

# **BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE**

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization

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## **FOSTER GUIDELINES**

Please carefully review the following guidelines. You will be asked to sign this in addition to the Foster Agreement before you take your first foster dog.

Foster families are the backbone to developing and rehabilitating our rescues. We cannot exist as a rescue without your assistance and willingness to bring needy German Shepherd Dogs into your home until Fur-ever homes become available. Fosters have our undying gratitude and my deepest respect and admiration. There are never enough foster homes to go around, so each is precious to BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE and the dogs we are trying to save. We want your fostering experience to be a positive and productive experience, not only for you and your family, but also for our rescued dog. We are always available should you have questions or concerns while you are fostering a dog for us.

**Please be sure you understand fully the scope of our foster application before bringing a foster dog home:**

1. Arrange to introduce the new animal to your own pet(s), if you have them, outside on neutral territory. We can assist with this should you require it. Once inside, it is best to situate the foster animal in a crate at first and introduce him/her gradually to other household members. Do not try to make the foster an immediate part of your family. Let him/her settle into the new place and help him/her learn the rules of the house as soon as possible. Never let the foster take over and place your own animals at risk or under stress.
2. Use a training collar or martingale collar to walk a foster so he/she cannot slip out of the collar. A dog can easily slip out of a flat collar, which should be worn for identification purposes only. The training collar should be used only for walking and training and should be removed after the session. Keep the training collar attached to the leash at all times. If you do not know how to put the collar on properly, please check with a Director of Big Cypress German Shepherd Rescue Naples, Florida  
[www.saveagermanshepherd.org](http://www.saveagermanshepherd.org)
3. If you find prospective adopters for your foster on your own, please make them aware of the application process, as well as the BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE requirements and adoption donation. Please make sure you understand the adoption application process and notify BCGSR if you have a potential adopter contact you. The BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE screens applicants very carefully. First, the written application is evaluated. Next, a reference check both personal and professional checks, a veterinary check is made for all animals the prospective adopter owns or has owned. If the application, vet check and reference checks are good, a home visit is scheduled. If the adoption is then approved, a contract is signed, and an adoption donation is provided by the adopters. The donation amount varies per animal. Please keep some clean applications and rescue marketing material on hand or have the capacity to print them from the website, to give to prospective adopters. Remember that not every prospective adopter is approved, and sometimes other applications may be pending.

4. Before taking a foster, ask about the animal's age, gender, temperament, behavior, and why he/she is in need of adoption. Find out to the best of your ability and ours if he/she is a stray, from a shelter, a private surrender, a victim of abuse or neglect, etc. Share any observations you might get on your own with Michelle Delaney.
5. Never turn over a foster to someone who claims it is his/her lost pet! This person could be mistaken, or he/she could be deliberately trying to mislead you. The animal could have been removed from his/her former home for all kinds of reasons. The claimant could well have mistreated the animal. Report any such claims to Michelle Delaney immediately, and we will investigate.
6. If necessary, BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE can lend you a crate, an appropriate collar and leash. Whenever you transport any animal, make certain you have him/her on a leash, with a training and flat collar. (If you plan to foster on a regular basis, it would be a great help to BCGSR if you could pick up an extra crate!) Make sure the dog has ample room to move around when choosing the proper size.
7. BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE provides food for fostered dogs. Some pet stores will donate food for foster dogs, so it is worth contacting your local pet stores like Petsmart, Petco, or small businesses and ask for donations for your fostered dog. If you start to run low on food, please give BCGSR 48 hours notice that you need to pick up another bag of food, and we will arrange a time to do so. Foster families typically provide extra toys and treats for their foster animals, with no reimbursement from BCGSR. Fosters may also be asked to participate in transporting animals or assisting in house checks.
8. If your foster animal becomes ill or gets hurt, contact Michelle Delaney immediately. BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE covers medical expenses, but I MUST authorize treatments and medications before they are administered, and I must also approve the veterinarian who will be doing the work. In emergency cases, when every moment could mean the difference between life or death, do not hesitate to take the animal to a vet immediately or to an emergency clinic if after regular vet hours. We will work out emergency expenses. The important thing is to do everything possible to save the animal in distress. Know where your closest vet and emergency center are located before you foster any animal or ask BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE. Keep the numbers and directions easily accessible. The time to search is not when you are holding a sick or injured animal in your arms.
9. Please be cautious of what you tell potential adopters. Avoid giving advice and criticism. Please avoid answering any questions with absolutes, and never answer any question you are not sure about. Ask for assistance from BCGSR when you don't know something. Tell inquirers you will get back to them as soon as possible, or share the contact information for the rescue with them. Always recommend that potential adopters do as much reading about German Shepherds, adoption in general, obedience training, and special needs of the breed.

10. If you have any hesitations or peculiar feelings or "bad vibes" about potential adopters, DO NOT ALLOW IT TO GO FORWARD! Say the final decision is not yours to make, and we will get back to them as soon as possible. Discuss your concerns with Michelle Delaney. You do not have to take the heat for your instincts, but I have learned through experience that it is best to go with them. Try to determine what is giving you pause or making you wary and take note of it.
11. Be very familiar with the regulations and policies of BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE. Please carefully read the adoption application, and be aware of special needs your particular foster dog may have (medical conditions, behavioral issues, etc.) Most of all, remember that no one can be approved until their application is deemed acceptable, the vet check is satisfactory, and a home visit is completed. If the adopters are approved, the adoption contract must be signed -- by the adopter(s) and by a BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE representative -- with all information carefully filled out and checked by you. Adopters must provide the non-refundable donation to BIG CYPRESS GERMAN SHEPHERD RESCUE either before taking possession of the dog or upon taking possession of the dog.
12. You are taking full responsibility for the rescue be whether it's in your home or out in public. You will not hold Big Cypress German Shepherd Rescue liable for any actions, while in your care. Please remember that your actions are a direct reflection on Big Cypress German Shepherd Rescue.

**Any further questions should be directed to Michelle Delaney 239-777-0853**