

About Transporting Animals for Ahimsa House

Thank you for your interest in helping to transport animals for Ahimsa House! This is a very important aspect of our work. These pages describe the process of becoming a transporter or foster home and give you an idea of what is involved. If you have any questions at any time, you may contact us at director@ahimsahouse.org

The steps involved in becoming and being an animal transporter are:

- You complete our general volunteer application and online orientation at <http://www.ahimsahouse.org/ahimsa-house-volunteer-application>
- You complete the animal transport application, which we send you after completing the general application/orientation process. We will need a copy of your driver's license and current auto insurance card.
- We process the application and complete your reference check and background check (please understand that this process may take several weeks depending on the availability of your references and of our volunteers).
- An Ahimsa House representative contacts you to schedule a time to review our transport policies and procedures.
- We place you on our transporter list. When we have a transport need, we email and/or phone you. You let us know if you would like to take the transport assignment. You can transport as infrequently or as frequently as your schedule and inclination suit.

Although we never know when we will have a transport need in a given area, and thus you may not be called upon to transport very frequently, you are still providing an enormous service just by being on our contact list, helping us establish a network of volunteers ready to transport if needed. The types of situations where we most often need transport assistance include transferring an animal from a client or domestic violence shelter to a boarding facility, from a boarding facility to/from a foster home, from a foster home to/from a vet appointment, or returning an animal to a client at the end of the animal's stay with us.

Being a transport volunteer requires some tolerance for the unexpected. The situations we are helping with often change by the minute, and for this reason pick-up or drop-off locations may change, the day/time when the transport is needed may be moved earlier or later, or a transport may be canceled altogether. We know our volunteers have busy schedules, and we do not expect you to be able to accommodate every change that may occur--we just ask that you be prepared for some unanticipated events and that you be patient as we work to coordinate these transports.

It is also important to understand that we do not usually know much about the animals that come into our care. Some may be fearful or aggressive due to abuse. Some dogs may have had little or no training. Some may be nervous riding in a car with someone they do not know. For everyone's safety, we require that all animals be contained during transport (leash and/or crate for dogs; carriers/cages for cats and other small animals), and we strongly recommend that all dogs be crated in the vehicle. Please handle all animals with caution and do not assume they will behave like your own pets. If you are ever uncomfortable with a transport situation for any reason, immediately notify our Program Services Coordinator (404-452-6248). You have the right to refuse any transport for any reason at any time during the process.

Finally, when transporting an animal for Ahimsa House, please remember that this is someone's beloved pet, with whose care Ahimsa House has been entrusted. As a volunteer for Ahimsa House, this responsibility and trust is being transferred to you during the time that you are transporting the animal.

Transport work can be very rewarding, particularly when you have the opportunity to be part of the joy of reuniting a client with a pet. In other situations, you may never learn the outcome of a particular case. Please understand that we may not be able to share this information with you, sometimes for confidentiality reasons and sometimes because even we do not know. This is the nature of the work we do.

Please read thoroughly through our Animal Transport Policies and Procedures below and ensure you are comfortable abiding by them.

Ahimsa House Animal Transport Policies and Procedures

- Ahimsa House will not be held responsible for any bodily injury or damage to personal property of the transport volunteer or any other individual resulting from a transport situation. Please understand that we are unable to reimburse expenses for car upholstery cleaning, dogs chewing upholstery or seatbelts, etc. However, you may be able to take a tax deduction on such expenses, as well as on your mileage: please consult your tax advisor.
- Ahimsa House animals are at **NO TIME** to be left unattended during the transport, **including left alone in a vehicle for any length of time, no matter what the weather.**
- Transport volunteers are required to maintain a valid driver's license, as well as current insurance and registration on any vehicle used for transporting Ahimsa House animals. If there is a change in status of any of these, please notify us immediately. Failure to do so could result in serious liability issues.
- No other animal may be in the vehicle while Ahimsa House animals are being transported without prior authorization from Ahimsa House.
- Ahimsa House volunteers are not permitted to provide transportation to clients, or to be transported by clients, under any circumstances. This could result in serious liability issues for us.
- For reasons of both confidentiality and liability, transport volunteers are asked not to bring anyone else along with them on the transport unless absolutely necessary (for example, you accept a request to do an emergency transport while driving your kids home from school, and there isn't time to drop them off at home first). If you cannot be alone on the transport, please notify the Ahimsa House representative in advance.
- No one besides the transport volunteer may handle the animal without prior authorization from Ahimsa House.
- No one besides the transport volunteer may drive the vehicle while transporting the animal--even if you are in the vehicle too--without prior authorization from Ahimsa House.
- While transporting Ahimsa House animals, transport volunteers are expected to obey all traffic regulations, including speed limits.
- Transport volunteers are also asked to drive with extra caution and consideration for the animal being transported. This includes attention to music volume, temperature, and smoke within the vehicle.

- Transport volunteers are asked to keep a slip-on leash and a cat carrier (if possible) in their vehicles at all times in case of an emergency transport need where the animal is not already leashed or in a carrier. These items can be loaned from Ahimsa House if needed.
- Ahimsa House animals must be kept contained at all times during the transport: dogs must be kept leashed and/or crated (**a crate is strongly recommended and will be provided upon request**) and cats, birds, rabbits, pocket pets, etc. must remain in carriers/cages.
- Any information pertaining to the client, the animal, the case, etc. is to be kept **completely confidential** from anyone other than Ahimsa House representatives, unless express permission has been given by Ahimsa House. When disclosure of information is necessary, please provide only the minimum essential information. For example, if you are transporting an animal from a client to a boarding facility, and we have authorized you to give the facility information about the animal, please do not disclose any additional information you may have learned from the client about what happened, where s/he will be staying, etc. If there is something you think someone needs to know, call us on the 24-hour hotline (404-452-6248). If someone is pressing you for information, refer the person to the 24-hour hotline also.
- If an animal needs to be picked up/dropped off directly from/to a client, Ahimsa House will set up the meeting at a neutral location (vet's office, gas station) whenever possible. If it does have to be at the home of the client, Ahimsa House will arrange for a police escort. If this is the case, the volunteer will be notified prior to the transport to make sure s/he is comfortable with the transport.
- If a client or agency asks a volunteer to change plans and pick up the animal from the client's home instead of the originally-agreed-upon location, the volunteer should not agree to this without first contacting Ahimsa House.
- If the transport requires the volunteer to come in contact with a client, Ahimsa House asks that the contact remain brief.
- If transporting an animal to/from a foster home, please be aware that as a safety measure, clients and foster homes never have direct contact with one another, and they are never told each other's identity or location. If the client asks for any information about the foster home, or the foster home asks for any information about the client--or if any other questions or concerns arise--please direct the person to call the 24-hour hotline, 404-452-6248. *Note: This policy differs somewhat for boarding facilities. Clients may be told where their animals are being boarded.
- Transport volunteers should notify Ahimsa House immediately (via the hotline, 404-452-6248) if any issues arise during the transport.
- If any transport volunteer ever encounters a situation where s/he feels his/her safety is at risk, s/he should immediately contact 911 and then Ahimsa House (404-452-6248), in that order.
- Transport volunteers are asked to keep track of their volunteer time via Ahimsa House Volunteer Timesheets and send these timesheets to volunteer@ahimsahouse.org monthly.