer's service, it is important that the volunteer notify his or her shift leader immediately. Volunteers should also complete an incident report and submit the report to the volunteer's shift leader or front desk.

Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, volunteers will be responsible for contacting their volunteer site to inform AAR that they will not be performing their scheduled service. If AAR should close, the Volunteer Office will notify volunteers by phone, text or email.

Safety and Security

Volunteers are responsible for using the following common-sense suggestions to help ensure a safe environment.

- Be aware of any unknown person who comes into your area and is not accompanied by a staff member.
- Never leave your purse, wallet, or other valuable items in sight. Keep these items out of sight. Lock them away. Avoid carrying large sums of money.
- AAR is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property. AAR will not reimburse a volunteer for any personal property which disappears from a volunteer site.

AAR Property

Equipment and Vehicles: Any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles which appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair should be reported to the shift leader or to the Front Desk Volunteers who will put a note in the appropriate mailbox.

Equipment, vehicles, phones, and computers are to be used for AAR business purposes only and may not be borrowed or otherwise used for personal use. Using AAR postage stamps for personal use is prohibited by Federal law.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

AAR is committed to providing volunteers with an environment that is free from discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religions or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. AAR encourages volunteers to bring any incident of sexual harassment to the immediate attention of a shift leader.

Conflict of Interest

AAR is judged, in large part, by the individual and collective performance of its volunteers. AAR must recognize the importance of a volunteer's duty to AAR, and to its members and supporters, to act in a manner that merits public trust and confidence.

Each volunteer must act in all matters in a manner that will safeguard the reputation and integrity of AAR and will preserve and strengthen public confidence in AAR activities. Likewise, volunteers must refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interest conflict, potentially conflict or appear to conflict with those of AAR.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for themselves or for a relative as a result of AAR's business dealings.

The following list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as all-inclusive:

- No volunteer shall accept payment of any kind for services rendered as part of his or her volunteer service.
- Inside information should not be used either for the purposes of gaining advantage for one's self, a close relative or another organization.
- Volunteers are encouraged to take an active interest and to participate in the political and government process. However, volunteers participating do so as individuals and NOT as representatives of AAR.
- No volunteer shall use AAR stationery, or any title of AAR, or refer to AAR, or misidentify him or herself as an employee, in connection with any matter in which he or she is not authorized as a representative of AAR.

Suggestions, Questions and Conflict Resolution

- The AAR Board welcomes and encourages all questions, suggestions, and inquiries regarding the shelter's management, but, they expect that all discussions will be done in a respectful manner. If a volunteer has an issue with any area of the shelter, please put it in writing and hand to a Board member. The Board will then arrange a conference at all parties' convenience. All due respect will be given the volunteer, but the Board has the final say in shelter policy. If the volunteer cannot accept the Board's decision, they will be asked to resign as a volunteer.

AAR Governance

THE BOARD

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - OFFICERS

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS - SHIFT LEADERS - OPERATIONS TEAM

VOLUNTEERS

THE BOARD consists of 9 individuals who have been duly elected and approved. ***The board makes all final decisions*** regarding animal care, animal adoptions, animal surrenders, building operations, purchases, and other AAR policies.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, OFFICERS & OPERATIONS TEAM consists of individuals chosen by the board to manage the shelter and clinic, to provide expert advice and to help decide shelter policy and direction. Because of their experience, length of volunteer time, participation, and support, the Board designates certain volunteers as **SENIOR VOLUNTEERS/SHIFT LEADERS**. These volunteers have access to the shelter, can make *some* decisions if a board member cannot be reached and have meetings with the Board on an advisory basis. Some Senior Volunteers have managerial positions over certain areas of the shelter's operation.

All volunteers are encouraged to ask the Board or a Senior Volunteer about policy, animal care, and other decisions. All volunteers are the eyes and ears of the shelter regarding the animals' health and the building's safety; so relay all information about an animal's behavior or a potential hazardous situation to the Board or a Senior Volunteer. NEVER attempt to care for an animal or fix a problem by yourself.

E-mail - execdirector@aartexas.org

AAR maintains an e-mail list that it uses to communicate with all volunteers. The purpose is to keep volunteers updated regarding events, animal adoptions, animal care, new policies, and other relevant information. The e-mails are intended for general information and guidelines. If you have a question about an e-mail, please *speak* with a Board or Executive Committee member regarding it.

Meetings

The Board schedules meetings during the year. They meet with the Senior Volunteers to discuss fundraising, events, policy, and other pertinent issues. The Board schedules all-volunteer meetings to discuss events and policy & event-specific meetings. Any volunteer may ask for a private one-on-one meeting with a board member to discuss issues. The Board requests that no group of volunteers meet *using the AAR name* unless a Board Member is present or notified. (This is not an attempt to stop casual get-togethers amongst volunteers, but please do not call other volunteers and say you want to have an AAR meeting).