

Friends Of Rescued Mastiffs, Inc.

Make a Big Difference to a Big Dog © 2001



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FOSTERING FAQ

Fostering a dog is an adventure! Whether you go into fostering with anticipation or dread depends on your point of view. Fostering is **NOT** for everyone. It can be exhilarating, rewarding, exhausting and heart wrenching all at the same time.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FOSTERING FOR FORM?

Foster homes must meet the same requirements as adoptive homes. A potential foster must submit an application. FORM will contact the veterinary references, personal reference and do a home visit. All other animals in the foster home must be on heartworm preventative and up to date on vaccinations. We prefer that foster homes have a fenced area/yard for the dog's safety and comfort.

WHAT ARE THE FOSTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Fosters are asked to:

1. Provide quality dog food for the Mastiff at their own expense (some regions have access to food for their foster homes—getting the donated food is the responsibility of the foster family).
2. Provide basic grooming responsibilities.
3. Use a crate to prevent mishaps.
4. Provide treats, toys, bowls, and other goodies.
5. Evaluate and observe each dog to identify any potential behavioral issues.
6. Care for the dog in a manner that is consistent with how you care for your own animals. Fosters need to provide basic training for the foster Mastiff, who is likely to have had NO training previously.

7. Do some driving from time to time to pick up dogs, take dogs to the vet, etc.
8. Adhere to the principles of positive reinforcement training. FORM believes in treating dogs with kindness and respect.
9. Follow the FORM Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to the letter and work willingly and effectively with the state and regional coordinators.
10. Allow prospective adopters to visit the foster dog at approved times. We work very hard to make sure that appropriate families visit the foster dog, however, the input of the foster family is very important in making the final determination if the match is “right.”

WHAT ARE FORM’S RESPONSIBILITIES?

FORM covers the foster dog’s approved veterinary needs by either paying the veterinarian directly (when billed) or through reimbursing the foster family. All veterinary expenses must be pre-approved by the state and regional coordinators. This helps us avoid unnecessary procedures and expenses. We **only** work with veterinarians who offer a significant discount.

We provide mentoring to our fosters via our state and regional coordinators. We are very proud of our volunteer team and work together to provide encouragement, advice, and support.

We solicit for donations of goods and services that are of use to our foster homes. Many companies donate items to us and we, in turn, route them to our fosters and the Mastiffs in their care. Leashes, collars, food, supplements, grooming tools and toys are some of the donations we receive.

Ownership of the foster dog lies with FORM, however, foster families are responsible for the daily supervision and behavior of the dog.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR A FORM FOSTER MASTIFF?

Along with having the basic supplies (crate, bed, bowls, leash, toys), you will want to take into consideration:

How to separate your resident animals from the foster Mastiff initially. We can never be completely sure of how a foster will react to different animals and situations. Being removed from his/her home is extremely stressful for the foster dog. By initially keeping the foster separate from your other animals, you can prevent the spread of expensive problems like illness and parasites. By keeping the foster dog separate and gradually introducing him/her to your resident animal(s), you will be better able to monitor and control his/her behavior.

We generally use foster homes with small children ONLY if the family has verifiable Mastiff/giant breed experience. If you do have older children, we expect that you will not allow them to:

1. Bother the dog while she/he is eating.
2. Bother the dog while she/he is sleeping.
3. Take things away from the dog.
4. Lean over the dog and hug the dog (dogs see this as a very threatening posture).
5. Be the primary caregiver for the dog.

WHO SHOULD NOT FOSTER?

Those who are torn between fostering and adopting. While many foster homes do end up adopting a dog, it is very important to remember that fostering is not a “try one on for size” activity. In the event that a foster home does adopt a dog, the family makes the same adoption donation as anyone else. Fostering is strictly for those who wish to assist “the cause” and feel that they have the time, space, and dedication to do so and do it well.

Those who cannot abide the emotional turmoil of caring for a Mastiff and then having the dog leave when adopted. Leaving the foster home should not be another trauma for the dog to endure.

Those who cannot tolerate disruption in their lives. Foster dogs can make housebreaking mistakes, get on the furniture, “counter surf”, get ill and need a trip to the vet clinic at 2 a.m., and leave slobber in the most amazing places. The most successful foster homes are those that have a high tolerance level and a good sense of humor.

Those who truly do not have the time to work with their foster dog. All foster dogs need training and direction, be it house manners, housebreaking or learning to walk politely on a leash. Providing a warm bed and regular meals are important, but fosters need to invest more than that. If you cannot honestly provide the “T” and “L” in “TLC,” then fostering is not for you.

Those who have difficulty taking directions from others. Ours is a true hierarchy with a clearly defined chain of command. We have a written set of rules and procedures and we expect all of our volunteers to follow them. Let’s be honest—some folks do not thrive in such a system and find it annoying at best and stifling at worst. If that is the case with you, then fostering for FORM will not be a rewarding experience.

If you are interested in fostering, please fill out an application and a volunteer form.