

Owner Surrender & Relinquishment Policy

"Every dog can be saved but not every dog *should* be saved."



We are a small, nationally registered Not-for-Profit group with very limited resources. We rely solely on private foster homes to take in and care for the dogs that come into rescue and those foster homes are few and far between. These homes are often families, with children, dogs and/or other pets, so we will not put our foster families or the general public at risk.

Behaviour assessments and transport, usually done by volunteers, are also very limited. If we cannot line up an experienced AB-HDR volunteer for a behaviour assessment, or we cannot find drivers for any or all legs of a trip, getting your dog to us will be up to you.

The other very limited resource is funding. We are a registered NFP which means we can do, and apply for, pretty much all the things that a registered charity can.

However, ONLY registered charities can issue a tax receipt and because an NFP cannot issue that little piece of paper, corporate funding and large donations are hard to come by. The majority of our funding comes from the general public - our friends, families, fellow dog owners - and the generosity of the vet clinics willing to discount their services or let us carry a balance.

Before you consider contacting us, or any rescue or shelter, we recommend reading this article:

<http://www.petguide.com/petcare/dog/things-to-consider-before-surrendering-your-dog-to-a-shelter/>

We also recommend going through the following, before contacting AB-HDR:

- if you purchased the dog from a breeder, you should contact the breeder first to see if they will take the dog back - most reputable breeders will take their puppies/dogs back if they can and re-home them. They often have waiting lists for their litters and some people on those lists will be happy to get a mature dog.
- if you adopted the dog from another rescue, a reputable rescue should ALWAYS be willing to take back one of their foster dogs, for any reason. The more information you can give them for returning the dog will help the rescue find a better match the next time around.
- if the dog is a stray, you should be taking those dogs to the local bylaw office (or Humane Society) in the county where the dog was found. It is their job to look for the owner of the dog, if the dog has not already been reported lost or stolen.

- if you have a senior herding breed, we recommend contacting rescues that specialize in placing seniors (+7 yrs). They probably have the resources in place to help senior dogs with their more specific health needs and/or have waiting lists of adopters who are looking for older dogs.
- if the dog has no behaviour issues and is a happy-go-lucky type of dog - one that loves everyone and everything - please consider the local Humane Society (we recommend Calgary or Cochrane). These are the kind of dogs that the Humane Societies will put in to their General Adoption area because they CAN be adopted by the general public that walks in off the street, so they will find new homes faster at a shelter. *(Those herding breeds that have too many issues, who do not do well in the shelter environment or have been there too long, are often transferred to us.)*
- if the dog is OK to stay with you until a new home is found, or you want a say in who can adopt the dog, consider doing a **courtesy post** on our Facebook page. We will not actively promote courtesy posts, as those dogs are not going through our processes and our time and effort need to go into finding new homes for the dogs that are actually in our care.
- if the dog is a cross-breed, they have to look like one of the common herding breeds (*flock guardians are NOT herding breeds*) for us to take them in. Although it sounds shallow, we cannot promote them to the right adopters if they do not even look like a herding breed - this means they are in rescue longer which, in turn, means we cannot make space for the next dog in need of our help because we do not have the available space or resources.

The behaviours we will work with are:

- excessive herding behaviour (circling, nipping heels, stalking, heading off "runaways"), excessive energy and high prey drive
- shy or reserved dogs (typically normal for many herding breeds)
- food or toy reactive dogs (also known as resource guarders)
- leash reactive or fence fighters/runners (also known as barrier aggression)
- fearful reactive dogs (if they would rather run/hide instead of fight or they would only snap IF cornered or confronted by that "thing" that triggers their fear reaction)
- dogs with a bite history will be considered, ONLY if the circumstances leading to the bite and the severity of the bite (see Dr. Ian Dunbar's Bite Level Chart) are disclosed.

We try to take at least 30 days to get to know fearful dogs or dogs with a bite history, as it may not be very apparent at the initial assessment. If they prove to be a danger to us, we will not put them into adoption. We cannot risk putting the general public in danger and we will take them to our vet for euthanasia if you are unable to take them back to have it done by your own vet.

Please understand, we cannot take in dogs that are outright aggressive (see Dog Aggression Ladder) to people or other dogs and animals. By this, we are talking about dogs whose **first reaction** to new

dogs, animals or people is to lunge, attack &/or bite when there was no obvious or even apparent threat (see Dog Aggression Ladder). They are not interested in any other option, such as running away or hiding. The time and money spent with one aggressive dog to get them to a point of adoption (plus finding an adopter that is willing to continue to work with the dog and manage it for the rest of its life) we could take in, care for and re-home multiple dogs with few, if any, issues.

If you think they are a danger to you, your family and/or other animals, they are probably a danger to others as well. If you have ruled out any physical problems that may be causing the aggression; if you've tried vet prescribed drugs; if you've spent many, many hours of your time & \$1000's working with a certified behaviourist; and if the dog still scares you and others, sending it to rescue or to a farm does not change the behaviour. It only passes the buck, putting others at risk or putting your dog at risk. No farmer, acreage or livestock owner will tolerate a dog that attacks them, their family and friends or their livestock. Your dog will likely meet their demise with a bullet instead of being held or surrounded by the only people they know and trust (as much as they are capable of trusting) while they are administered the euthanasia drugs to gently put them to sleep. It is a VERY tough decision to make, but it may be the kindest thing you can do for a dog who has trouble trusting humans and you know they will never have to go through further distress.

We understand that owners contact rescue because they DO care for their dog and they are trying to do the best thing for the dog. The fact that you recognize that your dog needs more than you are capable of giving at that point in time is the first step to ensuring that issues do not get so big that they will be more difficult to deal with down the road. We do not believe it is our job to judge your reasons and we will continue to believe that no one gets a dog, of any age or breed, with the intent of getting rid of it later.

If you have considered the options mentioned above or in the article, and you are still in a position that you feel you must give up your dog, then please contact us (HerdingDogRescue@telus.net) for our surrender/relinquishment forms.

- You must be the legal owner to surrender the dog to us. If you do not want to fill in the address, phone number and email or sign the forms, that is a red flag and makes us very suspicious (especially if you do not have registration papers or vet records to include).
- If you have registration papers, this not only confirms ownership, you will need to sign them in the appropriate place(s) so that we can transfer them to the new owners.
- If you have any vet records, please provide a copy of them or the name of the clinic so that we can contact them for the dog's vet info. This confirms ownership and it helps us determine what vetting the dog needs, if any. It saves us time and money if we do not have to vaccinate dogs that are current on their shots.
- If the dog does need vaccinations or a spay/neuter operation, a **minimum donation of \$100 is required**. It will cost us at least \$250 for an uncomplicated neuter (spays are more expensive) that should have already been done if they are not part of a reputable breeding program. Funding is one of the hardest things to come by and if we don't have it, we cannot take in more dogs. Our reputation is at stake if we do not vet them

properly and ensure that they are not able to contribute to the dog overpopulation problem.

It is unfortunate but it is a fact ... we will not be able help each and every dog that we are contacted about. It breaks our hearts every time we have to turn someone away, regardless of the reason, but we have to be able to help those that are already in our care first. Please do not add to the guilt we already feel by threatening to put the dog down if we don't take them - guilt trips do not help anyone.

Thank you for reading this and understanding our position,

AB-HDR