



## **Foster Home Manual 2021**

## **Foster Home Welcome Guide**

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## **SECTION 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction to the MHSPCA Foster Home Welcome Guide**

Thank you for becoming an MHSPCA Foster Home! This guide has been prepared to help you become familiar with the policies and practices of the Medicine Hat SPCA, and to serve as a reference throughout your time with us.

It is the responsibility of each foster home to familiarize themselves with the contents of this guide as soon as possible, as it will answer many questions you may have.

We hope this will help you understand more about the organization. Should you require clarification or have questions, please feel free to contact the front desk at [contact@medhatspca.ca](mailto:contact@medhatspca.ca) or 403-526-7722.

#### **1.2 Overview of Medicine Hat SPCA**

The Medicine Hat Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MHSPCA) was incorporated on October 15th, 1979. The founding members whose names and signatures appeared on the Societies Act Application are:

D. Sakamoto, P. Roddick, S. Appleton, J. Head and A. Hashizume. Dozens of past MHSPCA Board Members have been so very grateful that this group of dedicated animal enthusiasts had the desire and foresight to take this big step so many years ago. Thousands of our injured, lost, stray and abandoned animal friends in Medicine Hat and surrounding areas have been rescued and have found a new life, because of our founding member's vision. There can be no better reward for their commitment and dedication. We cannot THANK them enough!

Over the next nine years subsequent Board Members and dozens of volunteers struggled to raise money for a shelter. For many years, we utilized a few foster homes willing to take in some homeless animals and we housed a few stray cats (in home-made cages) in the basement of another foster home; all the while hoping to someday have the money for a shelter.

There was a small Pound in the City of Medicine Hat, but as the City grew, so increased the number of homeless animals roaming our streets. The MHSPCA knew that we had to find some kind of shelter for these homeless/stray animals.

So, our first SPCA Shelter was opened in 1988. We bought a second-hand mobile home, renovated it and a few years later, raised enough money to put on an addition. The City of Medicine Hat leased us a parcel of land, which was situated at 9th Ave. S.W. Pound Services were still available then, so we were fortunate enough to be a no-kill shelter.

Our present Medicine Hat SPCA Adopt-A-Pet Facility opened in June 1994, thanks to a very large bequest from Dr. A.C. Ahrens and Frances Ahrens. With the very generous legacy, we bought the Medicine Hat Marble building at 55 S.W. Drive S.W. and fully renovated it to suit our needs and the needs of the animals.

At this time, the MHSPCA was approached by City of Medicine Hat Bylaw Services and asked to begin taking over the Pound Services. Although we knew we were taking on a major commitment, we agreed for the sake of the animals. We knew that we could give the animals better shelter conditions, more care and a better chance of finding a new home. A contract with the city was then drafted and we started to quickly fill up our shelter. It was a very exciting time for the MHSPCA, we had finally reached our goal!

Thanks to the many dedicated staff and Board Members the MHSPCA Adopt-a-Pet Facility has now been in operation for 32 years. Still without the tremendous public support, we know that we could not have kept our doors open.

In January 2016, we made the very big decision to go back to our roots of animal rescue and adoption. We decided to end our Pound Services contract with the City, and these services were contracted out to another group. We are thrilled to be back to our roots, and to have sufficient space for the animals in our facility again in order to provide them with superior care.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Medicine Hat Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is to provide protective care for sick, injured, homeless and unwanted animals and to promote humane attitudes and responsible pet ownership.

To accomplish this, there must be acceptance that humans are responsible for the welfare of animals; and there must be an understanding of the physical and behavioral needs of animals.

### Vision Statement

The Medicine Hat Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is guided by a humane ethic to build a community that universally values animals, understands their needs, and takes action to meet them.

### Goals

The Medicine Hat SPCA serves the community and surrounding area by:

- To have an open-door policy, no animal is turned away at any time.
- To provide humane care and shelter for all homeless animals.
- To place adoptable pets in forever homes.
- To promote spaying and neutering for all companion animals.
- To promote responsible pet ownership and the respect for all life through humane education.
- To protect all animals from inhumane treatment.

- To speak out for those that cannot speak for themselves.

### **1.3 Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Where does the MHSPCA get funding?**

We rely primarily on donations from the public, fundraising events, and adoptions fees to cover costs.

#### **Where do the animals come from?**

We are an open intake shelter, which means we take in primarily owner relinquished animals and we never turn one away. At the discretion of the intake committee and when space in our facility allows, we will take animals transferred from other shelters/rescue groups.

#### **Who cares for the animals?**

Upon intake, animals will first stay in the 'holding' area of the shelter, where they are assessed and vet checked. Should there be a condition that needs immediate veterinary care, they will be transported to our partner veterinary clinic. Once they are cleared for adoption, they move to the adoptions areas as space allows.

7 days a week, animals in the shelter are taken care of by our Kennel Attendants and by volunteers.

#### **Who can adopt an animal from the MHSPCA?**

Any person over the age of 18, who can demonstrate a proper, responsible, stable, loving environment and is approved by the adoption committee. We do have the right to refuse any adoption.

#### **Do you adopt out of Province?**

Yes, we do adopt out of province to any person over the age of 18, who can demonstrate a proper, responsible, stable, loving environment and is approved by the adoption committee. We do have the right to refuse any adoption.

#### **How much are your adoptions fees?**

\$350 for puppies

\$250 for dogs (over 6 months)

\$100 for cats

\$140 for kittens (under 6 months)

\$65 for senior cats (over 7 years)

\$75 for rabbits

Other species – varies

#### **Do they come with vaccines?**

Yes. All cats and dogs are update-to-date on their vaccinations and dewormed.

#### **Are the animals spayed/neutered prior to adoption?**

Yes, all animals are spayed or neutered and microchipped prior to adoption.

#### **Who can volunteer for the MHSPCA?**

People over 18 years of age. The MHSPCA is lucky enough to have a wonderful network of volunteers. We have volunteers ranging from young adults to seniors. While some volunteer positions require a lot of

elbow grease and some physical labor, we do our very best to ensure everyone is in a position that will be rewarding, and doing something that they love!

### **How do I contact the MHSPCA?**

Depending on what department you need to contact, please see the below contact list;

Animal Health Lead/Foster Coordinator- Kaylee Getz - 403-526-7722, [ahlmedicinehatspca@gmail.com](mailto:ahlmedicinehatspca@gmail.com)

Shelter Director – Tom Carney - 403-526-7722, [director@medhatspca.ca](mailto:director@medhatspca.ca)

Medical Emergencies (must be previously approved by one of the above) – Crossroads Animal Hospital– 403-527-2829

## **SECTION 2**

### **General Foster Home Information**

#### **2.1 What is Involved**

The MHSPCA pays all reasonable expenses, including but not limited to, all veterinary care and food and when available provides other items such as toys, treats, kennels, etc. Foster homes provide a safe, loving environment until the animal is ready to go up for adoption and assists in providing basic training, housetraining, and transportation to vet appointments, etc.

Foster homes are responsible for supporting our mission and vision, respecting the society's policies, honoring their commitment and performing their duties to the best of their abilities. We hope that your foster experience with the MHSPCA will be positive and rewarding!

The foster home relationship is based on mutual support, respect, learning, and growth. Foster homes are essential and integral partners in the work of the society. Foster homes and volunteers bring unique talents, skills, contacts and knowledge that enhance and complement the organization's capacity.

Foster homes deserve and appreciate meaningful assignments, regular supervision, involvement that maximizes their potential, recognition for their work and an environment of mutual respect.

Through the volunteers' it recruits, the society strives to reflect a broad diversity of cultures, capacities and aspirations of the community it serves.

In order to reach our full potential as a leading animal welfare organization, it is essential that we work collaboratively with the communities we serve. Foster homes and volunteers are a vital connection to those communities and these relationships are key in helping us move our mission forward.

#### **2.2 Conditions for Fostering**

1. Must be 18 years of age or older and all members of the household in agreement;
2. All current animals in the home must be up-to-date on their vaccinations and dewormed;

3. All current animals in the home must be spayed/neutered, unless the MHSPCA is given and accepts the reasonable explanation (i.e. medical condition, too young);
4. Ideally a completely fenced yard, but we do have exceptions depending on the circumstances and type of dogs;
5. If renting, a permission letter from your landlord;
6. Commitment to the duration of the time the animal is in foster care, anywhere from 2 weeks to 4 months+ (dependent on the animal and the time of year); and
7. Signed waiver & release by the foster applicant- when this manual is reviewed with you and signed by an SPCA representative, which must be done before the fostering begins.

## **2.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

Foster homes can expect the following:

- To be valued and respected as part of our team.
- To receive guidance and training.
- To receive ongoing guidance, feedback, encouragement and recognition from staff.

In return, we ask our foster homes to:

- Approach their foster home role with enthusiasm, honesty and an open mind.
- Ask questions to ensure understanding of their role/task before accepting it.
- Carry out tasks efficiently and effectively and ask for help when needed.
- Participate in any training relevant to the role.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Provide positive or constructive feedback to the staff and suggest improvements or changes to roles when appropriate.

## **SECTION 3** **Getting Started**

### **3.1 The First Few Days**

Your foster pet has just experienced big changes. They may have experienced changes that are new and scary, overwhelming and very different for them and it is very important to keep this in mind. It is best to keep the environment quiet for a few days so they can adjust without the added stress. Keep visitors at bay and provide a safe, quiet place for your new foster pet to “get their bearings.” Please remember that 99% of the time, we do not know the full background of your new foster pet. We do our best to provide you, as the foster home, with as many details as we can regarding the background and behaviors.

During the first few days in your home, your foster pet may be too stressed to eat, drink or do their bathroom duties. The stress of the changes in life, in addition to a change in diet, may cause diarrhea. If the diarrhea persists for more than 48 hours without improvement or you start to notice any blood, or the animal becomes lethargic or vomiting starts or persists, please contact us right away!

Always keep clean food and fresh water available at all times. If, by the third day, the animal is not eating, drinking or you notice other of the above problems arising, please contact us with questions and/or concerns.

### **3.2 Caring for your Foster**

Please see Foster resources regarding cats, kittens, or dogs, depending on which type of animal you are fostering.

### **3.3 Vacation**

If at any time, you and your family will be going away on vacation, while caring for a foster, please contact the Foster Coordinator a minimum of 2 weeks ahead of time and provide the dates you will be gone. That way alternate arrangements can be made for your foster while you are away.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Vet Visits**

The Medicine Hat SPCA provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinic. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster cat's well-being, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster cats at our approved veterinary partner, Crossroads Animal Hospital.

If your foster cat needs to go to the veterinarian, please notify the foster coordinator by email or phone. The foster coordinator will schedule the appointment. Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from the foster coordinator.

### **4.1 Vaccinations**

On Tuesday mornings during our weekly vet visits, the MHSPCA does all of our vaccinations out of our shelter. All animals are vaccinated prior to going into foster care. Animals over 6 months of age require one vaccination when coming into foster care with ONE booster shot one month after the initial vaccination. Puppies and kittens under 6 months of age will receive one initial vaccine at approx. 6 weeks of age and then 2 boosters, one month apart.

### **4.2 Deworming**

The MHSPCA does all of our deworming out of our shelter. Deworming can begin as early as four weeks of age, and should be repeated in 7 - 10 days. You can usually expect to see worms passed in the stool the day following deworming and possibly for up to 48 hours after the deworming treatment has been given. Please do not be alarmed as this is normal, particularly in puppies and kittens. Please make sure to clean up after all messes and pick up in the yard so that it is not passed onto any other foster animals or to your own. Until worms are gone, washing your hands often is also highly suggested.

Although we do our best to advise the foster home of what has been done and what needs to be done. If this information is not given to you or you simply forget where treatment stands, please ask the staff within the first few days of receiving your new foster, so that we can keep everyone safe and up-to-date.

#### **4.3 Microchipping**

We microchip ALL MHSPCA prior to adoption. This is done out of our shelter. The MHSPCA does stay on all microchips as a contact in case an animal turns up at a local shelter or pound.

#### **4.4 Spay and Neuters**

Spays/neuters are done at Crossroads Animal Hospital; the SPCA always arranges an appointment for each animal before their adoption. If the foster parent is to have any part in dropping off an animal to the clinic or picking it up afterwards; the SPCA will let you know well ahead of time.

Pre-surgery: No food after 8pm the night before the surgery but water is ok.

**\*Please always use the name of the animal the MHSPCA provided to you during all your vet visits and when emailing staff so that we can keep our records straight. It becomes very confusing when paperwork comes in with names that don't match what we have on our records.**

#### **Approved Vet Clinics**

Crossroads Animal Hospital 403-527-2829

**If you should encounter a life threatening emergency situation with one of your foster pets and you are unable to get a hold of any of the MHSPCA staff, please call Crossroads Animal Hospital first.**

## **SECTION 5**

### **Supplies**

#### **5.1 Supplies**

You should be provided with all supplies you may need for your new foster dog or cat. If you need more food or supplies, they can be picked up at the shelter Monday to Friday between 12-6pm. Please return all supplies when you bring your animal back to the shelter, unless you intend to foster again right away.

## **SECTION 6**

### **Adoption**

#### **6.1 Adoption Process**

In consultation with the MHSPCA staff, you will be asked to return your foster to the shelter when they are ready to be placed up for adoption.

#### **6.2 Adopting your foster**

If at any time you think you might be interested in adopting your foster, please contact the office to complete an adoption form right away. As the foster, you will be the first in line to adopt as long as there are no concerns with your adoption application, however if we will not hold the animal if ready for adoption.

Adoptions Fees are:

\$350 for puppies

\$250 for dogs (over 6 months)

\$120 for cats

\$160 for kittens (under 6 months)

\$65 for senior cats (over 7 years)

\$75 for rabbits

Other species – varies

## **SECTION 7**

### **Expense Reimbursement**

#### **7.1 Expense Reimbursement**

Fosters will only be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that have been pre-approved by the Shelter Director - Tom Carney.

### **Closing Statement**

The MHSPCA is so grateful to have such dedicated fosters and volunteers who have a passion for this cause. We are hopeful that you will enjoy your time spent with us. Just in case you weren't convinced, below are some of the reasons you will love us!

- 1. Be part of the solution.** You'll join a network of hundreds of people working to make the world safe and more humane for all living creatures. You'll make the jobs of everyone working for animals a little easier by lending a hand and spreading the message of responsible pet ownership and animal protection.
- 2. Get warm fuzzies.** You'll never find a more grateful and accepting comrade than an animal you've comforted.
- 3. Keep good company.** You'll make lots of new friends—and not just the four-legged kind. Working side-by-side with people who share similar interests can forge lifelong friendships.
- 4. Meet the new you.** You'll discover skills you never knew you had, and you may be surprised at what you're capable of achieving.
- 5. Gain a new career.** You'll learn things that may lead you to the career - or career change - of your dreams. Employers and college admissions officers look favorably on time spent in volunteer service.
- 6. Enjoy a wagging tail, a purr and a smile.** Didn't someone once say that the best things in life are free?

Thank you for your time and commitment to read through this guide. We hope that it has answered any questions you may have had! If you have more, please do not hesitate to ask!

We look forward to seeing you at the MHSPCA Adopt-A-Pet Facility!

-The MHSPCA Team

**Section 8**  
**Foster Parent Waiver**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

What the MHSPCA Supplies:

We supply all food and veterinary care for each animal in our care. We supply donated blankets, crates, food, dishes, toys, leashes, collars, harnesses, shampoo, etc. Supplies are available for pick up between 12-6pm at our shelter.

What Foster Parents Supply:

Foster families provide an intermediary home until a puppy/kitten is of the age and health to be adopted. This requires a foster family to be patient and provide training while the animal is learning to get along with new people, animals, homes, rules, etc. Foster families must be available to transport animals to the shelter or to vet appointments etc.

Waiver:

I personally guarantee that my resident pets are up-to-date with vaccinations are in good health The Medicine Hat SPCA will not be held responsible for any damage brought to the house or inhabitants as a result of my decision to foster an animal.

Please initial here:

**Volunteer Agreement and General Release**

I HEREBY AGREE:

1. To volunteer for the Medicine Hat SPCA under the laws of the Province of Alberta. I do so at my own will and no one has demanded that I participate in any Medicine Hat SPCA activities.
2. That I will volunteer, to the best of my ability, to take part in all of the Medicine Hat SPCA activities assigned to me by the Executive Director, Manager or RVT:
3. To read any volunteer-related materials given to me, complete all required orientation, training and paperwork related to my volunteer position(s).
4. To disclose any physical or psychological limitation to appropriate staff before participating in any activity. Since I may be interacting with animals, healthy and sick, big and small, and may be lifting, carrying, moving, or otherwise engaging in physical labor, I will be respectful of my own limitations and will inform staff immediately of any such limitations.
5. To read and obey all Medicine Hat SPCA safety rules and regulations: in the interest and the safety of the animals, staff and volunteers.
6. That the Medicine Hat SPCA has the right to revoke volunteer privileges if these rules and regulations are not followed.
7. To treat all Medicine Hat SPCA staff, volunteers, animals, property, tools and equipment with respect. I will also return all Medicine Hat SPCA property when my volunteer relationship ends or upon request.

8. That either I or the Medicine Hat SPCA can terminate this relationship
9. To provide my services without compensation. I will not be compensated for my efforts, nor am I an agent or contractor of the Medicine Hat SPCA.
10. To be legally and financially responsible and I will hold the Medicine Hat SPCA harmless for my own acts, omissions and negligence relating to my volunteer activities with the Medicine Hat SPCA.
11. That I am voluntarily participating in the activities of the Medicine Hat SPCA with full knowledge of the risks and dangers involved and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of injury, death, or damage to myself and/or my personal property.

As a volunteer, I may come into contact with and interact with animals, and such work entails the risk of personal injury- due to proximity to animals, dangerous equipment, long-distance driving, and other considerations. These include, but are not limited to, being bitten, kicked, clawed, tripped, and possibly exposed to zoonotic diseases.

12. That I understand, as a volunteer of the Medicine Hat SPCA, I may be recorded on film, video or other electronic recording media. I hereby consent to such recording and to the use by the Medicine Hat SPCA of any recorded images or other media recordings of my name and likeness for any purpose related to the furtherance of the objectives of the Medicine Hat SPCA. In particular, I grant the Medicine Hat SPCA permission to copyright and use, reuse, publish, and republish A-V Recordings, without restriction as to changes and alterations, for art advertising, trade, or any other purpose.
13. That as a result of my participation in activities and volunteering and any A-V Recordings, I, my assignees, heirs, distributees, guardians, and legal representatives will not make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of the Medicine Hat SPCA for injury or damage resulting from any act, omission, negligence or other acts by any employee, agent, contractor, or representative of the Medicine Hat SPCA
14. To release the Medicine Hat SPCA from all actions, claims, or demands that I, my assignees, heirs, distributors, guardians, and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury or damage resulting from my participation in activities and performance of volunteer services.

**Confidentiality.**

Due to the nature and scope of the work done by the Medicine Hat SPCA, it is imperative that all volunteers of the agency adhere to strict confidentiality of all animal information they are privy to. All animal information, including their origin, medical records, and any special circumstances around which some animals are surrendered, must be kept in the strictest confidence. In addition, at no time will any volunteers of the agency speak to the media about any animals in care unless they are the designated agency spokesperson. The confidentiality of animal records and information does not end with termination of the relationship between the volunteer and the Medicine Hat SPCA.

**Term of Agreement.**

I acknowledge that this agreement will apply to the entire term of my volunteer relationship, starting with the date I first perform volunteer duties for the Medicine Hat SPCA, even if it pre-dates the date of this agreement, and continuing as long as I continue to be a volunteer and thereafter as is necessary to protect the interests and rights of MHSPCA arising with respect to confidentiality and use of my work products and/or A-V material as authorized above.

Foster Home Applicants Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SPCA Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_