

A Passion for Paws did not author this piece, but it offers an insight into the realities of the rescue world that may help you understand some of our policies and procedures (as well as our frustrations and exhaustion).

What Rescue IS and What it ISN'T

The following information may seem harsh and you might not agree with some of the things said, but please understand that these are the realities of rescue. You may have encountered rescuers who didn't reply to your emails or return your phone call, wouldn't approve you to adopt or foster a dog, or a rescue volunteer who was impolite to the point of being rude.

As you read further, you will be given an insight to a rescuer's life, and perhaps you'll begin to see why so many rescuers are not always the soft, gentle counselors you may be looking for.

Rescue is not a service for YOU. Not for you to find a dog, or to get rid of your dog. Rescue is a service for the DOGS. The dog is who we are here to help. Helping you is just a byproduct of helping them.

Rescue is NOT a shelter that you can just stop by to visit, pick out a dog, and take it home with you whenever the mood strikes you. There is no place to drop by and window shop, and no business hours.

Rescue is a group of people who love the breed, open our homes and hearts to the dogs, give them a place to live, and love them until we find them a forever home. We take applications, screen them, do home visits and reference checks. There is a volunteer's home on the end of any phone number you are given.

Rescue is not Dial-A-Person who wants to hear about your troubles and unload your dog on after you've had it for 10 years and for whatever reason it has now become inconvenient.

Rescue is a phone number that reaches right into the home of a volunteer who has little time to deal with your guilt trip over tossing "Chi-Chi" out like last night's leftovers, and even less time to deal with you see-sawing back and forth between keeping the dog and giving it up.

Don't lie to us or to yourself. Simply tell us the reason you are giving the dog up, and answer the questions we ask. If we're going to help you, the least you can do is help us speed the process along by not crying on our shoulders.

We've heard it all before ... allergies, moving, housebreaking, keeps escaping, neighbor problems, money, new baby, too hyper, barking, sick, injured, nasty, uncontrollable, landlord doesn't allow, parents said no, owner died and nobody wants, divorce, marriage, boyfriend/girlfriend/partner doesn't like, too many animals, chases cars, chases cats, sheds, too much trouble, new job, wants attention, lost your job, lost your house, foreclosure, the economy.

We're not cold hearted. We simply have too many things to do and not enough time to listen to how sorry you think you are about getting rid of your dog. Rescue should be one of your last resorts. Try obedience training, crate training, professional training for both you and the dog, try everything you can before you make the decision to give up your dog. Take your dog to the vet and make sure it doesn't have any underlying health issues which are causing physical problems or behavioral issues. Make sure your dog is altered and up to date on all vaccinations. Try to find a home for your dog yourself. Think about whether you would like to go live in the new home and give your dog the courtesy and respect of not placing it in a home where you wouldn't be happy yourself. After you've done all you can, then contact us and let us know why you're giving up the dog in the least amount of words you can. We'll ask questions, you answer them. We'll ask you to provide certain information and do certain things and expect that if you can't or won't, we won't be able to help you or your dog.

Rescue is not a person sitting at the computer or phone all day, just waiting for your call or email. We're not running home daily, hoping we'll have lots of email and answering machine messages about more dogs needing to be saved.

Rescue is a group of people who already have a life, a family, a full-time job, our own dogs, foster dogs, not to mention a multitude of vet appointments, processing applications and holding fundraisers to help us pay for the veterinary and other care that you neglected.

Rescue is not a way for you to find a purebred dog for little or no money. It is not a place you can pick up a "girlfriend" for Butch or "boyfriend" for Fifi so that you can irresponsibly mass-produce puppies.

Rescue is responsible about the reproduction of their breed. In fact, some rescues believe that the only breeding that should be done is by the few responsible breeders out there, and only to improve the breed. Breeders are not people with "Free Puppies" ads either. Responsible breeders care about their product and take pride in placing them in loving homes where they will be cared for. Many rescues do not support breeding of ANY kind even by responsible breeders due to the problems of pet overpopulation and euthanasia rates of healthy, adoptable and many purebred animals

All rescue dogs are spayed and neutered before adoption so that no "accidents" happen. You won't get an unaltered dog ... don't even bother to ask.

Rescue is not a place that will take vicious, aggressive dogs and keep them for the rest of their lives, living happily ever after in their owner's mind. If you don't want to deal with your own dog who has a history of biting and aggression, what on earth makes you think someone else would want it biting them and their family? Not to mention the liability of rescue groups fostering and re-homing "known" biters. On an individual basis, we work with foster dogs to see if they are just frightened or truly nasty. We allow those who are scared time to adjust and overcome fear.

Rescue is not a mail order service to find the dog of your dreams --loves kids, cats, everyone, doesn't bark too much, is perfectly housebroken, weighs _____ pounds, does tricks on command, and knows how to act in every situation.

Every dog has his own personality, and that is what matters. If you want a dog that fits a few certain requirements, that's realistic, but trying to find one that matches perfection is not going to happen anytime soon, and if one comes in, we have a line 5 miles long of people waiting for it.

We very much appreciate you wanting to do a good deed by saving the life of a rescue dog. It is our mission, our purpose, a reason we get up in the morning and without people's willingness to provide a chance for an abandoned, orphaned, homeless dog, we would fail. We know we can't accomplish our mission without you but it's pretty difficult to accomplish it if you are not open to the process and don't have reasonable expectations. Our joy comes from seeing a happy dog in a home where it will be cared for and unconditionally loved. After all, unconditional love is what your rescue dog will bring to you.

Author Unknown