



## **Purrfect Paws, Inc. Volunteer Hand book**

*by Andrea Ernst*

Welcome to Purrfect Paws, Inc. You made the decision to become a volunteer and assist felines residing here. Purrfect Paws, Inc. is a licensed, private, not for profit, holistic, no kill feline shelter/sanctuary. Rescue, Rehabilitate and Adopt are three words describing the primary activities at Purrfect Paws.

Everything that is done at Purrfect Paws revolves around these premises:

**Respect One Another.**

**We Are All One.**

**What You Give To Others Will Be Returned To You.**

We want to maintain the peaceful, calm environment here.  
It's beneficial to everyone!

My name is Andrea and I've volunteered at Purrfect Paws, Inc since 2005. I will be your trainer. What I love about Purrfect Paws, Inc is there are no cages. All of the cats live in "normal" bedrooms or are free to roam the house. We have an upstairs, downstairs, and also a Cat Vacation House. We do have one or two cats that have private rooms due to personality and circumstances. Some of the cats we house are "special needs" cats.

Some of the activities as a direct care volunteer may include:

- Pooper scooping
- Playing, Loving
- Grooming (brushing, clipping nails etc.)
- Feeding (caned food that is)
- Emptying and refilling water
- Filling the food containers
- Vacuuming or sweeping the floors in the rooms
- Giving Essential drops or medicine if needed (explanation will follow)
- Taking cats outside or walking cats on a harness
- Cleaning cat furniture, Washing cat blankets or covers
- Cleaning up throw up and/or other "accidents"

One thing I can promise you is that you will have a unique volunteer experience with Purrfect Paws, Inc. Thank you for choosing Purrfect Paws as your volunteer shelter.

Let's get started so you can enjoy yourself. In this hand book I will explain the **Conditions** at Purrfect Paws, Inc.

## **Conditions at Purrfect Paws, Inc.**

### **Condition 1:**

#### **Cats are addressed respectfully.**

Here at Purrfect Paws we treat the cats like "normal people" which means we talk to them like we would talk to you. Cats are very intuitive. Cats understand all we say and hear every thought. We speak only positive statements to the cats. There is no name calling. "Bad", "Fat", "Mean", "Crazy", "Ugly", "Stupid" etc. are words banned at Purrfect Paws. Instead we say "Upset", "Well Defined", "Frustrated", "Unique", "Beautiful", and "Intelligent".

Jinna only allows loving and respectful behaviors. How would you like it if somebody would call you a name and you could not defend yourself? Remember to address the cats with positive statements and think only positive thoughts.

### **Condition 2:**

#### **Cats are handled with love and respect.**

Again, Jinna only allows loving and respectful behaviors. If Jinna would ever see you push, hit, or kick a cat you will be dismissed from the shelter. You will face situations where a cat or cats will sit right in front of a door you try to enter or exit. Here are some "Jinna Approved" methods to "move" the cats gently out of the way:

1. Use the plastic carrier or something else (we use this carrier to transport the plates and food downstairs) to gently nudge them away from the door.
2. Gently nudge them away with your foot or hand. (PLEASE don't ever try this with Olive or Buddy. They will attack you and your foot.)
3. Pick them up if you can and move them.
4. Tell them in a nice voice to move out of the way

### **Condition 3:**

#### **Respect boundaries. Cats know what they want and don't want.**

Cats, like people, have very diverse personalities, needs, and desires. Part of your job as a volunteer is to learn and pay attention to their needs and desires.

There are cats at Purrfect Paws, Inc. who do not like to be touched. We will let you know in the beginning which ones don't like it.

The first cat you may meet at Purrfect Paws, Inc Shelter is Buddy. He is a very big and "healthy" cat. He also is the head of the household. Buddy may come up to you and rub himself on your legs. He does not want you to pet him; he's just putting his scent on you. He does this with everybody. Say hello to him, keep your distance, and look away from him. Buddy is front declawed but he still has his teeth and back claws. In the beginning you will enter the Master bedroom with an experienced volunteer.

Some cats are very shy and will hide for a long time.  
Some cats are climbing all over you the first time you volunteer.  
Please allow them all the space and time they need to feel safe.  
**Let them come to you at their pace not yours.**

#### **Condition 4:**

**Long pants and closed shoes are a necessity.**

You will work with cats. Cats can be unpredictable. Cats have claws (well most of them do). Some of the cats like to climb up your legs or think you are a walking scratch tree. That's where the long pants come in handy. The shoes are for your own protection. We have one cat that will attack your feet when he gets upset.

#### **Condition 5:**

**If a cat should bite you, push toward the cat rather than yanking away.**

***If a cat should attack another cat call for an experienced volunteer.***

Of course if you pull away from the cat (when he/she has his/her teeth or claws in you) it will make it worse. So make sure you push toward the cat. You have to get used to it and trust me, I can do it and so can you. In most rooms you will find our best friend Hydrogen Peroxide and also Band Aids. Should you get scratched or bitten, please use them. It will prevent you from getting infections.

If there is a cat fight do not intervene but instead call for an experienced volunteer.

#### **Condition 6:**

**Body parts are not toys. Carry a toy to redirect the cat's focus.**

The main goal at Purrfect Paws, Inc is to find a forever loving home for each cat. Who doesn't like a cat that is well behaved? We want to "teach" and "train" the cats not to see us as big toys. Should it happen that a cat tries to play with your hand or foot, just use the toy to redirect the cat's focus.

#### **Condition 7:**

**Watch for cats as you enter and/or exit the house.**

Cats are very smart. We do have cats in the Shelter who go outside under supervision and cats that go outside without supervision. Those cats who need supervision (most of those cats will take off as soon as they go outside) start to play hide-and-seek. It may take some time to retrieve them so anyone who accidentally lets out a cat gets the opportunity to experience that process! Now comes the fun part. Seasonally there will be soybean fields right next to the shelter which makes an awesome hiding place for the cats. So if you ever drive up to the shelter and you see us standing in the field it's not that we love nature so much it's because we are looking for a cat or cats. Feel free to join us in our search.

## **Condition 8:**

### **Closed doors stay closed at all times.**

When you come to the Purrfect Paws, Inc Shelter you will notice that not all the doors are open. Make sure the doors are closed should you enter and exit. When we enter those rooms we make sure that no other cat/s get in. Also when we enter we make sure no cat/s in the room exit.

### **Bathroom doors:**

Please keep all the bathroom doors (upstairs and downstairs except the Master bathroom door) closed at all times. There are some cats in the shelter who like to “mark” their territories, meaning they will spray/urinate in this room. So guess who will have the honor to clean this “accident” ....you guessed right.....the volunteer. This will be either you or me.

### **Bedroom doors:**

Earlier I talked about the three sections we have in the shelter (upstairs, downstairs and cat vacation home). We are now at the downstairs section. You will find all the doors closed downstairs. We also use one of the rooms downstairs as a transition room. Some cats live alone in the bedrooms due to personalities and circumstances. **Those cats may not mingle with other cats.** Always make sure that when you enter or exit a room downstairs that no cat gets in or out of the room.

## **Condition 9:**

### **Fiedo’s door stays closed AT ALL TIMES.**

Fiedo’s room is located downstairs. You will notice that his door is the only door in the shelter with an outside lock. As I mentioned before we have cats in the shelter that do not play well with others. Fiedo is one of them. The reason why that lock is on his door is for you. Stop and look to make sure there are no cats that could get in when you enter. If a cat should happen to get in the room you will have 3 seconds to get Fiedo into the storm shelter and shut the door or else Fiedo will take out the intruder! Jinna once tried to separate Fiedo from a cat that got into his room and got badly bitten by Fiedo. When Fiedo sees another cat in his room it does not matter who you are or how long he has known you. He goes for the cat and anyone else who is in his way. Don’t get me wrong, Fiedo is the most loving cat in the shelter but only if he is alone in his room. You could say he has the “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde syndrome” when he sees another cat in his room. So please take the time to look around when you enter and exit his room.

## **Condition 10:**

### **Olive will be handled by an experienced volunteer.**

When Olive came to Purrfect Paws Inc Shelter he had been severely abused. If you do not know Olive’s body language you could get hurt. He needs time to build trust with new volunteers. Even then there is no guarantee that he will not attack.

## **Condition 11:**

**Check tasks that have been completed on room worksheets.  
*Inventory and refill all supplies before you leave.***

This is a condition I added. I make sure that when I leave the shelter that everything (meaning paper towels, Shaklee spray, cleaning supplies etc) are refilled (or at least you find a note from me). So whoever comes after me to volunteer does not have to run around to get the material he/she needs. It makes life so much easier and more fun. If you've used the "Shark" (which can be found in Fiedo's and Annie's room as well as in the cat vacation home) please charge it so the next person can use it right away.

## **Condition 12:**

**The gate to the Cat Vacation Home is always locked.**

The Cat Vacation Home (or as we also call it the "Cat House") is located outside of Jinna's house (sorry Buddy's house). At one point there was no additional space in the shelter thus cats were placed in the Cat Vacation Home. Some of the cats living in the cat house had or still have problems with urination. So they are able to go to the Cat Vacation Home which is less stressful and extremely peaceful. Always lock the outside gate of the cat house before you come back to the main house (shelter) even if somebody tells you that he/she has to go to the cat house later. Something may happen such that the person does not get to the Cat Vacation Home. So Jinna wants us to lock the gate as soon as we leave the cat house.

## **Condition 13:**

**Purrfect Paws, Inc, T. Russell Reitz Shelter, Riley County Humane Society, and Pott County Caring Hearts Humane Society collaborate cooperatively.**

We all share a passion for animals. In addition we all share a common mission to assist animals and improve their quality of life. We all have different guidelines to arrive at our common mission. Some of us have more latitude and freedom in the organizational structure and how decisions are made. All communication to and about other animal organizations will be positive and beneficial.

Have Fun!  
Andrea



[www.purrfectpawskansas.org](http://www.purrfectpawskansas.org)