



HUMANE
DUBUQUE REGIONAL
SOCIETY

125
YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

Canine Handling Handbook



Mission

Support, enrich,
and connect
animals in need to
the people that
love and care for
them.

Vision

The Dubuque Regional
Humane Society envisions a
community where all
animals are treated with
respect and compassion,
and companion animals
have a permanent and
loving home.

Visiting Hours

Monday: Closed to public

Tuesday - Friday: 12pm - 6pm

Saturday: 11am - 5pm

Sunday: 1pm - 4pm

4242 Chavenelle Road, Dubuque, IA 52002

563.582.6766

Animal Handling Duties

All duties included in Shelter Crew, in addition to:

- Assist staff in providing premium animal care and enrichment
- Maintain sanitary kennels, building, and outdoor environment by cleaning up after animals
- Interact with animals independently of staff
- Socialize and exercise adoptable animals
- Welcome and positively interact with visitors
- Model ideal conduct
- Consistent handling and promote good behavior
- Assist Shelter Crew volunteers during their first 3 hours
- Encourage fellow volunteers to adhere to all policies and procedures
- Positively represent mission and vision
- Adhere to wearing appropriate attire suitable to volunteer activities
- Physical ability to handle the animal chosen to interact with

Please Note

Trained/advanced handlers are NOT to lead or perform adoption counseling visits. Adoption counseling requires training and is to be done by DRHS staff and specifically-trained volunteers only.

Handling Opportunities

- **New Dog Walker - First Handling Shift:** all new walkers must complete this shift to graduate to solo dog walking. Shift is spent with an experienced volunteer mentor and provides direct support for getting started with walking.
- **Canine Socializer/Walker:** provide dogs with socialization and playtime (via walking) while also spot cleaning kennels
- **Canine Suite Running:** assist ACT staff by leashing and running dogs outside as their kennels are being cleaned (may also assist in cleaning as necessary)
- **After-Hours Dog Walking:** available to trained handlers after they've put in some time dog walking at the DRHS - walking dogs after hours from 6pm - 8pm
- **Off-Site Adoption Event Assistant:** off-site events expose adoptable animals to new environments. Volunteers assist and handle adoptable animals during events while promoting the services and mission of the DRHS.

Levels of Dog Handling

Trained Handler

Trained Handlers have received training on basic canine behavior and handling techniques and should have a strong understanding of the shelter's handling processes and guidelines. May handle GREEN-notated, AVAILABLE dogs only.

Green: dog has been deemed handlable by most handlers upon receiving handler training (should be fairly easy going and not a risk to handle)

Advanced Handler

To become an advanced handler, trained handlers must have at least 100 hours of Dog handling-related service, as well as additional Advanced Handler training. May handle green and ORANGE-notated dogs.

Orange: dog can be handled by advanced handlers or skilled handlers only (volunteers). Dog may be strong on leash, have bad leash manners, dog reactive, shy with new people, jumpy or mouthy,

Skilled Handler

The skilled handler title is something earned and not automatically given. This is a small group of experienced and CONSISTENT handlers who represent fellow volunteers, gather feedback from other volunteers about the program, share their concerns and ideas with the Volunteer Coordinator, and dedicate efforts for creating and advancing a successful, positive, and exciting volunteer program. May handle most animals, depending on situation.

Purple: dog can be handled by skilled handlers or very specific staff members. Most purple dogs will not be available for adoption. Dog may be aggressive, highly reactive, or a bite risk.

Puppies ages 0-5 months with no color notation on their cage card are NOT TO BE TAKEN OUTSIDE/WALKED (or generally in public areas where other dogs have walked).

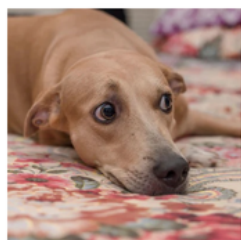
- When a puppy is under the age of 5 months, they are still receiving series of vaccinations and are at a higher risk of illness
- Puppies can be socialized in a pre-sanitized/deep cleaned visitation room but shouldn't walk in any common areas.

All volunteer handlers are expected to know what to look for when handling dogs. If you are ever unsure on a dog's body language, make sure to ask before handling that dog.

Canine Body Language Basics

• EYES

- Pay attention to the white part of the eye
- Consider the focus and intensity of the dog's gaze
- When a dog is feeling tense, their eyes may appear rounder than normal or show a lot of white around the outside ("whale eye")
- Dilated pupils can also be a sign of fear or arousal
- A relaxed dog will often squint where eyes become almond-shaped with no white showing at all.



• MOUTH

- Fearful signs include: lips pulled back at corners, rapid panting, a tight mouth, panting dog who suddenly closes mouth in response to something, drooling with no food present, yawning and lip-licking.
- Offensive puckering: wrinkle at top of muzzle and lips pulled vertically to reveal teeth.
- Teeth don't always mean aggression - consider the whole body and the context.



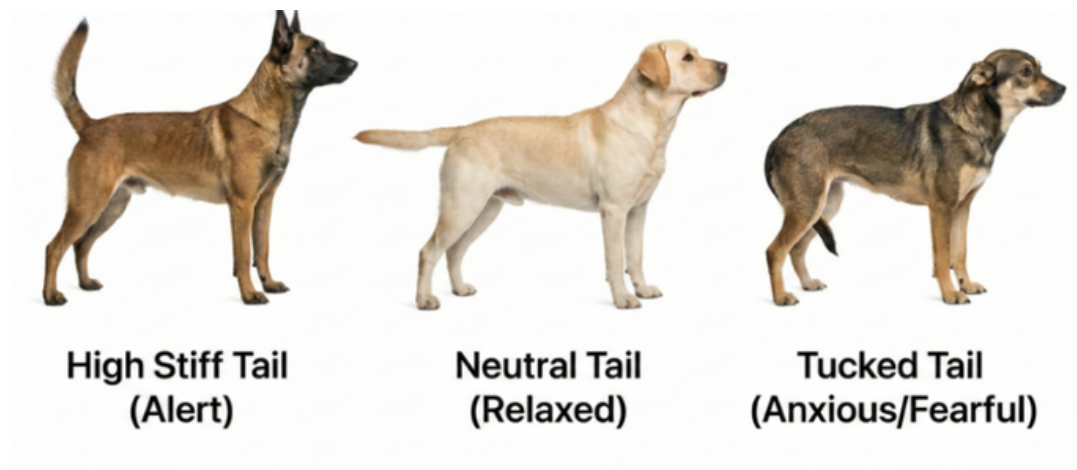
- **EARS**

- Pay attention to the direction of the base of the ear
- Relaxed: ears slightly back or to the sides
- Aroused: ears forward or pointing to subject of interest, forehead may wrinkle
- Scared/aggressive: ears pulled back or pinned down



- **TAIL**

- Consider both the position of the base of the tail AND how the tail is moving (all tails are different)
- Relaxed: tail is in neutral position, extending out from spine level or below (the more excited/aroused the dog is, the tail will rise above spine level)
- Fearful: tail is tucked between rear legs, held rigid against belly or wag stiffly.



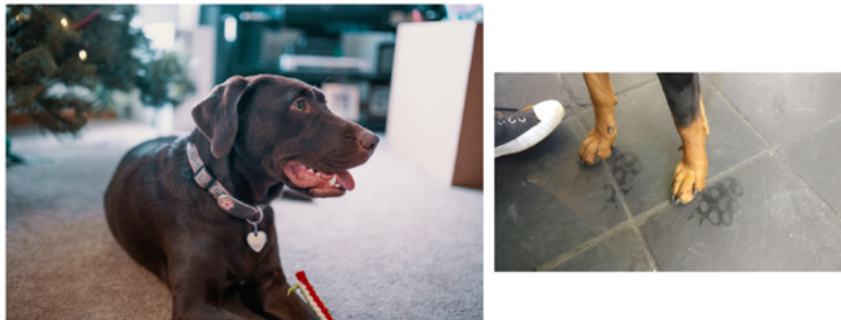
- **HAIR**

- When a dog is upset or aroused, the hair raises along a dog's back, across the shoulders, down the spine, and above the tail ('raised hackles')
- A frightened or stressed dog may also shed more than usual.



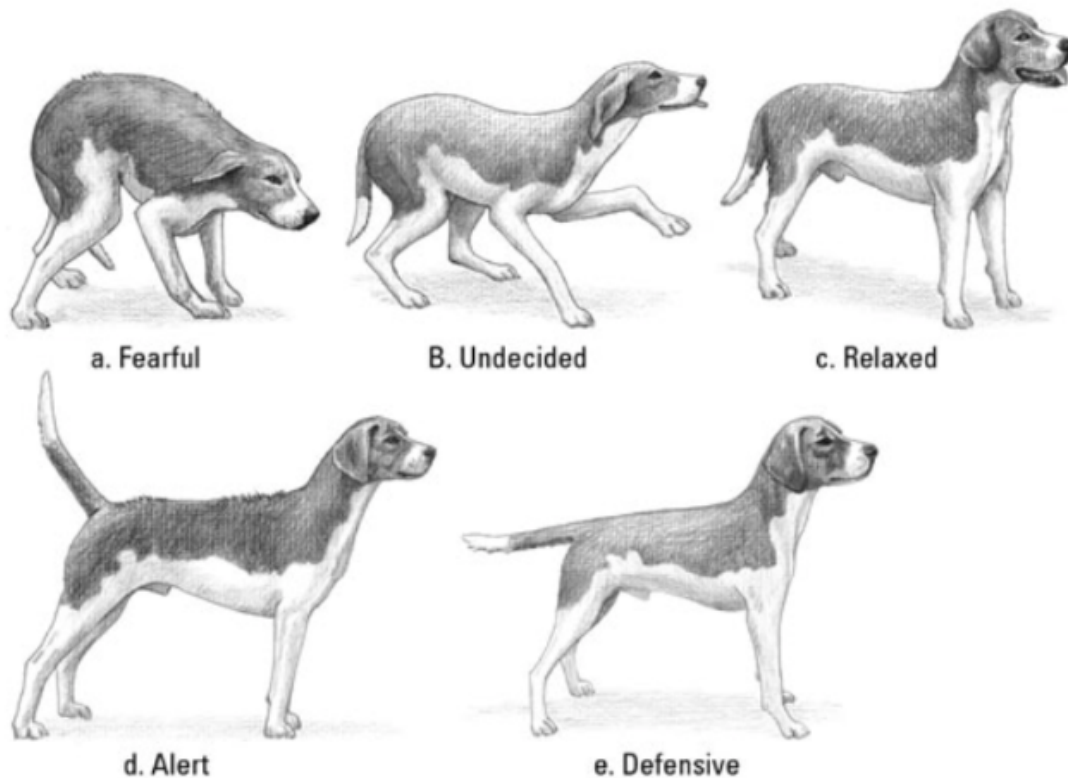
- **SWEAT/PANT**

- Panting can be a sign of stress, especially if it's rapid and the dog's mouth is tight with stress wrinkles.



- **BODY POSTURE/MOVEMENT**

- Playful: loose and wiggly, with lots of movement and brief pauses during play
- Uninterested: stiff, moves slowly, or who keeps moving away
- Fearful: lean away, lean back, tremble, crouch, lower body or head, or roll onto side or back
- Extremely fearful: freeze, frantically try to escape, may urinate/defecate when approached
- Aggressive: look large, stand with head raised above shoulders, tense, weight may be over all four feet or leaning slightly over front legs.



Canine Warning Signs:

- Freezing or becoming very stiff
- Tail held high & stiffly wagging OR tail tucked
- Ears pinned back or forward
- Body lowered
- Whale eyes
- Hard staring
- Lip licking or curling
- Growling
- Raised hackles
- Mouthing (without applying significant pressure)
- Lunging

Handling Animals

To keep our animals happy and healthy:

- **SANITIZE/WASH!** To prevent transmittable diseases, wash hands between each animal you interact with, with warm water and soap or hand sanitizer.
- **READ!** All signs posted throughout the building include important information regarding animals in our care (pay attention to the color bars on the canine cage cards and the socialization whiteboard). Certain animals need strict guidance and ARE NOT to be handled without proper instruction.
- **WATCH!** All animals you interact with at the shelter may be unpredictable. It is important to learn fearful animal body language and behavior to be safe while interacting with animals. Back off when needed and take the animals' lead.
- **PRAISE!** Animals in our care should receive praise when showing positive behaviors (sit, no jump, easy). Promoting shelter manners gets the animals into homes faster. Do not allow dogs to jump on people or cage doors, especially when connecting a leash.
- **REPORT!** Regardless of severity, all injuries, and most importantly, bites must be reported to the Front Desk Staff to handle the situation accordingly. Report irregular or unusual behaviors in animals, such as mouth-based behaviors*, excessive signs of stress**, blood, vomit, diarrhea, lethargy, cough, nasal/ocular discharge, or skin abnormalities to Front Desk Staff.
- *Mouth-based behaviors include: nipping, nibbling, mouthing, play biting, teeth on skin, grabbiness, air biting, snapping, and air-snapping
- **Signs of stress include: excessive drooling/panting, circling their kennel, reactivity in kennel, jumpiness, lack of appetite, elimination issues, etc.

Huey		Middle Kennel 1
Gender:	I am a Neutered Male	
Age:	4m	
Color:	White Tan	
Weight:	12.00 pound	
Price:	\$420 My Paw-pular Pals adoption fee includes support for our longer stay dog friends!	
		
Animal ID: A006056340 Microchip: 941010005100491		

Tater Tot		Middle Kennel 1
Gender:	I am a Neutered Male	
Age:	2y	
Color:	White Brown	
Weight:	18.90 pound	
Price:	\$235	
		
Animal ID: A006056739 Microchip: 941010005081652		
Recommend no small children.		

Things to Keep in Mind

- Check out cage keys by filling out the sign-out sheet and always return keys before leaving the shelter
 - Time spent behind the front desk should be brief
- Do not leave animals unattended (in visitation rooms, runs, etc)
 - Unless there is an emergency and the animal is in a secure area (or you are running/cleaning dogs)
- Only socialize with one animal at a time
 - Currently housed-together animals may be socialized together ONLY if there is a 1:1 person-animal ratio (1 person is not to handle more than 1 animal at a time)
- Animals' toys should be kept in their kennel, for safety and sanitary purposes
- Volunteers are not permitted to give animals (especially dogs) ANYTHING EXTRA in their kennels (this includes blankets, toys, food bowls, etc.) due to safety concerns and some animals having strict requirements)
- Refrain from cellphone use while interacting with an animal
 - With the exception being photography, as long as the animal is secured
- ALWAYS be aware of all animals & people when entering and exiting rooms, turning corners, going through doorways, and walking near kennels
- YOU lead the animal, not the other way around (keep leash tight with animal in control at your side)



Walking Guidelines

- Handlers are to walk **green dogs only, always adhering to the color bars on cage cards, as well as any other notes/signage on the dog's kennel**
- Handlers **MUST** stay in fenced-in enrichment trail or dog runs when walking outside
- Dogs are to remain on leash at all times, besides in the runs - always use a carabiner to secure runs
- Make sure to close gates behind you when walking a dog
 - When the runs are not in use, their doors should remain wide open
- Always check the Canine Enrichment white board by the door to the runs before selecting a dog, as well as kennel signage (on the back wall for middle/back/iso kennel areas):
 - Whiteboard: Always choose dogs that have not gotten an opportunity to get out of their kennel yet that day
 - Mark what dogs you have walked so other volunteers know where to start (mark board between each dog)
- Use your best judgment - do not handle a dog that you have not been trained for, is too large or strong for you, or with which you feel uncomfortable in any way, even if the dog is notated green
- If you ever feel you need assistance, **please ask.**

KENNEL	DOG NAME	AM	PM	KENNEL	DOG NAME	AM	PM	KENNEL	DOG NAME	AM	PM
K9 1	Kady			MK1a	Tater Tot	R		MK9a			
K9 2	Randy			MK1b				MK9b			
K9 3	Bart			MK2a	Coriander	RW		MK10a			
K9 4				MK2b				MK10b			
K9 5	Foster Dogs			MK3a	Galaxy	RW		MK11a	Kilo	R	
K9 6	Rosco *	W		MK3b				MK11b			
K9 7	Jasmine			MK4a				MK12a			
K9 8	Nova			MK4b				MK12b			
K9 9	Fiona *	W		MK5a	Rambo	R		MK13a			
CARE 1	Cher			MK5b				MK13b			
CARE 2	Sony			MK6a				MK14a	Queen	R	
CARE 3	Wanda			MK6b				MK14b			
CARE 4	Mark			MK7a	Cottonball	RW		DP = Dog Park W = Dog was walked R = Dog went into run for toilet * = Needs extra attention while in kennel			
CARE 5	Kyle			MK7b				Note: extra attention while in kennel			
CARE 6				MK8a	Antoinette	RW		Note: extra attention while in kennel			
CARE 7	Shelby			MK8b				Note: extra attention while in kennel			
CARE 8	Paige							Note: extra attention while in kennel			

Leashing Up and Transitioning Outside:

- Before unlocking/opening a dog's kennel door, check your surroundings to ensure the environment is secure and clear of potential hazards (children, a leashed dog and dog walker, etc.)
- Check their cage card and walking instructions: is the dog reactive? Do they require a chain leash? Do they have to be monitored while in the runs due to escaping? **These notes should be checked every time** since they are subject to change/be updated at any point in time as we learn about the dogs.

Dog Walking Notes:

☐ Harness ☐ Gentle Lead

☐ Chain Leash

MK 4b

Name _____

Age _____

Weight _____

Blanket _____

Toys _____

Feeding Instructions _____

Handling Instructions _____

- Leashing up should always occur at the entrance of the animal's kennel - do not enter the kennel space completely unless specifically approved to do so.
- When using a slip lead, make sure to always use the small stopper piece to ensure the slip lead remains tightened around the dog's neck.
- All dogs should have a collar that is TIGHT and secure - if they do not have a collar, locate one and put one on them.
- ALWAYS be aware of all animals & people when entering and exiting rooms, turning corners, going through doorways, and walking near kennels.
- The transition to outside should be practice for walking well on leash - do NOT run or jog with the dog in the hallways or let them excessively pull (this indicates they may need a walking accessory). All dogs should be in control at your side, waiting to go through doors before moving through them.

Leashing Up and Transitioning Outside:

- YOU lead the animal, not the other way around. If the animal is too strong for you to handle safely, this is a dog you should not be handling
- **We do not permit socializing in the hallways/transitional areas - this especially includes with the public.** If there are public visitors wanting to pet/approach the dog, firmly but kindly let them know that it's not allowed and to please give space.
- Handlers should always avoid behaviors that would hype the dog up or not teach good manners, including but not limited to rough play, running with them on leash, encouraging jumping or mouthing behaviors, play-wrestling, etc.
- Interactions should always be productive: use every moment with the dog (from the moment you leash them up upon returning them into their kennel) to help reinforce good behavior.
- All dogs must remain a minimum of 6 feet apart from one another (in the case of there being dog walkers coming in and out of the run area)
- ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP IF UNCOMFORTABLE: animals can sense energy, especially fearful or stressed energy.



- Trained handlers should use their socialization cards, especially if the shelter is open to the public in case someone requests to visit with a dog
- Give treats with an open hand to reduce chance of teeth breaking skin.
- Clean up after dogs inside and outside of the building and discard into any waste station OUTSIDE of the building (various waste stations in enrichment trail or dumpster)
- Remove poop, replace dirty bedding (as long as they are allowed to have it), and fill water bowl before returning a dog to their kennel

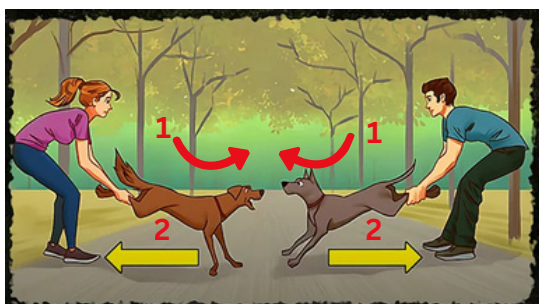
- If staff are in the process of cleaning suites (CARE suites and Canine Adoption Suites), DO NOT use the first door to go outside (or the runs themselves), since this is where dogs will be coming in and out with staff
 - Use the second door located closer to the enrichment trail to go outside during cleaning
- Please do not walk dogs in these areas while cleaning is happening (CARE and CAS). Walking dogs in Middle Kennel, as well as Back and ISO would be the alternative.



- Suite cleaning/running typically occurs twice daily (AM and PM) - volunteers are encouraged to sign up for Suite Running to help support ACT staff in taking dogs outside to the runs while their kennels are being cleaned.

Canine Fighting Incidents

- If a dog fight occurs, stay calm and do not try to separate the dogs by sticking your hands directly into the fight
 - Ensure that the dogs are in an enclosed area
 - Don't be afraid to yell for help - alert staff immediately
- Try to separate the dogs by:
 - Using the wheelbarrow technique (must have 2 people to perform)
 - Grab underneath the belly in front of hind legs (hips/thighs) (not feet/lower legs)
 - Lift and push forward into one another to separate their latch, then back to separate completely



- Other separation options:
 - Grabbing a hold of a leash - NOT collar for your own safety
 - Using a distraction (such as air horn (located in entry door areas), whistle, or water) to get the dogs' attention away from one another
 - What works for one dog may not work for another dog
 - Try not to clap or yell excessively AT the dogs since this may escalate the situation
- Once dogs have been separate, be prepared to continue restraining and get dogs into separate, secure areas.
- All incidents should be reported to a staff member, even if no bites or injuries occur
- If a dog is injured, it should be immediately noted and the clinic staff should be alerted

Canine Bite Incidents

If a Bite Occurs:

- Immediately return the dog to their kennel - if it is safely an option. If it is not a safe option, ensure the dog is in a secure location where they won't interact with anyone else and safely remove yourself from the area
- Find a staff person or go to the front desk to report the bite, fill out an incident report, and seek appropriate medical care
- All bites/wounds need to be clearly photographed and documented
- Volunteers will need to fill out an incident report (goes through what happened and when, who was involved, etc.) as well as a bite report (what is required by law to be filed with Animal Control/The City of Dubuque).
- Any staff or volunteer who experiences a confirmed bite incident may be temporarily suspended from animal handling duties until retraining and reassessment are completed.

Failure to report bites, attempted bites, or mouth-based behaviors is considered a serious safety violation and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of volunteer status

- By accurately and objectively reporting an incident (bite or not), we can learn from the situation and help alleviate it from happening again.
- It can also help us learn about each dog and will inform adoption restrictions that can lead to successfully finding the animal the best fit in a future home.

Handbook Acknowledgment/ Receipt

The Canine Handling Handbook describes important information about the DRHS, specifically about handling any animals in the care of, and I understand I should contact the Volunteer Manager regarding any questions not answered in this handbook. Accordingly, either I or the **DRHS may terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time for noncompliance of any policies and procedures.** This handbook and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede all prior practices, oral or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of my volunteer agreement with the DRHS. I understand policies and practices may be changed at any time by the DRHS. I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Potential Risks of Handling Dogs

By handling or interacting with dogs, I understand and acknowledge that certain risks exist, including but not limited to:

- Scratches and bites
- Allergic reactions
- Transmission of zoonotic illnesses (such as ringworm or other infections)
- Minor bruising or injury from physical contact

I acknowledge that these risks have been explained to me, that I understand them, and that I accept full responsibility for any injury or illness that may occur as a result of interacting with dogs.

Release of Liability Waiver

I hereby authorize the Dubuque Regional Humane Society (DRHS) to seek Emergency Medical Treatment in case of accident, injury or illness. I acknowledge my understanding that the handling of animals and other volunteer activities may place me in a hazardous situation and could result in injury and I assume that risk. I agree to hold harmless the DRHS and any employees and/or members of the Board of Directors of said agency from any liability whatsoever arising from my participation in the DRHS Volunteer Program. In consideration of being allowed to participate in the DRHS Volunteer Program, I hereby release the DRHS, its employees, officers and directors from any liability for injuries I might receive in my volunteer activities on behalf of the DRHS. I understand that I must complete the Volunteer Orientation process and sign a Volunteer Agreement before I will be allowed to volunteer for the DRHS.

As a volunteer of the DRHS, you may have access to confidential information, which is not generally known to or accessible by the public. Disclosure of confidential information is not permitted. This non-disclosure applies during and after your volunteer time with the DRHS. Any copying, reproducing or distributing of confidential information in any manner must be authorized by management. Confidential information remains the property of the DRHS. Understanding that public relations are an important part of a volunteer's activities on behalf of the DRHS, I hereby authorize the DRHS to use any photographs of me in its possession for public relation purposes.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Volunteer Name (print)

Guardian Signature (if volunteer is under the age of 18)

Date

Guardian Name (print)