

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE DO CLASSES MEET?

The Richmond SPCA is located at 2519 Hermitage Road. Classes are either held in the Track & Training Center in our Robins-Starr Humane Center or in Smoky's Training Center which is in the same building as our Susan M. Markel Veterinary Hospital (just east of the main building). Please refer to class descriptions and your reminder email for where your class will be held. To park, turn from Hermitage Road on to Rhoadmiller Street and take a right into the second or third parking lot. You may also park on the street.

WHAT DO I BRING TO CLASS?

Some classes meet the first week without dogs. Please check your class description and reminder emails to determine if you should bring your dog to the first week of class. If unsure, your instructor's contact information has been provided in a reminder email.

Equipment:

- Flat or martingale collar
- Head halters and harnesses if needed
- 4' or 6' leash that you can hold onto easily and won't slip through your hands
- Clickers will be provided
- Treats – lots of small soft food items your dog loves
- Treat pouch, fanny pack, or pockets
- Water and bowl for your dog
- Poop bags
- A hungry dog

DO I NEED TO BRING MY DOG'S VET RECORDS?

For your dog's health and safety, we require that certain vaccinations be up-to-date and ask that you provide the vet records prior to your first class. You may email records to gbirdnecklace@richmondspca.org or fax them to 804-823- 7788.

MUST MY DOG BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED?

We recommend all dogs and cats be spayed or neutered at the age deemed appropriate by your veterinarian. Spay or neuter is not required to attend classes, but female dogs may not attend class during their heat cycle and some unneutered males may not be behaviorally appropriate for play sessions. No refunds or class credits will be given for female dogs who miss class due to entering a heat cycle. Our usual refund policy applies in these situations.

WHAT TYPES OF TREATS SHOULD I USE?

Small, soft, high value treats are the best for training. Each dog is different, so we recommend finding out what your dog really likes before coming to class. You can test this by offering the dog these food items while outside with some distractions, such as while on a walk. If the dog gets very excited about this food, it's probably a good

paycheck! Introduce new foods slowly to your dog every day for a week before class starts, to give their system time to adjust.

Bring lots of treats as well as a variety of different treats. Common treats are cut-up hot dogs, chicken, cheese, meatballs, or soft dog food such as Bil Jac's frozen food or Happy Howie's treats.

CAN I BRING FAMILY MEMBERS WITH ME?

During COVID-19 we are allowing one adult handler to attend with each dog during in-person classes and puppy play sessions. Exceptions may be made on a very limited basis with permission from management. The person attending is welcome to video conference using a phone and tripod to allow families to participate during class.

CAN I BRING MY OTHER DOG?

Due to space and time constraints, please only bring the dog(s) registered for class. Please speak with your instructor if you have a special circumstance.

WILL THE DOGS BE "SOCIALIZING"?

Only in the puppy and adolescent classes (where appropriate) will dogs be playing together. In all other classes, handlers should avoid having dogs meet, play, approach one another, or pass too closely. All dogs need training and are welcome to attend classes whether or not they enjoy interacting with other animals. Classes are about your dog learning to listen to and focus on their handler.

To be respectful to staff, volunteers, adopters, and other students, keep leashes short and give lots of space between your dog and others' animals when in the parking lot and when entering/exiting class.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

No sandals or heels please! Wear comfortable clothing and rubber soled/non-slip shoes.

CAN WE ATTEND CLASS IF MY DOG DOES NOT GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE OR OTHER DOGS?

If you are concerned about your dog's behavior around other dogs or people, please contact the Manager of Training Education at 804-521-1326 for more information. Admission to class is determined on a case-by-case basis and we are happy to help you determine the best fit for you and your dog.

TRAINING CLASS POLICIES

CANCELLATIONS

If a class is canceled due to inclement weather or instructor illness, we will make every effort to contact participants at least an hour and a half prior to class start time. You will receive an email and/or a call or text with this information from either your instructor or management. In the case of a canceled class, another class will be added to the session on a day and time to be determined by the instructor.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

All dogs must be current on the following vaccinations at least three days prior to their first class (protective titers are also accepted):

- Rabies: for all dogs ages 16 weeks and older, updated annually or every three years (per your veterinarian's recommendation)
- Distemper/Parvo: updated annually or every three years (per your veterinarian's recommendation); puppies must have had at least two sets prior to class and by 16 weeks of age
- Bordetella: updated every six months or annually (per your veterinarian's recommendation)

You or your veterinarian must provide proof of current vaccinations or protective titers on or before your pet's first training class.

Send your veterinary records by email to gbirdnecklace@richmondspca.org, fax them to 804-521-0540 or bring printed copies to our humane center's front desk. Please mark them to the attention of Gail Bird Necklace.

Vaccination waivers from your veterinarian should be sent by email to afritz@richmondspca.org or faxed to 804-521-0540. Please mark them to the attention of Alisha Fritz.

All waivers must be approved by our veterinarian and management team.

CLEANLINESS

Please make sure to bag and dispose of all dog poop in the bins provided at various locations around the building. Indoors, if a dog poops, please bag it and take it outside for disposal. If a dog pees or poops indoors, please be sure to disinfect the area with the cleaning supplies provided in each training area. Please be sure to dispose of trash and torn-up toys in the trash bins provided in each training area.

DISMISSALS

Perfect behavior from dogs with minimal training is not expected, as improving dog behavior is the purpose of attending training classes. However, it is very important that handlers have control of their dogs at all times. If a handler cannot maintain appropriate control of their dog in a group class setting, they may be asked to leave class at the discretion of the instructor. We will make every attempt to move them into a more appropriate class based on their dog's behaviors and the owner's handling abilities. Please make sure to pay close attention to each class's prerequisites when choosing which to attend.

EQUIPMENT

All dogs should attend class wearing a collar such as a flat, buckle, or martingale collar. If you need extra control of your dog, harnesses and head halters may also be used where appropriate. Some classes require and some instructors recommend special equipment, which will be explained during the first week of class.

FEES

Training class fees are per dog. Each dog must come with his or her own handler. Fees for "with dog" workshops are per dog. Fees for "without dog" workshops are per family.

REFUNDS

Registrations that are canceled seven or more days prior to the start of class will be refunded in full. Registrations canceled with fewer than seven days' notice will not be refunded, and we will not offer credit toward future sessions for missed classes.

SAFETY

Dogs must be kept on leash at all times, except when told to do otherwise by an instructor. When outdoors, maintain at least 10 feet between your dog and other humans and pets. Indoors, maintain at least 6 feet of distance between your dog and other class participants. Dogs will not be allowed to meet except with the instructor's permission and only for the Puppy and Surviving Adolescence classes.

Both children and adults should not approach, interact with, or pet unfamiliar dogs without the owner's permission.

TARDINESS AND ABSENCES

In the case that you are late or need to miss a class, we make no guarantees that the instructor will be able to catch you up during regular class time. Please join in with the rest of the class when you arrive. Make-up classes may be offered for an additional fee at the discretion of the individual instructor. Make-up classes are not guaranteed, and refunds will not be given for missed classes.