

# Seattle Area Feline Rescue Volunteer Handbook

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Last updated March 2021

## A. Welcome Letter

Dear Volunteers,

Thank you, and welcome to the Seattle Area Feline Rescue (SAFe Rescue) team! As a volunteer, you are joining our organization in one of our most crucial positions. It is only because of the dedication and hard work of our volunteers that we are able to perform the work that we do every day. Volunteers are critical and we are very fortunate to have some of the best volunteers any organization could ask for. As a volunteer with SAFe Rescue, you have the opportunity to learn more about the Rescue operations, and most importantly, you get a chance to see the very rewarding work involved in helping to save and adopt out over 1,000 cats and kittens each year!

The work done here can be fun, rewarding, and at times, challenging. No matter what part of our operations that you become involved in, the work always ties back to our mission of finding love and care for the homeless cats and kittens in our care. Finding the support and resources for the cats is very rewarding, and there is plenty of hard work involved as well. The scanning, cleaning, laundry, feeding, sweeping, mopping, transporting, adopting, and care-taking never ends, which is why we are able to support so many volunteers in our mission to help the cats. Our volunteers make the rescue a reality. Volunteers are the reason we can help so many cats and through their hard work and dedication, we are able to keep the rescue running smoothly and effectively, which means more cats and kittens get adopted and more lives are saved. Your position with us is essential, from feeding kitties, to greeting adopters, to cleaning out enclosures. We strive to give our volunteers a great experience here at SAFe Rescue.

Our number one priority will always be keeping our cats and kittens *healthy* and *adoptable* so that they can find loving homes. We know that you are here for the same reason we are: to support this priority. Sometimes, that means not doing the things we may want to do (pet cats and kittens), but all of our decisions are made for the kitties' health.

Please read this handbook for all the information you need about volunteering here at SAFe Rescue. This handbook is always available for your reference.

We hope you enjoy your time here with us at SAFe Rescue, and thank you for your time, service, and dedication.

Sincerely,

SAFe Rescue Kitties, Staff, and Board

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## B. Mission Statement

SAFe Rescue saves feline lives by taking in homeless cats, giving them the care they need, finding them loving homes, and supporting their human companions.

## C. Statement of Purpose

We believe each cat has inherent value and that humans and felines enrich each other's lives. This bond builds compassionate communities with empathy for all living things.

## D. Values



# VALUES



Show  
**COMPASSION**



Value  
**COMMUNITY**



Act with  
**OPTIMISM**



Demonstrate  
**RESPECT**



Pursue  
**EXCELLENCE**

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## E. About SAFe Rescue

Seattle Area Feline Rescue is located on the border of Seattle and Shoreline, at 14717 Aurora Ave. N, Shoreline, WA 98133. We are a non-profit, no-kill rescue, 501c3 #91-2041961. SAFe Rescue takes in homeless cats and kittens, gives them the care they need to recover, and finds them loving homes. Over 1,700 felines, including seniors and special needs cats, find homes here each year as people in search of new friends visit our welcoming storefront Adoption Center. An extensive network of community volunteers and foster families helps the rescue carry out its mission and save more lives.

## F. Shelter Policies

SAFe Rescue is a limited-admission, adoption guarantee rescue. We only euthanize for the same reasons you would euthanize a personal pet and not because of expensive medical situations, behavioral reasons, limited enclosure space, or length of stay. We are able to do this because we are a limited admission shelter. The more cats and kittens we adopt out, the more lives we are able to save by taking in homeless kitties from full and overcrowded shelters.

## G. Hours of Operation and Contact Information

**Volunteers are typically scheduled at specific times between the hours of 9 am-7 pm every day of the week.**

We are currently closed to the public for in rescue adoptions and have switched to virtual adoptions only during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have volunteers and staff on site 9am-7pm, 7 days per week.

Rescue Phone: **206-659-6220** (please leave a voicemail)

Volunteer Manager Phone: **206-659-6220 ext. 517** (please leave a voicemail)

Volunteer Manager Email: [\*\*volunteer@seattleareafeline rescue.org\*\*](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafeline rescue.org)

## H. Volunteer Capabilities (Physical, Mental, and Emotional)

To safely and effectively serve as volunteers at SAFe Rescue, volunteers should possess the following physical, mental and emotional capacities, and be able to commit to a weekly two to three-hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours.

### Physical Capabilities

- 17 years old or older (may consider 16 with an interview). Under 18 requires parent/guardian agreement signature.
- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously.

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- Ability to stand, bend, squat, reach overhead, push, pull, etc.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around the property, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read and complete paperwork.
- Ability to hear if an animal is making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to read and effectively communicate. Read all newsletters, notes and e-mails to stay current / informed.
- An ability to handle close proximity to animals and chemicals used in cleaning that have the potential to cause allergies
- Ability to deal with unpleasant odors.
- Ability to cope with a loud environment due to animal noises.
- Average strength to assist with lifting boxes of food, animals, litter, tools and other supplies.

#### Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Possess problem-solving capabilities.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.

#### Emotional Capabilities

- Ability to cope with animal behavior, must be able to remain calm with animals who are upset.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally charged environment, and control one's own emotions at work.
- Ability to cope with the knowledge that animals in the environment may have been neglected/abused, be sick/injured/elderly, or nearing the end of life.

#### Level of Supervision

- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities and ask for help when needed.
- Should be able to work independently, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

### **I. Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are a valuable resource at SAFe Rescue. Please read the [VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FORM](#) which will need to be signed by and filed for each active volunteer. This form explains the agreement SAFe Rescue makes to the volunteers, as well as the agreement the volunteer makes to SAFe Rescue. Volunteers agree to follow instruction of staff and to follow guidelines

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and procedures in all handbooks (specific to each role). Page three of the agreement form document is a welcome letter to which the volunteer also agrees to, which includes the **Rules for SAFe Kitties**.

## J. Rules for SAFe Kitties

We strive to get as many cats into homes as fast as possible. We need to keep them *healthy and adoptable*. **Before doing something, we need to remember to ask ourselves:**

- **Will this be safe for the kitty's health?** Not following rules could jeopardize the health of the cats in our care and could delay their ability to be adopted.
- **Will this help the kitty get adopted?** Touching kitties does not help them get adopted and can be over-stimulating for them. Ask about training for the cat behavior shifts if you wish to interact with kitties.

### The 5 Rules for SAFe Kitties:

- 1. If you didn't clean it, it is dirty. Your hands are dirty every time you touch a kitty or their used things.**
  - Clean *every counter or surface* (e.g. washer/dryer) before you put something that will go in a cat enclosure on it. If you put something on a surface you didn't clean, that something is now dirty. Floors are always dirty. If you put something on the floor, it is dirty unless you put something else in between.
  - Wash your hands before touching clean items that kitties will touch or use, and in between every cat.
- 2. If you don't have to/ it isn't part of your assigned duty, do not touch a kitty, or their items. Always ask first.**
  - Feline health can change quickly. Colds and disease, like ringworm, can be undetected and easily spread, making kitties homeless longer. It is vital that we maintain caution and clean hands and supplies when working within the rescue to avoid any risk of spreading germs or disease. Not following rules could jeopardize the health of the cats in our care and could delay their ability to be adopted.
  - Be mindful to maintain a low volume and a calming tone when volunteering in the adoption center. It is important that we create an environment that is relaxing and as stress free as possible for the cats in our care. Only volunteers that have a specific need/task should be in ISO, quarantine, or in the Kitten and Cat areas.
- 3. Be mindful and try to use less and reserve resources.**

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- The more we save water, food, etc., the more money we have to help kitties in need!
- 4. If you notice a health issue tell the Operations Manager, the Veterinary Manager, , or your Volunteer Manager if they are available.**
  - If one of them is not available - mark the health issue on the chart, every time.
- 5. Cat Care Volunteers- Always check and mark the kitties' charts.**
  - Always read the charts before changing anything in an enclosure! *If it isn't labeled, ask.* Health can change quickly! Check the round sheets in each area you work in, and on charts on individual enclosures.
  - *If you change something in an enclosure, mark it on the chart. E.g. "feces/urine removed," "PM food added," etc.*

### K. Sign In & Scheduling Procedures

Signing In: Volunteers are required to sign in and out for all volunteer shifts. Volunteers are each assigned a username and password which will be chosen by the volunteer. Your username and password is your unique log-in that you will use to sign in and out during your shift. We use a Windows tablet to sign in and out. The tablet is located on the volunteer announcement board. Your supervisor will demonstrate how to use the tablet to sign in and will assist with any technical difficulties.

Scheduling: All volunteers are scheduled for the same shift weekly, unless other plans are made between the Volunteer Manager and the supervising staff member. Volunteer schedules are determined based on the volunteers' availability and the current openings. Volunteers must volunteer for a **minimum of three consecutive months and at least 30 hours**. Volunteers may request a change in their volunteer shift time or position at any time, but it is at the discretion of the Volunteer Manager whether this will be permitted, based on the current volunteer schedule. If a volunteer is going to miss a shift, they must notify the Rescue as soon as possible via email to [volunteer@seattleareafeline.org](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafeline.org), and follow the attendance policy below. **Two weeks' notice** should be given when requesting a shift change and/ or terminating a shift.

### L. Volunteer Attendance Policy

**Expectations regarding attendance and absences:** SAFe Rescue expects that all volunteers regard their volunteer shifts with the same consideration and respect as a paid position. The kitties, other volunteers, and staff rely on dedicated volunteers to maintain agreements for their shifts. Unexpected absences cause challenges for fellow volunteers and staff, and more importantly, interrupts the regular routine built around best serving our feline friends.

## **Procedure for ALL Absences**

- Remove yourself from the Better Impact schedule.
- Pick up an alternate shift.
- Email [volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org) which shift you are missing and which you are picking up.
- Post to Facebook group (if you are a Facebook user) to try to find a substitute for your shift.

## **Excused Absences**

For an absence to be considered excused, the following conditions must be met:

- Give 48 hours' notice minimum if possible unless in the case of an illness which will not require 48 hours' notice.
- Follow absence procedure.
- More than two (2) excused absences per month will require a check-in with the Volunteer Manager to discuss future scheduling

## **Unexcused Absences**

An absence communicated within 48 hours of your shift will be considered unexcused.

Communicate your absence by:

- Emailing [volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org) or removing yourself from Better Impact (preferably both).
- More than two (2) unexcused absences per month will require a check-in with the Volunteer Manager to discuss future scheduling and will result in being removed from the schedule until such a meeting can take place.

## **No Shows**

If a volunteer does not show up for their scheduled shift and has provided no notice to the Rescue, the absence will be considered a No Show.

- The volunteer will be removed from the schedule until contact has been made with the Volunteer Manager.
- A note will be added to the volunteer's file.
- Two (2) no shows may result in termination of the volunteer from our program.

## **Leave of Absence**

Any absence over four (4) weeks must be communicated to the Volunteer Manager. To be considered a Leave of Absence, the following conditions must be met:

- Give at least two (2) weeks' notice when possible.
- Communicate a return date when possible.

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- Volunteers may be removed from the schedule at the discretion of staff & may have to contact Volunteer Manager to be added back onto the schedule upon return.

### **Dismissal from Volunteer Program**

- Violation of Attendance Policy as outlined above may result in removal from the volunteer program at the discretion of the Rescue staff.

### **\*\*School/Community Service Hours\*\***

- Forms require 1 week notice/submission to be filled out, verified, and returned.
- In order for us to sign off on hours, volunteers must meet our minimum requirement of 30 hours or three months.

## **M. General Animal Handling & Behavior**

Please watch this informative [Cat Behavior Video](#) to better acquaint yourself with possible behavior viewed in a rescue setting. **Everyone must wash their hands before handling a cat, items a cat has touched, and between touching/cleaning each and every enclosure.** Once trained in a shift where interaction with cats is involved, be fully aware of the cat's behavior and body language at all times. Exercise caution at all times when working with any cat in a shelter environment. If a cat is not interested or showing signs of irritation, do not push forward. Warning signs of a cat not interested in socializing include ears back, not venturing out of their cubby, swatting, or any sort growling or hissing. For cats who are new to the rescue, it is not appropriate to handle the cat at all if the cat is not up-to-date on current vaccines or for any cat who may have an illness unless otherwise directed. Any cat who has a "Staff Only" sign should not be handled by volunteers unless given explicit permission.

## **N. Volunteer Positions - Basic Descriptions**

### **Clean Team Member**

**Purpose:** To keep our back of house clean and healthy for cats and volunteers. Most volunteers start with this position.

**Requirements:** 17 years or older, 16 with an interview. Be able to commit to a weekly two to three-hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours of service. Be able to squat, bend, twist, lift and stand for two hours. Direct contact with dirty litter boxes and cleaning agents including bleach, trifectant, and accelerated hydrogen peroxide. Attention to detail, ability to follow instructions and a self-starter.

**Duties:** follow all protocols to properly:

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- Hand wash dishes and litter boxes.
- Wash, dry, fold, and put laundry away.
- Sweep and mop floors.
- Wipe down countertops and surfaces.
- Empty trash cans and take out trash and recycling.
- Sanitize enclosures, sanitize and organize crates.

Shift Availability: General cleaning shifts are scheduled multiple times each day, and may have some flexibility for start times. Available shifts vary, dependent on current volunteer levels and needs of the rescue.

### [Clean Team Handbook](#)

### [Clean Team Learning Center](#)

#### **Cat Care- Morning (AM)**

Purpose: To feed and check on the cats, clean cat enclosures and make them comfortable for the cats, and to ensure everything is tidy, especially on adoption days.

Requirements: 17 years or older. Be able to commit to a weekly two-hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours of service. Be able to squat, bend, twist, lift and stand for two hours while working directly with cats and kittens. Direct contact with cats and kittens, dirty litter boxes, and cleaning agents including bleach, trifectant and Accel/Rescue. Attention to detail and ability to follow instructions. Must be experienced in handling cats. Must complete 30 hours on Clean Team prior to joining Cat Care.

**Duties:** follow all protocols to properly:

- Consult with the checklist to ensure all tasks are completed by the end of the shift.
- Clean and/or sanitize cat enclosures daily according to set protocols.
- Prepare clean litter pans, food and water bowls and replace the ones from the previous day.
- Clean dirty litter boxes and food bowls after enclosure cleaning is complete.
- Observe general cat health and behavior and make note of important changes for staff.
- Sweep and mop after enclosure cleaning is complete.
- Wash all dishes and litter boxes by hand.
- Restock clean items, and perform clean team duties as needed.

Shift Availability: 10am-12pm daily. Specific day of the week is variable, dependent on current volunteer levels.

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[Cat Care Handbook](#)

[Cat Care Learning Center](#)

### **Cat Care - Evening (PM)**

Purpose: To feed and check on cats, and make cat enclosures clean and comfortable for the cats.

Requirements: 17 years or older. Be able to commit to a weekly two- hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours of service. Be able to squat, bend, twist, lift and stand for two hours while working directly with cats and kittens. Direct contact with cats and kittens, dirty litter boxes, and cleaning agents including bleach, trifactant and Accel/Rescue. Attention to detail and ability to follow instructions. Must be experienced with handling cats. Must complete 30 hours on Clean Team prior to joining Cat Care.

**Duties:** follow all protocols to properly:

- Consult with the checklist to ensure all tasks are complete by the end of the shift.
- Spot clean and/or sanitize cat enclosures daily according to set protocols.
- Refresh litter pans, food and water bowls as needed.
- Take dirty litter boxes and food bowls to the back after enclosure cleaning is complete.
- Observe general cat behavior and make note of important changes for staff.
- Sweep and mop after enclosure cleaning is complete.
- Wash all dishes and litter boxes by hand.
- Empty all trash cans and take garbage outside to dumpsters.
- Restock clean items and perform clean team duties as needed.

Shift Availability: 5-7pm daily. Specific day of the week is variable, dependent on current volunteer levels.

[Cat Care Handbook](#)

[Cat Care Learning Center](#)

### **Retail and Front Desk Reception**

Purpose: To greet the public, introduce people to our adoption program and sell retail products to guests and adopters.

Requirements: 18 years or older, unless you have prior retail experience. Be able to commit to a weekly two to three-hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours of service. Excellent customer service and communication skills. The ability to represent SAFe

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Rescue in a positive and appropriate manner. Ability to learn the basics of each product for sale, in the retail section, and guide clients toward appropriate products. Experience in customer service or retail preferred. Ability to learn to use an iPad for customer transactions.

**Duties** - Follow all protocols to properly:

- Greet guests and potential adopters. Explain our adoption process to prospective adopters, while they wait for assistance from an adoption counselor.
- Introduce new adopters to products that the retail section carries, explain the benefits of types of food, as well as proper feeding protocol based on individual cats.
- Operate Shopkeep POS, handle money, and use the credit card machine.
- Keep the front spaces clean and organized.
- Answer the phone and respond to questions from potential adopters, fosters, and volunteers.
- Assist with office support, enclosure cleaning, crate cleaning, and other cleaning and tasks during downtime.

Shift Availability: two to three-hour shifts during hours we are open for adoptions, between 11:45 am and -7:15 pm, Friday-Sunday, and between 2-5 Mondays. Availability of specific shifts is variable, dependent on current volunteer staff levels.

## [Retail Handbook](#)

### **Administrative Support**

Purpose: To assist with management of paperwork, databases, and other special projects.

Requirements: 17 years or older. Be able to commit to a weekly two-hour shift for three consecutive months and at least 30 total hours of service. Most shifts may require basic proficiency with computers, including Windows 8, printing, scanning, and the ability to learn how to use a basic database program. Prior related experience is preferred.

**Duties:** follow all protocols to properly:

- Scan paperwork.
- File paperwork.
- Data entry.
- Database management.
- Other special projects, as needed.

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Shift Availability: Shift availability is variable and flexible and depends on the current needs of staff.

### **Adoption Counselor**

Purpose: To assist the public with all parts of the adoption process: Screen potential adopters and assist them in their adoption selection, have productive and informative conversations in order to educate the potential adopter, and overall, create a positive experience for the adopter and a good adoption outcome for our cats and kittens.

#### Requirements:

- 18 years or older.
- Have completed cat care and retail training and shifts and show proficiency in both.
- Demonstrate proficiency with cat handling, cat behavior and health recognition with proper responses.
- Able to commit to a set weekly shift for a minimum six consecutive months, and at least a 100-hour commitment, after training is complete.
- Understand the differences in cat personalities and how they may affect an adoption outcome.
- Excellent people and communication skills. Ability to represent SAFe Rescue in a positive and appropriate manner.
- Basic computer skills and ability to learn our shelter database program.
- Be an active learner and listener.

Please Note: Mastery of our adoption process, protocols and standards of service and care must be exhibited prior to facilitating adoptions on your own. Simply participating in training does not guarantee you a position as an adoption counselor. You must have an open mind, and both the ability and willingness to learn the skills listed below:

#### Duties - Follow all protocols to properly:

- Greet guests and potential adopters, answer questions, have informative conversations to understand what would be the best match for the adopters household and lifestyle.
- Oversee meetings between potential adopters and cats to ensure proper handling and a good match. Ensure proper sanitization procedure between meeting each cat.
- Know individual cats well enough to answer questions about individual animals for potential guardians and guests.
- Socialize and groom adoption ready cats, make notes and observations on their behavior toward different adopters.
- Ensure all cats have fresh water and dry bedding. Refill water and food bowls as needed.

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- Maintain the overall cleanliness of the cat room, while following sanitation protocols at all times. Change litter boxes as needed. Sweep the floor clean of litter or food periodically.
- Introduce new adopters to products that the retail section carries, the benefits of types of food, as well as proper feeding protocol based on individual cats.
- May or may not process adoption paperwork, explain adoption agreement and medical history, advise on new cat introductions, licensing, and vaccinations.
- Operate the cash register, handle money and use the credit card machine.

## [Adoption Counselor Handbook](#)

### **O. Work Attire**

All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes. Volunteer t-shirts are available to all volunteers and are stored and washed here at the rescue. If you work in a clean team, cat care, or retail position, your clothing will be at risk because these positions work with a lot of cat-related debris and bleach. Therefore, it is best to wear clothing that can be damaged. Additionally, for cat handling positions, remember kitties have sharp toenails, so it is important to wear shirts and pants that you are ok with getting holes in. Please wear pants that adequately cover your legs.

### **P. Personal Belongings**

While you are here at the rescue, you may store your belongings in a locker or on a hanger in the back hallway near the volunteer entrance. SAFe Rescue is not liable for any stolen or lost belongings during your volunteer shift.

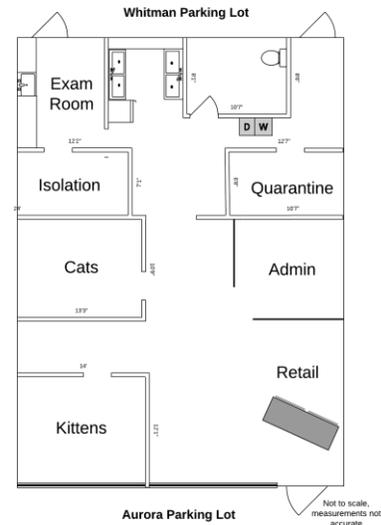
### **Q. Parking**

During your shift, we ask that you park in our back lot.. The lot is off of Whitman, but can be reached through our front parking lot, as well, by going around the north end of the building.

SAFe Rescue is not liable for any damage to your vehicle while you are here at the Rescue (see the building layout underneath Safety Information in the next section).

## R. Safety Information

- Emergency evacuation: there are three possible exits.
  1. Front door
  2. Volunteer/Staff entrance
  3. Exam room back door
- In the event of an emergency, meet in the parking lot next to the large yellow storage container on Whitman Ave.
- If you observe a safety hazard or potential hazard, please report it to SAFe staff immediately.
- Do not interact with cats unless you have been trained and it is part of your shift for that day. Do not handle or interact with any SAFe Rescue cat that has a “Staff Only” sign on its kennel. Do not handle any SAFe Rescue cat that has an “Ask Staff Before Visiting” sign on its kennel unless you have talked to staff first.



### What to do if a cat gets out

Whenever you open the doors to the rooms or any enclosure, watch for cats. If a cat gets out and starts to run from you, get an experienced staff member-- do not attempt to catch the cat yourself. (Frightened or fleeing cats may scratch or bite.) Follow the cat with your eyes at all times. Stay calm and clearly call “Cat Out!” so that **Staff** can quickly retrieve the cat and return it to its enclosure.

### First Aid and Fire Extinguisher

The first aid kit is located in the cupboard above the dish washing sink. The fire extinguisher is located in the cat area next to C10 and C9.

## S. Bite/Scratch Procedures

If you are ever bitten or scratched, here at the Rescue, you are required to report the injury to your supervisor immediately if the skin is broken. You will then be required to fill out an incident report describing the situation. Any volunteer who does not report the injury before leaving for their shift may have their volunteer position terminated at the discretion of the

Operations Manager or Volunteer Manager. The first aid kit is located in the cupboard above the dish washing sink.

#### **From King County Department of Health -**

If a person experiences a bite or a scratch from an animal in the facility, follow these first aid steps:

- Promptly rinse wounds and scratches with lots of water and wash with soap and water for three to five minutes.
- If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean, dry towel and raise above the heart to stop the bleeding.
- Apply a sterile bandage to the wound.
- Consult a healthcare provider if the bite or scratch has broken the skin.
- See a healthcare provider for all cat bites- they are particularly dangerous because the puncture wounds caused by sharp feline teeth often close up quickly, trapping harmful germs under the skin.
- Monitor all bites and scratches closely and seek medical care immediately if any redness, swelling or pain occurs.
- Report any bite to the supervisor or person-in-charge immediately.

#### **T. Feedback**

We encourage feedback at every step of the volunteer process. Please use a format similar to [this](#) for in-person feedback.

If you have feedback for the Rescue, we are open to any suggestions about how to improve our processes, complaints, etc. You can talk to any staff member in person, or email [volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafelinerescue.org).

#### **U. Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures**

- If a volunteer has a grievance with a staff member, or another volunteer, they will talk to them first to try to sort out the problem informally. Please [refer to this](#) before talking to a person, and follow a similar process.
- If this is not appropriate to the situation, the person with the grievance may bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Manager (or the Operations Director if the grievance is with the Volunteer Manager).
- The Volunteer Manager will investigate the problem and discuss it with the staff member or volunteer. The Volunteer Manager will determine what action, if any, to take. When possible, an answer will be given within one week of the matter being raised. If the staff member or volunteer agrees to the proposal made, this will be the end of the matter.

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- If the staff member or volunteer involved does not agree, or if the Volunteer Manager is unable to deal with the matter, then the issue will be referred to the Operations Director. Whenever possible any referral will take place within one week of the original complaint.
- The decision of the Operations Director is final.

## V. FAQ

### **What is the minimum age to volunteer?**

You must be at least 17 to volunteer in the shelter (16-year-old volunteers may be considered on occasion, with an interview). Anyone under 18 must provide their parent/guardian's agreement signature. For those under the required age, we recommend discussing fostering with your family. Fostering as a family can provide a positive way to interact with and help the cats in our care!

### **How do I become a volunteer?**

Your first step is to watch the [Volunteer Information Video](#) and complete the [short quiz](#) that follows. The second step is to fill out an [Application Form](#) and submit via email to the Volunteer Manager the required [Background Check Form](#) and [Volunteer Agreement Form](#) linked in the application. After we get a chance to review your application, you will receive an email to discuss which volunteer role you would like to fill and an invitation to schedule a training shift will follow. The training shift will be based around what will work with our needs and your availability.

### **What's the time commitment?**

We ask our volunteers to commit to at least one two-hour shift per week for a minimum of three months or a minimum of 30 hours. Volunteers are welcome to sign up for more shifts if they would like to and are encouraged to volunteer beyond their three month initial requirement.

### **I have a vacation where I will have to miss a shift. What should I do?**

Email us at [volunteer@seattleareafeline.org](mailto:volunteer@seattleareafeline.org) to notify us, as soon as you know you will be missing a shift. During your first three months, we ask that you miss no more than one shift. If you have to miss more, we will ask that you reevaluate your chosen shift and determine if it's appropriate with your schedule. We also ask that you make up any missed shifts by coming in a different day or by doubling your shift the next time. See the attendance policy.

### **Can I receive credit for service hours for school?**

This handbook is constantly evolving and is meant as a resource for you! Please check it regularly.

Last updated March 2021

Yes. You must notify the Volunteer Manager in advance. Please note that we will sign your completed service hours at the end of the three-month commitment. You must also have your hours approved when you stop volunteering, no longer than six months after you have stopped serving.

### **Can I complete my court-ordered community service hours here?**

Yes. You must notify the Volunteer Manager in advance. The crime must be disclosed in advance, and the Operations Manager must approve the service in advance. Please note that we will sign your completed service hours at the end of the three-month commitment.

### **Do you have any group volunteer opportunities?**

Occasionally we will have a large project that can utilize a group of volunteers. However group opportunities are extremely limited. Please email [volunteer@seattlearefeline.org](mailto:volunteer@seattlearefeline.org) if you are interested in a group opportunity.

### **Will I need to work holidays?**

If you are a retail or administrative volunteer, you do not need to work certain holidays (Christmas, Thanksgiving, July 4th, etc.). However, cats still need care on holidays; Cat Care volunteers, and sometimes Clean Team volunteers are required to work holidays. On some of our more popular holidays we have volunteers who are willing to cover for those who will be out of town, including Thanksgiving and Christmas.

### **What is the volunteer discount on retail items?**

Volunteers are given a discount in our retail store which carries a wide variety of supplies for your kitties! As a volunteer you will get 15% off if paying with credit/debit or 20% off if paying cash. This discount applies to everything except: litter, food, or used items.

## **W. Termination Policy**

SAFE Rescue reserves the right to terminate volunteers immediately, if they do not follow volunteer protocols, or if they endanger the safety and health of our animals, or other volunteers or staff, in any way. If a volunteer is found to be repeatedly breaking a protocol, the Volunteer Manager may choose to first issue a written warning and discuss the matter with the volunteer. If after the written warning the volunteer continues with the inappropriate behavior, the volunteer may be terminated.

### **Volunteers may also be terminated for the following reasons:**

#### **Violation our attendance policy may result in termination at the discretion of rescue staff**

- Please refer to our volunteer attendance policy for more information.

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Last updated March 2021

### **Being Unsafe**

- Willful violation of any SAFe Rescue policy or procedure, or any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to SAFe Rescue.
- Willful violation of security or safety policies or failure to observe SAFe Rescue safety policies; tampering with any SAFe Rescue equipment or safety equipment.
- Negligence or any careless action, which endangers the life or safety of another person or SAFe Rescue animal.
- Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons or explosives on SAFe Rescue property, or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone on SAFe Rescue property, horseplay or provoking a fight on SAFe Rescue property, or negligent damage of SAFe Rescue property.

### **Being Under the Influence**

- Possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, within the facility, or while on duty at any SAFe Rescue event.

### **Disrespecting Volunteers or Staff**

- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions issued by the Volunteer Manager or supervising staff.
- Theft of SAFe Rescue property or the property of fellow volunteers; unauthorized possession or removal of SAFe Rescue property, including documents from the premises, without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of SAFe Rescue equipment or property for personal reasons.
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of SAFe Rescue records or other documents.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer on the job; willfully restricting volunteer output or encouraging others to do the same.
- Immoral conduct or indecency on SAFe Rescue property.

Thank you for being a Catvocate! Every volunteer position at Seattle Area Feline Rescue has a major impact on the cats in our care and on the community that we serve. Your work with SAFe Rescue directly helps homeless cats find the care and love they deserve and require. We simply could not do the work that we do without every single person in our volunteer program. Thank

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you so much for helping cats in need and for serving your community! Please do not hesitate to reach out to your Volunteer Manager with any questions, concerns, or comment you may have!

Sincerely,

Your SAFe Rescue Volunteer Manager, the SAFe staff and board, and all of the cats in our care!

Please email the Volunteer Manager at [volunteer@seattlearefeline.org](mailto:volunteer@seattlearefeline.org) with any questions or comments.