



## **Big Fluffy Dog Rescue New Dog Survival Guide**

Thank you for opening your heart and home to a big fluffy dog. Our dedicated staff have spent a lot of time putting together this guide to familiarize you with our policies and procedures concerning fostering a dog for us, and to help make your dog's transition to your new home as smooth as possible. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact your foster or adoption coordinator.

The following sections will give you an idea of what to expect and hopefully answer any questions you may have.

### **Picking your dog up from transport:**

**If you are fostering a dog:** before you pick up your foster dog, make sure you have completed a foster contract [HERE](#):

**If you are adopting a dog:** your adoption contract and payment have been recorded! Congratulations.

### **Getting your dog from our transport staff:**

#### **LEASHES**

\*\*\* We require all fosters and adopters to bring a slip lead or martingale/no slip collar to pick up your foster dog. \*\*\*

If our drivers are kind enough to give you one of our leads, we would ask that you make a donation to the rescue to cover the cost. This is for the safety of your new pet. There have been too many occurrences of a scared/overwhelmed dog getting loose by pulling out of regular collars. A slip lead will prevent this from happening.

**NO RETRACTABLE LEASHES:** BFDR does not approve of this type of leash for any dog. Even the most beloved house dog will run in terror of the noise they make when they clatter on the ground. For a dog right off transport, this sound is terrifying and will spook them into a dead run. Trust me, this has happened. Please do not bring one to transport. In fact, we recommend you NEVER use one on your Big Fluffy Dog.

Please read this dog loss prevention document BEFORE picking up your new dog. Several times a year dogs get loose from their families. We have a fabulous success rate for catching these wayward souls, but we would rather not have to try to catch one again. The actions listed in the document below are vital to recovering a lost dog.

[Lost Dog Quick Action Guide](#)

**Flight risk:** Many of our dogs have come from difficult situations and are not quite used to living in a home or having a family who loves them. Therefore, they can all be considered somewhat of a flight risk. Your new family member may or may not know his/her name, may have only been in a car 3 times in his/her life, and is starting off on a whole new endeavor. We do everything in our power to make sure your dog is delivered to you safely. We make sure your pooch arrives safe and sound, and we make sure your new dog comes off our vans safely. If our drivers turn your leash around to use as a slip lead, please leave it on your dog until everyone in your family is in the car and the doors are shut and secure. Only then is it safe to remove the slip lead. When you get your pet home, we ask that you use the same lead that was handed to you to transfer the dog from car to yard, house, or to leash walk. Our primary goal is to have your first interaction with your pet be safe for everyone involved. Once home, please keep a watchful eye on your pet when he/she is out in the yard. Leaving a leash on your dog at all times for the first week or so is a great idea. That way if you need to grab your dog quickly you will be able to do so without worrying about getting your hands in places they might not want to be. For all new dogs, it's never a great idea to leave your dog outside unattended and off leash. If your dog gets scared it's much easier to grab a dragging leash than a quick moving fluff ball.

**Retractable leashes:** Please leave them at home! We will NOT put one of these leashes any dog at transport. (In case you missed the message on page one.....)

If you have any questions about whether your dog is a flight risk, please reach out to your coordinator. They will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Water at Transport:** It is always a good idea to bring a water bottle and bowl so they can rehydrate. However, you do not want to let them have an abundance of water as this can contribute to a deadly condition called Bloat. You can learn to recognize the signs of bloat by reading this:

[Dog Bloat: Causes, Signs, and Symptoms](#)

If you suspect your dog has bloat, please call your coordinator immediately.

## **Records**

Your dog will arrive with a packet containing everything we know about your dog. Medical records, vaccine records, shelter pull records (if applicable), and many other great tidbits are included in your packet. Be sure to get your dog's packet from the transport crew.

**Transport times are approximate.** Transport leaves Tennessee with a predetermined route and approximate arrival time. The tracking link you are provided will update and refresh all night as your dog(s) make(s) their way towards your home. As anyone who has traveled knows, there is always the potential for delays. We cannot control bad weather, accidents, road construction, and overturned cattle trucks (yes it has happened). The link will serve as your lifeline to keep up to date on your dog's arrival. Your patience is appreciated when dealing with any unforeseen circumstances that may occur during our travels from TN to your pet's destination.

### **Bringing your new dog home:**

Please read this link on Trigger Stacking. It is very, very helpful. [Trigger Stacking: How We Set Our Dogs Up To Fail](#)

If your resident dogs are not used to sharing their homes with other dogs, it may be helpful to introduce them on neutral territory. It is very common for the new dog and resident dogs to take a couple of days to warm up to each other. If you have cats, make sure they have a safe place to retreat to until they are used to the new dog. Never leave any dog unsupervised with young children.

Your new dog may be tired, wired or anything in between when they first get home. They will need a couple of days to adjust to their new surroundings before they settle into your home.

It is not uncommon for a dog to have a potty accident when he/she comes to a new home. This doesn't mean they aren't house trained. They will just need to learn where to go outside, and what the rules of your home are. Please be patient with them until they learn what you expect from them. Part of being a dog parent is working with the dog to acclimate it to new surroundings. It is your opportunity to teach the dog basic manners, thus making the dog better suited for home life when it is adopted. We suggest that you treat every dog that comes in your home with the patience you would show a 10 week old puppy. Gentle reminders go a long way. Also, until you know that your new dog will respect your fence, we suggest leashing them outside for the first day or two to lessen any chance of a scared dog getting over a fence.

**Feeding your new pet:** Some dogs have some digestive upsets after traveling. If this is the case, you can feed your foster dog a bland diet of boiled rice and cooked chicken or hamburger. After a day or two of this you can begin to mix their regular dog food in. We suggest using Nature's Recipe Chicken, Sweet Potato and Pumpkin dry food for new dogs. This is easily digestible for them.

### **Living with your new dog.**

As a proud parent of a new Big Fluffy Dog (of any size), you are responsible for providing your pet with food, fresh water, exercise, and love. If the dog has been crate trained, we would like you to continue with that. What your new dog most needs is patience. You are getting a dog who is probably very confused. These dogs have come from different backgrounds, many have been terrified in shelters, in southern foster homes, and then have been stuck on a transport vehicle for two days. They are stressed and as a foster or new adopter, it is important to be understanding. We also want to set up a new dog up for success during this adjustment period. This means feeding them away from other animals in the beginning, no high value treats given. It also means not bringing them to meet extended family or friends just yet. Let their first few days with you be a time of decompression. Take it easy, and work on building a relationship and a routine.

Your dog should arrive in good health. If your dog needs to be seen by a vet, prior approval by a BFDR coordinator MUST be attained to qualify for payment by the rescue.

**Medical Care for Foster Dogs:** If your dog is in foster care, and has any medical needs, please contact your coordinator for any and all vetting issues. We have specific vets that we work with and will schedule you an appointment for routine care. Per your foster contract, you have agreed that care for

your foster dog is the responsibility of the rescue, and the rescue will make decisions as to what course of action to take in all vetting situations. Once approved, any addition charges incurred that are not pre-approved will NOT be covered by the rescue. All our dogs are seen by a vet before traveling but there is always the possibility of them picking up something during their travels. BFDR buys medication in bulk for common ailments and will provide medication if needed. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, you can bring the dog to the nearest animal hospital. Life threatening constitutes of immediate danger of death.

**Preventative medications:** Your dog should arrive with two months of flea and tick prevention, as well as two to three months of heartworm prevention. Should you run out of medication while you have your dog in foster care, fill out the following form:

[Flea/Tick/Heartworm Meds Request](#)

Please allow 1-2 weeks delivery time for your preventatives.

**Insurance for Adopted Dogs:** If you have adopted your Big Fluffy Dog, we strongly recommend signing up for Trupanion Insurance for your pet. The first month of coverage is completely free! If you have any questions, please reach out to your adoption coordinator.

**Vacation Coverage:** We realize you have a life outside of fostering dogs. If you have a vacation planned, and want to bring your foster dog with you, just let us know. If you are going away, and can't bring your dog, please let us know at least 14 days in advance and we will find you a vacation foster. We need ample time to prepare, so the sooner you know any dates you will need care, the better. Please let your coordinator know the details of any planned trips, the dates you will be gone, and of course, the best home for your pet while you are travelling.

**Keeping your new dog safe:** You are your dog's savior. You are their knight in shining armor and they are glad to call your home theirs. Unfortunately, it may take some time (some articles say up to one year) for your dog to be fully adjusted and settled in your home. Please read, read, and reread the steps listed below:

- 1) You should consider any dog a **flight risk** for the first few weeks they are in your care. We ask that you take extra precaution when taking your dog out on walks, runs, etc. Make sure all harnesses are properly fitted. 2) Keep using a martingale collar, or no-slip lead as needed when out on walks. Double leashing by tying one to your waist is a great trick! 3) We ask that you not leave first floor windows open when you are not home as it is easy for a dog to climb out. 4) We ask that you and your children take extra care when opening doors to the great outdoors. Check where your dog is and make sure he or she cannot bolt out an open door. 5) Do not leave your new dog out in your fenced in yard unattended. Ever. Even for 2 minutes. Let him/her drag a leash or a long line (25-foot leash) so you can catch him easily if you need to. 6) Loud noises may terrify your dog. Fireworks, trucks banging, anything loud may cause your dog to bolt. Having a new dog drag a leash even inside provides a great way to easily catch your dog and keep it from escaping. 7) ALL of the above things have happened. We lose and recover multiple dogs every year. Following these instructions will help minimize the number of dogs who go missing every year. 8) If your dog does get lost, contact your coordinator immediately. We have a protocol in place for lost dog recovery.

### **Finding your foster dog its forever home:**

We assign each dog an adoption coordinator, and your coordinator will be in touch with you during your dog's first week with you. After 5 days of living with your foster, please fill out this [Foster Evaluation Form](#). This will allow your coordinator to learn more about your dog's personality and help find them the perfect home. We want to find the best home possible and the more info we have the better job we can do. You are now the expert on your foster dog.

First and foremost, if you fall in love with your foster dog and decide to make it a permanent part of your family, we whole heartedly support it. There is no better way to know if a dog is a good fit for your family than having it live at your house. Please let your coordinator know ASAP, and we will let you know the steps to go from foster to adopter. The sooner you let us know, the better as there have been circumstances of potential adopters being very disappointed when someone decides to keep a dog.

Otherwise, the coordinator will go through the applications for your dog, and once a suitable match has been made, we will put you and the potential adopter in touch then the two of you can set up a time for the family to meet your foster dog. We appreciate your input as to whether you think the family is the right one for your foster dog. Remember, you are now the expert on your foster dog.

### **The Big Day: Adoption**

The ultimate goal in being a foster parent is sending them to their forever home. This day is always bittersweet. While fostering you have most likely fallen in love, but it should help to know that we have done everything possible to find your foster dog the right family.

Fostering brings you and your family many things. It brings joy, frustration, happiness, and the knowledge that you were able to help save a life. You are a vital part of our organization, and we value everything that you do for the dogs.

From all of the Big Fluffies,

Thank you!!