

Greyhound Pets of Atlantic Canada
Dedicated to placing retired greyhounds
into loving homes across Atlantic Canada



VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES
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I. VOLUNTEERING OVERVIEW	3
II. KENNEL VOLUNTEERING	3
1. ENTERING/EXITING THE KENNEL	3
2. REMOVING DOGS FROM CRATES	4
3. TURNING OUT	5
4. WALKING	5
5. RETURNING DOGS TO CRATES	5
6. KENNEL DUTIES	6
7. DOCUMENTATION	7
II. MEET AND GREETES	7
APPENDIX A – CONTACT INFORMATION	10
HRM Region	10
Kennel Address:	10
Jeanette Reynolds	10
Melissa Ruginski	10
Cheryl Sinnott	10
Angela Collicutt	10
South Shore Region	10
Newfoundland	11
Lynanne Furlong	11

I. VOLUNTEERING OVERVIEW

Firstly, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, for volunteering! GPAC is a 100% non-profit, 100% volunteer driven organization, dedicated to finding loving homes for retired racing greyhounds. Without your volunteer time and effort, we would not be able to reach our goal of placing as many greyhounds as possible into loving forever homes throughout Atlantic Canada.

With volunteering comes a certain level of responsibility. While we indeed want you to have fun and enjoy volunteering with GPAC, the safety of the volunteers and of the dogs is our primary concern, and we take that very seriously.

With that in mind, our policy is that prior to volunteering on your own, you work with an experienced volunteer who will provide detail and demonstrations on how to handle the dogs appropriately and safely, general duties around the kennel, and how to answer questions appropriately from the general public. You can contact any Board Member or our founder Jeanette Reynolds to schedule a time to talk about volunteering or to meet with an existing volunteer to provide hands on training at the kennel.

We ask that you read this guide thoroughly and please address any questions or concerns you may have with one of our many experienced volunteers (contact information can be found in [Appendix A](#)).

II. KENNEL VOLUNTEERING

We ask that you complete a minimum of two visits to the kennel with an experienced volunteer prior to going to the kennel on your own. This will ensure you know the proper way to handle the dogs and will ensure the safety of both you and the dogs.

1. ENTERING/EXITING THE KENNEL

- There are 2 gates at the kennel entrance. Ensure the first gate is closed and proceed to the second gate. Scan the run area to check for any dogs that may be out and ask out loud if there is anyone outside. There is always someone outside when dogs are being turned out, therefore someone will know you are entering and can advise if there are any dogs out.

- If there are no dogs out, or another volunteer is holding the dogs away from the gate, you may proceed through the second gate, looking back to ensure the gate is closed behind you.
- The same procedure is true for exiting; ensure there are no dogs out, or that another person is holding onto the dogs while you exit the first gate, check to make certain it's closed and move to the second gate. Safety First!

2. REMOVING DOGS FROM CRATES

- Prior to removing any dogs from the crates, you must first read the card on the outside of each crate and the clipboard kept on the front of the crates. This is where details are kept on each dog, including any issues, injuries, or behavioural problems which may determine which dogs can be walked/turned out or socialized with the other dogs. It is imperative you read these items prior to removing any dogs from kennels.
- If you are turning out the dogs, you may only turn out 2 at a time with muzzles. This ensures the safety of the dogs and the ease of managing the dogs for the volunteer. Dogs are pack animals and any more than 2 dogs may result in some issues. The muzzles are also for safety purposes as these dogs are straight from the track and will likely start to run around together, and may be aggressive if the run becomes competitive. Again, safety first!
- When removing a dog from the top crates, first open the door very slowly and only enough to put your right hand into the crate, holding the dog's collar very tightly. This will prevent the dog from jumping down prior to opening the door all the way. Continue to hold the dog tightly, and keep in front of the dog at all times so it does not jump while you're holding him/her. Open the door all the way and put the door behind you. This will ensure the dog does not get hit by the door as they attempt to jump. Slowly move to the left and allow the dog to jump down. Close the crate door immediately.
- Check the dogs collar to ensure they cannot slip out of it while in the yard/walking. Tighten if necessary and muzzle the dog if you are turning them out.

3. TURNING OUT

- Hold the dog's collar and place the muzzle on the dog with the name facing upward and the ears pulled through the strap. Check to ensure it is not too loose.
- When removing a dog from the lower crates open the door while holding the collar and place the muzzle on the dog immediately upon exiting the crate.
- Open the door to the kennel and allow the dogs to exit the kennel into the run. It is a good idea to always have a scooper and pan in your hands should the dogs become aggressive, either growling or running competitively, use a very loud deep voice, and say "NO!" or "HEY!" while banging together the scooper and pan. The dogs will direct their attention to you and stop what they are doing.
- **DOGS MUST BE MONITORED AT ALL TIMES; NEVER LEAVE THE DOGS UNATTENDED.**

4. WALKING

- We recommend walking one dog at a time when volunteering, until you become experienced and if it feels quite comfortable taking 2 dogs at a time.
- Muzzles are not required when walking.
- You **MUST** take poop bags with you when walking. They are available at the kennel.
- As you are walking the dog on lead, keep the dog close to you. The leads with the loop close to the clasp provide an added benefit in that they allow you to hold the dog closer to you should they begin to pull or behave inappropriately.
- You always put the loop at the end of the lead around your arm and hold the strap with your left hand, then cross the lead in front of you and hold the lead with your right hand (or vice-versa, depending on your preference). This allows you to have two hands on the lead at all times.

5. RETURNING DOGS TO CRATES

- No matter if you are walking dog/dogs or turning them out, you always ensure all dogs are with you in the kennel while you're putting them back into the crates. No dog is to be left outside unattended.
- Be sure to remove the muzzles as you are putting each dog back. There are two hooks on the top crate; one with an arrow pointing down and one arrow pointing upward. Place the muzzle of the dog in the bottom crate on the hook with the down arrow and the muzzle of the dog in the

top crate on the hook with the up arrow. It is important the dog's muzzles are placed back correctly, as they are sized correctly for each specific dog. If they are on the wrong hook, the dog could slip out of the muzzle easily, or it could be too small and be uncomfortable for the dog.

- When returning a dog to the top crate, you hold the dog's collar tightly with your right hand, open the door to the crate, ensuring the crate door is completely opened behind you, and then allow the dog to jump up. It is imperative you never allow a dog to jump up while the door is not completely open and you are standing in front of it holding it open. Otherwise the dog could seriously injure itself jumping up and crashing into the crate door.
- When returning a dog to the bottom crate, open the door and hold them by the collar, guiding them into the crate. Never push a dog into the crate. If they are reluctant, hold the collar with your right hand, with your arm straight out in front of you, and move forward, and if need be while holding the collar straight out from you, scoop under their bum and they'll walk forward.
- Make sure they all have sufficient water in the dishes in each crate prior to leaving.
- Never ever make a big deal of the dogs when you leave. Simply ensure the radio is on and walk out and shut the door behind you. Separation Anxiety is likely when the dogs anticipate you are leaving. Saying "goodbye" to each dog prior to leaving will encourage this behaviour. The same applies to arriving in the kennel as well. Do not fuss with the dogs when you are coming into the kennel for the same reason.

6. KENNEL DUTIES

We appreciate any and all volunteers we have at the kennel. Some volunteers only have time to walk a few dogs, turn out a few, or even just to check water dishes and sweep the floor. Each and every effort is greatly appreciated.

When volunteering, we maintain a list of kennel duties on the board to the right of the entrance inside the kennel. The duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- Sweeping the kennel floor
- Cleaning the bowls
- Raking/cleaning the yard
- Emptying the wheel barrel
- Changing the garbage

- Brushing the dogs

7. DOCUMENTATION

- It is of the utmost importance to document the time you arrive, depart and what duties you have completed while at the kennel. This will help manage what needs to be done, and the routine for the dogs.
- It is also important to document any behavioral findings in the dogs, i.e. aggression towards another dog, loose stool, limping, scratching, etc.

II. MEET AND GREETINGS

- Meet and Greetings can take place in a number of scenarios, including malls, parades, or trade shows. We encourage you to talk freely about the adoption process and your experiences.
- It's also a good idea to talk a bit about GPAC, specifically that we are in our 14th year of operations, and we are a 100% non profit, 100% volunteer drive organization. We are always looking for volunteers as well as adopters. Don't hesitate to point out the donation jar or mention that we fundraise constantly to maintain our program and kennel. Item donations are always welcome as well.
- We request that you wait for at least a month or more after you adopt before you start volunteering for these events. This allows your new dog time to adapt to you and your family before introducing strangers into its life. We recommend booking your first shift with an experience volunteer so they can show you what we do and say during the meet & greetings.

Below is a list of common questions the public will ask when it comes to adoptions.

- a. How old are they when they usually come up? 2-4 years old, on average. Mandatory retirement is 5 years old and if the dog is still racing at that age, it will most likely go into a breeding program from there.
- b. How long do they live? 12-14 years, on average
- c. Do they have any health issues? These dogs are bred for bloodlines and athleticism (speed) so therefore are generally a very healthy breed. They do not suffer from a

lot of the issues that big dogs suffer from. With regular vet visits and preventative medicines they should live a long & healthy life.

- d. Are they abused at the track? Years ago, the media put a spotlight on racetracks and their handling of the dogs. As a result, more regulation and monitoring takes place. The dogs may not be treated the same way domestic dogs as we know them are treated, but they are taken care of sufficiently at the track.
Note: GPAC is a group that prides itself on being racing neutral. We have a good relationship with the groups in the US due to that fact. We do not comment on racing when in the malls or out in public. We are solely in this to find homes for the retiring dogs.
- e. Do they shed? Yes, as anything with hair/fur sheds. It is usually not a lot of shedding as compared to a lab, but they will lose some fur.
- f. Do they require a lot of exercise? Greyhounds are the most docile of any canine breed and require an average amount of exercise. One or two brisk walks/day is often sufficient. They are inherently lazy, so keep that in mind.
- g. Can you pick your dog to adopt? We allow people to choose gender and whether or not they want a really active or less active grey (which translates into older or younger). We don't allow people to choose color because this would not necessarily mean they will get the dog that is best suited for them. We profile dogs to fit the home and we are very successful with this process.
- h. How long does it take to adopt? We take greys from the U.S. between April and October. During these months, the adoption process is as long or as short as the adopter makes it. If they are ready for a grey, and we have greys available, we conduct the home visit and adoption can proceed immediately from there. If it is during the winter months, adoption makes take a bit longer, but there are usually a few dogs in foster care still awaiting a forever home.
- i. Do you need a fenced in yard? No. As long as you don't mind taking your dog outside on lead to do their business, then it is not a problem.

- When children approach your grey, ensure you kneel down to be at eye level with the child and watch as they pet your dog. It is important to monitor the child's behavior around the dog in order to prevent any unfortunate events. (i.e. child may unclip the lead, pull on the dog's ears, be rough with the dog, etc).

- REMEMBER: You are representing GPAC and should always be patient and considerate with people's inquiries. Sometimes people can be difficult, but they will eventually move along. Patience is important.

APPENDIX A – CONTACT INFORMATION

HRM Region

Kennel Address:

343 West Petpeswick Rd.
Musquodoboit Harbour, NS
B0J 1L0

Jeanette Reynolds

Home Phone Number: 902-889-2214
Cell Phone Number: 902-499-2762
Fax Number: 902-481-0419
Email: greyhnd@ns.sympatico.ca

Melissa Ruginski

Home Phone Number: 902-431-2211
Cell Phone Number: 902-225-0930
Email: mruginski@yahoo.com

Cheryl Sinnott

Home Phone Number: 902-435-1099
Cell Phone Number: 902-471-6973
Email: fastdog1@ns.sympatico.ca

Angela Collicutt

Home Phone Number: 902-468-7520
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South Shore Region

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