

TAKING IN A RESCUE DOG

Of course you know the basics: Any purebred Airedale that needs a new home needs be taken into "custody" after it has been determined that the breeder does not want to (or won't) take the dog back.

OWNER SURRENDERED DOG

When we get a dog, we have a surrender form that the previous owner fills out and signs. This is VERY important for owner turn-ins. We usually then give them our brochure, which explains most of what we are about.

GROOMING

I am a groomer (my grooming "business" is at least 98% Airedales) so I always clip the Rescue dog, almost immediately as a rule, taking my time, combing out thoroughly, bathing and blowing dry, etc... This gives me the opportunity to see the condition of every part of the dog... (skin, pads of the feet, inside of the ears, eyes and all of that). Your Rescue Airedale should look as closely like the breed standard as is possible when done. There is never a need to do a clip-down on a dog, no matter how full of tangles and "dread locks" they are. A wide tooth comb can get through any Airedale furnishings with patience. If you need to send the dog to a groomer, your rescue dog should at least be combed out thoroughly FIRST, as most "professional" groomers do not have the time it would take to comb out matted hair, and it surely doesn't make any Airedale look good to be clipped down.

VET

Next comes the trip to the vet: (appointment should be made as soon as you know you are getting the dog, rather than waiting till you get him.) General look-over, pointing out anything you have discovered from the grooming, heartworm check unless you KNOW the dog has been on preventative, all shots brought up to date, take a stool sample for checking if you can, and microchip. (The papers for the microchip need to be made out in your name/Airedale Rescue and whomever you are working with as contacts. This is not to change even after the dog is placed.) And of course the dog should be spayed/neutered if that is not already done. Even puppies can be spayed/neutered as young as two months, although many want to wait till they are four months. If your vet will not do it, make arrangements to keep the pup in Rescue until it can be done. **NO DOG SHOULD BE PLACED UNTIL NEUTERED.**

Sometimes we have a really good prospective adoptive home waiting for the pup we have and, following all the same procedures as an adoption (collect the adoption fee... \$300 for up to 18-24 months, but hold the check), we will let the family "foster" the dog until after the operation, which is done by our vet with us doing the transporting, so we are sure. Then the placement can be finalized.

Naturally, if the vet finds anything that needs to be medicated, that certainly needs to be done. On rare occasions there is a problem which would take a great deal of money to correct. Then you put your head together with all you work with... National has funds to meet some of these expenses, but it should be discussed with the Treasurer beforehand.



FOSTER HOME

Some volunteers are willing to foster from the first step and some don't want the dog until all of the above are done. Either way, our foster homes are golden, and scarce as hens' teeth. A foster home needs to have dog-friendly dogs of their own and some experience (or help) in introducing the dogs. Foster homes should be Airedale-savvy and forgiving of Airedale "sins." Often I hear that a person is willing to foster a dog, but only for a day or two, which I never understood, because the first day or two are the very worst, if there is to be a worst. Once a dog is settled in, there is no problem. The length of time in foster care has no bearing on how the dog will adjust to a new, permanent home. Foster parents should not be concerned about a rescue dog "bonding" with them. It is far more important that that dog's next home is a forever one than to have a speedy placement. I've had dogs in foster care at my house for up to a year and a half... sleeping on our bed nightly and all that. When the right home came along, the dog never "looked back."

PAPERWORK

If you wish, I can email you all or any of the paperwork that we use in our local rescue group so you can see the kinds of things that are involved. Every rescue group develops its own paperwork but most have the same or similar kinds of information. Where appropriate you would insert your own name... In the packet we send to adoption inquiries are copies of our letter of introduction, our placement agreement, our application to adopt and our latest newsletter, which we publish twice a year.

When dogs are placed, we give adopters a pocket folder containing:

1. Copies of the dog's complete medical records (without previous owner's names, copies are made from our office files, covering the previous owner's information with that of "Airedale Rescue," address and your phone #, etc.) Originals are kept in dog's file, filed under adopter's name. We maintain a running list of adopters and their addresses, phone #s, email addresses, etc. and all information on the dog... in alphabetical order.
2. Completed "Profile" on the dog and I usually include a write-up telling them in more detail what I know about the dog's behavior, preferences, etc.
3. Copy of the Placement Agreement
4. Copy of Second-hand Dog by Carol Benjamin
5. Airedale book
6. Copy of the Care-a-Lot dog supply catalog, because they so generously give to Airedale Rescue every year.

GETTING ORGANIZED, KNOWN

If you can get together with other Airedale rescue volunteers in your area and set up some chain of command and delegation of "duties" to follow, you can at the same time, pick a name and get whoever is best qualified to make up a brochure for your "organization." This brochure can then be sent out to all veterinarians in the area... and groomers... and boarding kennels... and pet supply stores... and dog obedience schools... and anyone else you can think of to get the word out that you ARE Airedale Rescue. At the same time, send along a letter to the vets and the kennels asking if they would consider giving rescue a discount on their services. This will be a BIG help. In our area, we get a 25% discount at my vet's and we pay less than HALF the boarding fee charged at the two kennels we use (\$7 a day instead of \$15). Then you need to be ready to get calls, being prepared that you will be getting them to turn an Airedale over to you as well as to get one. You'll need to have a plan as to where the dog is going to be groomed and "vetted" and fostered.

APPLICATIONS

When someone contacts us about adopting, we send them our three-fold brochure, the four page introduction to Airedale Rescue, an application form, a placement form so that they can see what they will need to agree to, and a copy of our latest local newsletter. Many groups have websites and post pictures of their adoptables. We (here in Airedale Rescue and Adoption of the Delaware Valley, my local group) purposely don't put our application or our adoptables on our website. We strongly feel that dogs should be HARD to get... [hard to get, easy to give up if unwanted and/or unloved] and we want it to take time for people to ask for and get an application... by slow mail. Then we want to study the applications. When we have a dog for adoption, we study them all again and try to come up with a match. Sometimes we can have 30 applicants and eight dogs and no matches, but that's better than forcing a "match" that we don't think will work. Rarely does it work when we "break our own rules."

We don't want people applying for a specific dog. A picture doesn't tell anything about temperament and personality and behavior. Or size, really. All of these things need to be considered to place a dog... and we feel that folks tend not to understand that. Instead they get offended because they can't have a certain dog. There may come a time when we change our minds about this, but that's how it is now.

We also want to keep dogs pretty much in their own areas. In other words, I try to discourage the shipping of dogs or even the "relaying" of dogs out of areas in most cases. The best way to feel satisfied that a dog is in the right home is by [the foster parent] taking it there. Then if it isn't right, he/she can return to the foster home. Once a dog is relayed across the miles, it becomes the responsibility of the rescue group in the area of its new locale. If you get, somehow, an application from a person in someone else's area, always check with the corresponding Airedale Rescue person from that area to see what's happening about that applicant from the rescuer's perspective.

We take Rescue very seriously -- dogs, adopters and rescue volunteers. The individual rescue workers assume the liability for placements they make, so it's important to be as professional as possible.

HOME VISITS

An in-home visit by an Airedale-experienced person is essential. Especially in today's world, there are people who have all the right answers, but they are all wrong when you actually sit down with them in their homes, especially if you have an Airedale or two with you when you visit. On the other hand, there are people who don't look great on paper, but because of their unique situation and personality, would make a great home for the right dog.

NEWSLETTER

One of the best things we have done here is start our own newsletter... filled with information of interest to Airedale owners. "Starting Over" gets published twice a year now... early summer and just before Christmas. We try to include a flier of Airedale stuff for sale and an order form. Send it to all who have adopted and to people who have expressed an interest in adopting. (Keep a chronological notebook of names, addresses and indicate whether or not they have previously owned Airedales. Send a newsletter to those people, especially the ones who have owned Airedales.) I will be glad to send you a back copy or two of "Starting Over." When you get a note from someone.. or an email, which is a little more common these days... make sure you save it. Edit it to put in the newsletter. (Take out personal stuff and anything that would discourage someone from adopting an Airedale from you. After all, this is a good tool to encourage adoptions!) Leave a copy at your vet's office and ask each of your volunteers to do the same, assuming they use a different vet. Such a newsletter will generate donations, whether people buy from your sale flier or not. If you don't have anything Airedaley to sell, work on that "department."

FUNDRAISING

A new group needs to make fundraising a high priority. There are people interested in Rescue who cannot do the dirty work... fostering, grooming, transporting to vet or kennel or doing home visits, etc. who CAN draw (cards, stationery, etc.) sew, shop for bargains, build things.... you name it. If it has an Airedale on it, someone will buy it. You need to become self-sufficient. Our group never has to get money from national, but we work hard at fundraising.

Hope this helps,
Joey C. Fineran,
Chair Airedale Rescue and Adoption Committee
Airedale Terrier Club of America, Inc.

