

# Volunteer Handbook



Alamo City Pit Bull  
RESCUE & REHABILITATION

**Alamo City Pit Bull Rescue**  
**PO Box 592978**  
**San Antonio, TX 78259**  
**[www.alamocitypitbull.org](http://www.alamocitypitbull.org)**

# WELCOME

Welcome to Alamo City Pit Bull Rescue! Volunteering your time is one of the best things you can do for our dogs. Without volunteers, this rescue would cease to function. Here at Alamo City Pit Bull Rescue (ACPBR), we are all volunteers and one big happy family!

Volunteering with ACPBR is not only rewarding for you, but also for the dogs you interact with. We need you to work alongside us to find suitable homes for every healthy and behaviorally sound dog and to save those that can be medically rehabilitated.

This manual outlines our general policies as they pertain to the volunteer program. Feel free to ask questions; all questions are important, please do not hesitate to ask. We depend on you to be an advocate in your community and educate your friends and family on issues that affect the lives of pets everywhere. You can make a difference!

We look forward to working with you. Thank you for joining us!

*ACPBR Team*

## **Contact Information:**

If you have a question or concern about volunteering please contact:

Michelle Zimmerman, Volunteer Coordinator  
[michelle.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

## **Introduction**

Since inception in April 2013, ACPBR has rescued, rehabilitated, and adopted out over 2500 dogs. ACPBR is a foster based organization, meaning we do not have a physical shelter. We have had over 50 active fosters homes at once. ACPBR does focus on the Bully Breeds however, we occasionally have other breeds in the program as well.

## **Mission**

Our mission is to save the lives of abandoned, abused, misused, and unloved Pit Bulls and other bully breeds. To find loving homes for those that are homeless, rehabilitate the medically challenged and provide refuge for the needy. To educate the community and to advocate for the responsible care and handling of these dogs. We are determined to rid the city of the negative stigma involving Pit Bulls.

## **Vision**

- To save healthy and behaviorally sound Pit Bull and other bully breed dogs.
- To rehabilitate dogs that can be medically treated within our means.

## **Objectives**

- Increasing pet adoptions.
- Emphasizing humane care for animals in the community.
- Assisting animal care facilities by pulling dogs from the shelter and placing them into our program.
- Reducing the animal population by releasing only altered animals into the community.

***Achieving our vision and objectives can only be possible with community support through responsible pet ownership and adoptions.***

## **Governance**

A Board made up of members appointed from the participating entities authorizes policies for Alamo City Pit Bull Rescue. Please refer to this list to help you understand who can help you with your particular question or concern.

**Jolie Zook: Founder/Medical Coordinator** [jolie.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:jolie.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

**Jess Bijonowski: Adoption Coordinator** [jess.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:jess.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

**Sarah Frye: Foster Coordinator** [sarah.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

**Michelle Zimmerman: Volunteer Coordinator**  
[michelle.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

**Izzy Norwood: Social Media/Marketing Coordinator**  
[izzy.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com](mailto:izzy.alamocitypitbull@gmail.com)

## **How to Become a Volunteer**

1. Complete a Volunteer Application and sign the Liability Waiver. Parents must complete and sign for volunteers under the age of 18. The waiver must be signed prior to participation in volunteer activities.
2. Complete orientation prior to participation in volunteer activities. If an orientation session is not available, new volunteers will be briefed at their first event.

## **Qualifications**

You must be an animal lover!

Be at least 12 years of age. Parents/Legal Guardian must accompany any minors below the age of 18 at all times while volunteering and no one under 16 years of age at events where the venue serves alcohol. If you are volunteering with a minor, you **MUST** remain together and only one minor per Parent/Legal Guardian volunteer.

All volunteers are asked to contribute as their schedules permit. However, if you sign up for an event, PLEASE make sure you attend. We understand things happen so if you cannot meet your obligation, please let Michelle know ASAP. Michelle

works very hard to ensure our events have the staff they need to operate successfully.

While we do not require a certain amount of volunteer hours, we do log the time that you serve. If it is noted that you have not logged any volunteer time within a few months, we may remove you from active volunteer status. If placed on inactive status, a volunteer may be required to repeat orientation if a significant amount of time has passed since their last date of volunteer service.

If you are pregnant or if you have any condition that might compromise your immune system, you must notify your physician of your intent to volunteer with ACPBR. Your doctor may want you to limit or stop your volunteering or s/he may have medical advice/precautions for you.

You must complete the volunteer orientation (if available) prior to participation in volunteer activities. Additional training may be required depending upon which area you would like to volunteer. You will be notified if you have additional training due. All volunteers will occasionally have mandatory training as procedures and policies change or are added.

You are an important part of the success of this organization. Volunteers are an essential part of events that are designed to promote the adoption of our animals, encourage donations, and provide information to the public about our organization. We rely on you! Volunteers who sign up to participate at events but are no-show for 2 events without just cause and notification will be removed from the volunteer database pending review by rescue management.

## **Shelter Policies**

### **Recording Service Hours**

All volunteers are required to sign in and out each time they volunteer. ACPBR keeps track of the number of volunteers serving the animals and their accrued hours.

### **Emergencies**

Please report any injuries to yourself, other volunteers, visitors or animals to Michelle or any other board member immediately. If you are bitten and the bite breaks your skin, notify a board member immediately. We are required by law to record a bite report for every incident.

### **Dress Code and Conduct Code**

When volunteering with ACPBR, volunteers are expected to present a professional image at all times. This includes language and clothing. Volunteers must be easily identifiable with their badge or name tag at all times. Volunteers must dress appropriately while volunteering. (Wearing your ACPBR volunteer t-shirt is preferred, but not required.) T-shirts with suggestive or offensive language and suggestive clothing should not be worn. Volunteers should wear long pants and sturdy, non-skid, closed toed shoes for safety. It is also advised to wear comfortable clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, stained, wet or snagged.

### **Drugs**

Drugs (including tobacco) are not to be used by volunteers during activities. (This includes smoking.) The sale, use, possession, or transfer of a controlled substance during volunteer time is prohibited.

### **Termination Policy**

ACPBR reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's service at any time, with or without notice. We advise volunteers to follow directives and all procedures and policies.

### **Sanitation and Cleanliness**

Our best defense against the spread of illness is diligently cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and hands. Everyone needs to wash their hands in between handling different animals and before eating. Many diseases are transmittable from animal to animal or human to human. There are some diseases that are communicable from animal to human. By your actions you can either limit or enhance the spread of infectious diseases.

For the protection of your own pets, we advise you keep them current on vaccinations. Volunteers should also change their clothing before interacting with their pets at home.

Bordetella (Kennel Cough) is a common virus that can affect dogs who are housed closely together such as in shelters, boarding facilities and grooming facilities. It is quickly transmitted through direct surface contact (with dogs, people, toys, bowls, etc.) and also through the air by sneezing or coughing. ACPBR provides dogs with a Bordetella vaccination; however, some dogs still come down with the illness due to their age, general health condition or stress level.

If you ever notice an animal who is sick, please notify a board member right away.

Cleaning the kennels that the dogs are housed in with a cleaning solution should be done before and after use. Cleaning solution and paper towels are available at all events.

All waste should be disposed of in a trash receptacle. Always leave the event area clean.

### **Euthanasia**

We do our best to place every dog in our program into an adopted home. ACPBR does not have “time limits” for adoptable animals; our fosters hold the dogs until they find the perfect home. A decision to euthanize is based on several different factors which may include but are not limited to life threatening illnesses, extreme medical problems, and unprovoked aggression. This decision is always carefully made by both the board members and the veterinarian.

## **The Animals We Serve**

### **Stray Animals**

ACPBR occasionally accepts stray animals from the public. San Antonio has a very high stray rate, and we get many emails everyday asking for us to take strays. Many times, we do not have the resources to accept the dog so we will refer them to other rescues or Animal Control.

Most of our dogs are received from Animal Care Services in San Antonio. They acquire the dogs in many different ways. ACPBR will request the dogs be temperament tested to ensure they get along with other dogs. We do not accept aggressively tempered dogs and/or dogs with a bite history.

### **Owner Surrender/ Rescue Transfer Animals**

ACPBR also occasionally accepts animals from their owners if the owner acts as the foster until the dog is adopted. Animals may be moved from rescues or even switched for other dogs. There is a surrender form we use and keep on file for animals that fit into this classification. While the stories that we hear for giving up a dog may be something we disagree with, we must remain professional and polite. Remember, we are here for the dogs!

Some of the reasons for owner surrenders include:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| “I’m having a baby”        | “I don’t have time for her”                      |
| “I can’t housebreak him”   | “He doesn’t get along with other dogs (or cats)” |
| “I’m moving”               | “The kids don’t spend time with him anymore”     |
| “My landlord said no pets” | “I can’t afford to take care of him”             |

“My husband is allergic”  
“He destroys the furniture”

“I got a divorce”  
“She is too big”

### **Animals Available for Adoption**

Volunteers will be working with animals who are available for adoption to the public. Volunteers are encouraged to socialize and care for these animals to help reduce stress and keep them safe. These are also the animals needing photos, bios, outings, etc. to increase their adoptability.

### **How to Talk to Potential Adopters**

Volunteers must be polite, courteous and helpful when dealing with staff and the public. Please refer all questions regarding policies and procedures you are not familiar with to a staff member. It is extremely important that the public not be misinformed and that you report any potential conflict to a staff member.

### **Adoption Process**

Adoption applications are available at [www.alamocitypitbull.org](http://www.alamocitypitbull.org)

Before adopting, the adopter must fill out an adoption application online. Once they fill it out, it will automatically email to the Adoption Coordinator. She will process the adoption application which can take a few days. If/when the application is approved, the adoption coordinator will forward the application to the foster of the particular dog. The foster will review the application and set up a meet and greet with the applicant and their family. If the meet and greet goes well, the dog will be left with the new family at that point.

Adopters must be 21 years old to adopt.

Please do not promise any animal to any adopter. Adoptions are not completed on a first come basis but on the best fit for the dog.

Our adoption fees are:

Medical dogs & puppies (under 6 mo) \$200.00

Standard fee \$150.00

Non- Bully Breeds \$125.00

The adoption fee includes:

Spay or neuter procedure

Microchip implant

Vaccinations  
Heartworm Test and treatment if necessary

## **General Volunteer Tasks**

### **Helping Potential Adopters Visit with dogs**

Volunteers can take dogs out of the crate to interact with potential adopters after checking with a staff member. Try to find a yard or area with no other dogs or people. If you feel comfortable with the potential adopter, he may walk the dog himself. Always have the dogs on a leash. Never leave a dog unattended. It is preferred that only one dog be out at a time (this includes dogs out for potty breaks).

### **Dog Walking/Socialization**

Walking dogs at the events is extremely important. It is crucial that you return the dog to his/her same kennel.

Dogs should be walked at least 10 minutes at a time. Make sure you take a poop bag, in case they go.

Only walk dogs you feel comfortable handling. In order to reduce unnecessary stress, contact a staff member if you need help getting a dog out of or back into his kennel. When you take a dog out, you are responsible for it at all times.

If you remove a dog from a kennel and soon realize that he is “too much dog” for you, put him back in the kennel immediately. Call a staff member to help you if necessary. Some dogs are more powerful than they look behind the kennel door. Remember, we want this to be a pleasant and safe experience for you and the dog.

Keep the dog on a leash at all times. To reduce the probability that the dog will pull the leash out of your hand, loop the leash handle around your wrist and firmly grasp the handle section with the same hand.

In the interest of safety and infection control, please keep a safe distance (6 feet is recommended) between the dog that you are walking and all other dogs. We don't always know whether any given dog is aggressive toward other dogs, is easily startled, or is not spayed/neutered. Take special caution when exiting and entering buildings.

Please do not walk very young puppies (6 months and under). Their immune systems are not completely developed and are at risk for infection if they are walked through high traffic areas.

## Volunteer Levels

The Volunteer Program of ACPBR consists of 3 levels. Each level builds upon the next in volunteer responsibilities and interaction with animals. It is not required to move up to any level. Volunteers are encouraged to find the niche that best suits them and we offer a variety of ways to get involved.

If a volunteer would like to move up to the next level, (s)he should work the required hours and then request any applicable training for the next level. Colored badges will reflect the level of each volunteer as follows:

Level 1, White. Level 2, Teal. Level 3, Orange.

Level one: Provide basic dog care, walk dogs, clean kennels, help with events under supervision, transport donations/supplies, transport dogs, fundraising.

Level two: (complete minimum 10 hours of volunteer service, complete any applicable training.) Level one roles, educate the public.

Level three: (complete minimum 25 hours of volunteer service, complete any applicable training.) Level one and two roles, mentoring, meet and greets.

\*\*\*Volunteers completing 25 hours of service will be provided a complimentary ACPBR Volunteer T-Shirt in recognition of their efforts.\*\*\*

## Body Language

Safety is of utmost importance at all times. We want your experience to be a happy and safe one for both you and the dogs you are helping. You should never put yourself into a situation where you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. If you feel uncomfortable with an animal's behavior do not remove the animal from the kennel.

Be aware of your body language and tone when approaching any dog. Dogs have a remarkable ability to read humans. This is what you are communicating:

### **Friendly human body posture includes:**

Look to the side of the animal

Arms at side

Move slowly

Speak to the animal in high-pitched, soft reassuring tones

**Threatening human body posture includes:**

Direct stare

Arm raised, with or without weapon

Rapid movement toward the animal

Shouting, growling commands

If a fight occurs between two dogs, stay calm. Pull the dogs apart by their leashes. **DO NOT USE YOUR HANDS** to break up a fight. Try to distract the dogs so that they will release their hold on each other (a quick scream/shout or loud bang). If that does not work, tell the nearest person to get a staff member. Always report a fight to staff.

# TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

## FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

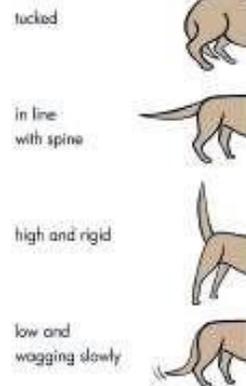
In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and offer signs of appeasement and peace: See the Doggy Dos and Don'ts poster



If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clearer that they are uncomfortable: raised hackles are a sign of fear:

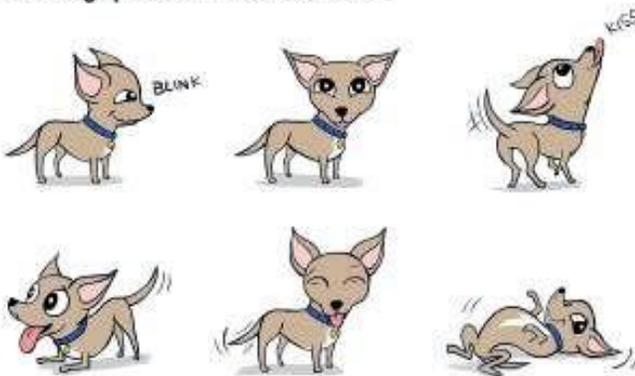


### TAIL POSITIONS



## CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.



### TAIL POSITIONS



Brought to you by **JezRose**  
canine behaviour specialist

For further resources and information on dog training and behaviour, see [www.JezRose.co.uk](http://www.JezRose.co.uk)

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I have read and understand the Alamo City Pit Bull Rescue Volunteer Policy Handbook. I agree to abide by these policies, and I understand that my volunteer service can be terminated by ACPBR staff at any time, with or without notice.

(Please print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature if under 18

\_\_\_\_\_

Shirt size (unisex): \_\_\_\_\_

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Received by Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE SIGNED AND DATED TO THE  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR PRIOR TO VOLUNTEERING.**

**Photo Release**

During my volunteer activities with ACPBR, I understand that my photo may be taken at various events and projects. By signing below I also hereby grant ACPBR permission to use my likeness in photograph(s) and/or video(s) in any and all of its publications or on the internet, whether now known or hereafter existing. I will make no monetary or other claim against ACPBR for the use of the photograph(s) and/or video(s).

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Volunteer Signature	Volunteer Name Printed	Date
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Parent Signature if under 18

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Staff Signature	Staff Name Printed	Date
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**PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE SIGNED AND DATED TO THE  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR PRIOR TO VOLUNTEERING.**