

Foster Family Guidelines

Southeastern Newfoundland Club – Rescue FOSTER FAMILY GUIDELINES

The purpose of Foster Families is to provide a Rescue Newf with a suitable and stable environment for a short period of time while the Rescue Committee locates suitable permanent homes. It also gives the Rescue Committee further information on the health and temperament of rescued dogs.

Fostering one of these Newfs is one of the most rewarding and heartbreaking experiences a family can experience. It is very much like being foster parents to a child. You teach them what is socially acceptable behavior and in most cases the foster family needs to give these Newfs special attention, they probably are not housebroken, know little or nothing about a leash, and in many cases have been physically and/or mentally abused. After you put in the time necessary to bring these dogs from where they are now to being socially acceptable members of your household they are placed with another family.

One of the most interesting observations you will make is the mental growth of these Newfs. Most have little or no training, but by their nature will respond very quickly and admirably to the attention, love and time you take with them.

Housing – The Newfoundland is, by nature, a companion and needs the contact that living IN the home can provide. The Rescue Committee very strongly urges the use of a crate when the dog is to be left for any period of time, when feeding and when sleeping in at night. The Newf is most likely to know nothing about crates or their purpose, but with persistence and time will come to regard it as their house in the home. It is their safe place and place to go when they have had a big Newfy day. It also provides you with the assurance you will have a house left when you return from being away or cannot watch them. Foster homes must have fenced yards and be willing to let the rescue dog live inside the house.

Medical – The Rescue Committee **MUST** make the appointments for medical services rendered for any rescue dogs. The Rescue Committee will make sure that any dog you take into your home will have the basic shots, including rabies. It may be up to you to provide transportation necessary to get the dog back and forth to the vet's offices. The stress of just moving some of these dogs can cause them to have loose stools and/or in some cases explosive diarrhea. As a Foster Family you need to be prepared to deal with this. If it persists for more than a couple of days the Rescue Committee should be contacted and appropriate action will be advised. If a rescue dog is on medication prescribed by a vet it will be necessary for you to administer the proper dosage as prescribed.

Feeding -- Your best bet for feeding the rescue Newf is in its crate, but remember it is now part of your pack and should be eating what your other dogs are eating unless a vet changes the food or the age of the rescue dog requires a different food. It is not uncommon for the use of supplemental foods to help with loose stools, and the most

likely choices are cottage cheese and boiled rice. The Rescue Committee urges you to stay away from such things as table scraps and snacks (dogs easily become junk food junkies and stomachs are easily upset).

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However, fresh fruits and vegetables are an excellent choice. Dog treats of all kinds are recommended for special accomplishments. A trip to your local ice cream store is not out of the question either!!! It provides them with several experiences in the process of socialization and familiarity with the car/vehicle.

Training -- As current Newf owners you know the value of training. The same goes for the rescue Newf placed in your care. These animals are unknown commodities; what they know and don't know will amaze you. You must assume they know nothing that is not their natural instinct; and, be pleased if they do. If they have some training they may not in your house. The most basic of training is to get them housebroken; if the crate is used the job is easier -- Rescue Committee members can provide help. A collar and leash may be foreign to the rescue Newf but the Rescue Committee will attempt to determine such things before a dog is placed in a foster home. Most of the Newfs that come into rescue are more than willing to please, are generally very intelligent and respond to loving/reward training. The basic training is all we ask of a Foster Family to provide these dogs, but if you are inclined to provide more it will be welcomed by all. Keep a record of their training and accomplishments.

Socialization – This is a very complex issue. The rescue dog should be exposed to as many situations as possible. They need to get out and meet other people of all ages, exposed to and taught about as many conditions as possible -- sliding glass doors, screens, loud noises, busy streets, other dogs behind fences, varying terrain like rocks, concrete, grass, dirt, stairs, carpets, wood floors, linoleum, baths, grooming, other household members and pets, strangers, when to bark and when not to, where to relieve itself, where it is permitted and where it isn't, how to ride in the car (a car ride should not only be to the vets, but for an exciting outing or just a treat).

Grooming – The rescue dog may not have much knowledge of cleanliness and may never have been formally groomed. As a Foster Home you will want to have a presentable dog companion to go for walks and to expose him to society. Baths are recommended and basic grooming is necessary. Hairballs and knots are dangerous to any dog's health and a Newfy is prone to both. Nails and dew claws need trimming, ears and eyes need attention. A plus to this extra work on your part -- you will have a dog you will be proud to take into public places, he won't smell, they love the attention, and you can hone your grooming skills on a rescue Newf rather than on your prize show animal.

Observation and Record keeping – **Your most important task** is to observe the day-to-day habits and temperament of these rescue dogs. The Rescue Committee will provide forms to keep notes on and specific areas to watch for and correct through training, if necessary. The Rescue Committee will be glad to provide you with assistance in special areas of training. The notes you keep will become part of the dog's file and will let the new family know the dog's exact schedule. Knowing what/where/when the dog eats, time it relieves itself, etc. will help the dog adjust to its new life much faster and easier.

If you feel you can provide a Foster Home for a rescue Newf, please obtain an application from one of the Rescue Committee participants or go to www.senewfs.com and complete the on-line

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Foster Application. As a Foster Home you are welcome to contact any one on the Rescue Committee at anytime with problems and to report major breakthroughs with any of these dogs.

We will assume several things when you call with problems -- the dog is living in the house, it further lives in a crate when necessary, and you are willing to try the suggestions of the person you consult with.

This information has been compiled by the Southeastern Newfoundland Club, as part of their comprehensive rescue program. We are grateful for their generosity in sharing all of their hard work.- NCA 2006