

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF VERO BEACH
AND
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FL, INC.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization and I want to thank you for deciding to include us in your life. Whether your knack is stuffing envelopes, cuddling with the cats, educating the public, walking the dogs or working on special projects, you are making a positive contribution and a difference in the lives of the animals at our shelter.

My door is always open to you and I hope you will be comfortable coming to me with questions, comments and suggestions.

In this manual you will find:

- Our Mission
- Our Statement of Purpose
- Community Benefits and Services
- Shelter Policies
- Scheduling and Sign-In Procedures
- Hours of Operation
- Important Contact Information
- Emergency Evacuation Information
- Adoption and Receiving Process
- Volunteer Code of Ethics

Tails are wagging and cats are meowing in excitement over your participation!

Sincerely,

Phaedra Kohler –Volunteer Coordinator

Mission

The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County, FL, Inc. makes a better community for its people and animals by:

- Providing humane care and shelter for homeless animals
- Placing adoptable pets in permanent loving homes
- Promoting spaying and neutering of companion animals
- Promoting responsible pet ownership and the respect for all life through humane education.
- Protecting animals from cruelty
- Pledging to be advocates for animal protection

Serving Indian River County Since 1953

Statement of Purpose

We believe that every living thing, derived from creation, has an intrinsic value. The primary purpose and motivating concern of the Society is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures. To guide the Society in its application of this belief, the following principles are set forth:

- It is unnecessary to kill animals needlessly or for entertainment or to cause animal pain or torment.
- It is man's responsibility to provide adequate food, shelter and care for animals in his care. The use of animals for medical, educational or commercial experimentation or research, should be discouraged unless absolutely necessary.
- Animals for display, impoundment or as pets must be confined in a humane manner.
- Domestic animals must not be permitted to propagate to an extent that leads to overpopulation and misery.
- It is wrong to maintain animals that are to be used for food in a manner that causes them discomfort or denies them an opportunity to develop and live in conditions that are reasonably natural for them.
- It is wrong to kill animals for food in any manner that does not result in instantaneous unconsciousness. Methods employed should cause no more than minimum apprehension.

PET OVERPOPULATION: The Society is confronted daily with tragic overpopulation of domestic cats and dogs in our community; we are committed to sheltering the animals produced by this problem and toward developing programs to reduce overpopulation.

SHELTERING OF LOST AND UNWANTED PETS: The Society will maintain a facility for the purpose of housing unwanted pets, livestock and wildlife. Professional standards of sheltering will be strived for, and programs will be maintained and developed to help in reuniting lost pets with owners and placing homeless animals in new and responsible homes. All pets adopted from the shelter will be sterilized at the time of adoption.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS: The Society will endeavor to help community efforts to eliminate the mistreatment and abuse of animals and, when necessary, pursue the prosecution of individuals abusing animals.

RELEASE OF ANIMALS FROM SHELTER: Under no circumstances shall the Society release animals for the purpose of biomedical research. Release of domestic animals will only be accomplished through the return of lost pets to their owners or to lifelong responsible homes.

COMMUNITY ANIMAL CONTROL: The Society shall encourage and support governmental efforts to create and enforce laws which are in the best interest of domestic animals in our community.

BLOOD SPORTS: The Society is opposed to all blood sports such as dog fighting, cock fighting, hog hunting, greyhound racing and similar activities. It is, therefore, the Society's policy to pursue legal action when possible to end these cruel events.

COSMETIC SURGERY ON ANIMALS: It is the Society's policy to oppose any surgical procedures that are painful, distressful, or those done solely for cosmetic purposes. Exception

will be where such cosmetic surgery may be beneficial, in the opinion of the Society's Executive Director, to the continuing and ongoing health and well-being of the animal and is performed at a time when the animal is already anesthetized for emergency or required surgery; i.e., the removal of front and rear dew claws on puppies/dogs during spay/neuter operations.

ADOPTION PROGRAM: The Society will maintain an adoption program to place healthy and well-adjusted pets in responsible homes, No animal shall be adopted for the following purposes: watch dog, hunting dog or mouser. Animals will be adopted to individuals who can provide a suitable home. Sterilization is required on all pets prior to adoption.

INJURED AND ORPHANED WILDLIFE: The Society will accept and provide care for wildlife. The ultimate objective in the care and rehabilitation of wild animals will be to release them into their native habitat or to end suffering by humane euthanasia.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: An estimated 40% of all living species are now threatened with extinction as a result of pollution, trapping, hunting and/or destruction of habitat. The Society will encourage and assist federal and state efforts to broaden their programs for the protection and propagation of threatened and endangered species.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING: The Society is opposed to all hunting practices that result in cruelty to wildlife. The Society recognizes that the need for human subsistence may on occasion, necessitate the killing of wildlife. It is the goal of the Society to strive to improve the quality of life for animals by eliminating cruel hunting practices and irresponsible game management practices through the encouragement of ethical stewardship for wildlife and its environment. Under no conditions will the Society condone commercial and sport trapping of fur-bearing animals. Trapping done for population control, disease control or habitat preservation should only be encouraged if the method of capture is humane.

EUTHANASIA: Euthanasia will be employed in cases of animals with health or behavioral problems which render them unadoptable; animals who are suffering from injuries or diseases, and those for which responsible homes are not available. The Society will perform euthanasia through the most humane method available, injection of sodium pentobarbital.

Community Benefits and Services

The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County was founded to make a better community for its people and animals. In a typical year, the Humane Society receives over 7,000 animals, both domestic and wild. No animal is ever turned away due to injury, illness or lack of donation. We are the only animal shelter in Indian River County.

People and animals in our community benefit from the following programs and services that we provide:

- Adoption counseling for placement of homeless animals
- Pet "lost and found" program – reuniting lost pets with caring owners
- Financial assistance for spay/neuter of pets of low income owners
- Free Pet ID tags
- Rescue and aid for injured animals
- Disaster training and assistance
- Investigation and prosecution of complaints of cruelty and neglect

- Resource information for animal welfare and adoption
- “Foster pet care” for pets of limited income owners facing a crisis
- Pet behavior help and advice
- Canine training classes – obedience, rally and agility
- Nursing home/assisted living pet therapy visits
- Humane education for schools, community groups and service organizations
- Youth “Care Cadet” program
- Volunteer Program
- Private Euthanasia provided at no charge
- Pet Bereavement Counseling

Shelter Policies

Appropriate Attire~ must be worn when working at the shelter or at off site locations. This consists of volunteer shirt and name badge at all times, and long pants and enclosed toe shoes if working with the animals. We recommend that you refrain from wearing dangling earrings or bracelets and necklaces for your own safety.

Lockers~ are provided in the volunteer lounge but you must bring your own lock. The shelter is not responsible for lost belongings. Please leave valuables at home or lock them securely in your car.

Visitors~ and personal guests are welcome to come for a detailed tour of the facility if prearranged with the volunteer coordinator. They will not be allowed to “help out” in the animal areas and must be treated the same as a regular member of the public when viewing animals. (see adoption procedures)

Alcohol and Drug Policy~ The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County is committed to providing a safe, efficient and productive environment for all employees and volunteers. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the facility may pose serious safety and health risks. While on HSVB premises and while conducting business-related activities off premises, no employee or volunteer may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted at the facility only if it does not impair a volunteer or employee’s ability to perform essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals.

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment~ The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual’s sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, it should be reported to your supervisor immediately. If the supervisor is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, you should immediately contact the Executive Director or designee. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear

of reprisal or retaliation. All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated.

Accident Policy~ In the case of accidents that result in injury including bites and scratches, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, must be reported to a supervisor and/or Volunteer Coordinator immediately. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws. There is a first aid kit located in the Volunteer Lounge along with accident/incident reports. A report must be filled out and signed by both the volunteer and the supervisor.

Smoking~ The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is only permitted in specifically designated areas. Smoking is not allowed in any HSVB vehicle or areas where animals are kept.

Health and Safety~ To assist in providing a safe and healthful environment for volunteers, employees, clients and visitors HSVB has established a workplace safety program. The program is a top priority for HSVB.

- When working in the facility you are advised to wear long pants and enclosed toe shoes.
- Do not try to carry a load that is too heavy for you. Practice proper lifting procedures and ask for help when you need it.
- During the summer months the heat index can be very high. If you are working outdoors please recognize your limitations. Come in to rest and cool down ~ see handout
- You are strongly advised to update your tetanus vaccination and keep it current while volunteering at the shelter.
- The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County reserves the right to have the final determination regarding volunteer duties, and may request a doctor's confirmation of your ability to perform certain activities.
- Accident Prevention ~ see handout
- Accident Investigation ~ see handout
- Muscular Skeletal Disorders ~ see handout
- Posture/ Lift Techniques ~ see handout
- Bloodborne Pathogens ~ see handout
- Fire Extinguishers ~ see handout
- Office Safety ~ see handout
- Material Safety Data Sheets ~ see handout
- Safety Signs ~ see handout

Disease Control~ HSVB health and disease control procedures must be followed at all times. Be sure you properly sanitize your hands between handling each animal. When cleaning, follow the procedures provided in training.

Grievances~ Any grievances should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator. If the issue is not solved and/or addressed by the Volunteer Coordinator you should go to the Executive Director.

Non-Disclosure~ The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests and success of HSVB. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Trade secrets or technical information
- Computer processes
- Customer lists
- Customer preferences
- Marketing strategies
- Financial records

Volunteers or employees who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to termination of volunteer duties and legal action even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Staff and Volunteer Solicitation Policy~ The following must be approved by the Society's Executive Director or designee before any fundraising activities are conducted:

- Solicitors must be approved by the society and have appropriate documentations required by local, state and federal laws to conduct any activities associated with solicitations.
- Outside fundraising events conducted by businesses, associations, or individuals must be approved beforehand, and a financial accounting of all funds expended and generated must be maintained as required by the Department of Revenue.
- Before conducting solicitations, the name and address of the individual or business to be solicited must be submitted to the Executive Director or her designee for approval.
- Monies and in-kind items donated to the Society are the property of the Society. Monies donated must be given in gross to the Society's business manager. In-kind items must be reported and given to the Executive Director at the Society's headquarters 6230 77th Street or designated location.
- Documentation of donations must include donors name and address as well as dollar amount and/or description of item.

Conflict of Interest~ Staff and volunteers, are to uphold the mission of The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County. We expect the primary interest of the volunteer to be the animals we serve.

- A conflict of interest occurs when the interest of a volunteer or other outside party actually or potentially affects the Society in a negative way.
- A conflict of interest also occurs when a volunteer profits financially from their relationship with the Society.

Background Checks~ The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County will conduct background checks on individuals interested in activities associated with schools, nursing homes and the public.

Volunteer Supervision~ Volunteers must take direction from the staff member that oversees the area where they are assigned. Any concerns with assignments must be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Scheduling and Sign-In Procedures

The sign-in books are located in the Volunteer Lounge. When you come in to volunteer please record your name, date, day, time in and time out in the book designated for your job description.

We ask our volunteers to sign-in and out for a few reasons:

- Grant Writing: Recording your hours enables us to track the number of hours donated by our volunteers. This in turn helps us to obtain funding from various foundations.
- Safety: We need to know who is in the building in the event of an emergency such as fire etc.
- Students: signing in and out lets us track students' volunteer hours for projects, scholarships, and college applications.

Setting up a regular schedule with the Volunteer Coordinator:

- Helps us determine when and where we need our volunteers the most.
- Helps us know who is available to respond to disasters, large-scale animal confiscations etc.

Hours of Operation

The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County's staff is on duty 365 days a year to ensure that the animals are cared for properly. The animals are always our first priority.

The facilities Adoption Center is open to the public:

Tuesday to Sunday from 11am-4pm

Closed to the public for adoptions on Monday

Volunteers are welcome from 8am-5pm 6 days a week (Sundays we leave at 4 pm)

The facilities Receiving Center is open to the public:

Monday-Friday 8am-5:30pm

Saturday 8am-5pm

Sunday 8am-4pm

The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County is closed to the public on the following holidays:

Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Years Day, Easter, Independence Day and Labor Day.

Volunteers are encouraged to sign up for a shift on any of these holidays to help us care for the animals.

Important Contact Information

Adoption Center and Administration ~ 772-388-3331
Receiving Center and Lost and Found ~ 772-388-4592
Volunteer Coordinator ~ 772-388-3892
Sebastian Thrift Store ~ 772-589-0323
Vero Beach Thrift Store ~ 772-567-2044

Emergency Evacuation Information

Over 150 major fires occur in workplaces on an annual basis. Hundreds of tornados touch down annually in the United States. Numerous accidents occur that may prompt evacuation of facilities nationwide.

This section of your handbook will give instructions on what you should do in the event of an emergency evacuation of the HSVB & IRC. Reasons for an evacuation include but are not limited to fire, explosion, chemical spill or leak, severe weather, bomb threat and other unforeseen emergencies.

Procedures for Fire and Explosions

Upon notification of a fire or explosion by the facility PA system, PA tone alarm, fire alarm, or as directed by management, all volunteers should evacuate the building immediately in accordance with the evacuation routes and report to the assigned or nearest evacuation relocation point or location designated at the time.

If smoke and/or heat conditions are encountered while evacuating, remember to stay low to the floor and exit by the nearest door or window. In the event of a major fire, evacuation may have to be delayed until the fire is actually fought under control and/or extinguished. If this situation exists, remain calm and shield yourself from the fire. If you are unable to escape, stuff clothing, rags, etc. in or around all cracks to help keep the smoke from entering your location. It is most important to try and notify someone of your location. If the telephone is out of service, try to get someone's attention by yelling or making noises. ABOVE ALL, remain calm until help arrives.

Procedures for Severe Weather

Upon notification of impending severe weather, i.e., tornado warning or severe thunder storm warning, high winds, and where immediate danger poses a threat to our facility, the following procedure will be followed:

When severe weather seems possible, a management official will monitor the weather media available at the time.

If a weather alert or warning is issued for the county, the Safety Officer will notify employees and volunteers of the potential for disaster. You will be asked to proceed to a Severe Weather Safe Spot.

After severe weather has passed, a "Clear Weather Announcement" will be made.

Severe Weather Safe Spots

Adoption Building- the safe area in the adoption building is the hallway located directly outside the treatment and surgical area.

Receiving Building- the safe area in the receiving building is the hallway located directly outside of the Animal Care Manager and Cruelty Investigations Office.

In the event one of these areas is determined unsuitable- the second location will become the central gathering location.

Emergency Evacuation Areas and Exits

Adoption Building- all exits are clearly marked in each area of the building. Evacuate to the front parking lot.

Receiving Building- all exits are clearly marked in each area of the building.
Evacuate to the front parking lot.

In the event of the front parking lot becoming unsafe- the parking lot behind both buildings will be used as the alternate Emergency Evacuation Area.

Adoption and Receiving Process

Receiving Center Procedures

- Lost companion animals are brought to the facility by City or County Animal Control, or by concerned citizens who befriend a lost animal.
- Lost companion animals are held in our quarantine area for a minimum of five days for dogs and 3 days for cats. However, the average holding time is nine days. During this time, lost animals are routinely checked against missing pet reports filed by concerned owners. In addition, they are evaluated for general health and temperament.
- At the end of the required holding time, lost pets are either moved to our facilities Adoption Center where we will find them a loving home, or humanely euthanized due to health or temperament problems.
- Exceptions to the minimum holding period of lost or stray animals would include those who are harboring contagious diseases, suffering from severe injuries or feral. Under these conditions, euthanasia is often the most humane option.
- Companion animals, who are no longer wanted by their owners, are accepted by the facility.
- No companion animal is ever turned away due to age, illness, temperament or because the owner cannot afford to make a donation.
- The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County does not impose a holding time on owner surrenders but in general, the average pet turned in remains at the facility eleven days while its health and behavior are evaluated.
- Animals brought to us because of severe behavioral problems, chronic disease or advanced age, are generally euthanized within 24 hours. It is our belief that to do otherwise, to keep any animal caged with no hope of placement into a new home, would be inhumane.
- Euthanasia is always an emotional topic of discussion. Any questions or concerns regarding euthanasia should be brought directly to the Volunteer Coordinator only and not discussed with staff members.

Please keep the following in mind when you are tempted to discuss euthanasia with the staff:

“SOME CONSIDERATION DUE”

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The following excerpt is from The Mazer Report, a publication for and about the interests of Euthanasia Technicians.

Dos and Don'ts: For Board members, volunteers, co-workers and (yes, even supervisors)

- DO NOT ask the whereabouts of an animal who is no longer in the cage or run. Please, if the animal was adopted, and you have shown a special interest in that particular

creature, someone will likely tell you, some euthanasia technicians, on some days, might not mind discussing the matter, but then, you have no way of knowing which days are acceptable to them, or which animal did or did not present the technician with an emotional problem.

- DO NOT assume that because you “volunteer” your time so unselfishly as a board member or volunteer that you are more dedicated than the “paid” worker on staff and that your caring for animals is any greater. ALSO, do not assume that because you are not required to euthanize animals you are, somehow, in a superior position to those who do put animals down.
- DO NOT assume as a board member, involved with other board members in making decisions and setting policy regarding the operation of a facility, that you should be in that facility making suggestions to employees about the day-to-day operation; or which animal may or may not be euthanized.
- DO NOT assume that your co-workers who are involved in euthanasia are not so sensitive to the tragedy and waste as animals are destroyed although they do not appear to be hurting as you are in the face of those deaths. Do not assume that Euthanasia Technicians are not hurting “on the inside” when you encounter them in an especially good mood, even laughing for no obvious reason.
- DO NOT EVER say to (a) the one who chooses, (b) the one who holds, or, to (c) the one who injects: “I could not “DO” your job. I guess I must love animals too much, I don’t know, but I just couldn’t “DO your job”. When this happens, whether or not it is what you intended to communicate, you have just told that person that he or she is uncaring, callous, without feeling, even a bit mean, and, compared to you, he or she must hate animals.

Adoption Center Procedures

- The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County has a thorough pre-adoption health screening program and pet sterilization policy that allows us to place companion animals in permanent, responsible homes.
- Animals determined to be in good health and of sound temperament are housed in the facilities Adoption Center after their initial holding period.
- Over 93% of the animals housed in the Adoption Center are adopted into new loving homes with an average stay of only 4 to 6 weeks at the facility.
- Individuals and families interested in adopting are required to complete an application before taking an animal out of his or her kennel/condo for a visit.
- The application gives us a profile of the prospective owner’s needs and desires thus helping the adoption counselor and applicant make the best choice in the selection of a companion for the home. This also helps us to determine if the applicant has the time and commitment for the training and care the animal will require.
- While the majority of applications are approved for adoptions, the following are examples of placements that are unacceptable to HSVB & IRC:
 - Animals who will be permitted to run loose.
 - Animals used for dog fighting or hunting
 - Animals used for utility purposes such as attack dogs, guard dogs or mousers (cats)
 - Animals used for breeding purposes

If a placement is deemed to be not in the pets' best interest, the adoption will be denied and counseling will be provided to direct the applicant towards a companion who may be more suitable. This process must be completed only by an adoption counselor.

Volunteer Code of Ethics

As a volunteer representing The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County, your conduct and interaction with staff, other volunteers and the public is expected to always be professional and courteous. By volunteering, you are making a commitment to staff and animals to carry out, to the best of your abilities, the tasks you have pledged to perform.

The Volunteer Code of Ethics clarifies the expectations and principals for The Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County volunteers. Should a volunteer display unprofessional, dishonest or disrespectful behavior or exhibit a lack of self discipline, the volunteer will be asked to leave the premises. Such behavior could be grounds for termination of volunteer status.

As a Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County Volunteer, I pledge to:

Respect

- Respect others even though I may not agree with them
- Display courtesy, sensitivity, consideration and compassion for people and animals
- Use good judgment in recognizing the scope of authority of staff members

Safety

- Keep safety at the forefront of all volunteer activities
- Follow the rules presented to me in training
- Respect and use equipment and supplies as they are intended
- Report all injuries immediately to a staff person

Quality

- Perform all tasks to the best of my ability
- Ask for help when needed
- Recognize training is essential to maintain safe shelter practices

Self Discipline

- Recognize my limitations and those of others
- Set boundaries for myself – know my limits with the animals and other activities
- Hold myself accountable for the commitments I undertake

Communication

- Recognize I communicate both verbally and non-verbally
- Listen to the needs of others
- Advise shelter personnel of relevant information regarding the animals and my involvement at the shelter

Commitment

- Recognize that commitment comes from within
- Respect that people and animals count on me to honor my commitments
- Work together with staff and other volunteers to meet HSVB's goals

Welfare

- Value my role in the maintenance and growth of the organization
- Strive to promote a positive environment
- Respect and support all people and animals

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Volunteer

Date

