



Volunteer Handbook

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at the Franklin County Animal Shelter! We rely on volunteers like you to help us with jobs like cleaning kennels, scooping cat litter, washing dishes, doing laundry, and walking dogs. The goal of this short handbook is to help acquaint you with some of the dos and don'ts of the shelter, as well as some basic procedures.

What We Do

We are a non-profit animal shelter focused on providing temporary care and shelter to stray, homeless, and abandoned animals within our community. We are a no-kill shelter, which means we never euthanize animals due to a lack of space. Stray animals generally arrive via our contracted towns' Animal Control Officers. After we attempt to find their owners, unclaimed animals are fixed, blood-tested, micro-chipped, vaccinated, and offered for adoption.

Shelter Layout

The shelter has several different animal care areas. The **Kitten Room** is located just off the lobby through the glass door marked "Kitten Room". **First Cat** is located just off the lobby through the screen door. All our available, adoptable cats live here. The **Laundry Room** is located off the First Cat room. On the other side of First Cat, you'll find our **Second Cat** room. This is where cats waiting for or recovering from spay/neuter surgery stay, as well as any special needs animals. Our **Dish Room**, where all animal-related dishes and litterboxes are washed, is located through the swinging half door in Second Cat. The **Dog Room** is located through the swinging metal door, all dogs found there are available for adoption. Beyond Dog Room, you'll find our **Holding** area, the first stop for all dogs and cats that arrive at the shelter. This area is closed to volunteers and the general public; only employees are allowed there. Hand sanitizer should always be used between handling animals in one room and handling animals in another room.

What to Wear

Closed-toed shoes are required. Business casual attire should be worn: plain t-shirts, button-downs, polos, or sweatshirts, and knee-length shorts, capris, or khakis/jeans are required. No leggings, tank-tops, shorter-than-knee-length shorts, sandals, flip-flops, or open-toed shoes are allowed.

Signing in

Each time you come to the shelter to volunteer, be sure to sign in on the Volunteer Sign-In Sheet located at the Volunteer Information table just outside of First Cat Room. After your work is done for the day, sign yourself out on the same line.

Volunteer Tasks

Younger volunteers accompanied by a parent may only be able to socialize cats, scoop litterboxes, or help with laundry. Teenage and adult volunteers are encouraged to scoop litterboxes; assist with cleaning kennels; wash, dry, and fold laundry; wash dishes and litterboxes; and walk dogs as allowed by the kennel staff.

- **Laundry:** All dirty wash is placed in the gray bin next to the washing machine in the laundry room. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bleach and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup detergent in each load. Please don't overfill the washer. In the warm weather months, clothes should be brought out to our clothesline to dry, but in cooler months, the dryers can be utilized. Clean the lint filter after each load and check the lint filter before starting a new load. Clean, dry laundry should be folded and put away on the appropriate shelf.
- **Dishes/Litterboxes:** There are two sinks located in our dish area: the large sink to the left is for washing litterboxes and litter-related items. The smaller sink to the right is for washing food-related items. The procedure for either is the same: wash it thoroughly, rinse, soak the item in the large black bleach bucket on the floor for 10 to 15 minutes, rinse again, then lay out to dry. Dry dishes can be stored in the cabinets above, and litterboxes are stored in the closet in Second Cat.
- **Cleaning Kennels:** Check with Kennel Staff for a demonstration of how to clean cat and dog kennels. If cleaning kennels in Second Cat, pay attention to "Don't Let Me Out" signs, as they indicate a cat may be sick and contagious. Those kennels should be left to Kennel Staff, unless otherwise directed by them.
- **Dog Walking:** Check with the Kennel Staff before walking a dog. They will instruct you on the proper method to take a dog out of its kennel, help you to teach good leash manners to the dog, and explain how to put the dog back in its kennel. Only dogs with green dots on their kennels should be walked by volunteers. During the spring, summer, and fall months (or when there is no snow), dogs should be walked on our walking path, accessed just behind Holding, or taken up to the Dog Park.

Dog Park Rules: Only one dog at a time is allowed in the Dog Park unless directed otherwise by Kennel Staff. Enter through the first gate, close the gate behind you and your dog, make sure the park is empty, then enter through the second gate, and close the gate behind you and your dog. Before releasing your dog, ensure that the gate on the far side of the park is closed and latched.

When to Volunteer

The shelter is staffed 365 days a year, including all holidays, generally from 8 am to 4 pm (holidays are staffed from 8 am to 11 am and 3 pm to 4pm). Volunteers are welcome to ring the doorbell if they choose to come during our closed-to-the-public hours. Be aware that at times our staff may not be in hearing of the doorbell (especially on Sundays and holidays), so please be patient if your initial ringing isn't heard.

Community Service

The Franklin County Animal Shelter will accept volunteers who are required to have a certain number of hours of community service for the following reasons: school/class requirement, or court-ordered service for minor misdemeanor charges, including traffic violations and marijuana possession. We will not accept volunteers who have been convicted of shoplifting, theft, or assault-related charges. We do require a copy of your court-order, with the charge clearly listed, in order to approve your application for community service. In addition:

- Signing in and out each visit is **mandatory** for your hours to count. We will not provide a letter of completion for hours that are not recorded on the Volunteer Sign-in Sheet. **A 72-hour notice is required to receive a letter of completion.** You may email your request to jennifer@fcanimalshelter.org. Be sure to include to whom the letter should be addressed in your email.
- Community Service volunteers should keep busy while at the shelter. Tasks should include dish-washing, laundry, kennel cleaning, and dog-walking as needed. Sitting in First Cat or Kitten Room for extended periods of time is not countable as Community Service. **If you have finished all obvious tasks for the day, check with one of our Kennel Staff for more work. If no more work is available that day, you must sign out.**

Event Volunteers

We have three primary events each year that require the help of volunteers: our Maine Mega Yard Sale, generally held in June; Barks & BBQ, generally held in July, and Strut for Strays! 5K Trail Run & Dog Walk, generally held in the fall. If you are interested in volunteering at one of these events, email jennifer@fcanimalshelter.org or call us at 778-2638.