



Volunteer Handbook

For prospective and current volunteers of the NWT SPCA



Dear Volunteers

It is my privilege to express, on behalf of the NWT SPCA Board of Director's, our appreciation and gratitude to the amazing individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to help us care for abused, injured, lost, homeless and neglected animals each year. It is through your compassion and commitment that we have been able to save thousands of animal's lives and to create happy endings for the North's most vulnerable animals.

We are inspired and deeply moved with the work being done by our volunteers – from dog walking and cat care, to fostering, fundraising, small animal care and special events. The NWT SPCA simply could not function without the support and dedication of the incredible volunteers who open their hearts – and their homes – to the animals who urgently need, and deserve, our protection and help. To each volunteer who make NWT a safer and more humane place for animals, we say thank you. Your support makes a difference and you are appreciated.

Sincerely,



Nicole Spencer

President
NWT PSCA



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Our Mission: To protect and enhance the quality of life for all domestic animals in Northwest Territories and to help support the North in appreciating and learning the value of the northern dog in today's society.

About NWT SPCA

NWT SPCA is the largest SPCA in the NWT located in Yellowknife, the Territory's capital. The NWT SPCA is a volunteer group striving to protect and enhance the quality of life for all domestic animals in the Northwest Territories. Focusing on the health and wellbeing of the Territories domestic pets, the NWT SPCA runs lifesaving Community Spay/Neuter and Animal Wellness Clinics for companion animals. Education initiatives and pet food drives, adoptions and dog transfer are just a few programs in place to reduce the number of stray and unwanted animals roaming our communities and improving the welfare of our Northern pets. NWT SPCA believes in taking a positive and collaborative approach to saving lives and helping the north understand and appreciate the value of today's northern companion animals in modern society. With tenacity, ability to learn and adapt to challenges together with our volunteers, staff, and on-the-ground network of partners, we will find every pet a home.

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nwtspca.com

The NWT SPCA volunteer experience

When you volunteer with NWT SPCA, you're giving the animals one of the greatest gifts of all — your time. Whether you're spending one-on-one time with the animals, helping out at events or assisting in some other way, you're helping the animals to feel loved. For that, everyone here at the NWT SPCA is incredibly grateful, especially the animals. We wish you an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling and rewarding volunteer experience!

To learn more about volunteering with the NWT SPCA and to ensure an even better volunteer experience, please take a few minutes to read this guide.

About the handbook

This handbook summarizes many of NWT SPCA's volunteer policies and procedures. All NWT SPCA staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook and would be happy to provide you with further information or clarification if you need it.

NWT SPCA volunteer managers and their designees may modify, rescind, delete or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If changes are made, we will be sure to notify you as soon as possible.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual relationship or employee relationship between you (the volunteer) and NWT SPCA.

NWT SPCA guiding principles

NWT SPCA is guided by the following values or principles:

- The Golden Rule: To treat all living things as we ourselves would wish to be treated.
- Kindness: To demonstrate compassion and respect for all living creatures.
- Positive Influence: To judge our effectiveness by the extent to which animal lives are saved and improved, and by the positive experience of the people we touch.
- Leadership: To lead by example — developing, promoting and sharing great new ideas and programs to help animals.
- Authenticity: To do what we say we do.
- Transparency: To be open and honest in our relationships.

Everyone representing NWT SPCA is expected to follow these principles.

Our staff commitment to you

The staff members at the NWT SPCA truly appreciate your service and your dedication to help our northern animals, and we want to make sure you have a wonderful and enjoyable experience. So, we strive to:

- 1 Provide you with adequate information, training and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
- 2 Provide you with guidance, goals and feedback.
- 3 Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
- 4 Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
- 5 Treat you as a valued team member along with staff, equally important in helping to accomplish the mission to improve the companion animal welfare in the North.

Volunteer program staff responsibilities

The NWT SPCA volunteer program is led by a board director and staff at the shelter. These people are responsible for the general administration of all volunteer programs at the shelter and events.

Depending upon the program, staff responsibilities might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recruit people into appropriate volunteer positions
- Provide new volunteers with orientation and training to be successful

- Provide ongoing support and assistance as volunteers work with other paid staff
- Provide updated information about NWT SPCA activities and volunteer opportunities
- Process requests from NWT SPCA staff for volunteer assistance, including volunteers for events, initiatives and special projects

Just a friendly reminder: When you work closely with animals, you can sometimes be bitten, scratched or injured in another way. Your safety is always our priority, but if you do happen to get hurt, please let a NWT SPCA staff member or manager know immediately. Be sure to **wear appropriate clothing and footwear while volunteering at the shelter.**

Youth volunteers

NWT SPCA welcomes the involvement of younger volunteers in several different volunteer positions. The goal is the same as it is for our older volunteers: to have a fun and rewarding experience. Below are the policies to ensure that our young volunteers have a safe experience.

At the Shelter

For the protection of children as well as the animals, children five years and younger may not volunteer. Children ages 6 to 17 must be accompanied by an adult volunteer. Junior volunteers (14-17) may volunteer without an accompanying parent or guardian with restriction. Parents or guardians of minor children (under age 18) must sign a Minor Permission Form, which gives permission for minor children to volunteer.

Minimum age requirements for each animal area are:

Rabbits and critters- 8 with an adult supervisor

Cats - 6 with an adult supervisor

Dogs - 10 with an adult supervisor

Duties may include but are not limited to: cleaning food/water dishes, folding clean laundry, cleaning windows, sorting leash/collar bin, helping out in the cat room, socializing with cats, helping with special events, puppy socializing.

Be sure that your child wears appropriate clothing to mitigate scratches and other potential injuries.

Your volunteer commitment

When you serve as an NWT SPCA volunteer, we ask the following of you:

Computer-related

- Have regular access to the Internet and a private email address. Email is our main form of communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, opportunities and confirmations.
- If you do not have computer access, we ask that you find a friend or family member who can help you with your communications with the volunteer department.
- Respond to emails from the NWT SPCA volunteer staff in a timely manner. Staff are committed to answering emails within 48 hours (during regular business hours).

Your volunteer profile and history

- Complete all required paperwork for acceptance into our volunteer programs.
- Stay within the parameters of your volunteer position
- Understand that all content developed by any volunteer as a NWT SPCA volunteer is the property of NWT SPCA. This includes, but is not limited to, all graphics, web pages, narratives, research, compilations, instructional texts, text, photos, videos, writings, computer programs, spreadsheets, summaries and recordings. It also includes any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from these materials. Of course, volunteers will receive appropriate credit for their submissions.
- Grant NWT SPCA rights in all photographic images, video and audio recordings of you made during the course of your assignment.
- Follow the dress code outlined in this handbook when representing NWT SPCA at functions, meetings and events.
- Return all NWT SPCA property when requested or when your volunteer service ends.

Expenses and insurance

- Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for NWT SPCA. In certain instances some expenses will be reimbursed, but you must receive approval in writing (i.e., email) from your staff supervisor or volunteer manager before NWT SPCA will reimburse you for any expense.
- As a member you fall under our liability Insurance while at the shelter or volunteering for us in any way.

Expectations of Volunteers

Volunteers are to handle all animals kindly, with common sense and concern for both the animal's safety and their own safety. Appropriate, positive, and humane methods of handling and restraint must be used at all times.

- Continue learning about dog training
- Contact a staff member if you are not sure how to handle a situation or if you need assistance
- Never handle an animal if you are unsure
- Report accidents or injuries while volunteering **immediately** to supervisor of staff on duty

Remember! Territorial law requires 10 day quarantine for rabies observation for animals that have bitten. Please follow safety rules.

Volunteer benefits

We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to helping save the lives of homeless pets. So, depending on where you decide to volunteer your time and talents, you may:

- Receive discounts at selected businesses as an NWT SPCA Member
- Receive formal and informal recognition from NWT SPCA staff
- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles as appropriate
- Receive special invitations to events and activities sponsored by NWT SPCA

Representing NWT SPCA

When you're serving as a volunteer for NWT SPCA, what you say and do reflects on NWT SPCA as a whole. We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we sincerely accept this diversity of thought. But if there is an issue on which NWT SPCA has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing NWT SPCA. Any personal comments you make should be clearly identified as personal comments.

As a volunteer, you are permitted to act as a representative of NWT SPCA, but please do so only to the extent described in your position description.

Social media

Online communication tools such as blogs and social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) are becoming the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with NWT SPCA and our many efforts to improve Northern Animal Welfare. For that reason, and because your behavior as a volunteer reflects on NWT SPCA, please use good judgment whenever you contribute to NWT SPCA's social media pages. We encourage volunteers

to join online conversations and spread the word about NWT SPCA and the animals, but you should never speak as an official representative of NWT SPCA.

When you are engaging with others via social media on behalf of NWT SPCA, please keep in mind the following:

- Be transparent: Identify yourself as a volunteer of NWT SPCA.
- Be accurate: Make sure you check your facts with a staff member who's involved with the issue before posting. Take every precaution to gather the most current information available. Be the first to acknowledge and correct your own mistakes.
- Provide resources: Link back to our website whenever you can so that people can see where your information is coming from. For example, direct people to our online resource library nwtspca.com/resources.
- Be considerate: Please do not use profanity, derogatory language or personal attacks, or engage in any other inappropriate conduct.
- Be real: Do not just copy and paste press releases or website content. Take talking points and put them in your own words. (The one exception is when you are quoting someone or using an official statement.)
- Be professional: Do not allow legitimate online explanation of a position or debate to devolve into personal attacks, fights or other negative behavior that would reflect poorly on you or NWT SPCA. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your involvement in an online discussion, please disengage or do not get involved in the first place. Pass along the link to your volunteer coordinator.
- Protect sensitive information: Protect NWT SPCA's confidential and proprietary information as well as the personal information of others. Get permission to use copyrighted content such as photos or videos, or to cite or reference our supporters, partners or suppliers. Do not disclose or use any confidential or business information about NWT SPCA, such as member or donor information.

Do not disclose personal information about co-workers, volunteers or former employees.

You are encouraged and welcome to use your own social media platforms to help promote adoptable animals, events, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, outreach and more. However, NWT SPCA volunteers are prohibited from starting any new social media properties that represent the organization. If you have any questions about this, please contact your volunteer coordinator or NWT SPCA social media manager, Nicole Spencer, at nwtspcayk@gmail.com.

Media contact

Media relations can be complex. For that reason, we ask that, as an NWT SPCA volunteer, you don't speak for NWT SPCA with the media without prior permission from your direct supervisor. Please send all media inquiries directly to your supervisor. Please note that media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be forwarded as soon as they are received. Direct any media enquiries to nwtspcayk@gmail.com.

Standards of conduct and customer service

NWT SPCA upholds the highest standards of conduct and service for the sake of saving the lives of animals. When you are serving as a NWT SPCA volunteer, we ask that you please do the same. Here are a few service guidelines that we kindly request you follow.

Be professional. As a NWT SPCA volunteer, please present an image that is both professional and appropriate to your working conditions. Remember, you represent NWT SPCA and the first impression you create may be a lasting one.

Keep the following in mind:

- You should have a well-groomed appearance. Closed-toe shoes and pants (or capris) should be worn unless instructed otherwise.
- NWT SPCA T-shirts and name tags (if issued) or aprons (if applicable) should be worn and be visible at all times when representing NWT SPCA in public. Other attire should be clean and appropriate for the setting.
- Eating, drinking and gum-chewing are not recommended at event booths when visitors are present. No volunteer should ever smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs when representing NWT SPCA in public.
- Booth and exhibit areas should be kept neat and free of debris. Literature should be displayed neatly and be easily accessible.

Be responsible. Service begins and ends with individuals. While you cannot control what others do, you can guarantee the quality of your own individual contacts. Each individual can potentially make or break the chain of great service. Responsibility is the key to this process, so you should strive to provide accurate and timely information. And don't be afraid to ask for help from staff when you need it.

Be positive. A positive attitude is contagious. Approaching your assignment with enthusiasm and dedication will positively impact members, potential members and staff. Some other tips:

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a **positive** fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Respond positively to complaints; never argue with anyone or dismiss someone's point of view.
- Offer additional services and information; add value to each interaction.

Be friendly, courteous and helpful. Common courtesy goes a long way toward making a favorable impression on our current and potential members, volunteers, adopters, donors, corporate partners, the general public and NWT SPCA staff. Remember the following:

- A smile goes a long way. Smile when someone approaches you at an event or function.
- Use the person's name whenever possible, and don't forget good manners.
- Practice active listening: Give your undivided attention to the person with whom you are speaking
- Treat each person with kindness, and as an individual.
- Please don't use slang and technical jargon or terms that the other person may not understand.

Be knowledgeable. It is crucial that you keep up-to-date with what's happening at NWT SPCA. The public sees you as someone who represents NWT SPCA, and they expect prompt, courteous and accurate responses to their questions and concerns, regardless of your individual specialty or field of knowledge. You may stay up-to-date on programs and services by asking our staff and reading stories on nwtspca.com and our [Facebook](#) page. Know and understand NWT SPCA's mission and guiding principles. If you don't know the answer to a question, please ask your staff supervisor or Board member.

The above are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment. When in doubt, remember that one of our guiding principles is the Golden Rule: "We treat all living creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated."

Attendance policies and procedures

When you commit to a volunteer position, you become a valuable member of our team and play an important role in the success of NWT SPCA's mission. For that reason, we ask that you please do not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill, or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified.

Confidentiality and nondisclosure policy

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of NWT SPCA to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of your relationship with NWT SPCA.

When you become a volunteer, you agree and understand that any breach of this confidentiality clause will cause NWT SPCA immediate and irreparable harm. You agree that NWT SPCA is entitled to injunctive relief or a preliminary

injunction if this confidentiality clause is breached. You agree that NWT SPCA does not need to post a bond if NWT SPCA asks a court for a temporary injunction or interlocutory injunctive relief. Some volunteer positions may require you to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Causes for release from volunteer service

Here are some potential causes for release from volunteer service:

- Breaking of confidentiality
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Inactivity
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position
- Misrepresentation of NWT SPCA
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violence

Grievance procedure

If you have any questions or challenges regarding your volunteer assignment, please bring them to the attention of your staff supervisor.

The staff make every effort to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate in a timely manner and settle the issue on a fair and equitable basis.

Requests for animal help

As a NWT SPCA representative, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- To help people find solutions to common problems, direct them to our library of resources at nwtspca.com/resources.
- If the person has witnessed animal abuse or neglect, tell him or her to report it to local authorities — the RCMP or Yellowknife Municipal enforcement. Encourage people to report the abuse not only to help the animal in distress, but also to make local officials aware of the severity of the problem.
- If you anticipate that the situation will become very public or you are contacted by the media or a high-ranking official, please notify your NWT SPCA staff contact to get further instructions.

Smoking Policy

NWT SPCA offers a smoke free environment for volunteers and staff. If a volunteer or staff member chooses to smoke, he/she is welcome to do so in their personal vehicle or off shelter grounds.

Conflicts of interest

As a volunteer for NWT SPCA, you should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, or interfere with the timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, or that could discredit NWT SPCA or conflict or appear to conflict with NWT SPCA's best interests. The success of NWT SPCA rests on its reputation and the goodwill of its many supporters.

Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of NWT SPCA assets, funds, materials, facilities, time or the services of other NWT SPCA volunteers and employees. Violations of this policy may result in release from volunteer service with NWT SPCA.

If you are asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of NWT SPCA, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please contact the volunteer department.

Sexual Harassment Policy

NWT SPCA is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, territory and local laws, NWT SPCA expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

NWT SPCA expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering, either explicitly or implicitly
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, hostile or intimidating work environment.

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from volunteer service. If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the volunteer department.

NWT SPCA will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment or intimidation may result in release from volunteer service.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the volunteer who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, as a result of the investigation, NWT SPCA determines that an employee or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, NWT SPCA will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counselling to immediate termination of employment, release from volunteer service or possible legal action.

NWT SPCA volunteer team contact information

General Information and Media inquiries: nwtspcayk@gmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator: volunteer@nwtspca.com

Event Volunteer: events@nwtspca.com

Retail Event Volunteer: adopt-foster@nwtspca.com

Foster Volunteer: adopt-foster@nwtspca.com

Thank You!

Volunteers like you are important to helping save the lives of countless pets across the North. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for giving them your time, energy and affection. We wish you a long, happy and rewarding relationship with NWT SPCA!

Together we can make a difference!

