

## Chapter 2 – The Job of Coordinating

### The Role of the Coordinator

SOAR has several coordinators in the three states of Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. All of these volunteers have undertaken a tremendous responsibility that is often time consuming. The rewards can be many or few. In an effort to help you understand how to best do the job of a coordinator, we have put all of the guidelines and procedures together in this chapter and throughout this manual.

It is SOAR's goal to have more than one coordinator in each state. In some states, the coordinators divide up the state and each one handles the entire job of coordinator in their portion of the state. In other states, one coordinator might handle applications or paperwork while another handles the dogs or recruiting volunteers. As a coordinator, you should decide the best way to work together with the other coordinators in your state.

In some cases, you may be able to handle all aspects of rescue as outlined here. However, with the large areas that you need to cover, it only makes sense to rely on the help of other volunteers. SOAR has a database of volunteer information to draw from, please make good use of it and learn to delegate. Remember, though, that you are still responsible to make sure the volunteers you call upon handle their task properly.

Before you become a coordinator, you **MUST** sign a SOAR Volunteer Agreement form and mail it to the SOAR Vice President Volunteers.

Anyone who volunteers for you to do transporting, fostering or home visits must also sign a SOAR Volunteer Agreement. Help them out by sending them a copy along with the address on where to mail it.



## Taking Custody of an Airedale

The ideal rescue situation allows you to plan. If you are lucky, most of your rescues won't be emergencies. The more details you can arrange prior to taking custody of the new dog, the easier it will be. Once you get your hands on a dog, things can get hectic fast. Use the SOAR database to find volunteers to help you if the dog is not in your immediate area. Many of them may be willing to not only get the dog, but take him/her to a vet, boarding facility or a foster home.

When you go to pick up the Airedale, it is important to have the following with you.

- A safe collar (preferably martingale style or a choke chain) and a leash
- An ID tag with SOAR contact information on it
- A Rescue Release form, unless you are picking up the dog from a shelter

Don't rely on the dog to have a safe collar on.



## Airedales in Shelters and Humane Societies

Sometimes shelters can be great to work with. These shelters may contact you with news that they have an Airedale at their facility. Get back with them right away and bail the dog out. If you have not met with anyone from this shelter before, take your business card, an "About SOAR" newsletter to give to them. Cultivate a relationship and make it easy for them to contact you again in the future.

Other shelters may not work with rescue groups at all. If you encounter a shelter that won't work with rescue, you can consider finding a local volunteer to go in and "adopt" the Airedale for you. Just be aware that sometimes this backfires if the shelter wants to do home visits on the volunteer who adopted the dog. Another option is to ask a waiting approved home to bail the dog out and foster it with the intent to adopt. If the dog isn't the right one for them, at least they have helped an Airedale in need while they wait for their dog. You may be surprised how quickly that 2-year old female they wanted is suddenly replaced by the 6-year old male they picked up at the shelter. He becomes "the right one."

You won't need a SOAR release form from a shelter. They will have forms for you to fill out. Expect to pay the usual adoption fee. You may be required to have the facility vet perform spay or neuter prior to adoption. The "bail" you have paid is reimbursable by SOAR when you send in your itemized statement. (Save the receipt) The shelter may have performed vaccinations, heartworm testing, etc. Make sure you get a copy of this paperwork so that SOAR does not have to do needless repetition of health care already done.

Every time you work with a shelter, make sure you enter the shelter into the SOAR database. Makes notes as to whether this shelter works with rescue, you need to send a volunteer in to "adopt," contact information or any other information that would be handy to have the next time you need to deal with this shelter.

## When Getting an Airedale from a Shelter

The number one thing to remember when you are alerted to an Airedale at a shelter is **do not let an Airedale languish at a shelter!** Make arrangements to bail them out as soon as possible. Get them to a vet's office or a boarding kennel where you know they will be safe until you can arrange for a foster home.



Don't assume that shelter workers don't care! Many balance all the negative aspects of shelter work with the happy endings and successful placements. A positive contact with you may be the best part of their day. If you have time, a "happy ending" photo of the Airedale all groomed and with their new family may make all the difference in the shelter working with you again.

Leave an "About SOAR" newsletter at the shelter along with your card. Ask them to add your information to their contact list. Thank them for entrusting you with the Airedale! If it is a shelter that does not normally work with rescue, contact them at a time when you know they do not have an Airedale and try to establish a positive relationship before you need to work with them again.

If you send a volunteer or approved home in to adopt an Airedale and they subsequently end up turning the dog over to SOAR, you **MUST** get a release form signed from that volunteer or approved home. If you do not, the Airedale does not belong to SOAR!



- ✓ Shelter paperwork you had to sign to complete the adoption/release
- ✓ Veterinarian paperwork from the shelter to show what the dog is up to date on.
- ✓ Receipt if you paid a shelter fee
- ✓ Rescue Release form (if it applies)



## Owner Surrenders

Many times when taking a call from an owner wanting to surrender their Airedale, you have to be a diplomat. Owners often want validation and reassurance that their Airedale is unusually naughty, incorrigible, spiteful, brain damaged, etc. Young Airedales are often described as "aggressive" when it's evident they aren't getting enough exercise or attention. "Biting" is often puppy mouthing that has gone unchecked. Jumping up and stealing food are thought to be mortal sins. A whole laundry list of poor behavior may be cited when the dog has had no obedience training or socialization. Owners complain of urinating in the house, but have never taken a urine sample to the veterinarian to see if the dog has an infection or other health problem. Listen, take notes, and bite your tongue. Write everything down as you interview the owner. Record the owner's name, address, and telephone number. Don't take everything at face value. Many "man hating" dogs just dislike the man in that household who has treated them badly.

Sometimes, after speaking with you, owners decide they love their pet and want to give things a second chance. You have helped them see their pet has been displaying "normal" Airedale behavior. If nothing else, you have had the opportunity to educate that owner and help them do a better job. Hopefully, their Airedale will have a better quality of life. If not, you should have established a relationship with them and hopefully they will call you again when they are ready to surrender their dog.

If the owner is indeed ready to surrender their Airedale, take possession of the dog as soon as possible. Don't make the surrender difficult for the owner. They may give the dog away, dump him at a shelter, euthanize him, or turn him loose on the streets rather than deal with rescue if you do. Do not tell the owner to 'buck up' and encourage them to keep their Airedale if they are indicating they cannot. If you make them feel ashamed or guilty they will simply dump their dog elsewhere.

Don't discuss the details of prospective homes with the surrendering owner. This will only complicate matters. The new family should have their privacy protected and feel they are secure with their new pet. They should know that no one will come knocking on their door saying they have changed their mind. The new home may share a note or photo if they desire through you or the rescue contact. The old home should not be allowed "visiting privileges." This is selfish and not in the dog's best interest. If the new owners and the old owners live close by to each other, make arrangements for a volunteer to pick up the dog and deliver them to the new owners. Do not allow the two to meet with one another.

Points to emphasize to the concerned owner are:

- We screen all adoptive homes prior to placement. We do home visits and check references.
- The vast majority of our adoptive homes know and love Airedales.
- We have a legal contract that protects and assures our dogs are well cared for.
- Follow-up is done after all placements, for the life of the dog!
- We won't put the old home in contact with the new home unless the new home desires it.

SOAR has information about surrendering an Airedale in the "About SOAR" newsletter that contains many frequently asked questions and answers about the surrender process. If possible, arrange to send a copy to the surrendering family to help ease their concerns and make them feel comfortable about surrendering their dog to rescue.

## **Surrendering Owners Who Want to be Involved in the Placement**

Occasionally, owners want to be involved in placing their dog. Discourage this! It really complicates the process, and shortchanges the dog.

*We worked with one couple in placing their own dog. They alienated six approved homes and then refused to work with SOAR. In the end, time ran out. They had to move out of their home so SOAR took possession of the dog on very short notice.*

If all else fails, and the only way to help the dog is through the old owner's involvement, so be it. The owners should be responsible for bringing the dog up to date on health care. You should verify this with their vet. They should also have the dog bathed and groomed. You will still do an intake evaluation. Visit with the dog and owner personally to get to know the dog and help you make the best match possible

## **Making Arrangements for the Surrender**

When making arrangements to take in an owner surrender, ask the owner to collect vet records, toys, food, medications, crate, bed, blanket, etc. to send with the dog. You can sort through the stuff later and donate unwanted items to your local shelter or an all breed rescue. It is helpful if the owner can fill out an Intake Profile to give us as much information about the dog as possible. It is important to have a familiar blanket, bed or other item to help the dog transition to the foster home or new adoptive home.

When you take possession of the dog, you must have the owner complete and sign a "Rescue Release Form." This gives SOAR legal ownership of the dog, and will prevent many headaches should ownership of the dog be contested later.

- ✓ Rescue Release form
- ✓ Intake Profile form
- ✓ Veterinarian paperwork from the owner to show what the dog is up to date on.



## Tips For Meeting Owner Surrenders

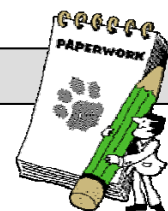
- It might be best to meet owner surrenders on neutral territory at a very public place.
- Have your crate assembled prior to meeting an owner surrender.
- If possible, take a friend with you.

## Airedales Found as Strays

Every now and then you will receive a call from someone who has found a stray Airedale with no identification. Try to verify that it is indeed an Airedale. If it is, arrange to take the dog into rescue. However, before you do anything further for the Airedale other than take care of the immediate health needs, you should do what you can to see if anyone is looking for him or her. Wait at least a week before proceeding with the dog as an official rescue.

If you are picking up the Airedale from someone else who found them as a stray, have them fill out one of the Rescue Release forms just to get as much information about them, the dog and the circumstances as to how and where it was found. They do not need to sign it as they are not the legal owner.

- ✓ Rescue Release form for informational purposes



## Airedales from Pet Stores, Auctions and Newspaper Ads

It is SOAR's policy not to purchase dogs from any of these sources as it only encourages continued breeding and sales. However, there are some things you can do. At the top of the list is communications. If you take the time to communicate with people and be an ambassador for rescue, you will be surprised at how positively people respond.

If you hear of an Airedale in a pet store, visit with the pet store and give them some information for them to pass on to the family who purchases the puppy. The "About SOAR" newsletter would be helpful for the new family plus it would give them a contact with us should they have problems.

When you see an Airedale offered in the newspaper as "free to a good home," by all means bring it into rescue. If the person who placed the ad is willing to give the dog to rescue, treat it as an owner surrender as far as paperwork goes. If the person is unwilling to work with rescue, have a volunteer call and pick up the dog for you. Have the volunteer ask for some sort of statement that would transfer ownership to them. The volunteer can then fill out and sign a Rescue Release form and surrender the dog to SOAR.

If the newspaper ad is trying to sell an Airedale (not puppies), call to see if they would consider surrendering the dog to rescue. They may agree to surrender the dog if they cannot place the dog themselves. Offer them the "About SOAR" newsletter, and offer to help a new family with any problems.

A couple of the SOAR states hold dog auctions. It is SOAR's policy not to buy Airedales at auction for the same reason we don't buy puppies from pet stores. It is difficult to see what goes on at these auctions, but the best we can do is try to educate people on responsible ownership and give them our contact information should they need it.

- ✓ Rescue Release form – if the owner decides to surrender their Airedale to rescue
- ✓ Veterinarian paperwork from the owner to show what the dog is up to date on.



## Airedales from Breeders and Breeder Information

Lately we have been getting calls from breeders who want to surrender puppies that they could not sell. For the most part, these are usually backyard breeders. We will take these dogs in only as surrenders. We will not pay a breeder even a small amount for their puppies as this encourages them to continue breeding knowing they can make some money from rescue by selling the unplaced puppies to us. If you do get puppies from a breeder who cannot sell them, try to talk to them into discontinuing breeding or at least not breeding quite so often. Some of our coordinators have been successful at stopping some of the backyard breeders.

During the intake evaluation on owner surrenders, you may inquire where the dog originated. If the breeder is known to you, carefully consider contacting the breeder. Many rescue groups will insist the breeder take responsibility for unwanted dogs of their breeding. Our concerns are for the dog and what future that dog will face if returned to the breeder. Many owners have serious objections to their dog returning to the breeder, fearing the dog will be euthanized or kept long term in an outdoor kennel. Please ask the SOAR officers for advice if you are in doubt. They may have had personal experience with the breeder in question, and will be able to offer important insight. There are several very responsible breeders in the SOAR area that will take their dogs back from us and work diligently themselves to place them in new loving homes. In any case, if you do not return the Airedale to the breeder and place the dog through rescue, you should not pass on any breeder information or AKC papers to adopters.

We do have a SOAR officer who is interested in tracking information on which breeders dogs are showing up in rescue, among other things. Please contact them with the Airedale's name and census number and the name of the breeder if you know it.

- ✓ Rescue Release form – if a breeder decides to surrender an Airedale to rescue
- ✓ Veterinarian paperwork from the owner to show what the dog is up to date on.



## Referral Rescue

One of the founding rules of SOAR is that we don't do rescue by referral. That means that we do not refer approved adopters to owners who want to give up their Airedale. SOAR intercedes by taking custody of the Airedale. When you rescue by referral, you accept the surrendering owners' word about their dog. They are often the last people who should be believed. (Do you really think that an abusive owner will admit they have beaten their dog?) Worst case scenario is you could be placing a dangerous dog without realizing it. More commonly, you would be placing a dog without learning about his/her personality or what this dog needs in a new home to make it his/her "forever home." This only increases the chance that this dog will lose its home AGAIN or end up being kept by people who don't appreciate that dog's personality traits. Each dog deserves both an evaluation by a rescue volunteer and health check by a licensed veterinarian prior to placement. When you are dealing with owner surrenders who want to be involved in the adoption process, you may be most tempted to do this. This is why we discourage it. If all else fails and you need to leave the dog at the surrendering family's home, make sure you get someone to go visit the family and the dog to get some "hands on" information. Also, it would be best to place the dog with an approved Airedale experienced family who would be willing to act under a foster placement contract for a while to get to know the dog. If the dog is not the right fit for their family or has other issues that were not known, at least you had the dog in rescue as a foster and now know a little more about them and can get them some training or other help for their issues.

## **A Word About Mixes**

Our official policy is that mixes should be rescued at the individual volunteer's expense. SOAR is happy to provide Web space for a mix and give some additional exposure for them to whatever organization or individual has the mix. If you are willing to rescue the mix on your own and find a foster home for it without taking up an Airedale foster home, we will also provide Web space. We know from personal experience the mixes are often WONDERFUL dogs deserving a second chance. The sad fact is there are too many of them.

If one of your volunteers rescues a mix truly believing it is an Airedale, SOAR will not turn their back on the dog or the volunteer. However, you need to choose your volunteers carefully if you need someone to go into a shelter to determine if the dog is indeed an Airedale. There are some people who cannot turn a dog away – even if they know it is a mix.

## **Black Airedales**

Yes there are black Airedales. We are seeing some of these come into rescue mostly on the west side of our area. If you get word of a black Airedale, check it out. They look like Airedales in every other way except they are all black instead of black and tan.

## **Now That I Have the Airedale, What Should I Do?**

The Airedale in our custody, which is the first step. You now need to make sure that the dog is safely handled during this initial stage at a time when things are confusing for them. You must also begin planning for the dog's future in rescue.

### **What Should I Know About Transporting?**

Most problems can be solved or fixed EXCEPT dogs lost or hit by cars. Safety of the rescue dog should always be first and foremost in placing or transporting any rescue dog. Transported dogs should first be secured with an appropriate collar. Many dog owners and shelters hand over a dog with a dangerously loose collar. The dog is transported by a volunteer and becomes increasingly anxious when he realizes he is going somewhere with a stranger. This dog is ripe for slipping or backing out of his collar. Use a martingale (no-slip) or choke collar. If the dog comes wearing a nylon or leather collar, insist the owner assist you in tightening the collar in a secure area before you take possession of the dog.

Transport the dog in a crate if your vehicle size allows. Keep the leash attached so when the dog bolts out of the crate, you have something to grab. A crate will keep both the dog and driver safe during the trip. It will also keep your vehicle clean. New rescue dogs are rarely freshly bathed. If you don't have room for a crate, protect your car seat with a blanket or throw. Secure the dog's leash into your seatbelt system. This is done either by looping the leash handle into the seatbelt and buckling, or securely tying the leash to a seatbelt or other fixture in your car. This will prevent the dog from bolting out of the car when you open the door.

### **Where Should I put the Dog For Now?**

If the intake was an emergency situation and you have no where for the dog to go, start with a veterinarian. Most dogs require veterinary care. If you find a vet willing to board for a few days while performing the necessary vet care, you then have time to plan where the dog should go. Options for foster care include you, other rescue volunteers in your area, approved homes waiting to adopt but willing to foster in the meantime and regular foster families. (Many temporary foster situations turn into permanent placements.) You could also check the SOAR database and contact other rescue volunteers within your area that may have ideas for foster situations. Of course an immediate in-home situation is preferable but not always possible. If the dog has to be boarded at the vet's office for a few days, don't worry! At least he's safe.

Remember that if your new rescue is taken to a vet or boarding kennel because you had no place for them to go immediately, you must continue to work on finding a foster home for them. SOAR cannot continue to pay for boarding fees. It is money that we cannot spend on other more important issues our rescues face and it is not fair to the dog. Sometimes an Airedale will become depressed if kept in a kennel situation for too long. If you have exhausted all possibilities for foster homes in your area, put a note out to the SOAR discussion group list to see if someone in another state can help out.



## **Collars, Leashes and Tags**

We believe all SOAR dogs should have a new lease on life with a new collar, leash and ID tag. The tag needs to be a SOAR tag with SOAR contacts and remain on the dog even after the placement. The new adopter can add their tag to ours. No rescue Airedale should EVER be without legible ID tags. Educate owners about properly fitting collars. Explain how Airedales back out of their collars. Educate owners to never use a choke collar in the house or when a dog is unattended. We encourage the use of Martingale (No-Slip) collars.

The collar, leash and ID tag initially put on the dog when they came into rescue may belong to the volunteer who did the intake. If this is the case, make sure that a new collar, leash and/or ID tag are sent out to the foster home.

## **A Bath and a Haircut**

For most rescued Airedales, these rank right at the top of the “things to do” list! If you are able to provide these services yourself, it’s a good chance to become familiar with your new charge. Feel for lumps and bumps as you scrub. Often several latherings are necessary. When in doubt, use a flea and tick soap. Clean the ears with ear wash. Feel between the paw pads and carefully trim away mats. Clip nails. Afterwards, slip a new collar and I.D. tag on. HINT: If you are fostering the dog in your home, make the final lathering with your shampoo. Dry with your used towel. This will help assimilate him into your pack – “Hmm... this new guy smells like mom!”

Don’t place a dirty, ungroomed dog! It’s unprofessional. Preferably you or another nearby person can volunteer to bathe and groom. If not, arrange for a professional grooming before placement – even if it is placement into a foster home. We have brought supplies to bathe and groom a dog at the time of placement. Get creative! Ask a nearby Petco, or other large grooming facility to use their tub for a rescue dog bath. Many are happy to help rescue when possible with free or discounted services. Always reciprocate by referring adoptive homes to groomers who help rescue.

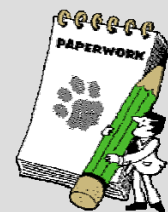
## **Don’t Forget the Paperwork**

When you take a new dog into rescue, you need to request a census number. You need this number in order to put the Airedale up on the adoption page of our Web site and to get bills paid for anything this dog needs. Please remember to put your request for a census number in writing – preferably an e-mail. If you call first to get a number for an immediate need, follow-up with an e-mail. SOAR keeps a paper trail for each dog that comes into rescue. When the dog moves to someplace else prior to adoption, remember to e-mail the person handling the census with the new location information (name/city/state.)

The Airedale should have come into rescue with a Rescue Release form (owner surrenders) or shelter paperwork and vet records (if they were available.) There may also be AKC papers, photos and other miscellaneous papers. The only papers the foster home needs are the vet records. If there are photos and other miscellaneous paperwork that an owner might have passed along for a new family, you can give these to the foster home as well. Make sure there are no names of the previous owners on anything since these papers will most likely be passed on to the new family. If the previous owners are listed on the vet records, you may want to make copies and mark the old owner’s name out with a magic marker.

You should send the original Rescue Release form and copies of the vet forms to the person handling the census. If you want any of this information for your records, make copies.

- ✓ Rescue Release form (original) – snail mail to person doing the census
- ✓ Shelter Paperwork (original) – snail mail to person doing the census
- ✓ Veterinarian paperwork (copies) – snail mail to person doing the census
- ✓ Shelter invoice – fax or snail mail to SOAR Treasurer for reimbursement
- ✓ Expense Report – fill out and fax or snail mail along with shelter invoice
- ✓ Census number – e-mail the person doing the census for one

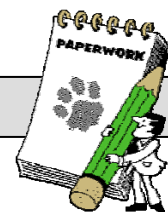


## Should I Microchip my Rescue?

When you take the Airedale in for his/her initial vet visit (nearly all dogs should have a wellness exam - discussed next), you should have them microchipped. SOAR gets chips from National Airedale rescue for a very reasonable price. If it is convenient to have some of these on hand, take one with you and ask your veterinarian if he or she can chip the dog for free while they are performing other services. If it is not convenient to use the chips from National, ask the veterinarian to chip the dog and ask if they will give a discount for rescue. We prefer to use the Home Again chips but will accept other brand if that is all the vet handles.

You should turn in your microchip paperwork as soon as the chipping is done. It will be initially registered with both primary and secondary names to SOAR people. Once a new adopter is known, they can be listed as the secondary. Do not wait until the dog is adopted to turn in the paperwork. More will be discussed on this later in this chapter in the sections dealing with approved applicants and adoption process.

- ✓ Microchip registration form – snail mail or fax to the person handling microchips



## The Initial Vet Visit

The goal of rescue is to provide a thorough health exam and treatment at the time of rescue. Please don't place sick or poorly evaluated dogs. To do so risks the health of other pets and people in the household. It also gives rescue a poor reputation!

On occasion, we will take in a dog that is up to date on shots, groomed, happy and healthy. This is great when it happens. However, most times you will have to schedule a vet appointment. Consider making this the first stop for you new rescue. If you plan to board the dog at a kennel initially, remember that most kennels require certain minimum vaccinations.

Please ask your vet for a rescue discount. Most will not offer one unless you ask.



The veterinarian visit for your rescue Airedale may be the first visit for that dog in years. Many dogs entering rescue have had minimal or nonexistent health care. Don't let the vet rush you through this first visit. Carefully examine any previous records to avoid giving vaccinations that are not yet due. Don't repeat vaccinations already given at the shelter. If you have noted potential health problems from your intake evaluation or from the bathe and groom, let the vet know. Explain the dog's history briefly to the vet. Your visit should include a physical exam by the vet. Below is a list of things that should be checked on this initial visit.

- **Eyes and ears** - Look for infection.
- **Skin** - Note lumps, masses, areas of hair loss, hot spots, infection. Any mass should be removed. SOAR has a no-biopsy policy.
- **Teeth** - Note wear and tartar. If teeth require cleaning, schedule all surgery procedures at the same time (lump removal, spay, teeth cleaning, etc.)
- **Spay/neuter** - are required before placement without exception for all dogs except very young puppies. Puppies should be placed on a spay/neuter contract discussed later.
- **Heartworm testing and initial preventative** - If dog's preventative history is unknown or uncertain, they **MUST** be re-tested again in six months. They should remain on preventative year-round in all SOAR states. Start the dog on preventative during foster, and send them to their new home with one month additional preventative. Explain that the adoptive family **MUST** purchase their own supply from their vet on their initial vet visit. Write re-testing in six months, if needed, as an additional condition in the "Placement Contract."
- **Fecal check for parasites** - Treat if necessary and explain re-testing procedure to a new home.
- **Rabies vaccination** - if not up to date.
- **Distemper combination vaccination** – if not up to date.
- **Bordatella vaccine** - (kennel cough) is required for dogs prior to kenneling or obedience classes. Dogs vaccinated for Bordatella at shelters frequently develop the disease a few days after vaccination due to stress and compromised immune system. Bordatella can be a debilitating disease with high fever. Do not place coughing dogs! They will infect other dogs in the home. Take these dogs to the vet for antibiotics.
- **Lyme vaccination** is recommended for dogs living or visiting in rural, wooded areas. SOAR feels the cost for this should be borne by the adoptive home after placement.
- **Blood work** - this is not done routinely. Exceptions include pre-op blood profile for elderly dogs. Dogs that have some medical problem may warrant blood panels.
- **X-Rays** - these are not done routinely. Some adoptive homes nervous about hip dysplasia, request any dog they adopt be X-rayed before adoption. We are happy to oblige if the adoptive home pre-pays for the procedure. This is not a reasonable cost for rescue to bear. Exceptions would include a dog that comes into rescue with obvious physical problems.

**NOTE ON VACCINATIONS** - Emaciated or sick dogs should NOT be vaccinated until they are recovered. This challenges their already compromised immune system, and in the end provides questionable protection. Dogs with an unknown vaccination history should not receive all of their vaccinations at once. Schedule a couple of visits at least two weeks apart.



## The Foster Home

Good foster homes make an incredible difference in rescue. Let the volunteers who foster for you know how much you appreciate their contribution. SOAR has a few guidelines to promote fostering and protect our foster home's rights in the adoption process. These are outlined below and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Rescue coordinators should have good rapport with foster homes. Let them know what is expected. If the dog requires vet care, grooming, or supplies, make sure they know how to send for reimbursement. Advise them to keep all paperwork pertaining to the dog intact. The vaccination records are forwarded with the dog to the adoptive home. Make sure everyone understands what expenses are reimbursable. Any questions regarding expenses should be directed to the SOAR treasurer.

Above all communicate with your foster home. Contact them regularly to let them know how the adoption quest is going. Don't make them wonder if the dog has been forgotten. Help them problem solve if needed. Good foster experiences will encourage them to help you again!

Any home considered for fostering should also be an approved home, eligible to adopt if they wish. If you make someone responsible for a rescue dog even short term, be sure they are an appropriate choice. They must have a good vet reference and an understanding of safety issues with rescue dogs. Remember, SOAR does not permit our dogs to be housed outside.

If you find that you are short on foster homes and long on incoming rescues, consider asking an approved home if they will help you out by fostering while they wait for their new dog. SOAR recommends that you consider an Airedale-experienced home without children, or at the most, older teenagers. It would also be preferable to have someone who would be home all day or only gone part time since they would need to work with and evaluate the foster dog for you.

If you have a foster home that fosters on an ongoing basis, they should have a "one-time" Foster Placement Contract on file with you using the word "ongoing" in the place where you would normally put the dog's name. If an approved home is going to help you out one time when you are "in a pinch," they should fill out a Foster Placement Contract for the particular dog they are fostering.

- ✓ Foster Placement Contract – one time for ongoing foster homes, every time for occasional foster homes.
- ✓ Volunteer Agreement – for ALL foster homes



## Length of Time in Foster

Because many Airedales go through a "honeymoon period" in the foster home, we recommend that a foster home keep and evaluate a dog for at least two weeks. We find that after this period of time, the dog begins to feel comfortable in his/her situation and their true personality begins to emerge.

## Foster Home Involvement in the Placement

Your foster home should be involved in the placement of their dog unless they specifically ask not to be. This means that if you have a potential approved home you feel is appropriate for their dog, send the foster home the application and home visit form. Encourage the foster home to talk with the approved home. Then make the final decision together.

## **Behavior Issues**

If behavior issues emerge while the dog is in foster care, put the foster home in touch with a behaviorist or trainer if they need help. If the issues still cannot be resolved, you may have to move the dog to a training facility.

## **The Foster Home Wants to Adopt**

If the foster home decides they would like to adopt the dog they are fostering, they should be able to. Make sure you complete the adoption paperwork to complete the process.

## **Health issues**

Make sure that the foster home spends enough time observing the dog to notice anything like a limp, skin problem, ear infection, etc. If anything is found, they should have it taken care of at their vet and contact the treasurer to arrange payment. You want to do everything possible so that a dog is not placed with unknown health issues. If there are ongoing health issues being taken care of by SOAR, you should be kept informed and any potential adopter should be told about them.

## **Getting the Word Out**

If you are lucky, you may have an approved home waiting for your new rescue. For the most part, though, you will need to get the word out that your rescue is now looking for his forever home. In order to do this, the foster home needs to give you a bio about their charge along with a photo. If they are not good at writing, you may have to take the details over the phone and do the bio yourself. Once you have a bio and photo, there are a few methods you can use.

The first and most widely used method is to get the bio and photo on the SOAR Web site. You will need to include the census number and contact information. SOAR has a volunteer who is in charge of receiving this information to make sure it gets posted on the Web site. Send everything to them. If you are unsure as to what to include in a bio, go to the SOAR Web site and look at some of the other bios.

You can post the information about your new rescue to the SOAR discussion group list. Sometimes a coordinator in another state might have a home waiting that is just right for your dog. States also post their available homes on the SOAR discussion group list. Feel free to reply to any of them.

If you have a dog that will be difficult to place and want to try some other options to get the word out, contact someone from the coordinator committee or one of the SOAR officers and we can help you.

# The Adoptive Home

Remember that it is SOAR's policy to find homes for dogs, NOT dogs for homes!



## The Search

SOAR finds homes in many ways. Our best prospects often come from our volunteers and previous adopters or from our Web site. Public appearances at "pet info days," parades, etc. are often beneficial. Meeting one GOOD adopter is worth the effort.

At times when one of our areas seems overrun with dogs and little to no approved homes, we have run newspaper ads. You might also consider posting bios of your available dogs to the SOAR discussion group list to see if other SOAR areas have approved homes waiting.

## Our Web Site

Many of our applications come through the SOAR Web site from people who are browsing the page of dogs we have available. Complete instructions are listed on the Web site – including the fact that a potential adopter must apply and go through the approval process before being considered for a dog. However, many people will contact you to express their interest in a dog you have available or to ask you questions. Please be patient with them. Answer their questions, but gently point them to the pages on the Web site that outline the adoption process followed by the on-line application. Get a name and phone number from these people who inquire and follow-up with them if you have not heard back with an application in a few days. They may have had trouble with our on-line application or concerns about the procedure and you would hate to lose a good lead because of it.

## Newspaper Classified Ads

SOAR has a volunteer who is knowledgeable about placing classified ads and can assist you with the wording for these ads and give you suggestions for taking calls. You should try to place an ad in the daily newspaper under the Pets or Dogs classification. The Sunday edition often yields the best results though it is usually the most expensive. You will have some inappropriate homes answer your ad. Attempt to gently discourage them. Often you will receive calls from Airedale owners inquiring as to "What is Airedale Rescue?" Use this opportunity to tell them about our efforts on behalf of homeless Airedales. At the very least, they may provide financial support or remember us if they hear of an Airedale in need. If you are lucky, they may be capable of far more. Have a copy of the "About SOAR" newsletter on hand so that you can mail out information that is appropriate to the caller.

Be prepared to get calls from people who want to give you their Airedale. That's okay. At least you saved another Airedale from a shelter experience! (And your ad worked, just not how you had hoped!)

## General Information Newsletter

SOAR has a general information newsletter available on request from the person who handles volunteer supplies. Spend some time handing them out to attract potential adopters.

Placement of informational pieces is crucial. Veterinarian offices, upscale dog supply stores, dog training centers, groomers, etc. are all good places to try. Be creative! If you have volunteers in your area who want to assist you but can't foster, get them busy distributing these newsletters! Putting SOAR information in every vet office and dog supply store in town is a good project for someone who wants to help.

## The Adoption Application

Majority of your applications will come from our Web site. These will be forwarded to you via e-mail from the volunteer handling applications. You may also receive an application occasionally via snail mail. Both of these applications ask the same questions and should be identical.

You should acknowledge receipt of an application within a day or two – no longer!



Once you receive an application you should either send an e-mail or make a phone call to the applicant to let them know you have their application and will be starting the approval process. It is very important and professional that you contact an applicant right away. Even though we have information on our Web site about the adoption process and we have the “About SOAR” newsletter that outlines the adoption process, many applicants may still have questions and be excited about this decision they made to adopt a rescue dog. We want to let them know that we appreciate hearing from them and they are important to what we do.

## Previous SOAR Adopters

For the applicant who has adopted from SOAR previously, the coordinator should ask them to fill out a new application unless one is already on file (so the updated info can be easily passed on to other coordinators.) Previous adopters should also fill out an application if things have changed with their living situation such as a move to a new home or they now have some children.

## The Reference Check

The next step is to check references for the applicant. This ALWAYS includes a veterinarian reference check. You can speak with the office staff or the veterinarian – whomever is available. Explain that you are a volunteer for Airedale Rescue and one of their clients has applied to adopt a dog from you. Request they check their records for the client, and see if their present and previous dogs have been tested and kept on heartworm preventative every year. Some people TEST but don't give preventative. This is not acceptable and does not meet one of the requirements of our placement contract! Any dogs in the home should have received basic immunizations on a routine basis. Any home whose dogs have seen a vet only occasionally or skipped years without vet visits is not an acceptable home.

Groomers are a wonderful resource. They will tell you that previous dogs were brought in religiously, or only when matted and with ear infections! Good groomers often note a dog's general health or lack of it and can provide valuable insight to the quality of care provided.

Lastly, you should contact the applicant by phone. We have a list of suggested questions to ask an applicant on the telephone interview. You may have come up with some additional and specific questions based on their application and the reference checks. During this interview, there are some points you should make (listed below.) Even if the applicant has answered these questions or indicated they are aware of our policies, these need to be covered verbally to confirm their understanding. You should feel comfortable and positive about the responses.

- We require that shots be kept up-to-date for our rescues.
- We require that our rescues be tested as recommended by the adopter's vet and that they be kept on heartworm preventative.
- We ask that the adopter consider an adoption donation of between \$300 and \$400. Let them know that the average cost per dog coming into rescue is quite a bit more than that, but we do take care of health and behavioral issues while the dog is in foster care.
- We do not allow our rescues to be kept outdoors.

## The Home Visit

After references are checked and meet with your approval, the final step should be the home visit. Do not set up a home visit with a family if the reference check turns up something to indicate you would not place a dog with this family.

By now you have spent time on the phone getting to know this prospect. There should be no surprises, but there frequently are! Assure people they are not on trial, this is a friendly visit and a necessary step in the process of adopting. We want to see where our rescue Airedales are going to be placed. We want to make the best placement possible. By visiting with the family and seeing their home, we accomplish both goals.

Sometimes you may be doing these home visits yourself, but in many cases you will have to rely on volunteers to do one for you. Before doing this, carefully consider if you trust this person's opinion. If you don't, don't waste everyone's time! Home visits can be very subjective. If you don't already know of a volunteer you trust, you can use the database to find a volunteer close to the applicant. As a last resort, if there are no volunteers close to the applicant, try contacting a vet or vet tech (not associated with the applicant) to do the home visit for you. We have a Home Visit checklist to make it easy for anyone doing a home visit.

You should bring a dog with you, but tell them up front, you aren't leaving the dog! In most cases it will be one of your own dogs. You will gain insight to how they relate to the dog. Do they get down to the dog's level? Do they greet the dog warmly? Is the husband more enthused than the wife? Are they overly concerned about dirt tracked in on their carpet? Are children in the house wild?

Ask to see the backyard. Examine the fence line carefully and look for gaps or weak areas a dog could escape from. Does the gate latch securely? Are there aggressive dogs in the next yard?

Ask to see where the dog will sleep. Where will he/she spend time when the family is away?  
Meet any resident dogs. Do they look well cared for?

The person doing the home visit (if other than the coordinator) should not make any promises to the family as to their approval. They should also not make any promises for the adoption of a particular dog. Refer all questions to the coordinator.



Once the home visit is done, a written report must be completed. The Home Visit checklist form can be used for this, or you can do a report in writing. It can be done in an e-mail or sent as a fax or snail mail as long as there is a hard copy.

It is important to have the home visit report in writing so it can be passed on to the foster family or to other coordinators with potential dogs.





## Approving an Applicant

Once you have decided an applicant is approved, you need to do several things. The first and most important item is to contact the applicant to let them know they are approved. Some coordinators have form letters they send out via e-mail, but phone calls are always preferable. No matter how you inform an applicant they are approved, please remember to discuss the following:

- A Placement Contract (or Foster Placement Contract) will be required prior to placement. There are situations where you may place a dog under a Foster Placement Contract first and then require a Placement Contract in a few weeks. This is discussed later in this chapter under “Placing Under a Foster Placement Contract.”
- An adoption donation will be required prior to placement (for Placement Contracts only.) Remind them once again of the suggested donation of \$300 to \$400.
- Urge them to work through you for any dogs they are interested in. This gives you a chance to talk with your fosters or other coordinators about your approved home and pass on copies of their application or home visit.
- Our microchip policy to register them as the secondary name with SOAR as the primary name. Discuss the \$13 microchip fee.
- Let them know they can contact you with any questions.

Next, you should put your approved applicant on the database. It is important to do this for several reasons. One is so that other coordinators can easily tell that your applicant has gone through the approval process and is approved for adopting. The other is that they will be signed up to receive our e-newsletters. Receiving the e-newsletters gets them excited about SOAR and makes them feel like a part of the SOAR family.

## Rejecting an Applicant

This is often the least favorite job of most coordinators. No one likes to deliver disappointing news to a family, however, once you have made your decision, you need to stay firm. It is a good idea to tell them that they would not be suitable to adopt one of our rescue dogs and let them know why. If you think they would be better off getting a puppy from a breeder or better off with a different breed of dog, let them know this also. It gives you something positive to say. Just try to be as kind as possible. Some people will still get mad at you, but at least you were thoughtful. Most coordinators will handle rejections with a letter. Try to stay away from a form letter with “check box” reasons.

The reasons for most rejections are obvious and easy to relay. Sometimes, though, your reason may be simply a “gut feeling” that something is not right. We encourage you to talk with one of our senior coordinators if you have any concerns. Most of the time you will find your “gut feeling” is the way to go.

Another important thing to do is to enter any applicant rejected on the database if you feel they might try to go around you and ask other coordinators to consider them for a dog.

## The Adoption Prospect

The one thing you can count on is dogs and homes rarely match up! When you are flush with young dogs, your applicants want older dogs. If you have males coming out of your ears, everyone wants a female. When you interview that good home who wants only a female, inquire why. Many times gender preference is based on ignorance. Often they haven't met a male or they think all males mark in the house, are aggressive, etc. Try to educate prospective adopters. Arrange for them to meet a nice male. Encourage them to have an open mind about age and sex.

*Rescue had an approved adoptive couple who wanted a young female. They had recently lost a 14-year-old Scotty. We KNEW they weren't up to a young Airedale. They had NO IDEA how wild young Airedales are. They insisted they couldn't go through losing another dog soon again. They wanted a young dog! Just before Christmas, rescue took in a 10 year old male who was in terrible shape from long neglect. He was almost blind and had been dumped at a shelter. It was heart wrenching and we had no place for him. All foster homes were full. The couple agreed to foster him since it was such an emergency. Several days later they called and said he was home to stay. He was the complete opposite of what they wanted but they loved him anyway!*

*Airedale rescue was in a jam! A long-distance placement did not work. We needed a volunteer to take custody of the dog and get it out of the home. Nearby volunteers were waiting to adopt their next Airedale (a young as possible male.) They agreed to jump in their van to help Belle. At 5 years old and female, she was NOT what they were waiting for but they were glad to help. The rescue run was successful and Belle was delightful. Three days later, a rescue volunteer phoned them to talk about a prospective adopter for Belle but the words never got said. Belle's rescuers LOVED her and wanted her to stay. She was the "perfect dog" for them "just like she had been there all her life." They were as surprised as we were about the happy ending. If no one had asked them to help, they never would have found Belle because "she wasn't what they wanted!"*

This happens time and time again. "We want a young female" can turn into "we adopted an older male." Never assume that a prospective adopter won't consider a dog. If the location and personality seem like a match, suggest it. Encourage them to speak with the foster home. Who knows what might happen? Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Also, remember our foster homes have excellent hands-on experience with our rescue dogs. They can provide prospective adopters with the details of living with a particular dog.

With an approved adult home (home check completed, ready and waiting for their dog) consider asking them to foster if you don't have the "right" dog for them. Sometimes the foster home will turn into a permanent home. Please do not do this if the home has children. You must consider the experience level of the people and the initial report on the dog you are asking them to foster. If you give them a dog they can't handle, you are risking the safety of the dog and the home. If their fostering experience is unpleasant, you may lose them as an adoption prospect.

If you do place a dog in a home as a foster, you should continue the process of finding a permanent home unless the foster home wants to adopt. Just because you are hoping they will fall in love doesn't mean they will. Don't abandon a dog in foster care. Let the home know you are looking for the right home. Keep in frequent contact.

## Housing

SOAR does not place dogs in homes (or foster homes) where they will be housed outside. Many folks feel strongly about keeping their dogs outside during the day when they are gone. Pens or fenced yards are not foolproof. These dogs are at risk for being stolen, poisoned, or escaping. They often develop thunderstorm phobia. They can choke to death on their collar if it catches on the fence. They may eat a bee or wasp and suffer anaphylactic shock. We feel strongly that we have invested too much emotionally into rescuing our Airedales to subject them to these unnecessary dangers.

This safety clause is written into the SOAR Placement Contract and is not a negotiable item.



## Fences

This is a controversial topic. Some people feel that Airedales can only live in homes with a fenced yard. Others are flexible on the issue. SOAR believes this should be decided on a case by case basis. Fences can leave people with a false sense of security. Many people turn their dogs out into fenced yards for hours on end while they are busy inside the house. Bored Airedales tend to get into trouble, digging, climbing over fences, and barking. Homes with small children make fencing more desirable as children often fail to close doors behind them, putting the Airedale at risk for escaping. Even so, fence gates must be closed faithfully. Invisible fencing is often unsuitable for Airedales. The small correction shock is little deterrent to a headstrong Airedale intent on chasing another dog, cat, rabbit or child outside the perimeter. Many homes with invisible fencing abuse its intent. They turn the dog out for long periods alone. This also puts the dog at risk for theft or attack by other dogs. There are also homes that use it responsibly. Please use your experience with these issues to ask more questions to satisfy any concerns rather than just turn down someone without checking.

Invisible fencing is not acceptable when used unattended.



Make sure the adoptive home understands the limitations and will keep the dog safe. Adult homes without fencing are often acceptable if the family understands Airedales are not trustworthy off-leash. Many Airedale-experienced homes are safety conscious and are dedicated to walking their dog several times daily or taking them to a dog park.

Since their dogs eliminate on-leash, the dog owner has the benefit of being tuned-in to their dog's health. Ask what the plan is for walking and pottyng the dog. If the owner has kept previous dogs safe and understands the inconvenience of no fencing, we encourage you not to dismiss them as a prospective home. Of course tie-outs are to be used with supervision only, never unattended!

Our coordinators have all combinations of fences, no fences and electronic fencing. I would like to think that we are all very responsible with our situations and that we are all resources to anyone who has questions.

## Families With Children

The "American dream" includes a family dog. Airedales appeal because they are cute and THEY DON'T SHED! Often either the husband or wife fondly remembers an Airedale from childhood. Both husband and wife work. Their subdivision doesn't allow fences. They may or may not have time to take a dog to obedience class. The home has 3 children under 8 years old. They have their hearts set on a puppy "to grow up with the children." They are afraid an older dog will have too much baggage.

These are upscale intelligent people. They have done their research. They argue with you and won't reconsider their choice. They have their hearts set on an Airedale, as young as possible!

Couples with new babies suddenly demote their beloved Airedale to second-class citizen. The jealous dog starts growling at the toddler who pursues him and invades his space. Older children have endless school and sports activities. The family Airedale spends almost all of his time alone.

Another wrinkle is grandparents who dump their Airedale because the dog dislikes or is unpredictable around visiting grandchildren. When making placements with older couples, always inquire about grandchildren and their plans for keeping everyone safe when they visit. Separation in another room with the use of a child gate is a perfect solution for occasional visits.

## Points to Consider With Children in the Home

Carefully interview the home for motivation for obtaining a dog. If the dog is in any way "for the children," this is a big red flag! Ask who will be responsible for the dog? If it's the children, the people are living in fantasyland! Who would be taking the dog to obedience school? Most schools won't allow kids under 16 to participate in classes for insurance reasons. Smaller children don't possess the strength to control an Airedale.

Consider not only the children living in the home, but their friends too! Many an Airedale has lost his home because he snapped or growled at a visiting child. Inquire about allergies. Although terriers are considered to be safer than many types of dogs, they still produce dander. When children are diagnosed with asthma and allergies, their families face years of allergy shots. Any potential offenders get the heave-ho!

A fact of life is that families with school age children have far less time, energy, patience, and financial resources to devote to a dog. After many failed placements with small children in the home, we made a rule, "If the home has children under 5 years old, the adopted Airedale should be 5 or older." We have bent this rule many times, usually with poor results. We remember the rule and remind ourselves that we should have listened to our own advice!

The successful Airedale home is typically an adult home without children. Dogs coming to rescue are most often from homes with children who are simply stressed out. Life's daily demands do not allow time to provide enough attention and care to a high-energy Airedale. When there is a conflict between a dog and children, children ALWAYS come first. Seldom can a home with children be considered a "forever" home for the rescue dog. There are too many variables to anticipate.

When placing an Airedale into a home with children, always protect yourself and SOAR by saying "this dog has been good with the children we have exposed him to." Don't make blanket statements such as "he is good with children."



Some coordinators prefer not to place an Airedale at all in a home with small children. While it is not impossible to find the right match for a family with children, it may take a while. Be very careful with your placement.

## The Experienced Adult Home

Mature couples make wonderful dog parents. They are often seasoned Airedale people. They have lots of love and time to devote to a dog that will become the center of their attention. Often these adoptive homes are new to the concept of rescue. They have always purchased puppies from a breeder. Their recently deceased Airedale was elderly. These folks call you, and want as young a dog as possible. They don't want to ever again go through the loss of a beloved friend.

They most likely don't remember how wild and naughty young Airedales are! YOU must consider the couples age. If they are elderly and they adopt a young Airedale, what will happen to the dog when they can no longer care for it? Are they able to provide enough exercise for a young Airedale? Are they able to attend obedience classes? Do they travel extensively?

This type of prospect often makes the best possible home for a mature Airedale. Do your best to befriend these folks. Guide them toward making a good decision. Often a lengthy visit with a young active Airedale will help them see that's not the best match for them. A casual meeting with a more mature Airedale in need will set the stage. Ask them to foster. Most likely if they meet the dog, caring people will fall in love. You have made a match!

## The Poor Match

Inappropriate homes will still want Airedales. You will be able to discourage some, educate others and direct some to a more suitable breed. Other homes will be angry with you. You are standing in the way of their desired goal. They will go away mad. They will purchase an Airedale from a breeder or a pet store. They will find an Airedale at a shelter and rescue their own. In the long run many of these dogs will end up with you, after they have failed. You can't please everyone. Don't even try. Do be professional and polite, you are representing SOAR.

*A couple in their 70's had their Airedale die of old age. They purchased an Airedale puppy from a local breeder. She grew quickly and was soon too much for them. Outside she went to live on a chain. When she was barely 1 year old, the man forgot Abby was there and backed his truck out of the garage. Her chain was caught in the wheels of the truck, dragging her underneath the vehicle. Her skull and jaw were crushed. She suffered brain damage. The people's veterinarian convinced them to call Airedale rescue and give up the young dog.*

*A family who home-schooled 6 young children wanted an Airedale. They had little money but lots of love to give. They had no fence and had never had a dog before. We went over the grooming and medical expenses for an Airedale. We REALLY hesitated giving them a dog because it looked like a bad idea. They purchased a puppy from a breeder. We cringed but put them on the mailing list. We offered to help with any problems. We heard from them a year later. Hobbes was growling at the smaller children. He wasn't neutered. He was being fed high-protein, low-quality food. His favorite game was tug-of-war! He had received no vet care after puppy shots and had never been groomed. We soon took possession of him.*

Some people believe anything they see printed in a book. Dog books are sometimes your worst enemy. We have had people argue with us about the traits of Airedales because the breed book they have says "Airedales require only a moderate amount of exercise" or "Airedales are WONDERFUL with children" or "Airedales are easy to train because they are so intelligent."

Airedales don't shed BUT they require frequent grooming and brushing.

Airedales are high-energy and are easily bored. If they aren't kept busy and given enough attention, they become mischievous and destructive. Unsupervised Airedales will create havoc in the backyard. They teach themselves to climb the fence and escape. They dig big holes. They dig under the fence and escape. They ruin plantings. They hunt and kill small animals. They bark! Young enthusiastic Airedales can hurt small children unintentionally. They mouth and jump. They play rough.

## Making Decisions

You will need to develop skills in making good decisions concerning placements. The best way to do that is to learn from our experience. These cases are presented here for just that reason.

### The Alpha Dog

Some of our dogs need to have alpha owners in order to have a successful placement. In order to help you understand the alpha owner, the following two cases are presented. In both cases below, the new owners were mild mannered, laid back or timid people who were by our definition not alpha of their household. While these people can still be a good home for an Airedale, we need to make sure that their home is going to be best for the dog concerned. These two dogs lost their home because they assumed the role of alpha and stepped in to “protect” these timid owners from anyone they thought might be a perceived threat to them – including other family members and friends.

*This dog entered rescue as being other-dog aggressive. The dog did like people and enjoyed working for and with the trainer (who obviously was “alpha”.) This dog was placed with a timid single mom. Mom ran 5 miles nearly every day, which the trainer thought was a plus for the dog. Mom had no other pets, a fenced yard and an 18-year-old son. Mom was a first time Airedale owner, however. Mom was given an extensive packet from the trainer about what to do with and for the dog and thought that she could do this. Long story short, she could not. The dog began to exhibit aggression towards people to protect mom.*

*The second is about an “alpha” dog that the foster mom thought it best to placed as an only dog. This dog seemed to get along with the neighbor kids – ages 8 and 12. The dog was placed in a home with an elderly mom and dad who did not want to adopt an “older” dog (for the reason we hear many times – they did not want to lose their new dog so soon.) Dad had a health issue, but not serious. They had no other pets, were Airedale experienced, had a fenced yard and small children who visited (under 5 years old.) This dog was very uncomfortable around the young children and began to show some aggression towards them.*

While there are many additional details in these stories, we need to make two points. If you take a dog in that you think is an alpha dog, you should look for alpha owners. If you have a dog that you feel must be placed as an only dog because of some issues like food aggression or other dog aggression, you should look for “alpha” owners. Alpha owners, as an example, are people who are self assured, not uncomfortable with crate training or obedience training, spend some quality time daily with their dogs and ask their dogs to be “good citizens” with other people around. One method to assess this on a home visit is to simply watch how they relate to the dog brought to the home visit. Watch what they do if the dog wants attention or petting. Perhaps have them walk the dog and observe.

Alpha dogs and dogs with some aggression problems need an owner who will give them plenty of exercise. This does not mean leaving them to run the fence with the neighbor dogs. In fact, this is the worst thing they can do and leads to additional aggression issues. Perhaps another question to ask during the home visit is about other neighbor dogs along the bordering fence lines. The best thing to look for when placing an alpha dog is an owner who likes to walk, hike, run or perhaps rollerblade with their dog – you get the idea. The dog needs exercise with their owner! Playing fetch or some other quality play time with the dog to get their blood pumping is also good. The key is that they need exercise. They don’t need to sit in the house all day or they will start to become protective of it.

This is not to say that the two owners outlined here are bad choices for an Airedale. But the choice of Airedale that you place with them needs to be carefully considered. In the first case, the mom did provide plenty of exercise, but she could not provide the leadership. SOAR is considering her home for a more laid back dog that we currently have in rescue. This looks like it will be working out for all concerned.

In the second case, the elderly mom and dad wanted a younger dog. They had the plus of being Airedale experienced and a fenced yard, but could not provide the exercise. It also seems that perhaps because of their age, they might not come across as being leaders to the dog. In this case, you could try to sell this elderly couple on the benefits of an older dog (yes, we need to be salespeople too), perhaps one that is 6 or 7 years old. Have them talk to some of us who have adopted older dogs. Have them talk with the foster parents. Let them visit with an older dog. If they still aren't sold on the idea and you think they are a good home, let them know that it may take a while for the right dog to come into rescue who would fit their lifestyle.

There are no black and white answers to making decisions. Remember that we are here to find the best homes for our dogs and act in their best interests. If you feel an approved home is not appropriate for your dog, please be pleasant with them and let them know in a positive way why your dog may need something different than what they can provide. Encourage them to work closely with you or the coordinator in their state. If they are your approved home, try not to just "turn them loose" to start calling on dogs posted on the Web site. Continued communication with your approved homes and discussion about dogs on the Web site lets them know you care about them and educates them on how to find the right forever match.

## **Omitted Information**

There was an incident where a prospective adopter made it through the approval process. A transport was all set up to get them one of our dogs. As last minute preparations were being made, a conversation with this adopter revealed a comment that led the SOAR volunteer to believe that this adopter was getting rid of her current Airedale. Sure enough, a look at the local paper revealed an ad for her 2-year old Airedale with her phone number. Needless to say, the adoption was halted.

It is possible this person did not like the current Airedale and wanted a different one. It is also possible this person was getting dogs and reselling them for more money. Whatever the reason, keep this incident in the back of your mind. Ask questions on the home visit and watch closely how people interact with their current pets.

## Homes Outside the SOAR Area

Sometimes good applicants who live outside the SOAR area will approach you wanting to adopt a rescue Airedale. If they do not live in the SOAR area, they should be referred to the Airedale Rescue contact closest to them. This information is found on National Airedale Rescue Web site.

Airedale Rescue volunteers outside of the SOAR area should investigate all prospective adopters within their area the same way we do with ours. They should be responsible for pre-adoption procedures: applications, reference checks, home visits, etc. If they choose to refer someone to SOAR, that is their decision to make. The SOAR volunteer involved should get a copy of the application from the local Airedale Rescue volunteer as well as details regarding reference checks and home visit.

If you as a SOAR coordinator decide to place an Airedale in a home referred to you by an Airedale Rescue volunteer from another region, you must advise that volunteer of your plan and ask for their cooperation. If they are unwilling to assist you, you may not place the dog unless you have a SOAR volunteer nearby to do follow-up visits and provide backup. This volunteer must be willing and able to take custody of the dog if needed. To do otherwise would risk the safety of the Airedale.

For placements out of the SOAR region, you should contact the coordinator involved in the other region and let them know what you are considering. We need their support to help with the transport or if things should fail. We also need their good will.

It is very important that you feel good about the fact that the out-of-region coordinator will provide back up should the placement fail. If not, don't consider the placement.



*Rescue placed a dog with a couple who had driven hundreds of miles to Michigan. Upon arriving home after hours on the road, their new Airedale jumped the fence and was gone. Though local Airedale rescue volunteers had referred the adopters to rescue, they did little to help find the missing Airedale. Admittedly, many volunteers were two hours away but not one made even a single trip to join any of the search parties. Rescue flew the foster mom to the area but it was of no use. Even a second trip by car yielded nothing. We learned two hard lessons from this sad situation. The first is that all Airedale Rescue volunteers are not as committed to the mission of rescue as we are. The second is that you are most likely to retrieve a lost dog within the first 48 hours.*

Prospective adopters are full of confidence until problems surface. For example, separation anxiety, growling, house soiling, incompatibility with other pets, etc. They will call you in a panic asking for the dog to be removed NOW! If you don't have a local person to provide follow-up visits and act as backup, your dog may be in danger.

As a matter of courtesy, SOAR would expect to be notified if a rescued Airedale from another region was being considered by a home in our area. We must always treat other Airedale Rescue volunteers with the same respect that we expect. Hopefully we will all cooperate with each other for the sake of rescued Airedales.

Also, if you are contacted by anyone out of our region about a dog you have on the Web site, encourage them to contact their local group. Tell them there may be a dog in their area that is just what they are looking for. If not, we need to work with their local group towards any possible placement. Give them contact information from someone in their area if necessary or refer them to the National Airedale Rescue Web site. Remember that not all other groups have Web sites to list their dogs and (just like SOAR) not all dogs are listed on the Web sites.



## Working Together Within SOAR

SOAR cannot survive as a successful rescue group unless our volunteers cooperate and work together. Dogs are frequently moved across state lines during rescue to foster homes and eventually adoptive homes. Many times a dog crosses several states before ending up in his forever home! Some states generate more dogs than homes. Others typically have more adopters than dogs. Both dogs and homes should be shared rather than guarded. If one state is hoarding its foster and adoptive homes for a rainy day while another is boarding dogs it is costing SOAR unnecessary money and Airedales who need homes languish at boarding kennels. That person in the next state over that you help out now is likely to help you out next month when you are over run with dogs!

Here are some things you should remember when working with other coordinators, volunteers, fosters or approved homes outside of your state.

- First and foremost, keep the other state coordinator informed of ANYTHING you are working on in another state.
- If you are contacted by an approved home from another state about a dog you have, contact the coordinator from that state before proceeding. Many times a home is not yet approved or may have been denied and is trying to work through you instead. If the home is an approved home, the coordinator from the other state should be aware their approved home is considering your dog.

Do NOT promise a potential adopter a dog until you find out that they are approved. This family may be rejected as an adoptive home and it makes for a mess to try to back out of. This is most important for calls taken from other states. Hopefully you are aware of approved homes in your own state.



It is important that the coordinators from BOTH states communicate with each other if the approved home and the dog are in two different states.



- Consider posting your approved homes on the SOAR discussion group list if you do not have any dogs within your state that would make a good match.
- If you have dogs in boarding kennels with no foster options within your state, put the word out on the SOAR discussion group list that you need help. SOAR cannot afford to keep paying for kennel costs when another state might be light on dogs at the moment. Ideally, this should be done if you cannot find a foster home after two to three weeks in your state.

If another state offers to take one of your dogs to foster, that state will assume responsibility for the placement of the dog once they have the dog.



- If another coordinator e-mails you or calls you about a rescue issue, be courteous and return their e-mail or call. It may be that you don't think a family or dog would be a good fit. It may be that you just weren't home all day. Whatever the reason, please try to return the call or e-mail as soon as practical and at least share your views. To not receive a return call or e-mail is frustrating – especially to new coordinators.
- If an issue seems like it would be sensitive, please use the phone and talk with the person involved. Many times e-mail can sound cold, uncaring and sometimes nasty even if it was not intended to be. If you need advice or help with a sensitive issue, contact the president.
- If you know you will be unavailable for two days or more, please send that information on to the SOAR discussion group list. Let everyone know who you have left in charge or if you will be checking e-mail or voice mail.

## The Placement

You have now found the right match and are ready to proceed with the placement. In most cases you will proceed with the placement as being a permanent placement in terms of paperwork and donation. In some cases you may want to proceed with the placement as a foster placement with the intent to adopt. Each will be covered here.

### Permanent Placements

Permanent placements should make up the majority of the placements you do. These are placements where the dog has been in foster care or with a trainer an adequate amount of time (usually at least two weeks) so that we know what the dog should be like in his/her new home. The adoptive home is excited about the adoption and feels the dog would make a wonderful addition to their family. The adoptive home may have already done a meet and greet with the rescue Airedale and fell in love. In these cases you would have the adoptive home sign the placement contract and handle the donation at or before they receive their new Airedale.

You should go over each part of the Placement Contract with the new family, and especially make note of the “Medical Care” clause. The new adopter should take the dog in to be seen by their vet **within one week** of the adoption **at their own expense**. If this visit is done and something is revealed to make the adopter want to return the dog to SOAR, then SOAR will pay for the visit and take the dog back. SOAR will not pay for this visit several months later or for conditions that occur several months later. There are some exceptions to SOAR helping with a condition that crops up several months down the road. You will need to speak with a SOAR officer about anything you think might qualify.

### Foster Placements With the Intent To Adopt

You would consider doing a placement of this nature for several reasons. The adoptive family may be unsure as to how the new dog might fit in with their family. This is sometimes the case when longer distance placements are done and the adoptive family is not able to meet the dog in advance. They might have another dog and want to see if the two dogs will get along. Maybe there is a health issue with the dog and the new family wants to see if they can handle it. In these cases you would use the Foster Placement Contract. The dog will legally remain a SOAR dog and SOAR would be responsible for any veterinary care required during this time.

It is important that you put an “additional condition” on these contracts with a date whereby the family needs to decide if this adoption will work out or not. The date should give the family around two weeks or at the very most no longer than a month. You **MUST** follow-up with the adoptive family to get the donation and the Placement Contract signed within that time or ask them to return the dog to you.



The easiest way to handle getting the permanent Placement Contract is to have one filled out and ready for signature. Give this to the adoptive family at the same time you have them sign the Foster Placement Contract. Include a self-addressed return envelope for their convenience.

### Puppy Placements

Occasionally SOAR will take in puppies or a litter might be born while the mom is in rescue. In these cases you need to do a few extra things when filling out the Placement Contract. Fill in a date the spay/neuter is to be done by and fill in the deposit required. The typical deposit is \$150. This deposit is in addition to the adoption donation and will be refunded upon proof that the puppy has been spayed or neutered. You should follow-up with all adoptions done this way to make sure the spay or neuter was completed on time. Refunds can be requested from our treasurer. Please be sure to include the adopter’s name, the puppy’s name and census number.

## The Donation

The primary source of income for SOAR is donations. For most people, any donation is tax deductible since SOAR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are given in response to our newsletter mailings as well as for Airedale adoptions. We do not establish a specific amount for an adopter to donate, but we suggest they consider between \$300 and \$400. We have found that most people are generous in their financial support.

SOAR tries not to make money an issue. We don't want to turn away the "right" adopter for a dog because they can't afford to make a donation. Perhaps they can make 2 or 3 smaller donations over a period of time or donate their time and talent such as grooming, obedience training, items for our auctions, etc. Any adoptive home should be alerted that although the initial cost of a donation for a rescued Airedale is less than buying a puppy, they are expected to provide adequate grooming, vet care, good quality food and preventative heartworm medication over the lifetime of the dog. A rescue dog should never be considered a "cheap" alternative to obtaining a purebred dog from a breeder.

You should always ask for a donation rather than tell the adopter they have to pay a fixed amount. Most adopters are looking for some direction as to the amount and would be happy to make a donation somewhere in the "suggested" range. By saying that it is "suggested" leaves it open for those who would like to donate more as well as for those who cannot afford to donate quite so much. Take a look below about some of the comments on the donation.

- This is the **most important thing!** The coordinators are the ones who will be speaking to the applicants about the adoption donation and the coordinators can accept any donation amount from an adopter that fits the situation. We have given the coordinators this flexibility with the words "ask" and "suggested." Things to take into consideration are:



The dog's age and health. Older dogs or dogs with health issues are good candidates for agreeing on a smaller donation – or even waiving the donation.

The cost of living in certain areas. The adopter might make a great home but come from a lower income community. Take this into consideration.

The U.S./Canadian exchange rate. The Canadian dollar is not worth as much as the American dollar (at least currently.) While the donation range of \$300 to \$400 is meant to reflect U.S. dollars, allow our Canadian adopters the latitude of making a donation in Canadian dollars. The banks will handle the exchange. Just write the words "Canadian" after the donation amount on the Placement Contract if this happens. Not too long ago, the Canadian equivalent of \$300 to \$400 U.S. was about \$550 to \$700 Canadian. It fluctuates.

- For a new applicant, the adoption donation question should be checked "yes" on the application and it should be discussed during the approval process.

As an example, one of our coordinators had an applicant who had checked this box "no." In discussing this with them (up front), the coordinator found out that the applicant thought they should be able to get an Airedale from us for free – or at least no more than \$25. The coordinator told them that while we don't expect everyone to be able to make a donation in the \$300 to \$400 range, they would like the applicant to remember that each dog is spayed/neutered, up to date on shots and has had any health issues dealt with. This should be of some value to them. The coordinator thanked them for applying and was pleasant about it. About a week later, the applicant contacted the coordinator again to say that they were ready to consider a higher adoption donation after checking around. Most shelter fees are higher than \$25.

- We have quite a few very active volunteers out there that put many miles on their vehicles, gas in their tanks, give items for auction and spend countless hours of their time. The coordinators should know who these people are. If these people want to adopt a dog from SOAR, the coordinator should offer to waive the adoption donation. In many cases that I observed, these volunteers still want to make an adoption donation anyways. However, by telling them you would like to waive the adoption donation, you are also telling them that you value the contribution they are making to SOAR.
- Occasionally SOAR gets a dog in that does not incur any expenses. First of all, we should not pass this info on to any potential adopter. Secondly, even if an adopter knew that we had no money invested, the amount they choose for the donation amount should come from the heart based on the work that we do for all Airedales, not what this one in particular cost us. On the flip side of this, do we expect adopters to cover the expense of some of our dogs who have cost several thousand dollars? An average is much easier to deal with.
- Expenses in lieu of an adoption donation. We should be getting the adoption donation at the time of adoption. But if this issue comes up or additional unexpected vet expenses are incurred within the first few weeks after the adoption, the coordinator should contact the treasurer about payment. If the coordinator is unsure as to what expense should be passed on to SOAR, the president or the Coordinator committee chair. Occasionally an adopter will try to get reimbursed for things like toys, food bowls, crates, heartworm preventative or the wellness exam the adopter should have done within a week after the adoption. SOAR will not reimburse these items.
- If the dog comes back into rescue, the adoption donation will be refunded at the request of the adopter. Many adopters would prefer that SOAR keep this as a donation, but it will be refunded if asked.

Remember that a donation can be made via check, credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover) or PayPal. It is highly recommended that you take care of the donation and paperwork prior to the placement – especially if a long transport is involved. Many times a transport volunteer will feel uncomfortable handling this at the end of a transport.

## What the Foster Home Needs to Do

The foster home is the one who will be doing the most to get the dog ready for his/her new family. There is a detailed list and explanation of what the foster home should do to prepare for the placement. You need to make sure the foster home is aware of their responsibilities – especially the following:

- Gather all of the vet records and make sure there are no references to the previous owners.
- Bathe the dog a day or two before the transport to the new home.
- Groom the dog if necessary prior to the transport.
- The dog should have a new collar, leash with SOAR and microchip tags.
- Have them send along a blanket and a toy or two to help with their transition.
- Send along at least a couple of days worth of food – more if the transport is a long one.
- Make sure they have two copies of the Placement Contract if it was not already signed.



Be sure to remind the foster home to black out the previous owner's name on any vet documents. Also, we do NOT send AKC paperwork to a new adopter. If the foster family has this, they should return it to you. You can send it to the census volunteer for the dog's permanent file.



A note concerning the grooming. If the foster home does not feel they can do the grooming themselves, have them contact a groomer you know who donates grooming to SOAR or rescue. If this is not convenient, SOAR will pay for the dog to be groomed. Contact the treasurer for payment arrangements. Have the foster home ask for a rescue discount.

## Arranging the Transport

If the adoptive home and the foster home are in the same state, you should try to arrange the transport yourself. If the transport includes more than one of our states, you can contact the transportation coordinator for help in lining this up. If you are arranging a transport, make sure that each person involved in the transport reads Chapter 4 of this section – especially about the safety issues. You may want to copy just that section and e-mail it to them.

Transport requests to the transportation coordinator should include the following:

- The Airedale's name and census number
- Who has the Airedale currently and where they are located (phone and address)
- Who will be getting the Airedale and where they are located (phone and address)
- How the adoption and donation paperwork will be handled, if handled on the transport
- Any information you have on the Airedale's temperament, is he/she housebroken, etc.

Some transport tips to remember were also outlined on page 2-8 of this chapter.

## Follow-Up

Now that the dog is in his/her new home, you need to put a note on your calendar to follow-up with them in a week and perhaps again in a month to see how things are going. This is the suggested follow-up schedule. You can follow-up more often or at different intervals if you think it is necessary. You may even want to consider sending the new adopter a Christmas card or an "anniversary" card one year from the date of adoption. These contacts not only give you a chance to see how the dog is doing, but they foster good relations with our adopters.

Depending on the situation, you may want to schedule a follow-up home visit with the family. If so, it should not be a surprise visit. Arrange the visit at a time convenient to both the adopter and the person doing the visit. This home visit is different from the initial visit in that it is usually just to check on something the adopters agreed to do or to help with specific problems. The results of this home visit should be documented in writing.

Be prepared to answer questions about problems the new adopter may be having. Suggest having the adopter sign up for obedience classes with their new charge. Refer them to a trainer or behaviorist if you cannot help with a problem over the phone. In all cases, make the new adopter feel like they can contact you if anything is on their mind concerning the dog.

Encourage the new adopter to send a write-up and photo of the family with the dog to our newsletter editor or to our Happy Web Tails editor. Everyone loves to read about happy endings.

- ✓ Foster Placement Contract – if this is a foster with the intent to adopt. The original of this contract should go to the volunteer handling the census.
- ✓ Placement Contract AND donation (unless waived) – for ALL placements. The original of this contract and the donation should go to the SOAR President.



Any contracts received by the treasurer will be forwarded on to the census volunteer.

## **Other Things to Know**

There are a number of miscellaneous things you may need to know or do that are not directly related to the rescue of a dog. These are outlined here.

### **Euthanasia**

As much as we don't want to think about it, there are some dogs that SOAR cannot place safely or are too sick to be treated. If you think you have such a dog, let the president know. You will be asked to obtain supporting documentation including statements from volunteers, trainers, behaviorists or vets. The decision will be made by committee.

### **Supplies**

Supplies that are needed for the rescue of any Airedale are reimbursable. The basic supplies needed are a new non-slip collar, leash, I.D. tag and crate or child gate. Collars, leashes and tags can be obtained from the volunteer who handles them. Someone who is engaged in the rescue, transport or foster of a dog should try to obtain crates or child gates locally. Cruise the local garage sales. Some of our volunteers have found bargains on crates at garage sales. Some of our coordinators have extra crates on hand. They are difficult and expensive to ship, so if you are not close enough to pick up an extra crate from a volunteer, you should do the best you can to obtain a used one at a good price. Send your receipts in with a request for reimbursement form.

### **National Airedale Rescue**

As a coordinator, you will be asked to sign up with National Airedale Rescue. National Airedale Rescue does not engage in the rescue of dogs, but rather provides support to the volunteers across the United States and Canada who do.

### **Delegating**

Being a coordinator is a big job. To do it successfully, you may have to learn to delegate some small parts of your job to dependable volunteers in your state. If you do, it is still your responsibility to follow up to see that everything is being done.