# A dog lying on a couch  Description automatically generated

# Welcome to Marley’s Mutts Dog Rescue Foster Division

Welcome to Marley’s Mutts Dog Rescue (MMDR) and thank you for making the decision to foster. This foster manual is intended to be a reference guide for you, answer questions you may have, and set standard practices within the foster team. Fostering is a big commitment and is the lifeline of MMDR. It is also extremely rewarding to help these dogs become the best dogs they can be in the short amount of time they are with you.

If you have any additional questions during your fostering career, we have a team of experienced people who are a call, text, or email away. Do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

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# Contact Information

## Bakersfield Office- 3720 Easton Dr. Suite 10 Bakersfield, CA 93309

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Position** | **Phone** | **Email** |
| Marsha Gebhart | Adoption/Foster Coordinator | 805-798-7631 | mgebhart@marleysmutts.org |
| Bernadette Ferguson | Social Media Coordinator | 818-415-8805 | bferguson@marleysmutts.org |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Rescue Ranch- 24890 Haven Lane Tehachapi, CA 93561

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Position** | **Phone** | **Email** |
| Connor Long | Operations Manager | 661-303-9808 | clong@marleysmutts.org |
| Jillian Becker | Adoption Coordinator | 661-425-8257 | jbecker@marleysmutts.org |
| Melissa Brunson | Executive Director | 951-218-8027 | mbrunson@marleysmuts.org |
|  |  |  |  |

## A black dog with a red collar  Description automatically generated

## Veterinary Hospitals

If you live outside of Bakersfield or Tehachapi, we will work with your normal vet where you reside. Notify the Foster Coordinator before setting up that appointment.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tehachapi Veterinary Hospital | 20693 Woodford-Tehachapi Road Tehachapi CA 93561 | 661-822- 6731 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| VCA Bakersfield Veterinary Hospital\* | 8610 Harris Rd Bakersfield CA 93311 | 661-327- 4444 |

 \*Please only use this vet for emergency services and must be preapproved by the foster coordinator before making the appointment.

# Quick Overview for New Fosters

Regular foster dogs and Mutt Mover dogs are fostered in our homes. The Mutt Mover foster dogs typically stay from a few days to 2-3 weeks’ time before they are transported to other rescue partners. Regular fosters are typically in foster care from one to four months before they are adopted, but this time can be shorter or longer depending on the status of vaccinations, spay / neuter, and interest in the dog. Medical needs dogs, larger breed dogs, and puppies can take longer. We welcome temporary fosters as well and work to be as flexible as possible with our volunteers.

1. Home Checks- Home checks are part of the initial foster home approval process. Foster families should expect periodic home checks throughout their foster journey. These checks allow us to access the dog in a home environment and assist the foster family with acclimating each dog to that foster environment and dynamic.
2. Dogs are typically pulled from high kill Kern County shelters and matched to a foster home based on what type, size, and training the fosters have attended. Foster parents usually will pick up the dog from the ranch or Bakersfield office, or by other arrangement depending on your schedule and location. In most cases, dogs will complete a quarantine period at the ranch prior to going into a foster home. In the rare instance where a dog must go into a home directly from the shelter, we will work to set up a quarantine area in the foster home.
3. Each dog will be provided food, treats, collars, leashes, beds, crates and toys.
	1. The Bakersfield office has the necessary supplies for Kern County fosters.
	2. If you live in Tehachapi, Cal City, Lancaster, Mojave, and Ridgecrest you can pick up supplies at the MMDR Rescue Ranch.
	3. If you have an emergency, please contact the Foster Coordinator for your area immediately.
4. Once the dogs are set up at home, we will contact you to schedule vaccines. The foster team will notify you of the schedule for spay or neuter and coordinate veterinary visits to treat any medical issues as needed. Puppies will need a series of shots every two to three weeks until adoption. Each dog over 1 year will need the following:
	1. Rabies 1 Year Vaccination
	2. Combo Vaccination for Distemper, Parvo and Canine Influenza.
	3. Microchip
	4. Spay or Neuter Surgery
5. After the dog has been in your care for approximately 1.5 weeks, we would love to have you start posting pictures and bio information in our Facebook foster group. Our foster team will also reach out to obtain some of that information. When the foster team reaches out for bio information, we will also try to coordinate appointments to get some great pictures and videos. These pictures and videos are incredibly helpful for networking the dogs in your care.
6. If you are on Facebook, there is a Foster Group page that you can be added too. This page is a great place to get in touch with other fosters, share problems, solutions, and pictures. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/marleysmuttsfosters>
7. Once we receive applications for your dog, we will go through each application and send you those applications most qualified for adoption via email. Please take time to review each application and provide the foster team with feedback about the fit for your foster dog. Remember you know your foster dog best and we want your feedback. Once you’ve provided feedback on each application, we will make phone contact with the potential adopter. If the conversation goes well, we will coordinate with you and the potential adopter to set up a meet and greet with the dog. If you do not think a potential adopter is the right fit for your foster, please let the foster coordinator know so we can discuss concerns.



Being in a shelter, rescued by strangers, passed to new strangers, and taking a car ride to a new home can be very stressful for your new foster. If you are fostering a dog that is overwhelmed, please be patient and give the dog space. Our foster team will be more than happy to provide helpful tips for each individual dog. Allow time for adjustment. Watch their behavior closely. Below are some helpful tips for introducing a new dog into your home.

1. Give them a quiet quick tour of the areas they are allowed to be in and let them sniff their new surroundings. Don’t forget outside, and important things like water dish location.
2. If you have resident dogs, closely monitor the introduction between your new foster and your resident dogs. Be mindful and advocate for all the dogs. Perform introductions with your resident dogs in a controlled environment and make sure all dogs are being respectful. Please reach out to the foster team if you have any questions or concerns about introductions with your resident dogs.
3. Let the dog come to you when they are ready for attention. For most dogs, this will not take very much time at all. However, some of the dogs we rescue are very overwhelmed, insecure, and timid dogs. These dogs take a little bit more time to come around, but don’t worry they always do!
4. Do not leave foster dogs unattended with residents’ dogs.

# Recommendations for daily life

These are suggestions we would like to provide to new fosters that we have found helpful with new foster dogs.

1. We recommend feeding foster dogs separately from resident dogs. All feeding should be supervised to ensure there are no resource guarding issues.
2. We recommend not leaving foster dogs in the yard unattended for long periods of time during the first couple of weeks in your home. As the new dog acclimates to the environment and you learn more about your foster, they may be given more freedom in the yard.
3. If you are noticing undesirable behaviors, please reach out to our foster team so that they can assist you with addressing these behaviors. As a foster becomes more comfortable in their new home, their different personality traits will really start to show. Issues such as resource guarding or using their mouth can become a much larger issue if it is not addressed immediately.
4. Keep energy levels low when playing with resident dogs to prevent escalation as what starts out as play can turn into something else if not careful. Always monitor play, especially when toys are involved.
5. Always use a leash while in public with the foster dog. The leash should always be always in control of an adult.
6. Once your dog is completely vaccinated and is clear of any illness that they may have come in with, it's time to get them out in the world and socialized. Take them for walks, (always on leash) friend’s homes, and public places that are dog friendly. Dog parks are a very uncontrolled environment where people typically do not pay attention to their dogs. This can result in fights that cannot be stopped in a reasonable amount of time. Dogs at parks are not always vaccinated and can spread disease quickly. If you will be utilizing dog parks, please use your best judgement and always supervise your foster dog.
7. Send updates and pictures of your dog at least twice per week. This can be done on the Foster Group Facebook page or by text / email to the Foster Coordinator. This helps MMDR stay in the loop with your dog and gives additional marketing material to help promote your dog.
8. Remember – you are the biggest reward for your dogs. Verbal communication and touching makes your dog happier than any treat or toy. These can be the best tools for positive reinforcement training or can positively reinforce undesirable behavior, so always be mindful of the message you send the dog.
9. Love and enjoy your foster dog!

# Adoptions / Events

Adoptions can happen by direct contact through the website application or during one of our adoption events. It is important that adoptable dogs are available for public adoption events. Our foster team will notify you of all upcoming adoption events as soon as we know dates and locations. If you cannot stay at an event, please let the Foster Coordinator know as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to ensure the dog makes it to the event. If you are able to stay and answer questions from the public first-hand, this could lead to an easier adoption.

No personal dogs should attend the public adoption events. The environment during these events can be chaotic, adding additional dogs can be confusing to potential adopters and add to the elevated energy which can cause unwarranted stress for our adoptable dogs.

When a selected application is forwarded to your attention, it is important to review the application and address important areas regarding your foster dog with the foster team. Follow your senses. If it doesn’t feel like a good fit, that is perfectly OK. Just let the Foster Coordinator know. Additional meet and greets can be set up with an experienced foster or trainer if you do not feel comfortable making the decision.

For your information, MMDR Adoption Personnel will be handling adoptions and will be handling payment. The dog will go with a collar and the adoption packet. Leashes, crates, beds, etc. are the property of MMDR unless you decide to use your own supplies (not reimbursable) and is not part of the adoption supplies.



# Vacations

Vacations will be covered by another foster who can pup-sit for you while you are out of town. It is important to notify the Foster Coordinator as soon as possible of your intent to take vacation, two weeks’ notice is preferable when possible. This will ensure that coverage will be secured for your foster dog. It is also helpful if you can post on the foster group Facebook page in advance so fosters can know more about your dog and if it would be a good fit for them to pup sit. If no foster is available, it is possible to board the dog at the MMDR Rescue Ranch.

# Foster Dog Transfers

If your foster dog is not a good fit for your home, you are planning a vacation, or circumstances have changed and the dog needs to be returned or transferred to another foster, please contact the foster team as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to move the dog in question.

# Additional Do’s, Don’ts, and Helpful Information

## Collars

Do not use prong collars, electronic shock devices or give any forceful corrections. If your foster dog is displaying undesirable or unsafe behaviors, please contact the foster team immediately. We will coordinate training options on a case-by-case basis.

## Exercise

Foster dogs should receive some kind of exercise every day. The old adage, “A tired dog is a happy dog,” holds true for foster dogs. Playing interactive games such as fetch or going on walks or hikes as appropriate, are great ways to help tire your foster out.

## Puppies!

We determine foster needs for puppies based on age, size of the litter, and whether the litter has a mom. In some circumstances we will split a litter up. We always prefer sending pups out in at least a pair so they can still socialize and learn important things like bite inhibition.

## Foster Fails

Does a foster fail mean that you were a bad foster? Absolutely not! A “foster fail” is a common term used in rescue when you decide to keep your foster dog. MMDR feels if you’ve been cleared to foster then you also meet our criteria to adopt! We always welcome foster fails!

**Introducing New Dogs**

If you need additional guidance for introductions, please contact our foster team.

## Crate Training Tips

If you are interested in crate training your foster, please reach out to the foster team. We are happy to provide you with an appropriately sized crate and can provide crate training tips and guidance.

## Illness and What to Watch For

Some illnesses that dogs get are obvious that they need medical attention. Some symptoms are not so obvious. Watch for the following signs that your foster may need medical attention. If any of these symptoms are noticed in your dog, notify the Foster Coordinator immediately.

1. Poop – It is common for a dog to not have a bowel movement within the first few days of being in a new home. Bowel movements should be well formed and free of mucus or blood. Loose stools are common in dogs when switching diet or when the dog is stressed, but if it doesn’t clear up in a couple of days, veterinary care might be necessary.
2. Not eating or drinking regularly
3. Lethargy or depression
4. Abnormal color in urine
5. Lumps and bumps
6. Discharge from eyes, nose or mouth
7. Vomiting
8. Limping



# Change History

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Summary of Changes** | **Date Published** |
| 1 | Initial Release | 2015 |
| 2 | General updates to reflect changes in the program | 10/01/17 |
| 3 | General updates to reflect changes in the program | 9/5/22 |
| 4 | Total revision | 2/14/2024 |