

# RedRover Responders



## RedRover Responders Volunteer Manual and Standard Operating Guidelines

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## REDROVER OVERVIEW

In this section, RedRover Responders volunteers will get acquainted with RedRover's mission and find contact information, membership forms, and basic information about RedRover.

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### RedRover's Mission

The mission of RedRover is to bring animals out of crisis and strengthen the bond between people and animals through emergency sheltering, disaster relief services, financial assistance, and education. RedRover accomplishes its mission by engaging volunteers and supporters, collaborating with others, and maximizing the use of online technology.

### RedRover Contact Information

**Mailing address:** P.O. Box 188890, Sacramento, CA 95818

**Phone:** 916.429.2457

**RedRover Responders emergency cell phone:** 916.216.3677

**Email (general):** [info@RedRover.org](mailto:info@RedRover.org)

**Email (RedRover Responders):** [Responders@RedRover.org](mailto:Responders@RedRover.org)

**Website:** [www.RedRover.org](http://www.RedRover.org)

**Hours of operation:** M to F 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Pacific Time

### Staff

For a current list of RedRover's board members and staff, as well as any employment opportunities, visit the website at [www.RedRover.org](http://www.RedRover.org) and navigate to the "About Us" section, then click on "Our People." The format for all of our email addresses are first letter of first name, then whole last name. For example, Nicole Forsyth's email address is [nforsyth@RedRover.org](mailto:nforsyth@RedRover.org).

## RedRover Programs and Publications

RedRover provides resources to animals and people in crisis and supports the human-animal bond through three different programs:

**RedRover Responders:** RedRover Responders provides emergency sheltering assistance for animals that are displaced by natural disasters or rescued from cruelty and neglect situations. We also deploy volunteers to planned projects such as Safe Housing builds (building housing for pets of domestic violence survivors) and Community Programs deployments such as vaccine clinics, Trap-Neuter-Return projects, and Unchaining programs to improve the quality of life for dogs who live outside.

**RedRover Readers:** Through stories and discussion, the RedRover Readers program teaches children empathy, compassion, and the importance of the human-animal bond.

**Kind News Magazine:** *Kind News* magazine is a colorful, eight page publication. It helps children understand and respect animals and think about why treating animals and people with kindness matters.

**RedRover Relief:** Our RedRover Relief program provides financial assistance, resources, and support to low-income individuals when pets need urgent and emergency veterinary care. This program also supports survivors of domestic violence and their pets by providing emergency boarding as well as long-term pet friendly housing for domestic violence shelters.

## How is RedRover funded?

RedRover is funded through private donations and bequests. We do not receive any state or federal funding. All of the programs and services that we provide to both individuals and communities across the United States and Canada are offered at no cost.

Wondering how you can support RedRover? Check out [www.RedRover.org/join-us/donate/](http://www.RedRover.org/join-us/donate/) to see all of the ways you can give.

## RedRover's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At RedRover, we see diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as integral and vital to the success of our mission, as well as to the wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, and the people and communities we serve. We invite you to learn more about our ongoing commitment and [Action Plan \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

RedRover recognizes the deep systemic racism within the animal welfare sector. Our mission is to help animals in crisis and strengthen our relationships with animals – but the lives of animals do not exist in a vacuum. We cannot fully and effectively help animals without looking deeply at ourselves and how we treat one another. Therefore, we see diversity, inclusion, and equity as integral and vital to the success of our mission, as well as to the wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, and the people and communities we serve.

RedRover is committed to examining the way we do our work and accomplish our mission with the goal of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion. RedRover is committed to working in stronger partnership with

the people and communities we serve and actively seeking representation from those communities for our governing Board of Directors and for our staff and volunteers.

More specifically:

- We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and ensure that all voices are valued and heard.
- We will engage in ongoing learning and examining our own biases.
- We are committed to nondiscrimination, providing equal opportunity for employment and advancement, and ensuring our internal review and promotion practices are equitable.
- We will create and maintain diverse and equitable work environments with a strong sense of safety and belonging for our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to modeling diversity, equity, and inclusion for the animal welfare sector and to encouraging those we work closely with to make this commitment with us.

### **The Need**

In our work to build a more empathetic society for all, the intersection between human injustice and animal suffering matters. And this means social justice, including racial justice, is also our cause. Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color are significantly underrepresented in animal welfare organizations at every level, but especially in leadership positions. The systemic racism and underlying bias that plague us as a society impact the policies and practices that govern our nonprofit organizations and have excluded and oppressed people of color. Finding ways to identify bias, celebrate and invite diversity, and develop and embrace inclusive practices can repair the divisions in our society and support equity, as well as help animals. For example, just a 3% increase in the adoption of shelter animals among people of color would lead to 2 million more animals in new loving homes. (For more statistics, visit [careawo.org](https://careawo.org). ([Links to an external site.](#)))

### **Our Accountability**

We are committed to Board-level thinking around examining the structural inequities that have contributed to historically marginalized people being underrepresented and underserved within the animal welfare sector. We are committed to learning and implementing ways RedRover can address these inequities in ways that most impact our mission. The RedRover Board of Directors has approved this policy, as well as the Action Plan, which will be updated quarterly, shared with our supporters, and posted online to show our progress.

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## VOLUNTEERING WITH REDROVER RESPONDERS

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This section includes information about what to expect while volunteering with RedRover Responders.

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Since 1987, RedRover Responders volunteers have cared for thousands of animals during times of crisis. Our team has provided care during wildfires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, puppy mill seizures, and animal hoarding cases in the United States and Canada.

### **Requirements to be a RedRover Responders Volunteer:**

- 18 years or older
- Internet access and reliable email that is checked often
- Current tetanus and Covid immunizations
- Complete FEMA course IS-100c (or Canadian equivalent for Canada residents)
- Complete RedRover Responders volunteer training
- Agree to the RedRover Responders Code of Conduct
- Able to withstand the physical demands of deployments; including ability to lift up to 30- 40 pounds, and stand, kneel, or bend for long hours in varying temperatures and conditions

### **Recommendations:**

- Complete 50 hours of animal handling at your local animal shelter
- Additional recommended vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Pre-exposure rabies

### **What does a RedRover Responders Volunteer typically do? Depending on the deployment, a volunteer will do a variety of different asks such as:**

- Setup and breakdown of the temporary shelter
- Clean animal cages, clean food and water bowls, change bedding
- Prepare food and feed and water the animals
- Walk and socialize animals
- Restock supplies, sanitize animal crates, organize shelter, organize donations, etc
- Safe Housing Builds: Painting, construction projects
- TNRs: Trapping and transporting cats
- Wellness clinics: Drawing up vaccines, paperwork, monitoring animals post surgery
- Unchained projects: Building fencing, cleaning up yards, installing chicken wire

## RedRover's Pledge to its Volunteers

### RedRover pledges to:

- Within our ability and authority, keep the animals' best interests as a priority at all times.
- Treat all volunteers with respect.
- Be available to all volunteers and respond as quickly as possible to all questions, comments, and requests for assistance or advice.
- Communicate with volunteers as openly and honestly as possible at all times.
- Train volunteers and give them the tools and knowledge they need to successfully perform their duties. We will strive to provide clear direction and clarification of expectations.
- Keep volunteers safe and healthy while on deployment to the best of our ability.
- Seek and use volunteer feedback to guide program decisions. RedRover recognizes the value of the volunteer's input and encourages continued communication.
- Handle any situation involving volunteer criticism or discipline as professionally and discreetly as possible.
- Never force or expect a volunteer to do something outside of their level of comfort.
- Provide at least two group briefings per day while on deployment, and one debrief opportunity after the deployment is over.
- Honor and respect volunteers' feelings and emotional attachments to the animals in their care during a deployment.
- Provide support for the emotional needs of volunteers before, during and after a deployment. RedRover will also provide direction for additional opportunities for support if needed.

## RedRover Responders Volunteer Pledge

During my service as a volunteer in the RedRover Responders program:

I WILL	I WILL NOT
Commit to participating in an inclusive and equitable space that is respectful to all.	Use any language, references or wear any article of clothing that is potentially offensive or could be perceived as oppressive.
Treat all humans and animals with compassion and respect. I will act with maturity, be courteous and kind, flexible, empathetic, and be accountable. I will recognize that I am part of a team.	Use oppressive or offensive language indicating that a certain identity or belonging to a certain group is undesirable, e.g. language that is sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, classist, or includes slurs.
Wear a RedRover t-shirt or sweatshirt during any deployment, unless instructed not to.	Reveal, share, or repeat any sensitive or confidential in connection with deployments or deployment requests, including the location of a deployment, criminal investigations, animals, fellow volunteers, or members of the public we interact with. This applies before, during, and after a deployment.
Immediately inform the Team Leader of ANY safety hazards, incidents, accidents.	Solicit donations while on deployment.
Follow the rules and guidelines in the RedRover Responders Social Media Policy.	Speak to the media or represent RedRover unless asked and authorized to do so by the Team Leader.
Inform RedRover staff if I am using any prescription drugs that could impair my ability to perform tasks.	Consume or be impacted by any impairing substances while on duty during a deployment.
Follow the direction of the RedRover Team Leader.	Challenge the authority or otherwise undermine the leadership role of the RedRover Team Leader.
Obey all local laws, ordinances, and regulations.	Bring a firearm or other weapon on deployment.
Observe all safety rules and regulations, and be familiar with the proper use and operation of all equipment.	Commit or promise RedRover's assistance; rather if I hear about animals in need I will contact RedRover at <a href="mailto:Responders@RedRover.org">Responders@RedRover.org</a> .



<p>Follow the rules provided by the RedRover, and I will speak up and let the Team Leader know if I am unclear, unable or uncomfortable performing any task requested of me.</p>	<p>Publish or publicly make any derogatory statements about RedRover, partner organizations, or their individual; rather, I will contact RedRover about these concerns.</p>
<p>Understand and comply with the Incident Command System (ICS) at all times.</p>	<p>Take any photos or videos during a deployment unless I am specifically authorized to do so by the RedRover Team Leader.</p>
<p>Communicate any changes to my scheduled deployment days/times to RedRover scheduling staff and the Team Leader in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Smoke while working unless during allotted breaks and in designated areas only, and away from animals in our care.</p>

Signed/Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Waiver of Liability

I have requested the opportunity to participate as a Volunteer in the RedRover Responders program.

### In consideration of the opportunity to volunteer for RedRover:

- I hereby acknowledge that my work and tasks as a RedRover volunteer expose me to the risk of minor OR serious injury, death, damage, expense, or loss to me or of my property.
- I agree to assume all risks arising in the course of my participation as a volunteer.
- I agree to waive my right to bring a claim, and waive the rights of my heirs, assigns, designees to make a claim against or sue or attach the property of RedRover for injury, death, or damage arising from or related to my participation as a volunteer at RedRover.
- I voluntarily release, discharge, and waive any and all claims, actions, or causes of action for personal injury, wrongful death, personal property damage and/or any other loss or harm.
- I agree to indemnify and hold harmless RedRover, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers from and against any and all claims, loss, damage and liability for injury or death including any such claim, loss, damage and liability caused by the negligence, malfeasance or misfeasance of RedRover, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers.
- I intend by this document to exempt, relieve, and release RedRover and its officers, agents and employees from liability for injury or damage caused by negligence or otherwise.
- I hereby grant permission for any representative of RedRover to take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care for me including, but not limited to, (1) attempting to contact my next of kin; (2) attempting to contact my physicians; (3) calling other physicians or paramedics; and (4) taking me to an emergency hospital.
- I hereby consent to any medical or surgical treatment and hospital service that may be rendered to me under the instructions of any physician or hospital. It is understood that this consent is given in advance of any specific diagnosis or treatment which may be required, and is given to encourage the RedRover staff, hospital staff and physicians to exercise their best judgment in treating me. I agree that any and all expenses incurred will be borne by me and not RedRover.
- As a volunteer for RedRover, I agree that I am not an employee of this organization and am not entitled to workers' compensation benefits. With some exceptions, RedRover's volunteer insurance provides limited secondary medical coverage for trained and documented volunteers who suffer illness and injury while performing assigned volunteer duties.

By signing below, I agree that I understand the provisions of this Waiver of Liability, and that if I have questions about any of its content, it is my responsibility to speak with a RedRover representative or an attorney of my choosing.

I understand that RedRover is an at-will organization that has the right to terminate my service as a volunteer, with or without cause OR notice.

I also understand that Breach of the Volunteer Pledge or conduct that is contrary to RedRover's values and mission could also be grounds for my release.

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

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

## RedRover Responders Volunteer Social Media Policy

As a RedRover Responders volunteer, you represent the values that RedRover stands for: caring, respected, unwavering, inspirational, and vigilant. Keep in mind what the RedRover name represents – that we are warm, friendly, and passionate about the work we do and the people and animals we serve.

RedRover values the conversations and contributions that arise from social media use. We are an organization dedicated to helping people and pets in crisis, grounded in equity and inclusion for animals and human beings. Inclusive of this is our commitment to creating and sustaining an animal care ethic within the context of anti-racism as well as gender and LGBTQ equity and justice. Hence, when using social media, always keep in mind your association with RedRover, use good judgment, and make sure your profile settings and content are consistent with how you wish to represent yourself personally and professionally, within the context of our diversity, equity, and inclusion *principles and values*.

### **When posting or commenting on RedRover's social media (for example, RedRover's Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter accounts), please adhere to the following guidelines:**

- RedRover encourages open discussions and differing opinions; however, please show consideration for others' opinions and privacy and refrain from commentary that may be considered objectionable, obscene, or inflammatory or does not uphold RedRover's principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Be mindful. Consider how your posts or content may make others feel. Do not post language that is disrespectful, hurtful, offensive, derogatory, or ignites conflict. Posts and/or content should not be damaging or potentially embarrassing to an individual or organization or target an entire group of people in a negative way.
- RedRover will remove any posts/publications in conflict with this policy.

### **Regarding your personal social media accounts:**

- RedRover Responders volunteers are encouraged to share content posted by RedRover on its website and other media outlets.
- If you include an affiliation to RedRover in your social media profile, it **must** be clear that you are a volunteer and **not** an employee.
  - As a RedRover Responders volunteer, consider whether your post(s) could be interpreted as representing RedRover's position and bring confusion or controversy to RedRover.

### **Regarding confidential information about deployments:**

As a RedRover Responders volunteer you will have access to extremely confidential and sensitive information. You may come across this information via your on-the-ground-experience, email, word of mouth, photos, briefings, things you overhear, etc. You are not allowed to post any confidential content from deployment – this applies before, during, and after a deployment.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) the condition of the animals (whether good or bad) at the shelter or otherwise involved in the deployment.
- b) the progress of the deployment.

c) anything regarding any legal proceedings associated with the animals or the deployment.

d) photos or videos.

e) location of the deployment.

Additionally:

- Unless specifically authorized by RedRover staff, **you are not allowed to take any photos or video while on the deployment.** Even the act of attempting to take photos on site, including selfies or photos of other volunteers, can damage RedRover's relationship with its partners who rely on our discretion.
- Do not publish or publicly discuss anything that is disrespectful, damaging, or embarrassing to any of our deployment partners or volunteers, including the inviting organization and other organizations working on the response.

We recognize the desire to capture the friendships and experience that occur on deployment via photos. Talk to your Team Leader about appropriate ways to capture these images. In most circumstances, this can be accommodated with photos taken away from the shelter location and without any animals visible.

**However, do not take or publish any such photos or videos until authorized by on-site RedRover staff or designated Team Leader.** Sometimes even the shelter location is confidential, and photos taken outside of the shelter can reveal its location. **It is also important to know that your location can be embedded in your images.** For example, if others were able to click on "details" or "more info" about the photo, an automatic GPS location-tag would be able to tell them where the photo was taken, even if you do not manually input this information yourself.

RedRover will request the removal of any posts/publications in conflict with this policy.

## **Volunteer Information**

### **Travel reimbursement**

RedRover offers a travel reimbursement for volunteers. The amount of the reimbursement varies depending on the deployment and can be used to cover the cost of your flight, rental car, gas (not mileage), and pet sitting. A daily stipend is also available that volunteers can use to purchase vegetarian food. RedRover will communicate the amount of reimbursement at the time of the deployment request.

### **Housing**

RedRover also provides housing and typically provides one meal per day. Volunteers are responsible for all other personal costs related to deployment. RedRover does not provide any reimbursement for supplies purchased or other expenses unless explicitly stated in writing. RedRover recommends that volunteers carefully log their volunteer-related expenses and keep receipts. Expenses while volunteering with RedRover may be tax-deductible. Talk to your tax advisor for details.

### **RedRover Responders uniform**

Volunteers are required to wear long pants and closed-toe shoes in addition to a RedRover Responders volunteer t-shirt. Two RedRover Responders t-shirts will be provided to you on-site at every deployment for no charge. Additional RedRover Responders t-shirts are available for order for \$15 each. Contact RedRover at 916.429.2457 or send an email to [Responders@RedRover.org](mailto:Responders@RedRover.org) for details.

## **Volunteer Insurance**

RedRover provides coverage that is in excess of your personal health insurance

- Insurance provided to volunteers is coverage that would go into effect after a claim has been submitted to your own personal insurance company. Thus, volunteers must submit their claim to their own insurance first before being submitted to RedRover's volunteer insurance.
- RedRover's insurance applies while you are traveling directly to and from, and while you are participating in, RedRover volunteer-related activities. The insurance also applies to treatment of zoonotic diseases contracted while on deployment.
- Initial medical expenses must be incurred within 60 days of the incident. Expenses are then covered for a one-year period following the incident.
- RedRover's volunteer insurance also covers vehicle claims if you are driving your own vehicle while volunteering. As above, you must first submit any claim to your personal auto insurance company. RedRover's insurance only pays in excess of the amount not covered by your own policy.

If you are injured on deployment, please let your Team Leader know immediately.

## **Deployment Process**

### **Pre-deployment**

Once RedRover has agreed to respond to a crisis, we send an email to trained volunteers in the region—typically within driving distance of the shelter. This email contains general information about the crisis and the types of tasks you will be doing as a volunteer. If you are interested in deploying, you will be able to indicate your interest using the link and form provided in the email. Please note that sometimes we have more volunteers sign up for a deployment than are needed. If this does occur, we will let you know via email.

After you have indicated your interest in deploying, a RedRover staff member will call you to discuss the details of the deployment. You'll have a chance to ask questions and learn more details about the work you will be doing. Sometimes during this conversation, a volunteer will determine that the deployment is not a good fit for them. This could be due to the nature and details of the crisis or due to the tasks the volunteer may be doing. RedRover totally respects this decision and encourages honest conversation and questions during this call.

When you are confirmed to deploy, you will receive a confirmation email that will include additional details about the deployment. This will include your travel dates, hotel information, Team Leader contact information, and shelter/site information. **Please remember that this information is confidential.**

### **Post-deployment**

After a deployment, you may experience a wide variety of emotions. You may have witnessed cases of extreme neglect or cruelty or devastation due to disaster. Deployments can be stressful, emotional, and exhausting. They also bring out feelings of happiness and satisfaction. It's important to practice self-care post deployment.

Stay connected:

- **RedRover hosts a group check-in call** after most deployments. Volunteers will be invited to participate in a zoom call with RedRover staff, your team leader, and fellow volunteers. The goal of this call is to come together as a group to talk about the deployment, give any updates on the animals, gather feedback from volunteers, and answer any questions.
- **Give feedback via our Volunteer Debrief Survey.** We'll email you a survey to gather anonymous feedback about your experience with the deployment process and leadership. Comments beyond the survey are always welcome and can be sent to [Responders@RedRover.org](mailto:Responders@RedRover.org)
- **Animal updates.** When possible, RedRover will share any information we receive about the animals we worked with. This is usually shared in our post deployment call and we may also post an update on our social media. If you have any questions about adopting an animal you worked with please speak to your Team Leader on-site.

## **Types of Deployments**

RedRover helps in a number of different situations where there are animals in crisis.

### **Cruelty Case Response**

Our most common type of deployment is a cruelty case response in which animals who have experienced cruelty or are living in neglectful conditions are seized by the appropriate authorities such as animal control. (See Animal Cruelty Case Response SOG). Sometimes the animals are housed in a brick and mortar animal shelter, and our volunteers will help provide their daily care. If a temporary shelter is needed to house the animals, RedRover can help set this up and staff the shelter.

### **Natural Disaster**

RedRover also helps care for animals in natural disasters. Typically, we provide daily care for the pets of people who have evacuated from an impacted area, or for animals rescued from the disaster. (See Disaster Response SOG).

### **Domestic Violence Pet Housing Builds**

Through our partnership with GreaterGood.org's Rescue Rebuild program we are able to help renovate domestic violence shelters to create on-site pet housing—which allows for survivors and their pets to find safety and healing together. These deployments involve renovation and construction projects including painting, fence installation, tiling, etc. and volunteers of any skill level are welcome.

### **Community Cat Trap/Neuter/Vaccinate/Release (TNVR)**

RedRover has helped local community cat organizations reduce cat overpopulation by assisting in mass TNVR operations. We typically set up and operate a temporary shelter to stage trapped cats before surgery, and to provide a safe place for them to recover overnight after surgery. Sometimes we also assist with trapping in the field.

### **Community Programs**

The RedRover Responders Community Programs initiative seeks to provide funding, resources, expertise, and volunteers to meet the local needs of animal welfare and social service organizations across the United States and Canada. Through collaboration, we aim to support local community projects that improve quality of life, services, and care for both animals and people, and to create lasting impact and relationships that support a humane community. Examples of Community Programs deployments include building fencing for chained dogs, assisting with vaccine or spay/neuter clinics, and building dog houses.



## **The National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC)**

Established in early 2006, the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition is an outgrowth of the unprecedented disaster season of 2005, where major storms – including Hurricane Katrina – brought to public light the impact that storms can have on people and their companion animals. The National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition includes such organizations as American Humane (AH), American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Code 3 Associates, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA), American Red Cross, PetFinder Foundation, and RedRover. Find more information about NARSC at [www.thenarsc.org](http://www.thenarsc.org).

Coalition representatives meet regularly to identify, prioritize, and find collaborative solutions to the major human-animal disaster issues currently being discussed at the federal, state, and local levels. Among the animal-related issues we have addressed are:

- Standardization of a core curriculum of training for disaster responders;
- Volunteer management and training;
- Resource typing of animal rescue, transport, and sheltering expertise;
- Assisting state and local entities in disaster planning under the PETS Act;
- Creation and acceptance of a Code of Conduct for all NARSC members; and
- Professional development.

## **Incident Command System (ICS) Positions and Descriptions**

### **What is the Incident Command System (ICS)?**

ICS is the system for command, control, and coordination of an emergency response. It provides the means to coordinate the efforts of individual agencies as they work toward the common goal of stabilizing

the incident and protecting life, property, and the environment. ICS improves efficiency and effectiveness in emergency responses.

### **Chain of command**

A key principle in ICS is the chain of command. This chain of command can also be thought of as a “chain of communication,” through which tasks, questions, and feedback should flow. RedRover Responders volunteers should understand and follow the chain of command. This means that, at a minimum, each volunteer should be clear on who they report to in the chain of command—who is the person that assigns their tasks and answers their questions. If every volunteer on site went to the Incident Commander (IC) with questions and comments, the IC would quickly become overwhelmed, operations would not be as effective, and the quality of animal care would decrease. When people go outside of this chain—either with questions, instructions, feedback, or task assignments—it makes the system less efficient and creates confusion in what can be very large and complex operations. Sticking to the chain of command helps the whole operation run more smoothly and relieves stress on all participants.

No one other than a volunteer’s immediate supervisor should reassign that volunteer or otherwise take them away from their task. If this occurs, please check with your supervisor and he or she will handle the request. RedRover Responders volunteers have skills and positive attitudes that are easily recognized, thus they are often requested to assist in different ways by different people and agencies. However, RedRover Responders volunteers’ primary concern is animal care; so redirecting requests to a supervisor helps animal care to remain a priority.

### **Why do you need to know about ICS?**

We live in a complex world in which responding to emergencies, from single-car accidents to large-scale disasters, often requires cooperation among several agencies. It is likely that you will be asked to function within an ICS environment at a deployment.

During a deployment, you may or may not be working in a role that you are used to performing. You may be tasked to do a duty for which you are overqualified. Be aware there are personnel assigned to each role listed in the ICS chart. Every duty given during a deployment is an important facet to the overall success of the response and it is imperative you stay within the bounds of your assigned task.

***Specially skilled volunteers:*** If you have special skills that you think may be useful to the response, such as electrician, animal control officer, veterinarian, veterinary technician, or another relevant profession, *do* alert your Team Leader about your skills and experience. However, you most likely *will not* be called upon to use these skills. Usually before the RedRover volunteer team arrives on site, procedures have been followed to assign roles for the entire operation. Under ICS, qualified individuals may already have been assigned to each role, and even though you may have the skill to fill that position, you may not be requested to do so. Unless requested by a Team Leader or supervisor, please do not go outside of the duties you have been specifically assigned to perform.

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## **STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES (SOGs)**

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RedRover’s Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) encompass a basic outline for how RedRover conducts its work of caring for animals in crisis in most circumstances. SOGs are a method of recording and sharing best practices for the many detailed aspects of operating a temporary emergency animal shelter.

SOGs are guidelines, not strict rules. Since all emergency situations are different and the condition of the animals varies, many items may be changed, modified, omitted or amended. SOGs provide the structure upon which the leadership team can determine the procedure that works best for a given circumstance. Flexibility is inherent in the SOGs. In some cases, on-site procedures are provided by an organization or authority that has their own SOGs that may be different from RedRover Responders' normal operations.

The following pages contain the SOGs, procedures and policies that RedRover has in place. Volunteers should review these pages prior to deployment, but be prepared to encounter procedures that are different from the ones outlined here.

Please keep in mind everything that is done during an emergency response is done in the best interest of the animals. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask your Team Leader.

## **Volunteer Arrival SOG**

Upon arrival at the temporary shelter you will be greeted by your on-site Team Leader. Your Team Leader will give you an overview of the deployment, a tour of the facility, and give you an idea of the work that you will be doing. They will also go over the specific needs of the case you are on, in regard to animal handling, the cleaning process, the daily schedule, and volunteer paperwork. This is a good time to ask your Team Leader questions or let them know about any additional skills you may have.

You'll also meet other RedRover Responders volunteers as well as staff and/or volunteers from our partner organization. You will always have a place to put your belongings and RedRover will provide snacks (granola bars, fruit, trail mix, chips, etc.) and drinks (usually water and Gatorade).

## **Safety SOG**

Your Team Leader will attempt to identify all safety concerns at the emergency shelter location. Concerns will vary from site to site and can change daily. Use proper judgment and be alert for any unidentified concerns.

RedRover Responders volunteers will be advised of any known safety issues. Continually check for tripping hazards, electrical issues, HAZMATs (bleach containment), behavior issues with animals, and other concerns, and advise the Team Leader immediately if you identify a hazard. Please be mindful and aware of signs that address any safety concerns.

## **Injury SOG**

You must inform your Team Leader immediately if you become injured on deployment. An injury includes animal-inflicted wounds such as scratches and bites, as well as accidental injuries from a fall or a cut. Your Team leader will assess the injury and may consult with our partner organization to determine what medical treatment is needed.

Please know, there is a possibility that you will be required to seek professional medical care even if you view the injury as minor. Your Team Leader will determine if your job duties can be modified or if you will need to be released early from deployment.

## **Animal Handling SOG**

When working in an emergency, temporary setting you will likely be exposed to animals who are fearful and stressed. While we do not expect volunteers to be experts in animal handling, there are some basic guidelines that we expect you to follow that will help keep both you and the animals safe in a stressful situation. It's important that you are aware of your skill level and always ask for help when needed.

Animals are complex creatures who are doing their best to communicate with us through their body language. It is our job to be aware of this body language as well as our own movements and actions. On deployment you will encounter fearful and defensive animals. Remember, these animals are coming from a crisis situation.

Please keep in mind the animals you are working with may:

- Be experiencing high levels of stress
- Not be socialized
- Associate humans with a negative experience
- Have just been evacuated from a natural disaster
- Be fearful of strangers and a new environment

In general:

- **Recognize your skill level.** Ask for help when needed. If you are not easily able to handle an animal please ask for help. Do not attempt to handle fractious, scared, or aggressive animals. Some animals require expert handlers.
- **Pay attention and be aware of your surroundings.** Notice when other staff or volunteers have animal cages open. Be aware if others are struggling with an animal and give them space. Assist only if asked and when needed. Keep your voice calm.
- **Always stay with your partner.** RedRover utilizes a buddy system when cleaning and working with the animals. This is for your safety and for the safety of the animals. It is vital that you never leave your partner unattended. We will go over this in more detail.

When interacting with the animals on deployment, volunteers should never:

- Drag, push, or pull animals out of enclosures
- Drag a dog on a leash
- Interfere in an animal-to-animal confrontation
- Make decisions about an animal's enclosure or diet

We recommend you begin by watching the following videos:

CATS: <https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20130402/feline-communication>

DOGS: <https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20120426/human-body-language-and-dog-behavior>

### Dog Body Language

Dogs are in constant communication with us and other animals. Both our body language and theirs is extremely important. Typically, dogs are doing what they can to avoid any type of confrontation. Dogs get stressed, just like us! When in stressful settings or situations, they display a variety of signals and body language to communicate and calm themselves as well as others around them. In this work, especially when animals are in crisis and are stressed, it is vital that we pay attention to body language and give animals space. Though we may think animals want our comfort, we have to remember that we are strangers to them, and that sometimes our best intentions can actually cause more stress.

Let's take a look at some images.

- **Friendly/social dog body language:**
  - Body is loose and/or wiggly
  - Horizontal tail
  - Soft, relaxed, or squinting eyes
  - Open mouth
  - Relaxed muscles in the face and body



- **Nervous/fearful dog body language:**

- Hard eyes with white of eyes showing (known as whale eye)
- Ears back
- Tail tucked
- Tense, closed mouth
- Body lowered and tense
- May growl, bark, or show teeth with social pressure



- **Forward/defensive dog body language:**

- Hard stare
- Square, frontal alignment
- Ears up and forward or pinned back
- Body weight forward
- Muscles in face and body tense
- Tail tense
- Mouth tense, whiskers forward
- Showing teeth, vocalization (Barking, growling, etc.)



## How Not to Greet a Dog

# HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!  
I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.



**DON'T**  
Lean over the dog & stick your hand in his face



**DON'T**  
Lean over the dog & stick your hand on top of his head



**DON'T**  
Grab or Hug him



**DON'T**  
Stare him in the eye  
(This is an adversarial gesture)



**DON'T**  
Squeal or shout in his face



**DON'T**  
Grab his head and kiss it  
(This is an invasion of space)

Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a great big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

## THE CORRECT WAY:



- \* No Eye contact
- \* Let the dog approach you in his own time
- \* Keep either your SIDE or BACK towards the dog (non-threatening posture)



www.doggiedrawings.net *Lili*

## **Cat Body Language**

Like dogs, cats communicate their intentions and feelings through body language. Though sometimes more subtle, cat signals can be interpreted if we pay attention to their actions. In a stressful setting like a temporary emergency shelter, combined with cats often housed in small enclosures, it's important to take the time to assess the behavior of any cat you are working with.

Let's take a look at some images.

- **Content and comfortable cat body language**
  - Relaxed body posture, "loafing" position (paws tucked under)
  - Soft, squinty eyes
  - Making "muffins" or "biscuits"
  - Ears forward
  - Self-petting (rubbing on items, or people)
  - Soliciting attention





- **Anxious and fearful cat body language**
  - Bat ears
  - Wide pupils
  - Avoidant
  - Head/body lowered
  - Body posture tense
  - Tense facial muscles
  - Swatting, hissing, vocalizing



## Public Relations SOG

Due to the nature of the work, there may be times when the media is on-site at a temporary shelter or at a location where you are volunteering.

If filming or an interview are occurring, we ask that our volunteers continue their work as normal (unless asked otherwise). Please refrain from chatting in the background, eating, or doing other non-work related activities.

On occasion, a RedRover Responders volunteer may be asked to do an interview. If you would like to participate, there is only certain information that you may share:

- Where you are from
- Why you chose to volunteer with RedRover

- If you took time off work/school to help the animals
- What tasks you are performing at the shelter

It is very important that you do not share your opinion on any legal case, share future plans for the animals, or discuss any other aspect of the deployment.

Post deployment, volunteers are often asked to contribute to RedRover's printed and online publications, like the blog ([www.RedRover.org/blog](http://www.RedRover.org/blog)) and Companion magazine. These are important communication tools that inform RedRover members, donors, and volunteers about a deployment.

Some topics volunteers may write about include:

- A special animal who has caught your attention
- What it's like to deploy
- What it's like to leave your home obligations to deploy
- The generosity or hardships of the community you are serving

## Animal Cruelty Case Response SOG

Most often, RedRover is asked to assist with a cruelty case response. These types of cases typically involve a large number of animals experiencing cruelty and neglect. This could be from a puppy mill, hoarding, or dog-fighting situation.

RedRover frequently partners with other groups that specialize in complimentary services. When on deployment you may encounter partners like the Humane Society of the United States and American Humane. These groups have excellent investigation teams and usually help the local agency gather evidence, conduct the criminal seizure, transport animals to the temporary shelter, and arrange for the animals to be transported to their shelter partners for adoption when possible. They may even assist the prosecutor with preparing the legal case. Other organizations like PetSmart Charities and GreaterGood.org may provide supplies (or grants for supplies) like crates, bowls, and even food and toys, to complete the shelter set up.

RedRover assists with the set-up (and breakdown) of the temporary shelter and the daily care of the animals (feeding, cleaning, walking, etc.). Having RedRover volunteers care for the animals allows for the other organizations to focus their staff on needs like veterinary care and behavior plans. Our services are at no cost to our partners.

Confidentiality is a key concept to understand as a RedRover Responders Volunteer. You will have access to confidential information before, during, and after your deployment. All information about the animals you work with, the case you are deployed to, and even the specific location of the temporary shelter is confidential. It is vital that you follow the rules regarding confidentiality which can be found in our Volunteer Code of Conduct and our Social Media Policy. **These rules continue to apply even after the deployment is over.**

The most important concept to understand is that you may not share information—such as anything you see and hear at the shelter, including the condition of the animals. Also, you are not allowed to take any photographs or videos. This is especially important in a criminal cruelty case as the animals are considered evidence. Taking photos or video can truly jeopardize the entire case and safety of the animals. It is, however, acceptable to share information or articles that have been officially released by RedRover or one of our on-site partner organizations.

Because the animals are evidence, volunteers may not alter their appearance. You will often see nails that need to be trimmed, infected eyes that need to be cleaned, and matted fur that needs to be shaved. However, in this type of situation the conditions of the animals must be documented in a particular way for the court case. Volunteers should never take it upon themselves to bathe an animal, trim fur or nails, or clean them up. The lead agency will determine when these needs are able to be met and as a volunteer you may be asked to assist.

Once ownership of the animals has been released to the lead agency, work will begin to have the animals transferred to other rescue organizations for continued medical care and adoption. This will typically include animal shelters and rescue groups that are both local to the case as well as out of state transport partners.

## **Disaster Response SOG**

RedRover deploys to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, fires, and tornados, to provide daily care of animals whose owners have been displaced or found animals who have been separated from their families or are strays.

As with a cruelty case response, RedRover works with a lead agency on a disaster response. This is typically the local authorities but could also be another animal welfare organization. RedRover may assist by helping to set up the temporary shelter, provide daily care for the animals, and work towards reunification (finding owners of lost animals). Sometimes, evacuees are there caring for their own pets.

Confidentiality is important when deploying on a disaster response, because we want to protect the confidentiality of evacuees and their pets. As a general rule, you should not be taking any photos or videos unless you are asked to do so by your Team Leader.

All deployments, including a disaster response, require flexibility. Priorities and tasks may change day-to-day and even moment-to-moment. There are many moving parts and organizations involved including the evacuees, animal control, and the local emergency response personnel. Additionally, during a natural disaster, supplies, housing, and food that we may typically rely on may not be available.

## **“No Animal Left Behind” SOG**

It is RedRover’s mission to help animals in crisis. Our No Animal Left Behind policy means:

- RedRover chooses to work with partner organizations who have protocols and policies in place that ensure the animals will have a chance at the best possible outcome. This means the partner organization has access to veterinary care, behavioral support, and a placement plan for the animals that will support their success.
- RedRover does not discriminate based on breed. We support the sheltering and care of all animals and believe that all animals are individuals.
- Though a difficult decision, RedRover supports the humane euthanasia of an animal, when necessary, due to medical or behavior concerns. This decision is typically made by medical and behavioral professionals from our partner organizations. Quality of life, the safety of an animal (to both people and animals), and available resources should all be considered for each individual decision.

## **Animal Caution Labels SOG**

When we are working with a large population of animals, notes and labels are often utilized to communicate important information between volunteers and staff. For this reason, it is important that you check an animal's cage or enclosure every day for any notes or labels. This information may pertain to the animal's behavior, such as **Staff Only**, **Caution**, or to their diet or enclosure, such as **Wet Food Only** or **No Shavings**. On deployment you should always double check for additional information and directions on an animal's enclosure.

Labels are usually simple: Different colored duct tape with instructions written in marker.



Volunteers should not add any labels or signs to an animal's enclosure unless they are specifically asked to do so. If you have been working with an animal and you feel that they need a label, you should bring this information to the attention of your Team Leader.

When discussing behavior concerns about an animal, it's important to use objective language. For example:

**Don't say: "The brown dog is being really wild and out of control".**

Do say: "The brown dog is chewing the wires of his enclosure and he is spinning in circles"

**Don't say: "The dog is being really aggressive".**

Do say: "When I try to enter the dog's enclosure he is barking, growling, and showing his teeth".

Language is very important when it comes to describing animal behavior. Using subjective words like *aggressive*, *mean*, *scary*, *happy*, *etc.*, does not accurately describe the behavior the animal is showing. For staff and behavior professionals to determine what an animal needs, it is important that they have an objective view about what is going on with the animal behavior-wise.

## Daily Care SOG

When caring for animals on deployment, it is important that we track how they are eating, their bathroom habits, and any health concerns. This is typically tracked on what is called a Daily Care Sheet. Though the care sheet may look different depending on the partner organization we are working with, the premise behind any Daily Care Sheet is the same.

For each animal whose enclosure you clean you will note your initials and the following:

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- Did the animal eat
- Is there urine and feces
- Is there any vomit or diarrhea

It's important that you let your supervisor know if an animal has not been eating for 48 hours.

### **Medical concerns**

Typically, there is a separate area where medical concerns are tracked. This could be a white board, a clip board, a notebook, or an additional medical sheet. Here you will write any health concerns that you notice such as: *Limping on back left foot, diarrhea day 2, sore on stomach is bleeding*, etc. If you come across a life-or-death medical need, such as an animal not breathing or stuck in their enclosure, you should get your team leader. Otherwise, general concerns should be written down and they are checked each day by the medical team.

### **Unloading Transport Vehicles SOG**

During your deployment you may be volunteering when animals arrive at the temporary shelter site. If you are on a cruelty case deployment, animals will typically arrive in large numbers and will need to be unloaded in an organized manner.

This typically includes volunteers lined up outside of the vehicle and working in pairs. Each team is given an animal, sometimes in a crate or sometimes on leash, and the animal's paperwork. One person should carry the paperwork and the other should carry the crate/walk the dog. If more than one person is needed to carry the crate, then you should work in a group of three. This allows the volunteer(s) with the animal to be totally focused on transporting the animal safely to their cage and not be distracted. As a team, you will bring the animal to their designated space in the temporary shelter.

At this time, your job will be to place the animal in their enclosure and then go back outside to line up to take the next animal. Feeding and watering of the animals will happen at a separate time. Sometimes, multiple animals will have been housed together where they were living and may be housed together at the temporary shelter. You and your partner will work together to make sure everyone is safely in their enclosure. If needed, additional staff and volunteers will help when there are multiple animals.

If at any time you are uncomfortable with the animals you are being asked to handle, please do not handle that animal and let your supervisor know.

### **Animal Feeding SOG**

The animal diets (type of food and amount of food) will be set by the shelter manager in consultation with the veterinary team. It is important to always check for signs on an animal's enclosure such as *Wet food only* or *Mix food with water*, etc.

Feeding can be accomplished in a few different ways. The first is to prep all the food for the entire population. Then the food can be distributed by sections by volunteers. Other times, it may make sense to prep the food by certain sections of animals. This will all depend on the deployment you are on. Typically, animals are fed using disposable food trays.

When feeding enclosures that have multiple animals, you will prepare a dish for each animal and monitor them while eating. If there are any issues, the animals will need to be separated for feeding. This is something you should let your supervisor know, and they will determine what the feeding plan will be.

It's important to remember that you don't know the dogs you are working with. Feeding time is not the time to pet animals or interact with them for prolonged periods of time. Simply place the food in their enclosure and leave them to eat. When removing any bowls or trays it is also important to be mindful of an animal's behavior around their food dish.

## Animal Cleaning SOG

In the majority of emergency shelters the animals will either be housed in metal wire cages or in 5x5 kennels. Sometimes, if a physical animal shelter building is available, animals will be housed in the kennels and/or cages that are within the shelter. Below is an overview of the different types of enclosures that you may encounter in an emergency sheltering setting. Please note that this is meant to be a guideline and that the cleaning process will be specific to each deployment and will be explained to you on site.

When cleaning, it is most important to remember that less is more. In a crisis, the goal is to give the animals a clean space while causing the least amount of stress and maintaining safety and keeping the animal from getting loose. Once the shelter is established with a routine, there may be deep cleaning protocols that are put in place which will allow for a more thorough cleaning.

### Metal wire crates: Cats

The crate set up for a cat is often very simple. The bottom of the crate is usually lined with newspaper or puppy pads. Typically, the cat will have a litter box in the back of the crate and a food and a water bowl in the front. Sometimes, their cat carrier will be placed within the crate, if the crate is big enough, to allow for a hidey area. There may also be a cardboard box for a hidey spot if they are available.

In the photo below, you can see a volunteer prepping wire crates for cats. Each crate has a puppy pad, a litter box, and dishes. These are the items that will be cleaned each day. Cleaning will include emptying or replacing the litter box, replacing the puppy pad if soiled, and rinsing out and refreshing the water dish.



### Metal wire crates: Dogs

The crate set up for a dog is similar to cats but will vary depending on the size of the dog. In the photo below, you can see a small dog being housed temporarily in a dog crate.





Similar to the cat set up, the bottom of the crate will be lined with newspaper or puppy pads. For cleaning, volunteers will work in pairs. One person will walk or handle the dog, while the other replaces the bedding and refreshes the water bowl.

### **5x5 Kennels: Dogs**

Another type of housing that is often used for dogs is a 5x5, or larger, kennel. In the first photo below, you'll see a dog housed in a 5x5 kennel with pine shavings used, as well as a few kennels set up. This is a very common type of bedding that is used in emergency sheltering as it is easy to clean and provides cushioning and warmth. Think of this type of bedding as a large litter box that allows you to easily scoop out solids. When cleaning this type of kennel, you'll be working with a partner, but you may also be cleaning with the dog inside of the kennel. Your partner will be there to hand you any needed supplies while you scoop out urine or feces from the shavings. When needed, you will add new shavings to replace what you removed. For dogs housed long-term, it is ideal to fully replace the shavings and do a full clean once a week. If there is bedding (Kuranda bed, fleece blankets), this may need to be changed out or wiped down if soiled, and water bowls will need to be rinsed and refilled.



L photo: Pup with a soft bed



R photo: Kennels set up with vinyl Kuranda beds

Occasionally, a 5x5 kennel will be set up over a surface that can be easily cleaned. In the photos below, you'll see a 5x5 set up with rubber flooring and one with a piece of vinyl material. When working with these surfaces, the cleaning would involve picking up any solids and then spot cleaning or mopping as needed. You would then change out water and bedding as normal.





*5x5 kennel set up over a piece of vinyl*

### **Cleaning in pairs (buddy system)**

In an emergency shelter setting you will be cleaning animals' housing in pairs (using the buddy system). This is for your safety as well as for the safety of the animals. Typically, each team of two will be assigned to a section for cleaning. One person will clean the enclosure while the other person provides their partner with the necessary supplies. Not only is this an efficient way to clean, but it also ensures that the person interacting with the animal has a partner as a backup for safety. **It is most important that you never leave your partner alone with an animal. You are a team and are expected to stay together during cleaning.**

## Other Volunteer Tasks SOG

As a volunteer there are a variety of tasks that you may do while on deployment. When you receive your initial deployment request email, you will be sent an overview of what is needed for that particular deployment and can determine if you are able to complete the types of anticipated tasks.

Typically, volunteers will complete the following tasks:

- Setting up or breaking down a temporary animal shelter (putting up kennel panels, setting up crates, etc.)
- Sweeping and mopping
- Organizing supplies
- Disinfecting kennels, crates, and transport vehicles
- Cleaning animal enclosures (emptying litter box, cleaning dog kennels)
- Feeding animals
- Emptying trash
- Wash dishes
- Making enrichment items

## Dishwashing SOG

### Supplies/equipment needed

- 3 sinks, tubs or buckets of fresh water
- Bleach
- Dawn dish soap
- Scrubber pad/sponge

Fill the sinks/tubs/buckets as follows:

- 1) Cleaning: fill one sink/tub/bucket with fresh water and enough Dawn to make the water sudsy, but not too soapy
- 2) Disinfecting: fill the next sink/tub/bucket with fresh water and ½ cup of bleach per gallon of water
- 3) Rinsing: fill the last sink/tub/bucket with fresh water only for rinsing

- Using the scrubber pad/sponge, be sure to scrub all bowls clean of caked on food, saliva, feces, etc. in the soapy water.
- Then put the cleaned bowl into the disinfecting tub and leave for 10 minutes (other cleaned dishes can be added in the meantime).
- After 10 minutes, remove the cleaned dishes from the disinfecting tub, and then dip into the rinsing tub.
- Set aside on a clean surface to air dry.
- Empty and rinse the dirty water from the tubs/sinks/bins after the dishes are done.
- Leave empty to be filled the next morning.

### Washing/soaking litter pans

- Soak the litter pans in designated cleaning solution of Dawn and fresh water and scrub clean.
- Place the litter pans in a disinfecting tub to soak for 10 minutes, then rinse thoroughly in the tub.
- Set aside on a clean surface to air-dry.

## Dog Walking SOG

In an emergency sheltering setting, dogs are typically not walked on a normal schedule. A disaster or emergency situation can be extremely stressful for dogs, and sometimes enrichment like going for a walk or spending time with people is actually not what is best for them. There may be other reasons that the dogs cannot be walked such as medical concerns, behavioral concerns, or confidentiality. For example, if the dogs are part of a cruelty case and their location needs to remain confidential, they may not be able to walk around the property depending on the location of the shelter.

Dogs should only be walked if directed to do so by your supervisor. Often, dogs who are housed in a large 5x5 kennel will remain in their kennels for the duration of your deployment. Cleaning will typically be done around them or they may go into a holding area or outdoor fenced area for a potty break. Dogs who are housed in wire cages will typically be walked by volunteers or staff in teams of two. This will vary depending on the deployment and will be explained to you when you are on-site.

The body language that we show when leashing a dog can be scary! We are typically reaching towards the dog, leaning over and then putting something over their head. All of these actions can make even a relaxed and tolerant dog feel uncomfortable. On deployment, it is even more important to be mindful of our body language and how the dog is reacting to us. If you are trying to leash a dog and the dog is moving away from you, moving from corner to corner in their enclosure or showing any signs of defensiveness (growling, showing teeth) you should immediately stop what you are doing and let your supervisor know about the interaction. At no point should you be forcing the dog to be leashed.

As with cleaning, when walking dogs, you will be working with your partner. Again, this is for safety and support. You should never enter a dog's kennel without your partner standing by. Your partner is there to make sure you enter the kennel safely and that the dog does not escape. There may also be times when a dog is walked using two leashes and two people.

When walking dogs on deployment you will use what is called a slip lead. This is a looped leash that will slip easily over a dog's head and does not attach to a collar. It's important to keep the dog close to you when walking through the kennel areas. Do not let the dog you are walking approach other kennels that have dogs in them. Instead, quickly and safely move towards the door to go outside. You should keep a safe distance from other people and other dogs while walking. If you are ever uncomfortable with a dog or need assistance, stop what you are doing and find your supervisor.

## Loose Animal SOG

Even with the best safety practices and management, sometimes an animal will escape their enclosure. When this happens, the following procedure should occur:

- *If you are the first to notice the loose animal, or the animal gets loose on your watch, shout "Loose dog!" (or Loose cat, etc.)*
- *If you are in a different area of the shelter and hear "Loose dog!" repeat it so that other volunteers and staff will be notified. "Loose dog!" should be heard going all around the building.*
- *Stop what you are doing and step out of or close any animal enclosures that you are working in.*
- **As a volunteer, your job is not to catch the dog or the animal. This job is for your supervisor or staff of our partner organization. Never chase or try to restrain a loose animal.**
- *You can help by closing any doors in your area that the animal could escape through.*
- *Once the dog is caught, the supervisor or staff member will yell "Clear!" and this should be repeated throughout the shelter so that everyone is aware that the animal has been caught.*

## Interacting with Dogs SOG

As discussed in the Animal Handling SOG, when you are working with animals on deployment it is extremely important to be aware of your body language as well as theirs. Both play an important role in the relationship between you and them.

It's important that you apply what you've learned in your training and from the manual to your interactions with the dogs on deployment:

- Approach dogs in a non-threatening way (do not reach out to them, do not lean over them, do not put your face in their face)
- Make your body language less threatening (loose arms, looking at the ground, body turned to the side)
- Keep your voice calm and even toned (avoid high pitch squeaking, loud laughing, etc.)
- Do not make direct eye contact (when looking at a dog look at their ears or their paws)
- Practice a consent test when petting a dog (pet for a few seconds on their chest or their shoulder, stop, and see if they continue the interaction for more pets)
- Treat every dog as if you do not know them (never assume that you know how a dog is going to interact with you, even if previous interactions have gone well)
- Remember that you are a stranger to these dogs (hugging, petting, and interactions from strangers are often not comforting for dogs)
- Know your skill level. We do not expect you to be an expert and deployment is not the time for volunteers to try and handle difficult animal situations

When you enter a dog's kennel for cleaning you should always assess the dog's behavior. Is the dog in the back of the kennel, turned away from you, with his tail tucked? This is a dog that does not want to be touched. Instead, clean slowly and calmly around him. Is the dog in the back of his kennel, showing his teeth and low growling? Do not approach this dog to clean his kennel Touch base with your supervisor about what to do. Is the dog approaching you tentatively, licking his lips, with a lowered head and a small tail wag? This is a dog you can speak softly to and let him approach you on his own terms. The most important thing you can remember is the importance of respecting a dog's space - less is always more with dogs on deployment.

## Interacting with Cats SOG

Similar to dogs, when interacting with cats on deployment it is important to be aware of their body language and assess each cat prior to working with them. Most cats on deployment will be housed in a smaller wire cage. Unfortunately, this type of housing is not the most conducive to natural cat behavior, but is necessary during a crisis or natural disaster. Because cats are housed in smaller spaces and may feel fearful or defensive, it is just as important to be mindful of how you handle them. When working with cats:

- Approach cats in a non-threatening way (do not reach out to them, do not lean over them, do not put your face in their face)
- Keep your voice calm and even toned (avoid high pitch squeaking, loud laughing, etc.)
- Practice a consent test when petting a cat (pet for a few seconds, stop, then see if they continue the interaction for more pets)
- Treat every cat as if you do not know them (never assume that you know how a cat is going to interact with you, even if previous interactions have gone well)
- Remember that you are a stranger to these cats (hugging, petting, and interactions from strangers are often not comforting for cats)
- Know your skill level. We do not expect you to be an expert and deployment is not the time for volunteers to try and handle difficult animal situations

When opening a cat's cage for cleaning, assess the cat. Note where the cat is in the cage. Are they pushing at the door and reaching out with their paws? Take caution when opening the door of a cat displaying this behavior as they may jump out. Is the cat on top of their carrier? Cats often feel safer when elevated. Typically, a cat's cage will have a carrier, a cardboard box, or some sort of item that they can sit on. If the cat is in their safe place, leave them there. Do not try to coax a cat out of their hidey area. Instead, clean slowly and calmly around them. Is the cat in the back corner of their crate flicking their tail, ears back and eyes wide? This is a scared kitty that does not want to be petted. Remember, though our instinct is to reach out and touch scared animals to try and comfort them, this is the opposite of what you should be doing. A cat showing this behavior should be left alone while cleaning around him if possible.

Cleaning around a cat in a small space can be difficult. Sometimes, it can be helpful to feed the cat while you are cleaning. This way, they are distracted while you replace their puppy pad, clean their litter box, and fill their water dish. Your partner may also do their best to distract the cat if it is showing soliciting behavior (wanting to be pet, rubbing on your arms while trying to clean, or attempting to come out of their cage).

## Animal Health SOG

The animals you will work with on deployment may have a variety of health needs. Animals needing emergency vet care will quickly be transported to a local veterinary hospital instead of coming to the temporary emergency shelter. All other animals will come to the temporary shelter where they will be seen by a veterinarian over a period of time. Once seen they may receive vaccines and any medications for common conditions like eye infections, ear infections, or skin issues. Because animals are considered evidence, it is not always possible to treat health conditions that are not considered an emergency or life threatening. Grooming, for example, cannot necessarily happen right away when the animals are moving through the legal process.

Often, veterinary exams will occur while you are on deployment and trying to clean animals. It is even more important during exams that you are calm, quiet, and aware of your surroundings.

When working with a large population of animals with unknown and varying health conditions, it is extremely important that certain protocols are followed to prevent the spread of disease. We reduce our risk of spreading disease by mitigating the transmission of fomites. A fomite is simply a nonliving object or material that can transmit infection. Thus, we, our hair, our clothes, the pen we are carrying from room to room, is considered a fomite. We are the biggest vector for disease. This comes from petting and touching animals, touching their bedding, changing their water bowl, and then moving on to the next animal.

When working with the animals, expect to wear latex/disposable gloves and change them for each animal you handle or cage you clean. This detail will depend on the deployment and the population you are working with. There may also be times where you will need to wear full Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), such as a gown and disposable booties.

In a temporary emergency shelter, there are a few different factors that cause concern regarding the spread of disease:

- The animals have an unknown history and what they have been exposed to is unknown. Additionally, the animals may be in our care for a few days until every single one has received an exam by a veterinarian
- The animals typically have no vaccine history
- The animals are often stressed, which weakens the immune system, and causes animals to break with disease
- Animals with a variety of different health needs and underlying conditions may be housed in close contact

In an emergency setting, whether a cruelty/neglect case or a natural disaster, you may be faced with caring for animals with a variety of needs. For example, there may be a nursery area where moms with nursing puppies are housed, an area with dogs that have a contagious skin condition, and an area for cats who have an autoimmune disease. For this reason, there is often, and ideally, a cleaning order as well as cleaning supplies for each section. This is so we do not bring contaminated supplies into different sections.



# Animal Health Symptoms SOG

<b>EYES</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Clean</li><li>● Clear and bright</li><li>● Responsive to visual stimuli</li></ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Watery, red, or discolored</li><li>● Filmy or cloudy</li><li>● Inflamed (swollen)</li><li>● Hypersensitive to light</li><li>● Pupils are unequal in size</li><li>● Pupils are overly dilated or overly constricted</li><li>● Showing third (or middle) eyelid</li><li>● Showing discharge</li><li>● Itchy (animal rubs eyes)</li><li>● Painful (animal squints)</li></ul>
<b>EARS</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Clean (both outer ear and canal)</li><li>● Pink and clean (inner ear)</li><li>● Responsive to noise</li></ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Showing discharge (waxy or other)</li><li>● Crusty, red, or inflamed</li><li>● Hair around ear is matted</li><li>● Scabbed or fly-bitten</li><li>● Itchy (animal scratches ear or shakes head)</li><li>● Foul odor</li><li>● Painful (animal cries when ear is touched)</li></ul>
<b>NOSE</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Clean</li><li>● Free of discharge</li></ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Scabbed</li><li>● Showing discharge (clear, mucous, blood, or pus)</li><li>● Crusty</li><li>● Cracked</li><li>● Congested or blocked</li></ul>
<b>MOUTH</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Free of odor</li><li>● Teeth are clean</li><li>● Gums are pink</li><li>● Gums have good capillary refill time (pink gum color returns within 1-2 seconds after being pressed with finger)</li><li>● Animal appears to swallow normally</li></ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Unusually red or pale</li><li>● Dry</li><li>● Salivating (animal is drooling)</li><li>● Foul odor</li><li>● Foreign bodies</li><li>● Showing discharge</li><li>● Swollen or inflamed</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gums are pale, white, purple, or inflamed, teeth are loose, pitted, broken, or tartar-covered</li> <li>Animal has trouble swallowing</li> </ul>
<b>LEGS/FEET</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legs support weight evenly (no limp)</li> <li>Pads are clean and smooth</li> <li>Nails are healthy looking</li> </ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal favors one leg (limps)</li> <li>Animal has limited motion</li> <li>Animal is weak or uncoordinated</li> <li>Joint feels tender</li> <li>Pads are cracked or hard</li> <li>Pads have matted hair between them</li> <li>Nails are long, short or ingrown</li> <li>Legs show swelling, lumps or lesions</li> </ul>
<b>SKIN/HAIR</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coat is bright and glossy</li> <li>Coat appears well groomed</li> <li>Skin is clean and free of oil</li> <li>Skin is free of swelling, lumps, and lesions</li> </ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coat is dull</li> <li>Coat is oily or dirty</li> <li>Hair loss or thinning</li> <li>Hair is matted</li> <li>Skin is dry or flaky</li> <li>Swelling, lumps, or lesions</li> <li>Skin is scabbed</li> <li>Skin is red or irritated</li> <li>Fleas, ticks, lice, or other parasites</li> </ul>
<b>BREATHING/RESPIRATION</b>	
<b>GOOD SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respiration is regular</li> <li>Respiration sounds clear</li> <li>Respiration rate is normal</li> </ul>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breathing is irregular, rapid, shallow, or labored</li> <li>Sneezing, coughing, wheezing</li> <li>Moist lung sounds</li> <li>Open-mouth breathing</li> </ul>

## Identifying Communicable and Parasitic Diseases SOG

This section outlines common diseases that may be encountered in a shelter environment. Whether the shelter is housing displaced animals from a natural disaster or those rescued from a seizure, animal health at the emergency shelter is always a top concern. The protocols on the preceding pages are designed to mitigate the spread of disease, but preventing disease and treating outbreaks in a temporary emergency shelter can prove to be even more challenging than when it occurs in a permanent animal shelter.

RedRover Responders volunteers who have up close, daily contact with animals are a key line of defense against an outbreak because of volunteers' ability to identify animals that may be stricken with communicable and parasitic illnesses. In order to perform this essential function effectively, RedRover Responders volunteers should become familiar with the descriptions and symptoms of each communicable and parasitic disease listed in this section.

It is vital that diseases are quickly identified and reported. Many diseases, especially the parasitic ones, are also zoonotic, which means they can affect humans as well as other animals. Secondly, in criminal seizures, any affliction must be documented for evidentiary purposes. This documentation must take place prior to any treatment.

A RedRover Responders volunteer who suspects any disease or parasitic infestation should notify the Team Lead as soon as possible. The Team Lead along with the Shelter Manager and Medical Director will determine appropriate action to protect volunteer safety, animal health, and preservation of evidence.

### Cat Diseases

#### **Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)**

Highly contagious respiratory tract infection caused by an airborne virus similar to the human cold. Symptoms can include sneezing, nasal discharge, runny eyes, cough, oral or nasal ulcers, sniffles, fever, hoarse voice, and/or loss of appetite.

#### **Feline Panleukopenia**

Caused by a virus so resistant, it can survive over one year outside a cat's body. Symptoms can include listlessness, diarrhea, vomiting, severe dehydration, and fever.

#### **Feline Leukemia (FeLV)**

Symptoms can present in a multitude of serious health problems – everything from cancerous conditions such as lymphoma to a wide range of secondary infections caused by the destruction of the immune system. After initial exposure to the virus, a cat may show no symptoms of its presence for months, if not years, yet all the while infecting others.

### Dog Diseases

#### **Kennel Cough**

Highly contagious respiratory-tract infection caused by an airborne virus similar to the human cold. Symptoms can include dry, raspy or hacking cough, backward sneezing, and/or loss of appetite.

#### **Canine Distemper**

Highly contagious, it is spread by discharges from the nose and eyes of infected dogs. Symptoms can include listlessness, fever, coughing, diarrhea, and vomiting; convulsions and paralysis may occur in the disease's final stages.

## Canine Parvovirus

Very contagious, debilitating, and widespread. Spread through infected feces, the highly resistant virus can remain in the environment for many months. Symptoms include high fever, listlessness, vomiting, and diarrhea.

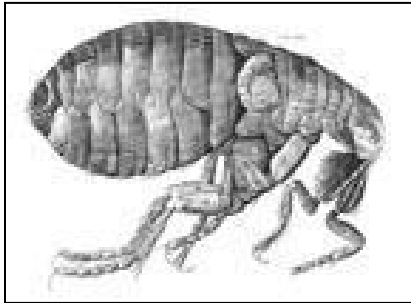
## Diseases found in Cats and Dogs

### Rabies

Incurable viral disease that affects the central nervous system and is spread through contact with the saliva of infected animals through bites or any break in the skin. Symptoms include lethargy, loss of appetite, lack of coordination, seizures, aggressive behavior, disorientation, and lack of fear toward natural predators, among other signs.

## Common Parasites and Parasitic Disease

### Fleas & Flea Anemia



Many of us are all too familiar with fleas. For animals in our care, fleas are much more than just an irritating nuisance; they can also pose a serious health risk. Flea infestations can lead to skin problems and infections and can even cause anemia in extreme circumstances. On small or weak animals, fleas may drink so much blood they can cause a state of inadequate red blood cells called *anemia*. Moreover, fleas are vectors for tapeworms and other diseases.

Incessant scratching and biting are two of the most commonly exhibited symptoms. Often these behaviors will be directed predominantly at areas such as the head, neck, and around the tail, as these are the places where fleas and their bites tend to be concentrated. Skin may become red and inflamed as a result of the irritation caused by flea bites and the constant scratching and biting. Flea “dirt” may be visible on the skin, on bedding, or in other areas around the living area. Flea dirt looks like tiny dark specks and is actually a combination of dried blood and flea debris. In addition to flea dirt, the fleas themselves may be visible in the animal’s coat.

It takes a lot of fleas to produce enough blood loss to create a life-threatening situation for the host, but it still commonly happens. Young animals kept outdoors (such as those involved in a puppy mill situation) are at high risk for flea anemia. Very small, young animals do not have blood to spare. Further, they are growing and trying to expand their blood volume; they are too young to effectively groom themselves and remove their own fleas. Flea anemia is one of the most common causes of death in young, outdoor animals.

## Ringworm



Ringworm is not a worm; it is a fungus that can be spread from animals to humans. Ringworm is spread by contact with infected animals, and by touching objects that the infected animal has touched such as bedding, brushes or grooming equipment, saddles and other tack, furniture, rugs, etc. Not every animal or human who touches infected animals or objects will become infected; young, old, and those with suppressed immune systems are most at risk.

In animals, the classic ringworm lesions are patchy areas of hair loss with circular, scaly areas, usually with very little inflammation or redness. Ringworm generally appears as spots around the head, ears, tail, and feet of an animal. The symptoms can vary – some show little or no hair loss at all and seem relatively unperturbed while others have marked hair loss with pronounced scaly lesions which can extend to the whole body. In humans, symptoms most commonly present as circular, red, raised and itchy lesions.



To prevent the spread of ringworm, use general precautions, such as wearing gloves and covering clothing with gowns or towels when handling an animal or other objects. The good news is that unless the animal is immune suppressed, ringworm generally runs its own course in a matter of six to eight weeks and the symptoms resolve on their own with or without treatment.

## Sarcoptic Mange



Sarcoptic mange, commonly known as canine scabies, is caused by the parasite *sarcoptes scabiei*. These microscopic mites can invade the skin of dogs or puppies and create a variety of skin problems, most commonly hair loss and severe itching, especially on the elbows, ears, armpits, hocks, chest, and belly. The mites prefer to live on areas of the skin that have less hair. As the infection worsens, it can spread over the entire body. Small red pustules often develop along with yellow crusts on the skin.

Because of the severe itching and scratching, the skin becomes traumatized and sores and infections can develop. While they will infect other animals and even humans, they prefer to live their short lives on dogs.

When humans get scabies from animals, it produces a skin rash composed of small, red, intensely itchy bumps and blisters and affects specific areas of the body. The disease is generally self-limiting, causing only temporary itching. Topical ointments can provide relief and expedite a cure. The best prevention is to avoid contact and wear long sleeves, gloves, or other protective clothing while handling dogs with mange.



## Ticks

Although ticks are commonly thought of as insects, they are actually arachnids like scorpions, spiders, and mites. All members of this



group have four pairs of legs as adults and have no antennae. Ticks are among the most efficient carriers of disease because they attach firmly when sucking blood, feed slowly, and may go unnoticed for a considerable time while feeding.



There are many varieties of ticks across the country. If you discover a tick on an animal, note it on their animal care sheet and advise your Team Leader. In cruelty cases; the tick should be removed by appropriate personnel and documented as evidence.

If you find a tick on you during a deployment, please notify the Team Leader immediately. The Team Leader will administer first aid to remove the tick and determine appropriate next steps.

If you experience a rash that looks like a bullseye, or a rash anywhere on the body or an unexplained illness accompanied by fever following a tick bite, you should consult your physician and explain that you were bitten by a tick. Disease carried by ticks can be treated with antibiotics. However, the type of antibiotic can vary, and individuals should be treated early in the infection.

### **Giardia**

*Giardia* is a parasite (protozoa) that can infect both humans and animals. Contaminated water is the typical source of a *Giardia* infection. At deployments, good handwashing and avoiding touching your face can prevent *Giardia* transmission.



The most common symptoms in humans are diarrhea and abdominal pain. Severe cases may also exhibit cramping, bloating, nausea with or without vomiting, malaise, and fatigue. In animals, *Giardia* can interfere with the absorption of food, vitamins, and other nutrients causing malnutrition. Clinical signs range from none, to mild recurring diarrhea consisting of soft, light-colored stools, to acute explosive diarrhea in severe cases. After infection, it takes 5 to 12 days in dogs, 5 to 16 days in cats, and 7 to 14 days in humans to develop symptoms. Symptoms can last two to four weeks in humans. RedRover recommends contacting a physician if you suspect you have contracted *Giardia*.

#### **When Returning Home**

Prior to returning home, all contaminated clothing should be bagged separately from clean clothing. We recommend sanitizing your shoes while on site. Once home, remove and immediately wash all contaminated articles of clothing in the normal wash cycle. Use common sense and attempt to keep possibly tainted items away from direct contact with your healthy pets.

### Additional Resources

#### Education

<https://www.maddiesfund.org/learn.htm>

<https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/>

<https://www.4pawsuniversity.com/blog>

## **Disaster Response**

<https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/disaster-cruelty-disaster-response/disaster-response>

## **Animal Behavior**

<https://www.aspcapro.org/training-webinar-series/webinar-series-ccpdt-behavior-training-ceu>

## **Training**

<https://eerular.org/>

<https://fearfreeshelters.com/program/>

<https://redrover.org/resource/additional-training-and-hands-on-experience/>