



HOME VISIT GUIDELINES

Home evaluators may use this form for both foster and adoptive home checks.

General Guidelines for Home Evaluators

Home evaluations are usually completed by a Coordinator but may also be completed by a volunteer under a Coordinator's guidance. The home visit may be in person or virtual (by videochat); most are virtual due to the distances involved. If an in-person visit is to be completed by a volunteer, the Coordinator should ensure the volunteer is familiar with these guidelines and the *Home Visit Checklist* form in advance.

- When the Coordinator decides to proceed with a home visit, make an appointment for the home visit and be on time. When making the appointment, let the fosterer/adopter know the main purpose of the visit (to meet the family and pets and a Tibbie-specific safety check) and what to expect (what you will want to see) as the fosterer/adopter walks around the home with you.
- When beginning the home visit, introduce yourself and try to make the prospective adopter or fosterer and family feel at ease with you. Be friendly. You want them to be themselves.
- The two versions of the *Home Visit Checklist* are an online version and a printable version. The online form is designed for completion during a virtual visit. For that to work, you will need two screens – one to complete the form and the other to view the home. Or, you can use the printable version to take notes while you conduct the visit and then complete and submit the online version later.
- When taking notes during an in-person visit, please do so discreetly. Don't make a big deal of the form in the presence of the prospective adopter or fosterer.
- We ask all adoptive or foster family members and their pets, if any, to be present during the visit. If any are absent, find out why.
- You are there to meet and observe the behaviors of family members and pets as well as look around the premises. Take note of qualities such as sincerity, commitment, tolerance of normal dog behavior, honest representation of the home environment, children's behavior especially with other pets, and the condition and temperament of pets.
- The Coordinator will have already shared information about the specific Tibbie needing a foster or forever home with the prospective fosterer/adopter. If you are a volunteer evaluator, you should not discuss the Tibbie(s). Don't give opinions about whether a dog is "perfect" for the fosterer or adopter.
- The family will have passed initial screening based on the paperwork they submitted, but the visit's outcome is important. You are TSCA Rescue's eyes. The Coordinator makes the final decision whether to approve a foster/adoptive family. If you are a volunteer evaluator, please do **not** indicate whether or not TSCA Rescue will approve the foster/adoptive family during your interaction with them.
 - When you will be recommending the home, you may be complimentary and enthusiastic about a wonderful home and family, but please don't make any commitments or promises.
 - When the home is one you will not be recommending, be polite and noncommittal. Don't try to impose philosophies about dog ownership and care on the family. Don't suggest corrections or improvements about home environments that don't meet TSCA Rescue standards.
- If you are a volunteer evaluator, please be open about any concerns when you share your observations with the Coordinator. Discuss whether follow up education or counseling is indicated. The Coordinator will decide how to proceed.

TSCA Rescue Basic Standards for Dog Care in Foster and Adoptive Homes

Fosterers should advise the Coordinator if they are unable to commit to caring for their foster Tibbie indefinitely. A foster home should have no more than six dogs per caretaker. (A caretaker may be a spouse or kennel help).

Adopters must commit to lifelong care for the Tibbie. If circumstance arise that prevent an adopter from meeting this commitment, the adopter must agree to contact TSCA Rescue about re-homing the Tibbie.

Foster or adoptive homes must meet these basic standards for dog care. Anything less is not considered responsible rescue practice or dog ownership and TSCA will not consider the home acceptable. The home must provide:

- clean, safe and comfortable housing with a climate-controlled indoor environment
- adequate and appropriate food, clean water available at all times
- adequate and appropriate veterinary care
- parasite control including heartworm and flea/tick preventative
- adequate daily socialization with people including, playing, petting, loving and training
- daily fresh air and exercise in a controlled (supervised), safe environment with adequate measures to prevent escape and intrusion by other animals or people
- consistent and knowledgeable grooming.

TSCA Rescue Safety Standards for Foster and Adoptive Homes

In addition to the basic standards above, the home must meet safety standards specific to Tibbies. Bearing in mind the Tibbie's age and the breed's escapist tendency, look for these safety standards when visiting the home:

_____ Every exterior door should preferably have a "double barrier." Examples: Front door has a storm or security door in addition to the house door, front door leads to a screened porch or fenced yard, interior door or baby gate prevents access to front door.

_____ Adopters should be aware of and take measures to protect Tibbie from predators or poisonous animals in the area. Examples: coyotes, birds of prey, snakes, cane toads.

_____ A fenced outside area is preferred but not absolutely required. In the absence of a fence, the dog must be walked on lead. An electronic fence as the only means of control is **not** adequate.

- If fenced, inspect the entire fence-line with attention to each of these features: The fence should be at least 4 feet high and have no gaps greater than 3" under the fencing, adjacent to gate posts or where the fence meets the house walls. There should be no gaps around gates and gates should latch securely, preferably with a lock. Chain link should be "tight," not sagging. Pickets should be spaced no more than 3.75" - 4" apart, depending on size of Tibbie.
- If no fence, survey the area where the dog will be walked for safety and cleanliness.

_____ There should be nothing pushed against a fence or rail (such as outdoor furniture, garden equipment) which would allow the Tibbie to climb up and over the fence or rail.

_____ Interior stair cases should be carpeted, have tread strips or other means to prevent slips and falls. Open stair cases (those with no risers) are not desirable due to risk of fall.

_____ A way to bar Tibbies from access to water features, such as pools, ponds and spas, when unsupervised is required.

_____ A way to bar Tibbies from jumping from decks or other high places is required.

_____ Dog doors should have means to be closed.

_____ Exterior landscaping and interior houseplants should not include toxic plants such as sago palms, dieffenbachia or lily of the valley. Adopter will be provided with toxic plant guide and encouraged to survey all plants.

_____ The following should be not be accessible to the Tibbie:

- hanging electrical wires or cables
- chemicals such as cleaning or laundry supplies, pesticides
- edibles that are toxic such as sugar-free sweets, grapes or chocolate
- small objects that pose choking risk

Counseling on Deficiencies

If you find any deficiencies or have any concerns or doubts, note and report them to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will counsel the foster/adoptive family on corrective measures and ensure corrections are made before transferring a Tibbie into their care.