



Friends of the Animals Community Spay & Neuter Clinic

Volunteer Handbook

Updated: February 2026

Welcome to the FOTAS Community Spay & Neuter Clinic Volunteer Team

Thank you for volunteering with Friends of the Animals (FOTAS). Our volunteers are essential to everything we do, and we are truly grateful you have chosen to give your time and energy to support pets, families, and our community.

The Friends of the Animals Community Spay & Neuter Clinic exists to provide accessible, high quality spay and neuter services for owned pets, rescue partners, and community cats throughout Southern Oregon and surrounding areas. Every role in the clinic, whether medical, support, or administrative, directly contributes to animal welfare and public health.

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to help you feel prepared, supported, and confident in your role. Inside, you will find information about clinic operations, volunteer expectations, training pathways, safety policies, and how we work together as a team.

Our goal is to create a volunteer experience that is respectful, well organized, and rewarding. We also strive to maintain a safe, professional medical environment for our patients. If you ever have questions or concerns, we encourage open communication. Please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator, Clinic Manager, or clinic staff any time via email or while you are at the clinic.

We are glad you are here and look forward to working alongside you. Thank you for being part of the FOTAS mission.

Overview

Friends of the Animals is a private 501c3 nonprofit organization serving Southern Oregon. In addition to supporting shelter animals and foster programs, FOTAS operates the Community Spay & Neuter Clinic to address pet overpopulation through prevention.

The clinic provides spay and neuter surgery for owned pets, rescue partners, and community cats. We focus on safe, efficient, high quality surgical care while maintaining a compassionate and welcoming environment for clients and volunteers.

Volunteers are an essential part of this work. Every role, from reception to recovery, contributes to patient safety, public health, and the long term wellbeing of animals in our region.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

We strive to create a community where every pet has the opportunity to thrive by expanding access to preventive care and reducing pet overpopulation.

Vision

All animals living healthy lives with humane care, safety, and stability in the communities they call home.

Values

FOTAS fosters a culture of kindness, respect, compassion, accountability, and integrity toward all pets, clients, staff, and volunteers.

Staff Contact and Chain of Command

Clear communication helps keep our clinic running smoothly and safely. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and seek guidance whenever needed.

Primary Points of Contact

Volunteer Coordinator

Randi Coleman

randi@fotas.org

541.944.2811

Clinic Manager

Victoria Wade

victoria@fotas.org

541.301.1169

Operations Manager

Megan Ayars

megan@fotas.org

907.304.3643

Chain of Command During Clinic Operations

Scheduling, training, availability, and general volunteer questions should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Medical questions, protocol clarification, or concerns related to patient care should be directed to the Clinic Manager.

For urgent safety concerns, incidents, or emergencies, notify clinic staff immediately and then alert the Clinic Manager.

Volunteers must not make independent medical decisions or provide medical guidance to clients. When in doubt, always ask a staff member for assistance.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers are assigned roles based on clinic needs, training progression, and demonstrated readiness. All volunteers are expected to follow clinic protocols, maintain sanitation standards, and always prioritize patient safety.

General Expectations for All Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to arrive on time, remain for their scheduled shift, and communicate any scheduling issues in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Proper hand hygiene and sanitation are required before, during, and after patient contact. Work areas must be cleaned between patients as directed.

On-site training is required before volunteers perform tasks independently. Advancement to additional responsibilities is based on staff assessment, volunteer confidence, and consistency.

What to Wear

Please wear comfortable pants or scrubs that can get dirty. We also recommend bringing a change of clothes in case of accidents or exposure to contagious animals.

Wear a plain T shirt or scrub top.

You will be on your feet for four to six hours or longer, so please wear comfortable, slip resistant, closed toe shoes.

FOTAS will provide a hat and mask to wear in the sterile surgery area.

Please avoid strong perfumes or strong smelling scents. Our surgery team works in close proximity to one another.

Because the clinic operates as a medical facility with a high-volume surgery schedule, consistency and reliability are essential.

Minimum Commitment

Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of three shifts per month. Consistent attendance allows volunteers to build confidence, retain skills, and become strong members of the team.

Training Availability

During the training period, we strongly recommend being available for several consecutive days when possible. Volunteers who train over multiple days in a row tend to feel more comfortable more quickly and are better able to retain what they learn.

Training Levels

Training levels are determined by clinic staff based on volunteer background, demonstrated skill, comfort level, and patient safety considerations. Advancement is collaborative and based on readiness, not speed.

Some areas such as instrument packs and laundry may be performed independently after several supervised sessions once competency and consistency are demonstrated. Recovery is a critical phase of patient care and requires additional training and observation. Final decisions regarding solo responsibilities are made by the Clinic Manager.

Non Medical Volunteer Roles

Non-medical volunteer roles help clients by answering questions and getting important information for the medical team.

Morning Welcome Team

Typical start time is 7 00 AM.

Responsibilities include greeting clients, assisting with check in, verifying patient and owner information, confirming services, and ensuring consent forms are completed. Volunteers may assist with phone calls, emails, appointment scheduling, scanning documents into patient records, and transferring pets to the medical team.

Afternoon Reception

Typical start time is 11 00 AM.

Responsibilities include preparing discharge paperwork, organizing medications and personal items, confirming payments, reviewing discharge instructions with clients, and preparing paperwork for upcoming surgery days.

Medical Volunteer Roles

Medical volunteer roles require additional training and staff approval. Tasks may vary depending on experience and clinic needs.

Morning Pet Intake

Morning pet intake is the initial medical intake process for patients arriving for surgery. This role supports the veterinary team by ensuring pets are properly identified, assessed, and prepared for the surgical day.

Typical start time is 7 00 AM.

Responsibilities may include assisting with patient intake, weighing patients, recording vital signs, confirming patient information, updating the clinic whiteboard, and assisting veterinary staff as directed. Volunteers in this role must be comfortable with animal handling, which may include working with pets who are nervous, fearful, or physically strong, always using approved handling techniques and asking for assistance when needed.

Surgical Preparation Assistant

Responsibilities may include assisting patient restraint, shaving and scrubbing surgical areas, transporting patients, cleaning and resetting prep areas, and supporting technicians during surgery preparation.

Recovery and Post Surgical Care

Typical shift time is 8 45 AM until the end of surgery, which is usually between 1 00 and 2 00 PM.

Extubation is the process of removing the breathing tube from a patient once they are waking safely from anesthesia. Because this phase carries increased risk, recovery responsibilities are introduced gradually.

Volunteers must observe approximately one hundred extubations before being considered for independent recovery duties. Observation allows volunteers to recognize normal recovery patterns and identify when a patient may need assistance.

Independent recovery responsibilities are assigned only after staff determine a volunteer is ready and comfortable in the role.

Packs, Laundry, and Sterilization Support

Typical shift time: 8 45 AM until the end of surgery, which is usually between 1 00 and 2 00 PM.

Volunteers assisting with packs, laundry, and sterilization play a vital role in keeping the clinic running safely and efficiently. This work directly supports the surgical team and patient safety throughout the day.

Responsibilities include cleaning surgical instruments, drapes, and supplies, which may involve exposure to blood and tissue residue. Volunteers are trained on proper cleaning techniques and safety practices before performing these tasks, and may also assist with assembling and repacking instrument packs, supporting sterilization as directed, organizing clean supplies, and washing, drying, folding, and properly storing clinic laundry according to instruction.

These tasks may be performed independently after several supervised sessions once competency, consistency, and comfort with the workflow are demonstrated.

Final approval for independent work is determined collaboratively by clinic staff and the volunteer, based on clinic needs and the volunteer's demonstrated competency and comfort level. Volunteers are encouraged to take the time they need and to ask for additional support whenever they feel it would be helpful.

End of Day Clean Up

End of day clean up volunteers are the heroes of the clinic day. This role helps reset the clinic for the next surgery day and ensures a safe, clean environment for patients, staff, and volunteers.

This shift generally starts around 2 00 PM and lasts approximately one hour, depending on clinic volume.

Responsibilities may include sweeping and vacuuming floors, mopping designated areas, cleaning and sanitizing kennels, assisting with laundry as needed, and returning equipment and supplies to their proper locations.

This role is essential to keeping the clinic running smoothly, and we truly need all the help we can get. Volunteers who assist with end of day cleaning up make a meaningful impact every single surgery day.

Personal Hygiene and Disease Prevention

While volunteering at FOTAS, volunteers may encounter diseases that are communicable to humans and or household pets. Volunteers should take care to change and wash any clothes and shoes worn while volunteering to help prevent the spread of disease to personal pets or to the public.

General Conduct and Expectations

Volunteers represent Friends of the Animals and play an important role in creating a positive experience for clients, patients, and fellow team members. We expect all volunteers to conduct themselves in a respectful, professional, and supportive manner.

Respectful Behavior

Volunteers are expected to treat all clients, staff, fellow volunteers, and animals with kindness and respect. Respect for one another and for the animals in our care is essential to maintaining a safe and supportive clinic environment. Disrespectful behavior, harassment, discrimination, or unprofessional conduct is not acceptable and may result in follow up review and guidance. Continued or serious concerns related to disrespectful behavior may lead to dismissal from the volunteer program.

Non-Judgmental Approach

FOTAS serves a diverse community with varying backgrounds, resources, and circumstances. Volunteers are expected to approach all clients with compassion and without judgment. Most people care deeply for their pets, even when resources or circumstances are limited.

Professional Boundaries

Volunteers must not provide medical advice, interpret test results, change instructions, or offer personal opinions about treatment, medications, nutrition, or diagnosis.

Volunteers may review and reinforce clinic written materials such as official discharge instructions, pre surgical instructions, or other approved clinic documents. When doing so, volunteers should read directly from or reference the written protocol and avoid adding personal interpretation.

Any medical questions beyond written clinic instructions must be referred to the Clinic Manager or appropriate clinic staff.

If a client becomes upset or a situation begins to escalate, volunteers should step back and immediately notify clinic staff for assistance.

Animal Handling and Safety

Volunteers must follow approved handling techniques and clinic protocols at all times. Animals may behave unpredictably in a clinic environment, and safety is always the top priority.

Volunteers should remain attentive when handling animals and avoid distractions. If at any time a volunteer feels unsure or unsafe, they should ask for assistance immediately.

Confidentiality and Media Guidelines

Volunteers are expected to respect the privacy of clients, patients, staff, and fellow volunteers at all times. Information learned while volunteering at the clinic, including client information, medical details, internal operations, or personal information, must be kept confidential.

Volunteers must not share client or patient information outside of the clinic or discuss cases in public spaces or on personal social media. Any questions about what may be shared should be directed to the Clinic Manager.

Media and Public Inquiries

Volunteers may be approached by members of the media or members of the public seeking information about the clinic. Volunteers should identify themselves as volunteers and explain that they are not authorized to speak on behalf of Friends of the Animals.

All media requests, interviews, or public statements must be referred to the Clinic Manager.

Social Media and Photography

Volunteers may not post photos, videos, or stories taken inside the clinic or on clinic property without prior approval. Client, patient, or staff identities must never be shared without explicit permission.

The Friends of the Animals name and logo may not be used in personal social media accounts, email addresses, or communications in a way that suggests official representation of the organization. Volunteers are encouraged to share their positive volunteer experiences in general terms while respecting confidentiality and clinic guidelines.

Incident and Accident Reporting

Prompt reporting of incidents helps keep everyone safe and allows the clinic to respond appropriately.

All injuries, bites, scratches, accidents, near misses, or safety concerns must be reported to clinic staff immediately. This includes incidents involving animals, equipment, facilities, or people. If a volunteer is injured, the affected area should be washed promptly and clinic staff notified. Volunteers should seek medical care from their healthcare provider as appropriate.

An incident report will be completed to document what occurred and to help prevent similar incidents in the future. Reporting an incident is not punitive and is intended to support safety, learning, and continuous improvement. Failure to report an incident may result in follow up review and guidance.

Tobacco Free Workplace

FOTAS is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment for employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors. Smoking and vaping are not permitted in any enclosed clinic facility, anywhere on clinic property, or inside personal vehicles while on clinic property. Smoking and vaping are also prohibited while handling animals. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, clients, contractors, and visitors.

Prohibited Conduct

To maintain a safe, respectful, and professional environment for animals, volunteers, staff, and the public, certain behaviors are not permitted while volunteering with Friends of the Animals. Examples of conduct that is not appropriate include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to follow volunteer guidelines, clinic protocols, or staff direction.
- Behavior during a volunteer shift that negatively impacts the organization, fellow volunteers, staff, or the animals in our care.
- Behavior outside of volunteer shifts that significantly affects the organization or undermines trust in the volunteer program.
- Volunteering while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Possession of a weapon while volunteering.
- Misuse or theft of clinic property or funds.
- Any form of abuse, rough handling, or mistreatment of animals.
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information.
- Serious unprofessional behavior, including insubordination.

When concerns arise, incident reporting may be used to document the situation and support communication, learning, and appropriate next steps. The clinic will work with volunteers to address concerns whenever possible. Repeated or serious issues may result in suspension or termination from the FOTAS Spay and Neuter Volunteer Program.

Volunteer Separation and Resignation

We hope every volunteer finds their experience at Friends of the Animals meaningful and rewarding. We understand that availability and circumstances change over time. Volunteers who need to step away or resign are asked to notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible so schedules and coverage can be adjusted.

In some situations, a volunteer relationship may be ended by the clinic. This may occur when policies are not followed, safety is compromised, or expectations outlined in this handbook are not met. Decisions regarding volunteer separation are made thoughtfully and with the safety of patients, staff, and volunteers in mind.



Volunteer Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Friends of the Animals Community Spay & Neuter Clinic Volunteer Handbook. I agree to comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth in the handbook.

I understand that my role as a volunteer is at will, meaning either Friends of the Animals or I may end the volunteer relationship at any time.

I agree to maintain confidentiality and to act in a manner that supports the mission, values, and safety standards of Friends of the Animals.

Volunteer Name Printed _____

Volunteer Signature _____

Date _____

Clinic Representative Name Printed _____

Clinic Representative Signature _____

Date _____