



Guidelines for a Home Visit

Purpose

The purpose of the home visit is to see firsthand the environment that will be provided for a dog so that we can confirm the information on the application, evaluate the overall safety and suitability, and ensure the household offers a good match for a specific dog. **We essentially want to know: *Will the applicant provide a nurturing home, keeping the dog's needs in mind and providing for the dog's safety at all times?***

Preliminary

First contact the applicant to set up a mutually-convenient time for the visit. The whole visit should take 30-60 minutes, depending on how chatty everyone is. Take the lead on suggesting some possible days/times. All members of the household must be present for the home visit. Once you've set a day/time, please notify your HV Coordinator or, if you cannot establish a mutually-convenient time within a week, let the HV Coordinator know. If you have a dog that is comfortable in such a situation and is known to react well to other dogs and people, you may take him/her with you as your "assistant" to help identify potential trouble spots and see how the applicant interacts with a dog. Please ask the applicant first, however, and if the applicant requests that the dog **not** be brought for some reason, please respect that. If you do take a dog, it must remain on leash at all times unless the home owner specifically invites the dog to be let off leash.

Starting the Conversation

When you arrive at the home, introduce yourself and briefly explain that your function is to assess the overall safety of the home for a rescue dog. Let them know that if potential problems are noted, the HV Coordinator will be able to discuss the issues with them so that they can be corrected before they could become hazardous for a new dog. It is usually easy to start off conversation by saying, "So, you've applied to adopt a Rat Terrier," then pause for them to talk and volunteer information. Make note of anything you deem relevant, and if we have questions, we will pursue with them later. **If you are not comfortable with the applicant or do not feel that you are in a good situation, please end on a nice note and leave right away.**

The Home Visit Tour

Tour the entire home, including yard, basement, garage and living area. Make sure to go into any area that the dog could find access to. The Home Visit form will need to be completed, but you may be more comfortable filling it out afterwards. You may let them know your observations and make suggestions as you go along if you feel they would be receptive. You may give the applicants the supplemental materials on toxic plants, toxic foods, and pet first aid kit (at end of this document), if appropriate. If you see specific areas of concern, it would be good if you could take photos, which will help us assess the situation.

Completing the Home Visit

Ask the applicants if they have any questions. Let them know that NR will be making a decision soon on the best home for the individual dog. **Do NOT give any indication of whether you consider the home visit a "pass" or not!** If asked directly, let them know that your role is to turn in the checklist report for review by the Adoption Team, and the Adoption Manager will make the approval decision. Thank them for their time.

Sending in the Report

Please submit your findings ASAP after the home visit. This is the final step to approval, so everyone anxiously awaits the results! Fastest is to submit the report on-line at <https://newrattitude.org/forms/home-visit-form/>, or you may scan and email the hard copy report to the HVC.

THANK YOU!

NEW RATTITUDE HOME VISIT REPORT

Applicant Name: _____ Home Visit Date: _____
Applicant Address: _____ Dog Applied For: _____
Applicant City/State: _____ Time of Visit: _____

The Surroundings and Yard

Describe the Setting/Neighborhood: _____
(Rural/suburban/urban; busy/quiet; pedestrian/car traffic, etc.)

Describe the Yard: no yard unfenced partially fenced (unsecure) fully fenced

If fully fenced, describe the fence: _____
(Chain link, privacy, picket, split rail, etc., and approx. height)

Are there problems with the fence or its condition, including potential escape routes (eg. holes, loose boards) or places where items are stacked beside the fence that a dog could climb on to get out: yes no
If yes, please describe:

Does the applicant have plans to fix the fence problem(s): yes no

Describe yard area shade: full sun partial shade full shade

Describe yard area surface: grass gravel dirt concrete mulch other: _____

Is there weather protection: yes no

Would a dog's digging be problematic: yes maybe not especially

Are there exterior stairs required to reach the yard: yes, full flight yes, partial flight no

Are there places a dog could fall or leap off elevated deck, balcony, or porch: yes no

If yes, describe size of opening and distance to ground: _____

Is there a swimming pool, pond, or other body of water a dog could fall into: yes no

If yes, is there a secure fence around the pool/pond: yes no

Are there built-in steps or a ramp that a dog could use to get out of pool/pond: yes no

Notes and Explanations for Surroundings and Yard:

The House

Describe the home: _____

(House, condo, apartment building, mobile home, basement apartment, duplex, ranch, split level, etc.)

Are there storm doors that latch properly to help deter escape: yes no

Are there small/fragile/hazardous objects within a dog's reach: yes no

If yes, describe: _____

If there is a staircase inside the home, are the stairs carpeted: yes, carpeted uncarpeted no stairs

Are there any houseplants on the floor or otherwise accessible: yes no

If yes, please give applicant the Toxic Plants handout: done

If the dog being applied for is a puppy, are there exposed electrical cords in the area where the pup will spend any unsupervised time: yes no n/a

Is kitchen trash can covered or out of reach: yes no

Are bathroom/bedroom waste baskets covered or out of reach: yes no

Is there a secure storage area for dog food: yes no

If the home currently has pets, is drinking water available: yes no

Is there a paper shredder within a dog's reach (even if kept off): yes no

Are there ashtrays within a dog's reach: yes no

Is there a fire extinguisher in the home: yes no

Are all toxic substances (cleaning products, household chemicals, antifreeze, etc.) securely stored where they are completely inaccessible to a dog: yes no

Does the household use pest control products (poison, bait, traps): yes no

If yes, describe usage location(s) and storage location(s): _____

Is the home neat and clean: yes, almost spotless yes, reasonably no, quite cluttered no, a mess

If no, describe issue(s): _____

Do you notice damage to the house or furniture from pet chewing or scratching: yes no

Do you get the impression that a dog chewing or creating a mess would be a problem:

yes, big problem reasonably undesirable not especially

Are dogs allowed on the furniture (beds, sofas, chairs): yes yes with restrictions no

Describe any restrictions: _____

Is there a basement: yes and dog will have access yes but dog will not have access no

Is there a garage: yes and dog will have access yes but dog will not have access no

Are any other areas of the house closed to dogs: yes no

If so, describe: _____

Notes & Explanations for the House

The Household

Are there pets (dogs or cats) in the home: yes no

If yes, please list: _____

Do any of the pets live outside: yes no

If yes, describe situation: _____

How do pets act toward you: _____
(friendly, curious, disinterested, hiding, suspicious, barking, skittish, hand shy, aggressive, etc.)

How do pets act toward the owner: _____

Do pets obey commands: yes no unknown n/a

Are there children living in the home: yes no

If no, is there any evidence of children: yes no
(for example play structure in yard, children's videos near TV, etc.)

If yes, describe behavior of children in relation to adults, to other children, and to any pets: _____

Are the children aware of an upcoming adoption: yes no

If yes, describe their attitude. Do they show any concerns: _____

Does household have more than one adult: yes, all listed on app yes, but not all listed on app no

If yes, list other adults: _____

Are all adults engaged in the adoption process: yes no

If no, explain: _____

Notes and Explanations for the Household:

Other Considerations

Does applicant have a pet first aid kit: yes no

Does applicant know location of nearest emergency (24/7) vet: yes no

Where will dog spend the day: loose in house confined to one room or area crated in house
 in garage in yard at work with adopter other: _____

Where will dog spend the night: loose in house confined to one room or area crated in house
 in garage in yard in bed with a human other: _____

Where will dog be when company comes: loose in house confined to one room or area crated in house
 in garage in yard other: _____

Does there appear to be a lot of "traffic" in/out the house or commotion within the house: yes no

Does the applicant appear to be dog-savvy: yes no

Do other household members appear to be dog-savvy: yes no

Would you feel comfortable leaving your personal dog with this applicant: yes uncertain no

If no or uncertain, please explain: _____

Are there any special needs, unusual circumstances, or concerns that we should consider: _____

In recognition that not every home is right for every dog, and even great people can be wrong for a specific dog, do you feel that this household is a good match for the particular dog applied for?

yes uncertain no

If you feel a different dog might be better suited because of the dog's age, size, energy level, socialization, training, adaptability, etc., please describe considerations: _____

HOME VISIT VOLUNTEER INFO

Your Printed Name: _____

Your Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete and return the four pages of this Home Visit form to the Home Visit Coordinator.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Plants Toxic to Dogs

Many common house and garden plants can be toxic to animals if swallowed, especially certain parts of the plant. Symptoms usually present as drooling, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and oral irritation, but in extreme cases can lead to muscle tremors, convulsions, liver failure, and death. Immediate medical attention is needed if your dog has

HIGHLY POISONOUS

- *Castor Bean*
- *English Ivy*
- *Foxglove*
- *Hemlock*
- *Inkberry*
- *Jimsonweed*
- *Johnsongrass*
- *Lantana*
- *Nightshade*
- *Oleander*
- *Pigweed*
- *Pokeweed*
- *Redroot*
- *Rhubarb leaves*
- *Sago Palm*
- *Tulip Bulbs*
- *Yew*

TOXIC but usually not lethal

- *Apricot* stems, bark, seed pits
- *Arrowhead Vine*
- *Azalea* leaves
- *Bird of Paradise* fruit, seeds
- *Boston Ivy*
- *Caladium*
- *Creeping Charlie*
- *Choke Cherry* leaves, seed pits, stems, bark
- *Daffodil* bulbs
- *Daphne* berries, bark, leaves
- *Glacier Ivy* leaves, berries
- *Heartleaf*
- *Hyacinth* bulbs, leaves, flowers
- *Hydrangea* leaves, buds
- *Jerusalem Cherry*
- *Jonquil* bulbs
- *Lily-of-the-Valley*
- *Mandrake* roots, foliage, unripe fruit
- *Milkweed*
- *Mistletoe* berries.
- *Morning Glory* seeds
- *Marble Queen*
- *Nephthytis*
- *Oats*
- *Poinsettia* leaves, flowers
- *Parlor Ivy*
- *Red Sage* green berries
- *Rhododendron*
- *Red Princess*
- *Saddleleaf*
- *Tomato* leaves, stems, unripe fruit
- *Tulip* bulbs
- *Umbrella Plant*

This is a compilation of toxic plants information from multiple sources including

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>

<https://www.petmd.com/dog/slideshows/emergency/poisonous-plants-to-dogs>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/plants-may-poison-your-pets>

<https://www.thespruce.com/plants-poisonous-to-dogs-2132451>

<https://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/>

<https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/gardens/planting-and-maintenance/protect-your-pets-from-harmful-plants>

For educational purposes only. This information is not intended as medical advice and can never replace medical care and treatments.

Foods Dangerous or Toxic to Dogs

The following common foods and beverages can be toxic or dangerous to your dog.

- **Alcoholic beverages.** Can cause coma and death.
- **Avocado.** Can cause vomiting and diarrhea.
- **Baby food.** Good for tempting your dog to take medicine, but look at the label and make sure it does not contain onion powder (See onion below.) Can also result in nutritional deficiencies if fed over long period of time.
- **Bones** from fish, poultry, or other meat sources. Can splinter and cause obstruction or laceration of the digestive system.
- **Cat food.** Generally too high in protein and fats to be fed long-term.
- **Chocolate, coffee, tea, and other caffeine.** Contain caffeine, theobromine, or theophylline, which can be toxic and affect the heart and nervous systems.
- **Citrus oil extracts.** Can cause vomiting.
- **Fat trimmings.** Can cause pancreatitis.
- **Grapes and raisins.** Contain an unknown toxin that can damage the kidneys.
- **Hops.** Unknown compound causes panting, increased heart rate, elevated temperature, seizures, death.
- **Human vitamin supplements containing iron.** Can damage the lining of the digestive system and be toxic to the other organs including the liver and kidneys.
- **Liver.** In large amounts, could cause Vitamin A toxicity, which affects muscles and bones.
- **Macadamia nuts.** Contain an unknown toxin, which can affect the digestive and nervous systems and muscle.
- **Marijuana.** Can depress the nervous system, cause vomiting, and changes in the heart rate.
- **Milk and other dairy products.** Some adult dogs and cats do not have sufficient amounts of lactase, which breaks down the lactose in milk. This can result in diarrhea. Lactose-free milk products are available for pets. Yes, that includes **ice cream!**
- **Moldy or spoiled food, garbage.** Can contain multiple toxins causing vomiting and diarrhea and can also affect other organs.
- **Mushrooms.** Can contain toxins, which may affect multiple systems in the body, cause shock, and death.
- **Onions** (raw, cooked, or powder). Contain sulfoxides and disulfides, which can damage red blood cells and cause anemia if ingested in large quantities (a whole onion or more). Cats are more susceptible than dogs.
- **Persimmons.** Seeds can cause intestinal obstruction and enteritis.
- **Pits** from peaches and plums, and apricots. Can cause obstruction of the digestive tract.
- **Raw eggs.** Contain an enzyme called avidin, which decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin). This can lead to skin and hair coat problems. Raw eggs may also contain Salmonella.
- **Raw fish.** If fed regularly, can result in a thiamine (vitamin B1) deficiency leading to loss of appetite, seizures, and in severe cases, death.
- **Salt.** If eaten in large quantities it may lead to electrolyte imbalances.
- **String.** OK, it's not a food, but it can become trapped in the digestive system.
- **Sugary foods.** Can lead to obesity, dental problems, and possibly diabetes mellitus.
- **Table scraps** (in large amounts). Because table scraps are not nutritionally balanced, they should not be more than 20% of the diet. Limit table scraps to plain meat, vegetables, potatoes, or rice. Excess fat should be trimmed from meat; bones should not be fed.
- **Tobacco.** Contains nicotine, which affects digestive and nervous systems. Can result in rapid heartbeat, collapse, coma, and death.
- **Xylitol (artificial sweetener).** Causes drop in blood sugar and liver failure. Can also cause seizures.
- **Yeast dough.** Can expand and produce gas in the digestive system, causing pain and rupture of the stomach or intestines.

Toxic Foods Information Source: www.peteducation.com. For educational purposes only. This information is not intended as medical advice and can never replace medical care and treatments.

Pet First Aid Kit

Dog owners can treat minor injuries for their pets if they have the appropriate remedies, tools, and equipment on hand. Assemble the items into a pet-specific consolidated kit so that it is readily available when the crisis occurs. The following items are suggested contents:

Tools/Equipment

- Muzzle
- "Elizabethan" collar (a/k/a "e-collar" or "cone")
- Rectal thermometer
- Tweezers
- Blunt-end bandage scissors
- Pet first aid book/chart
- Card containing dosage notes, based on your dog's weight, for all oral medicines

Supplies

- Sterile, non-stick gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Cotton balls
- Gauze rolls
- 2" wide self-cling bandage
- Plastic eyedropper or syringe

Topical Medications

- Antiseptic wipes, lotion or spray
- Petroleum jelly
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hydrocortisone 1% cream
- Anti-Fungal cream (OTC cream for athlete's foot, jock itch, or yeast infections)
- Sterile saline solution

Oral Medications

- Children's aspirin (81 mg)
- Pepto Bismal tablets
- Benadryl capsules (25 mg)
- Panacur worming powder
- Hydrogen peroxide, unopened! (to induce vomiting)