Responsible Dog Owner's Pledge

I am acquiring a pet to love and enjoy.

I have a responsibility to care for my pet during its life expectancy.

I will be responsible for my dog's health needs including routine veterinary care, check-ups and vaccines.

I will be responsible for ensuring adequate nutrition through proper diet and clean water at all times.

I will ensure my dog gets daily exercise and regular bathing and grooming.

I will be responsible for my dog's safety.

I will properly control my dog by providing fencing where appropriate, not letting my dog run loose, and using a leash in public.

I will ensure that my dog has some form of identification when appropriate (which may include collar tags, tattoos, or microchip ID).

I will provide adequate supervision when my dog and children are together.

I will not allow my dog to infringe on the rights of others.

I will not allow my dog to run loose in the neighborhood.

I will not allow my dog to be a nuisance to others.

I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog's waste.

I will be responsible for my dog's quality of life.

I understand that basic training is beneficial to all dogs.

I will give my dog attention and play time.

I understand that owning a dog is a commitment in finances, time and caring.

CONGRATULATIONS

You've made the choice to add a new puppy to your home. Whether you're experienced with pets or adopting for the first time, we have put together some basic information to help you transition your new puppy into your home.

Your puppy now depends on you for everything – food, water, exercise, training, good health and hygiene. Please remember that all puppies are different, and you should consult your veterinarian and trainer for specific needs of your pup.

It is exciting to bring your new puppy home and into your life and heart. I know you will be excited to show him / her off and play with him / her right away but remember to give your puppy some time to adjust! We recommend three days at home. No visitors and no outings. Your puppy is undergoing a lot of change and they need lots of rest while they adjust. Adding more stress during this transition is detrimental to both their mental and physical health.

Puppies do not know English. The best way to train a dog is when they do a behavior you want, praise the pup with a pat, a treat or a verbal praise (keep it short and simple though). For example, don't say "Sit…sit…sit…sit…SIT" and expect a response. Get your puppy to do the behavior (sit) and then reward. You add the word and maybe even a hand signal later.



Food

Feeding your puppy is one of the most important things that you do that affects your puppies health. Good food = good attention and ability. A good quality food is recommended. Dry food keeps dog's teeth cleaner. Puppies should be fed a puppy food for 9-12 months. We recommend feeding a measured amount 2-3 times daily. Most dog

foods have recommended feeding amounts on the bag. This gives you a good idea where to start. For small breed dogs 3-4 meals a day while they are young puppies, gradually reducing the number of feedings down to 1-2 feedings/day by adulthood. Large breed puppies may do fine with fewer feedings as young puppies. Remember that your puppy will be going through growth spurts and so will be very hungry at some times and less hungry when he/she is not growing as rapidly. Do not be too concerned about this, but adjust the feeding as necessary. It is important to try to prevent obesity to maintain health.

You have been provided with some of the food your puppy has been eating. We use Nutri-source small/medium sized puppy food and highly recommend this food. We do not require your puppy to stay on this food if you have a preference to a different brand. We do recommend you not make any switch to a new food for at least a month or more after your puppy gets home. The transition to a new home can be stressful and we do not want to add to the puppies stress by immediately changing the brand of food. If you do decide you are going to change brands of food after 1 month, we recommend you do a slow transition by mixing the brands together so that your puppy can adjust to the new brand.

Changing Food

First and foremost, you should never do an abrupt food change. If you do, your dog is more susceptible to experiencing an upset stomach and diarrhea. Rather, you should gradually replace your pup's old food with their new food. Some manufacturers recommend a 10-day process. If you are switching to a food that specifies this long of a transition period, then plan for the full 10 days. If not, usually between 5-7 days is sufficient. Check out this helpful infographic by PetSmart:



Photo Credit: PetSmart

The Formula

If you are happy with your current dog food formula and changing because of age or medical reasons, then look for another food that contains similar ingredients. Switching to a food that's similar to the one your dog is already used to will make the transition easier.

During your transition period, keep a close eye on your dog's appetite, energy level, and overall attitude. If your fur baby shows signs of an allergic reaction during his food transition, call your vet.

Puppy Chewing

Puppies have needle sharp teeth and this can be tough! Some tricks to help you avoid becoming a pincushion are to have chew bones and toys always close by! Do not ever let them chew on you. All it takes is one family member that allows this behavior and it will be possible for the toddler to become a chew toy too. Keep your rules and boundaries

consistent. If your puppy chews on you, offer an acceptable item for them to chew on. If they persist, then take yourself away from them (get up and leave or turn your back to them). They will not want to lose you! Another tip that works for most puppies is to make a quick, sharp puppy "cry" noise. This is how they let other littermates know it hurts!

Bathing/Brushing/Nail Care

Start grooming early on. Get your pup used to handling from day one, touching feet, nails, tail, ears, mouth, teeth, and belly with love. Every dog needs a good brushing once a week or more often. Use this time to check your dog all over. A thorough grooming session once a week can save you a trip to a groomer or even the vet. Lumps and bumps should be seen as soon as possible by your veterinarian. A good brushing will help to remove any excess hair and can decrease the amount of shedding (based on breed). Use this time with your puppy so that it gets use to being handled.

Bathing requirements can vary. Basically, the best way to gauge when your dog needs a bath is to give him/her a good sniff. How does he/she smell to you? Not so good? Start running the water. Use dog shampoo. It's less drying to their skin than people shampoo. Work the shampoo into a gentle lather and massage it all over your dog's body, being careful not to get soap in his/her eyes. Do not bath your puppy too often though as you can dry out the puppies skin.

If the idea of wrestling your dog into a bath tub and expecting him/her to quietly tolerate being lathered and rinsed makes you laugh hysterically, then do what many opt for: take your dog to someone who makes bathing dogs their business. Groomers will not only bathe your dog but they'll clip her nails, express anal sacs (upon request), trim near the eyes, and dry him/her off. Most are priced reasonably.

Your dog will need regular nail care. If you can hear your dog coming, you need to clip your dog's nails. Use clippers and cut the tip of each nail. Be sure to give lots of praise during this process and offer treats to promote good behavior. Be careful to stay away from the quick, which is easier to cut into than you think. The quick is the end of the toe's blood vessel, so if you cut the quick, the toe will bleed. If this happens, just hold a

little pressure to the tip of the nail and this should stop the bleeding. If the nail continues to bleed, a little flour and pressure will clot off the bleeding. Remember to also clip the dew claws if your dog still has their dew claws. The more you handle your puppy's paws, the easier it makes it to take care of nail care.

Vaccinations

Your new puppy definitely needs a series of vaccinations in the first year of life to protect him/her from many dangerous diseases as your puppies doggy immune system develops. Different veterinarians recommend slightly different vaccination schedules and vaccines according to the specific dog's risk factors. Your vet can be more specific about the vaccination needs based on your individual dog, the particular region of the country in which you live, and your individual circumstances. Puppies receive most of their vaccinations every two to four weeks until they are at least 14 to 16 weeks old. Some vaccinations are given as a combination while other vaccinations are administered one at a time.

Your puppy will come with vaccinations started. Puppies get some antibodies from their mother but they wear off over time so vaccinations are given to help promote their own immunity to diseases. You will be provided with a health record of the worming and vaccinations that have been given to your puppy. You will need this information to provide to your veterinarian so that the puppy vaccination schedule can be continued.

All puppies should be immunized against parvovirus, distemper, rabies and hepatitis. Most states require that all dogs be vaccinated against rabies. Be sure to keep proof that your dog's shots are up-to-date. Follow your vets recommended schedule.

Worms

Dogs are ideal hosts -- to worms and other parasites, that is. Animals that sniff, slurp, lick, and gobble anything in their paths, including dirt, trash, and poop, are bound to pick up pests. Unfortunately, parasites in pups are extremely common and it is estimated that 95% of pups have parasites. We do our very best to keep our puppies parasite-free. However, not all parasites respond to particular deworming and excess stress with "go-home" can "awaken" parasites that previously lay dormant. Common parasites that

can affect dogs are round worms, hook worms, tape worms, whip worms, heart worms, coccidian and giardia.

Puppies can be born with worms and therefore it is very important that they are treated for worms/parasites from the very beginning. Your puppy has been given medication to treat worms/parasites and you will be provided with a record of this information so that you can give it to your veterinarian. It is important to discuss with your veterinarian a regular treatment schedule.

Flea Control

Flea control is important. Aside from creating itchy bites, fleas also can transmit diseases and parasites to your puppy. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian about available options for flea control. We do not start the puppies on any flea control medication.

Microchip

Your puppy has been microchipped. We encourage you to follow through to get the microchip/puppy registered. It's your best chance at being reunited with your dog if he/she ever gets lost.

Puppy Proofing

Remember that puppies are naturally inquisitive and often like to explore with their mouths. Put away delicate items that could be broken. Tuck cords away so that they don't get chewed. Pick up any small objects that could be swallowed, and make sure any houseplants you have are nontoxic to dogs. Make sure shoes and children's toys are put away so they don't get destroyed and give your puppy appropriate toys to chew on. Make sure trash cans are covered. Also, don't forget your yard when puppy proofing.

Socialization

The idea behind socialization is helping your puppy become acclimated to all types of sights, sounds, and smells in a positive manner. Proper socialization can prevent a dog from being always fearful of children, for example, or of riding in a car, and it will help him develop into a well-mannered, happy companion.

Introduce your puppy to new sights, sounds, and smells: To a puppy, the whole world is new, strange, and unusual, so think of everything he/she encounters as an opportunity to make a new, positive association. Try to come up with as many different types of people, places, noises, and textures as you can and help your puppy be exposed to them. That means, for instance, have the puppy walk on carpet, hardwood, tile, and linoleum floors; have him/her meet an old person, a young person, a person wearing sunglasses, a person carrying crutches.

Make it positive: Most importantly, when introducing all of these new experiences to your puppy, make sure he/she is getting an appropriate amount of treats and praise so that he/she associates what he/she is being exposed to and the feeling of seeing something new as a fun thing. Don't forget to break the treats into small pieces that will be easy for your puppy to digest!

Involve the family: By having different people taking part in the socialization process, you're continuously taking the puppy out of his comfort zone, letting him know that he might experience something new no matter who your puppy is with.

Take baby steps: Try to avoid doing too much too fast. For instance, if you want your puppy to get accustomed to being handled by multiple people the puppy doesn't know, start with a few family members and slowly integrate one stranger, then two, and so on. Starting this process by taking your puppy to a huge party or a very busy public place can be overwhelming and result in a fearful response to groups of strangers in the future.

Take it public: Once your puppy is used to the small amounts of stimuli, move outside of his/her comfort zone to expand the amount of new experiences for your puppy. Take your puppy to the pet store, over to a friend's house for a puppy play date, on different streets in the neighborhood, and so one.

Word of caution: The socialization period overlaps a period of vulnerability to disease, including canine parvovirus and canine distemper virus infection. Puppies need socialization with other dogs, but those dogs must be vaccinated and healthy. It is important to understand that a regular vaccination schedule must be followed to minimize the risk of your puppy contracting a disease. Until your puppy is fully

protected, avoid taking it to dog parks or other areas where it has uncontrolled exposure to dogs with questionable or unknown vaccination histories.

How to Housetrain Your Puppy

Housetraining can be a daunting task, but with a few training aids and a large commitment on your part, you can succeed. Just like parenting, you will need to be patient, vigilant and most important, consistent!

Set a Pattern - Just like with a new baby, it's best to have a schedule and stick to it. Your puppy will quickly learn that there are times to eat, sleep, play, and eliminate.
For the most part, a puppy can control his bladder for about one hour for every month he is old. So if you have a two-month old puppy, he can hold it for about two hours. If you wait longer than this to give him a bathroom break, you will be setting him up for an accident. If you work outside the home, arrange for someone to give your puppy his breaks.
Give Frequent Breaks - Begin by taking your puppy outside immediately after he wakes up and at least every two hours thereafter. He will probably need to go during and after playing, and you will want to take him outside after eating or drinking too.
Pick Your Spot - Determine where you want your outdoor "bathroom" spot to be and then guide your puppy to this spot using a leash. While your puppy is going potty, use a word or phrase like "go potty," that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him what to do.
Praise and Reward - After he is finished, reward him with praise, a treat, a long walk or some playtime. Remember to do this consistently and immediately after he's finished and when you are still outdoors. This step is very important because it's the only way he'll know what you expect. Make sure he is finished before you reward him. Praising him too soon may excite him enough to stop in the middle of his business and then complete the job when he's back in the house.
Make a Feeding Schedule - Establish a regular feeding schedule for your puppy. What goes into a puppy on a schedule comes out of a puppy on a schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed several times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he'll eliminate at consistent times as

well.

Prepare a Bedtime Routine - You can reduce the need for your puppy to have to relieve himself in the middle of the night by picking up his water bowl about two and a half hours before bedtime. Most puppies can sleep for approximately seven hours without having to eliminate.

If your puppy does wake you up in the middle of the night, just quietly take him out to do his business and return him to his bed. It helps to turn on as few lights as possible and not to talk to him or play with him. If you do, he might think it is time to play and won't want to go back to sleep.

Vigilance - Whenever your puppy is indoors, you will need to keep a watchful eye for signs that your puppy needs to eliminate. Some of these signs are barking or scratching at the door, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around, or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates outside, give him lots of praise and reward him with a treat.

Tethering - During the housetraining process it's helpful to tether your puppy to a piece of furniture while inside to more effectively keep an eye on him. Use a six foot length of rope so he has plenty of room to roam, but he is not able to get out of your sight. You can also tether the puppy to you so that you are always watchful.

Keep your puppy on a leash in the yard, as well. Your yard should be treated like any other room in your house. When your puppy has become reliably housetrained, then you can give your puppy some freedom in the house and in the yard.

Confinement - When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. This space should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around in. You can use gates to block off part of a utility room, bathroom or laundry room for this purpose. You can also crate train your puppy. When using this method, be humane as possible. If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, you'll need to take him directly to his bathroom spot as soon as you let him out, and praise him when he eliminates.

Accidents Happen - Accidents will happen. It is a normal part of the housetraining process. If you catch your puppy in the act of soiling in the house, interrupt him. Say "OUTSIDE!" and immediately grab the leash and take him to his outdoor potty spot.

Praise him and give him a treat only if he finishes his business outside.

Clean to Eliminate Odors - It won't do any good for you to punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. In fact, it will do more harm. Just clean up the soiled area. If you rub his nose in it and scold him, you will just make him afraid of you or eliminating in your presence. You will have to clean the area really well and use an odor eliminator to keep your puppy from soiling in that same area.

It's so important to be consistent and vigilant. If you follow these steps, you will have fewer accidents. If you allow your puppy to have a lot of accidents, you will only confuse him about where he is supposed to go and therefore prolong housetraining.

Paper Training - If you must leave your puppy alone for long periods of time, confine him to an area with enough room to sleep and play, along with a separate place to eliminate. Use training pads with a floor protector in this area for your convenience.

Crate Training

Left to their own devices, young puppies can get in a lot of trouble, from soiling the carpet to chewing your favorite pair of shoes. That's why it's important to start training early and keep a close eye on them, especially when they're still learning what's expected of them. And the best way to do that is to crate train. First of all, understand that crate training is not cruel. In spite of what some people may have told you, breeders and veterinarians recommend using a crate for your dog from a young age.

For thousands of years, dogs in the wild have sought out small "dens," where they can feel safe and sheltered while resting, caring for puppies, or recovering from an injury or illness. Giving your puppy his/her own personal bedroom can help him/her feel more secure.

This method is also extremely effective for house training while you're not keeping a hawk eye on them—dogs won't want to soil their bed, but will have little issue with sneaking into another room of the house to go if they're not yet fully trained.

Finally, crate training can help prevent anxiety. For puppies, overseeing a big house when no one is with them can be overwhelming. When they feel like they have a smaller place they need to "protect," it's much more manageable.

Choose a well-ventilated crate that is large enough for your puppy to stand up, lie down, and turn around. Remember that your puppy's crate will have to grow as he does, so

purchase a crate that is appropriate for your dog's expected full-grown size, and use a divider to make the crate smaller for the time being. Many crates available at pet-supply stores include dividers.

The most important part of crate training is making sure your puppy always associates it with a positive experience.

Start by lining it with blankets and place a few toys inside to make it cozy. You can also cover it with a lightweight blanket to mimic a "den" environment. Make sure it is still ventilated and not too hot if you do this.

Bring your puppy to the crate for naps and quiet-time breaks so that he/she can "unwind" from family chaos. Start in increments of 10 minutes and work up to longer periods. Offer treats when your puppy goes inside, and distraction toys like a stuffed KONG.

Every time you take the puppy out of the crate, take him/her for a walk so the puppy can eliminate. It will get used to the idea that potty time comes after crate time. Remember to give praise when your puppy goes to the bathroom outside.

It's also helpful to keep puppies in the crate overnight. They may cry the first night or two—in most cases, they are simply adjusting to home without their mom and littermates. Most puppies should be able to sleep through the night without a potty break by 4 months of age, but if you're in doubt, take him/her outside.

Never use the crate as punishment. Your dog should see his "room" as a place where only happy, peaceful things happen.

Rest

Although puppies may seem like little bundles of energy, in fact, they sleep 15-20 hours a day. One minute your puppy may be a miniature tornado, and the next he's fallen soundly asleep, almost mid-activity. Sleep is essential to healthy growth: during sleep his central nervous system, brain, immune system, and muscles are developing. All of that sleep also helps him rest up during growth spurts.

Leave your puppy undisturbed. He's going to nap several times during the day, and although he may fall asleep in place, encourage him to nap in his safe place: a crate, a bed in your bedroom, or a quiet place in the house where he can nap undisturbed. Speaking of undisturbed, household members, especially children, should leave your puppy alone while he is sleeping.

Follow a schedule. Plan his day so that active time is followed by quiet time for sleep. He'll most likely be ready for a nap after playtime or a walk, sleep for a while and then wake up ready for anything. Your puppy may nap every hour or so, sleeping from 30 minutes to as long as two hours. All of this sleep is perfectly normal.

Show your puppy where to sleep. If he seems drowsy and ready for a nap, guide him to his crate, bed, or wherever you've made his sleeping space. It may take some time for him to get the idea, but over time, he'll recognize that spot as the place for sleep. It might be hard to resist cuddling him and letting him fall asleep in your lap, but that's setting up some bad habits: you don't want him to be dependent on you to fall asleep.

Shopping List

Here is a list of some things that you will need and/or will help to make your transition to having your new puppy at home less stressful. We have made it more convenient for you to shop at home by visiting our website and click on the Let's Go Shopping tab.

- **Pet Gates (or Baby Gates)** – To establish which areas of your home will be restricted, go ahead and set up a baby gate before your new pup comes home.
- **Bed** – At first, you may just want to use some old blankets to designate your dog's sleeping space, but after they grow out of their chewing phase, you might be interested in a more official dog bed.
- **Bowls** – Look for ceramic or stainless steel dishes for your dog's food and water, as some dogs are allergic to plastic.
- **Brush** – Your puppy shouldn't need anything too fancy at first, but as their coat grows in, you'll be able to determine what types of grooming tools you'll need.
- **Cleaning Supplies** – As much as we hate to think about it, there are going to be accidents. Before bringing your new pup home, have some carpet cleaner on hand that destroys odor-causing molecules, rather than simply covering them up. You can find these cleaners at pet supply stores.
- **Collar, Tags, and Leash** – While you're at the pet supply store, take a look at their identification tags. They can usually be made while you wait, and it's imperative that you have them. Pick up a collar and leash right away as well so that you can bring it with you when you go to pick up your new dog.
- **Crate** – You'll want to have a crate ready so that you can start crate training immediately. You'll have the option to choose between **metal, plastic, soft-side, heavy duty, and decorative**. There are pros and cons to each type. For example, the wire and heavy-duty crates are easy to clean should your dog have an accident in them, are good for dogs that get hot easily, and allow your dog to see out of all sides. However, a wire crate can be noisier and some dogs are able to escape. The same is true of a soft-sided crate. Some dogs figure out how to unzip the

panel to get out. They are, however, lightweight, portable, and easy to use with small breeds. Heavy-duty crates are difficult for most dogs to escape from. Each of these types of crates is durable and affordable, but don't look as attractive in your house. If you have a dog that is well-mannered and doesn't chew or try to escape, you may be able to use crates made out of rattan or wood that are designed to look good in your home. These are fashioned to look like a piece of furniture.

- **Nail Clippers** – At first, even nail clippers will work on your puppy. As your dog grows, you'll want to have the appropriate clippers for your sized pooch.
- **Poop Scoop and Poop Bags** – Yes, you'll be scooping poop, so you'll want to be well prepared. There are several types of scoopers, some best for grass, some for concrete. Always have bags ready, especially when you're leaving your own yard. Most urban and suburban areas have **ordinances requiring you to pick up after your dog**.
- **Shampoo** – You can pick up specially formulated dog shampoo at your pet supply store and most discounted department stores.
- **Toothbrush** – There are dog toothbrushes, however, you can also get away with a kids-sized toothbrush as well. Rather than brushing their dogs' teeth, many pet owners opt to use **dental treats** like **Milk-Bone** or **Greenies**.
- **Toys** – Your new puppy will want to play a lot! Be sure to have a variety of toys ready so they don't get bored, just make sure that there are no parts of the toy that could come off because that can be a potential choking hazard.

Remember that your puppy is a baby – don't ask too much of him/her. Focus on socialization and having fun. Take lots of pictures. Puppyhood goes by SO fast.