



## HELPFUL HINTS FOR NEW DOG OWNERS

Thank you for adopting a four-legged companion animal.  
We wish you many years of joy with your new friend.



"To the young child, there is no gap between his soul  
and that of animals."

*G. Stanley Hall (1904)*

Issued by the National Council of SPCAs  
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Caring and providing for an animal brings a whole new set of responsibilities, such as thinking ahead with regard to danger areas in your home (e.g. poisons, uncovered swimming pools, unsecured gates, etc.), as well as ensuring that the new member of your family is groomed regularly, fed, sheltered, watered, identified, vaccinated and dewormed.

### SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

#### Sleeping Inside

- A blanket placed in a basket or a box on the floor will be suitable.
- Sleeping arrangements for puppies are non-negotiable – they sleep inside the house. (By the way, a dog that sleeps inside the house is more likely to be a better protector than a dog that sleeps outside.)

NB: It is important to remember that young animals, like human babies, sleep a large percentage of the day and children should be prevented from carrying them around all the time as this can cause them to stress and may also make them irritable.

#### Sleeping Outside

- A raised, waterproof kennel, with bedding and minimal exposure to the elements is essential.

### FEEDING

- Provide your dog with his own food bowl.
- Feed a well-balanced nutritious diet.
- Your dog must have access to fresh water at all times.
- Do pick up uneaten food after an hour - leaving food down can encourage dogs to become "lazy" eaters.
- If you are going to give your companion bones, only give marrow bones.

### EXERCISE YOUR DOG (AND YOURSELF)

- Set time aside every day to play with your companion.
- Dogs should also be leash-trained and kept under control at all times.
- The by-laws in most municipalities require that dogs must be on leashes in public places, including beaches and parks.
- Remember to pick up your dog's poop – in public places as well as at home.

### CHILDREN

Bear in mind that dogs have not read the human rulebooks, so teach children:

- that animals must be treated responsibly;
- that they must be handled correctly (children can be rough, and what may be fun in their eyes, such as teasing, can be very, very annoying to a dog);
- that they are real live creatures that feel emotions such as affection and fear;
- that they are not toys;
- that they can be hurt easily;
- to approach a dog from the side, never from the rear or directly from the front;
- to leave a dog alone if it growls, lifts its lips, backs off or raises the hair on its back;
- never to approach a dog that is eating;
- not to approach or pet a strange dog without the permission of the handler;
- not to run if they are afraid, but to stand absolutely still until the "danger" has passed.

### HEALTH & VETERINARY CARE

- Dogs should be dewormed and vaccinated on a regular basis and have health checks annually.
- Puppies cannot be fully vaccinated before 12 weeks, and should not go out of your property until this has been undertaken.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the second and third vaccinations are given to your puppy.
- Without these vaccinations, the puppy is very susceptible to diseases such as Parvo-Virus and Distemper.

### IDENTIFICATION

It is highly recommended that your pets be identified:

- with a collar and ID tag;
- If you can afford it, with a microchip as well.
- An additional precaution is to write your telephone number on the inside of the collar with a permanent marker.

## INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO ITS NEW HOME

- When you get your new companion home, check that all gates are securely closed (preferably locked).
- Other canine companions should be kept inside the house whilst the new dog is being walked around its new outside territory, and vice versa when the new dog is being walked around the inside of the house.
- Walk your new companion around the garden and through the house, on a leash, in order to establish the boundaries of the new territory. Reassure your new friend by talking quietly while you walk around the new territory.
- It is recommended that children sit quietly to one side while this is happening.
- Once this has been done, show the dog his/her water and food bowls, remove the leash and perhaps provide a small snack.
- Once your companion has settled down, complete the introductions to the rest of the family and anyone else in the household, such as the domestic employee and gardener.

NB: It is also advised that you give your pet basic obedience training. The Clicker method of training is recommended.

## INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO OTHER DOGS IN ITS NEW HOME

- There is likely to be territorial grumbling, so you must keep all the dogs on leashes while doing the introductions. (If there are more than two dogs to introduce to the newcomer at home, introduce the existing dogs one at a time.)
- Allow the dogs to sniff each other whilst on the leash and gauge their reactions. Reassure them by talking calmly and quietly.
- If there is no aggression, take off the leashes and go into the house, so that they can sort out their pecking order.
- If there is still aggression, then keep the dogs separated and repeat the process a few times each day until you are confident that they can be left alone without fighting.

## INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO CATS IN ITS NEW HOME

- Certain breeds of dog are known to be cat chasers. If you already have a cat it is important to find out whether or not the dog you wish to adopt has a history with cats.
- Dogs and cats who have not experienced each other will require some extra time to become accustomed to each other. Dogs usually want to chase cats, and cats are usually afraid and defensive.
- Ensure that your cat has its bedding/nest, and food and water, out of reach of the dog.
- After the animals have been exposed to each other's scents, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner.
- Put your dog's leash on and command him to either 'Sit' or 'Down' and 'Stay'. Have another family member enter the room and quietly sit down with the cat on his or her lap. If the cat is nervous and does not want to be held you can use a carrier instead.
- Reassure them by talking calmly and quietly and, if it helps to relax them, give each titbits simultaneously.
- At first, the cat and dog should be on OPPOSITE sides of the room. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other without fear, aggression or other uncontrollable behaviour.
- Next, move the animals a little closer, with the dog still on a leash and the cat gently held in a lap. **THIS MUST BE DONE WITHOUT FRIGHTENING THE CAT.**
- During the introduction process you may want to keep your dog on a leash, and with you, when the cat is free in the house. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide out of reach of the dog.
- When you are not at home, and until you are certain that they will both be safe, keep the dog and cat separated.