



des moines county
**HUMANE
SOCIETY**

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Des Moines County Humane Society Volunteer Program

We are so excited you are interested in helping out our local animals. DMCHS relies on volunteers to help us serve the needs of lost, neglected and unwanted animals. There are many other ways to help our animals other than adopting. Thank you for thinking of our four-legged family!

About DMCHS

The mission of DMCHS is to provide shelter and rescue operations for our animals, and secure permanent and loving homes for abandoned, abused or neglected animals while teaching responsible pet ownership and compassion for all living things.

DMCHS is a 501(c)(3) organization that is headed by a board of directors comprised entirely of volunteers. You may also hear us referred to as the Burlington Animal Shelter because we are also the city pound. The city owns the building but we don't receive any funds from them. Our staff consists of a shelter director and a few staff members, all part-time employees. Each staff member is experienced, dedicated and caring, and makes sure each animal receives the attention and care it needs. They are supported by an active group of volunteers.

Purpose of this Handbook

This volunteer handbook is designed to acquaint you with the Des Moines County Humane Society and provide you with information about DMCHS' procedures, working conditions and policies. All volunteers must comply with the provisions of this handbook.

The contents of this handbook are presented as information only. Volunteers serve on an at-will basis and therefore can resign at any time, just as DMCHS can ask that you step down as a volunteer at any time and for any reason.

If you have any questions about this handbook, please feel free to consult with the Shelter Director or Volunteer Coordinator.

Policies-updated July 2016

Age limit

Volunteers interested in direct animal care must be 18 years of age.

Volunteers under the age of 18 are allowed to help with dishes, laundry and general cleaning, but must have a parent or a responsible adult with them. The parent or guardian must sign the volunteer application and attend orientation with them.

Restrictions

Registered sex offenders are not permitted to volunteer at the Des Moines County Humane Society. Anyone convicted of crimes involving abuse of or cruelty to animals is also not permitted to volunteer.

Confidentiality

By signing the volunteer agreement, you agree not to disclose or use any of the shelter's confidential information. This may include information about the shelter's customers, health information, volunteer records and more. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any shelter records, reports or documents without prior management approval. Additionally, volunteers are not authorized to discuss situations involving the shelter with the media. Please do not post negative comments about the shelter or its customers on Facebook or other social media. If you see something on social media about the shelter that needs attention, please refer it to the shelter staff or a board member.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

The Des Moines County Humane Society has a strict policy prohibiting the possession, use, sale or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol in DMCHS buildings or property. The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or other controlled substances on DMCHS property is also prohibited.

Performance Guidelines

The DMCHS corrective action protocol is designed to encourage good behavior amongst volunteers. If a violation occurs, the incident will be evaluated based on its severity, and the shelter manager may issue a warning or ask that the individual(s) involved not return to volunteer at the shelter. Below is a list of violations that may result in corrective action. Please keep in mind; however, this is not an exhaustive list of all possible infractions.

Violations resulting in corrective action:

- Harassment of fellow volunteers, customers, employees or anyone else
- Assault against any person on shelter property

- Fighting on shelter property
- Coercion, intimidation or threatening of any person on shelter property
- Discourteous treatment of others or the use of inappropriate language
- Physical abuse to animals or any intentional act to harm an animal
- Handling of quarantined or other restricted animals
- Posting or removal of notices, signs or writing in any form without specific approval by a staff member
- Unsatisfactory performance of volunteer duties
- Any form of dishonesty
- Violation of the DMCHS Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Theft or unauthorized removal of property belonging to others or to the DMCHS
- Malicious damaging of shelter property or that of fellow volunteers, customers, employees, or anyone else
- Violation of any safety procedure, program or rule, which results in unsafe conditions or carelessness with regard to your own safety or the safety of others
- Smoking in areas where it is prohibited
- Littering or causing unsanitary or unsightly conditions
- Any other conduct which DMCHS deems to be grounds for corrective action

The DMCHS Volunteer Program

All volunteers must complete an application and attend a volunteer orientation session.

Sign In & Out: Every person is required to log in and out when they are volunteering at DMCHS. There is a binder at the front desk where volunteers can log their time. You must also wear your name tag and t-shirt while volunteering at the shelter. This helps shelter staff as well as visitors identify you as a shelter volunteer.

Dress code: Wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Avoid sweaters as they can pull easily from an animal's claws. Closed shoes are strongly recommended. It is also a good idea to have a designated pair of dog walking shoes that you can remove to minimize the chance of bringing home an illness to your own pets. Dangling earrings, especially large hoops, can be dangerous and are not recommended since an animal may grab at them and injure you. Long pants and long sleeves are recommended but not required.

Adoptions: Adoption counseling and decisions are the responsibility of the staff. Please do not recommend an animal to a potential adopter since not every animal is suitable for every adopter, and vice versa. If asked for a recommendation by a visitor, please refer them to a staff member.

Reception Area: The front desk/reception area should only be occupied by those who are working in that area. Please do not hang out around the front desk, and also do not block the

front door. Be observant. If you see someone walk into the shelter, and they are not immediately attended to by a staff member, greet them and offer to direct them to where they wish to go. Please notify staff if you witness anyone who is not a staff member, veterinarian, law enforcement officer, board member or volunteer in "Employees Only" areas.

Handling the animals-Age 18 and over only

Cats

Cats are at high risk of spreading disease to one another. Due to this risk, cats must be treated for possible infectious diseases before they can be mixed in with other cats. Only cats that are already in the cat playroom can be in there. Do not take any cats into the playroom or remove any that are already in there. The following are some additional guidelines for handling cats:

- Only 1 cat at a time can be out of their kennel.
- You can allow the cat to roam the cat room under constant supervision. Do not leave the room and leave a loose cat unattended.
- Parents must accompany small children in the cat room.
- Make sure to return your cat to the kennel it was originally in.
- Do not mix litters of kittens.

Dogs

For the most part, these dogs are not like your own pets-these are shelter dogs. They come to us as strays or unwanted pets. Most have never been trained or disciplined. The dogs get very excited when they see someone coming, so it's important you follow procedures in place to keep yourself and the dogs safe.

- Look for dogs with the same colored star as what you are allowed to walk. DO NOT walk dogs which are a different color than you've been given.
- Before you get a dog out of a kennel, have a leash ready, along with poop bags, treats, toys and whatever else you need. No retractable leashes.
- When you open the kennel door, swing the door inward which will allow you to be in the kennel with the dog without getting trapped
- Keep your dog on a short leash while walking through the shelter to the front door. Go slowly around all corners to ensure you don't meet another dog un-expectedly.
- Keep your dog away from other dogs
- You can take your dog to the outside pens, but you must remain in the pen the entire time with the dog.
- Do not walk dogs on the dentist office property.
- You must clean up any feces and dispose of it in the trash can or dumpster.
- After returning your dog to the kennel, please mark the walking chart appropriately.
- Wash or sanitize your hands before getting another dog.

If you have a problem entering a kennel and removing a dog, or returning it to its kennel, ask a staff member to assist you. Never be afraid to ask for help!

Quarantine Area

Volunteers are never allowed in the quarantine area. These animals are likely dangerous and should only be handled by staff who are trained in proper restraint and handling techniques. If you see someone in this area who is not a staff member, veterinarian, or law enforcement officer, please report this to a staff member or kindly ask them to stay out of the quarantine area.

Distractions

Walking the shelter dogs requires your full attention. This is so you can be aware of behavior issues, medical concerns and your surroundings. The following are not permitted while walking dogs:

- Friends or family
- Your own pets
- Music players
- Talking on the phone or texting

Other Volunteer Duties

There are many tasks and needs for volunteers. We understand that many of our volunteers simply want to walk dogs and play with cats; however, please consider helping with the following additional duties:

Clerical support
Promoting our animals
Monitoring the main kennel area and the cat room during adoption hours
General cleaning including dishes and laundry
Outside maintenance

If you want to know more about any of these duties, or if you have ideas or suggestions for additional duties, please speak with the shelter manager.

Risks of Volunteering

The following are some, but not all, of the risks associated with volunteering at the shelter:

Bites or scratches from dogs or cats

Being knocked down or pulled excessively by a dog

Injuries resulting to wrist, hand, fingers, etc. from a dog leash

Slips, trips or falls resulting from wet floors, kennels or equipment

Hitting your head on objects such as cages, doors, kennel walls, hose boxes, etc.

Water or cleaners getting in eyes

Injuries resulting from cage doors, equipment, etc.

Injuries caused from grooming equipment, such as clipper blades, shears, driers, etc.

Flea/tick bites or ring worm infestation

Internal or external parasites

Zoonotic illness (human illness contracted from animals)

Animal illness exposure to animals at home

Injuries related to lifting animals, food, litter or equipment

Exposure to cleaners, latex gloves, bleach, parasite control products, and other chemicals

Exposure to incidents relating to the public (outbursts, inappropriate contact)

Exposure to incidents relating to the volunteers (outbursts, inappropriate contact)

Exposure to potentially upsetting situations in relation to the condition of the animals.

Damage to clothing from animals, kennels, chemicals, etc.

The Des Moines County Humane Society is not responsible for any loss of personal property or damage to vehicles parked on Burlington Animal Shelter/DMCHS grounds.

To reduce the risk of contracting zoonotic illnesses, spreading diseases to animals within the shelter, and spreading illnesses to your own animals, volunteers should wash their hands or use antibacterial hand sanitizer after handling each animal or handling animal waste. Please also make sure your own animals are up to date with their vaccinations for their safety.

Contact Information

Primary Contact: Burlington Animal Shelter (319) 753-8389
Kandi Glick, Shelter Director

Volunteer Coordinators:

Kristy Wellman (319) 470-6114

Sue Van Meter (319) 457-0276

Volunteer Hours

Tuesday-Friday 3:00-6:00 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Acknowledgment

I have received and read a copy of the Des Moines County Humane Society's Volunteer Handbook. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to ask questions about anything I do not understand regarding the information presented in this handbook. If I have not asked any questions, it is because I understand the contents of the volunteer handbook.

I understand the contents of this volunteer handbook are presented to me for guidance and orientation only. I understand that as a volunteer at-will, I am free to resign at any time, just as the Des Moines County Humane Society is free to terminate me any time.

I understand it is my responsibility to abide by all of Des Moines County Humane Society's policies set forth in this handbook. I further understand the procedures and policies described in the handbook are subject to change at any time.

Volunteer signature

Date

Name (Please print)

Parent/Guardian signature (if under 18)

Date

Volunteer Coordinator/Manager signature

Date