

# Information for Emergency Cat Fosterers

## **Legal Guardianship**

All animals in foster care are the property of the Austin Animal Center and are subject to all applicable Austin Animal Center policies, rules and restrictions.

The Austin Animal Center reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.

If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal upon request by Austin Animal Center staff, or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and the Austin Animal Center may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.

## **Health and Temperament**

AAC will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical treatment, training and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the animal.

## **Guidelines for Care and Handling**

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate controlled homes where the temperature is kept between 60 and 80° F.
- Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Austin Animal Center's veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.
- Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secure carriers.
- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between animals in your home and foster animals, Austin Animal Center will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster pet for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.
- If a foster pet gets loose, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator immediately.

## **Sick or Injured Fosters**

If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea or have vomited, but are alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, lethargy, yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, previously undocumented hair loss, straining to urinate or defecate, etc., please notify the foster coordinator, and bring the animal to the INTAKE office to be seen by a veterinarian during our clinic hours. If you are fostering a litter of kittens or puppies, even if only one animal is showing symptoms, the entire litter should be brought in.

During clinic hours, as you enter the intake office you will see a sign posted on the counter along with a sign in sheet. Please sign in and begin to fill out one of the "Foster Sick Check" forms (located next to the sign in sheet). It is our intention to have veterinary staff available to provide care for sick foster animals while you wait, and most animals coming in during these hours will be seen and discharged within one hour. However, please be aware that there are times that the veterinary staff assigned to clinic hours will be needed to handle more urgent/emergency situations, so wait times may be longer, or you may be asked to drop off and pick up later.

*The Intake Office is open for clinic hours daily from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.*

*Outside of clinic hours, you may still bring sick animals to the Intake Office, but you will have to drop them off, and we will call you once they have been seen by a veterinarian and are available for pickup. The Intake Office is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. After 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday you may need to knock. Please try to arrive no later than 6:30 p.m. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to drop off earlier in the day, please contact the foster coordinator.*

## **In Case of an After Hours Emergency**

If you have a true emergency before the shelter opens, please try calling the foster program hotline at 512-978-0541; we are frequently able to assist foster care providers outside of business hours. If it goes to voicemail, you can take your foster animal to the North or South Austin Emergency Vet Clinics found here: <http://www.eahnwa.com/>.

When you present your foster animal to the emergency clinic, you must inform the staff there that it is an Austin Animal Center foster animal and provide them with the animal's AAC ID#. The emergency clinic staff will then contact designated AAC staff to verify that treatment can be provided. If the foster parent is unable to provide emergency clinic staff with the animal's AAC ID#, the animal may still be treated, but at the foster parent's expense. In such cases the foster parent may apply for reimbursement from the shelter.

Foster animals taken to the emergency vet clinic for treatment will be kept overnight at the clinic and an Animal Protection officer will be contacted in the morning to transfer the animal back to the shelter for further treatment/care.

## **Contact Information**

Foster Program Hotline: 512-978-0541  
Foster Program Email: [animal.foster@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.foster@austintexas.gov)

Customer Service Phone: 512-978-0500  
Customer Service Email: [animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov)

**To view the Foster Program Manual, please visit [AustinAnimalCenter.org](http://AustinAnimalCenter.org) and click the "Foster" button.**