

MILITARY PET OWNERS HANDBOOK

Current as of 21 January 2014

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

In 2010 the Wayne County Animal Adoption and Education Center killed 1322 dogs and 3130 cats. That's 12 pets every day. This includes pets surrendered by Seymour Johnson AFB personnel. Many military families fail to plan ahead for deployments and PCS moves. They are left without a plan for their family pets and decide to surrender them to the county animal shelter. They mistakenly believe their pets will be adopted by another family. They could not be more wrong.

It is a sad fact that the large number of owner surrendered pets and strays means that your pet is more likely to be killed than adopted. This holds true across the country, not just in Wayne County. Local governments like Wayne County struggle with the cost of collecting and housing an overwhelming number of owner surrendered and stray pets. Their numbers force shelters to put most of these pets to sleep.

Be a responsible pet owner and plan today for your next deployment and your next PCS. Have a plan for your pets that does not rely on the slim hope of having them adopted from the county shelter.

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VETERINARY TREATMENT FACILITY (VTF)

Fortunately there are plenty of resources available to help you and your family meet your needs. The first and best resource is the SJAFB Veterinary Treatment Facility (VTF). As a member of the base community you are entitled to a number of benefits from the VTF. Register your pets at the VTF and take advantage of your benefits.

The VTF primarily serves our military working dogs. It is difficult to get an appointment if you don't plan ahead. However, as long as your pet has an annual wellness exam you can take advantage of the many discounts and services available to you. Call a month ahead of time to ensure you can schedule an available appointment.

Most pet owners also have a relationship with an off base vet for non-routine care. The VTF will fax your pet records to your off base vet. This allows you to use the discounted routine services at the VTF and still have someone off base you can rely on in an emergency.

At your annual wellness exam you and your pet will enjoy discounts on vaccinations, flea and tick preventatives, heartworm preventatives and microchips.

North Carolina has a VERY HIGH incidence of fleas, ticks, heartworms and rabies. Families who have moved here from another region of the country will find that there are vaccinations and preventative medications your pet needs in this area that you may not be familiar with. Protect your pets and save money by getting your pet vaccinated for rabies and other diseases at your annual exam. With an up to date annual exam you are now authorized to purchase discounted flea/tick and heartworm medications. These products will prevent fleas, ticks, heartworm and a number of other disease carrying parasites. They are normally given to your pet monthly throughout the year. Winters in this region are not severe enough to kill flea, ticks and parasitic worms. Most pet owners continue preventative medications every month, even during the winter.

The VTF can help your pet meet the requirements for your next PCS, especially if you are going overseas and you wish to avoid the expense of a long pet quarantine. Once again, planning ahead is key. There will be more information on PCS moves with pets later.

The VTF can help you microchip you pet(s). Micro-chipping is a great way to help reunite your pet with your family if they are ever lost or stolen. This will also get you one step ahead if you are preparing for an overseas PCS move. Unlike a collar tag, the micro chip is implanted under your pet's skin and cannot be easily removed.

The VTF has information on low cost spay/neuter services. There are plenty of health benefits when you spay or neuter your pet. Furthermore, many foster services we'll cover later require pets in their program to be spayed or neutered. There are low cost spay/neuter programs in the local area:

- Spay/Neuter Assistance Program of North Carolina (SNAP NC): www.snap-nc.org
- Wayne County Humane Society's Spay/Neuter Program: (919) 736-PETS
- Spay/Neuter Assistance Program, Raleigh: (919) 772-5880

BASE HOUSING AND PETS

There are a number of rules for families who live in base housing:

The maximum number of pets permitted in Base Housing is 2 four-legged pets and 2 birds.

Pets in Base Housing **MUST**:

- Be registered at the VTF
- Wear their base registration tag at all times
- Be up to date on rabies and all other immunizations
- Wear collars with their current rabies tag
- Be on a leash when outside unless inside a fenced yard. Your fence must be an above ground fence, at least 4 feet high and cannot be equipped with any electrical components

Pets in Base Housing **CANNOT**:

- Exhibit aggressive and/or dominant behavior
- Be left tied or unattended outside of a fenced yard
- Be allowed to run loose outside a fenced yard
- Be housed outside in a fence kennel
- Be enclosed by electric fence or underground pet-fence
- Be one of the following breeds:
 1. Pit Bull
 2. Rottweiler
 3. Doberman Pinscher
 4. Chow
 5. wolf hybrid

Refer to SJAFBI 31-201 and the Military Housing Brochure for more details.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

Make a plan NOW for your next deployment! Don't wait until the last minute. You have a few options.

Will you:

1. Place your pet(s) with family, friends, a pet sitter or a temporary foster program and be reunited upon your return, OR
2. Surrender your pet(s) to another responsible owner, perhaps through a pet adoption organization, OR
3. Surrender your pet(s) to be killed at the shelter

The first 2 options require you to plan ahead!

The last is the result of having NO PLAN for your four-legged family member.

If placing pet(s) with FAMILY/FRIENDS, ask:

1. Can this person handle my pet's physical needs/energy level? This is especially important if the caregiver is older or senior such as your parents.
2. Does this person have a previous and positive relationship with my pet(s)?
3. Can I provide all necessary resources to ensure my pet's health while I'm away?
4. Is this person able to maintain my pet's daily routines, e.g., feeding, play, sleep schedules?

If the answer is 'no' to any of these questions, you need another plan.

If instead you decide to use a pet sitter OR a surrender your pet to a new family there are a few ways to get the word out. Start by placing ads or posting flyers at the following locations:

- The News Argus & Wright Times Classifieds at 778-3411.
- Post flyers at the VTF, off base vet offices and pet stores like Pet Supplies Plus which has a bulletin board in the back of the store.
- Email the Wayne County Humane Society at admin@goldsboro-wchs.org for their website's Adoption Page.

In all of these locations be sure to include a photo of your pet(s), a brief description of their overall health and temperament and your contact information. Be sure to specify whether

you're interested in pet sitters or if you're looking to surrender your pet(s) to a new, permanent home. And finally, be sure to mention that you're a deploying service member!

If making temporary 'pet sitting' arrangements:

1. leave a Power of Attorney and money for vet care, food, grooming, etc. for the duration of your deployment
2. leave good contact information for yourself and at least one trustworthy friend in the local area

Another option is to place your pet(s) in a temporary foster home and be reunited upon your return. There are a number of non-profit organizations that support deploying service members. They are made up of networks of volunteers who will open up their homes to your pet(s) while you are deployed. Visit their websites at least 45 days prior to leaving to find out if any of their volunteers has an opening in their home:

1. Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pets
www.guardianangelsforsoldierspet.org
Provides temporary foster homes for pets of deploying military personnel
 2. About.com
<http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/assignments/a/petfostercare.htm>
 3. Military Pets Foster Project
www.netpets.org
temporary foster homes until you return from Iraq or Afghanistan
 4. Operation Noble Foster
www.operationnoblefoster.org
specializes in temporary foster homes for cats
 5. Dogs on Deployment
www.dogsondeployment.com
specializes in temporary foster homes for dogs
 6. Foster Military Pets
www.fostermilitarypets.com
temporary foster homes for pets of deploying military personnel
- Contact these organizations at least 30 – 45 days prior.

- Your pet must be up to date on vaccinations, on regular flea/tick and heartworm preventative medication and be spayed or neutered to qualify for the support of most of these organizations.
- Many of their volunteers do not live in the local area and this will require you to travel to their homes to deliver and pick up your pet(s).

Other websites for both temporary foster homes and placing your pet up for adoption to a new permanent home:

1. American Humane Society
www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/issues-information/fostering-military-pets.html.
2. Humane Society of the US
www.humanesociety.org
3. Animal Shelter
www.animalshelter.org
4. Pet Love Shack
www.petloveshack.com/militarypet.htm
for more info on pet adoptions

An additional resource is SPCA International's Operation Military Pets (OMP) program. This organization awards grants to military pet owners to help alleviate the financial burden of moving your pets:

<http://www.spcai.org/index.php/2013-02-08-14-09-56/operation-military-pets-assistance-application.html>

CAUTION! Be wary of using methods such as Craig's List. There is no way to verify the integrity of potential pet adopters. There have been past incidents of dog fight organizers posing as adopters on Craig's List. Use well-known and trusted charities.

YOUR NEXT PCS

Make a plan NOW for your next PCS move! Don't wait until the last minute or for unexpected orders. It's going to happen eventually so prepare for the inevitable move today. Will you:

1. Take your pet(s) with you, OR
2. Place your pet(s) with family, friends or a foster program and eventually be reunited, OR
3. Surrender your pet(s) to another responsible owner, perhaps through a pet adoption organization, OR
4. Surrender your pet(s) to be killed at the shelter.

The first 3 options require you to plan ahead!

The last is the result of having NO PLAN for your four-legged family member

If you decide to take your pet(s) with you, you will need to be prepared for the expense and the time required to get them ready for the move.

Remember your records at the VTF. This will save you time and money at your next base.

Going Overseas? The VTF can help you save money and comply with country-specific rules regarding pets. Most importantly, the VTF can help you avoid the long and expensive quarantine periods many countries require. Once again, prepare ahead of time and save money.

There may be some moving expenses not covered by the USAF, especially if you're going overseas. Save those receipts! You can deduct them as NON-REIMBURSABLE MOVING EXPENSES on your federal income taxes. Airline pet fees and kenneling associated with your move are just some of the allowable deductions.

Be aware of the airline's summer temperature restrictions for timing your pet's travel.

Remember that most TLFs allow pets, but not all. Be sure to call well ahead of time for reservations and ask about any pet number and/or weight restrictions. Most TLFs have a limited number of pet-friendly rooms. If the TLF is not an option you will have time to find a local kennel to board your pet(s) while house hunting.

Could your next PCS be overseas? Be prepared for the expense OR make plans to re-home your pet(s)!

Many countries have lengthy (i.e. costly) rabies quarantine periods and expensive pet shipping requirements, both into and out of the country. The same is true for Hawaii and Guam. However, procedures exist to avoid or drastically reduce the rabies quarantine IF YOU PREPARE IN ADVANCE!

You can avoid many rabies quarantine requirements if you plan ahead AND are willing to invest the time and money. These programs are not free BUT they are much LESS expensive than a lengthy quarantine.

The steps vary significantly depending on the destination, but many involve the following:

1. Micro-chipping your pet with an approved ISO-compatible microchip. Once again the VTF can help. Visit PetLink for more info at www.petlink.net/us/cms.spring?path=/welcome.html
2. Rabies vaccination AFTER chipping (even if pet is not due)
3. Rabies blood test after a specified time period (can be as long as 30 days)
4. Specified waiting period (can be as long as 6 months)
5. Flea/tick/tapeworm treatment and health certificate signed by a vet and USDA just prior to travel (usually within 72 hrs of departure)
6. Travel on an approved airline and/or route

For country specific rules see that nation's pet travel website. These rules change frequently so visit the government website. Do NOT rely on this handbook or any other '.com' websites.

- UK

<http://www.defra.gov.uk>

The infamous 6 month quarantine is no longer required and has not been for a number of years. It was replaced with a 6 month waiting period before travel. Also, the UK has been bringing it's procedures in line with the rest of the EU. This means even this 6 month waiting period can now be avoided.

- Germany, Italy, Spain and Other EU Countries

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/qanda_en.htm

- Avoids quarantine
- South Korea
 - <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>
 - and
 - http://www.qia.go.kr/english/html/Animal_livestock/02AnimalLivestock_007-8.jsp#this
 - Avoids quarantine
 - Requires 30 day waiting period prior to travel
- Japan
 - <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>
 - and
 - <http://www.maff.go.jp/ags/english/animal/dog/import-other.html>
 - Reduces 6 month quarantine to just 12 hrs
 - Requires preparation begins 7 months prior to travel
- Hawaii
 - <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/ai/aqs/info>
 - Reduces quarantine to 5 days or less
 - Possible to arrange for same-day release depending on arrival airport
- Guam
 - http://agriculture.guam.gov/programs/animal_health.htm
 - Reduces quarantine to 5 days or less

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SUMMARY

- Your benefits at the VTF can save you money.
- Living in base housing means complying with the pet regulations.
- Prepare for your next deployment NOW.
- Prepare for your next PCS NOW.
- Surrendering your pet to the shelter will most likely mean death, not adoption.

Not ready to own a pet? Consider volunteering as a pet foster to support deployed Airman. Join Pets Awaiting Warriors (PAWS), Guardian Angels for Soldiers Pets, NetPets or Operation Noble Foster. If you cannot meet the demands, cost and commitment of pet ownership, please consider being a temporary foster instead. You'd be supporting your fellow Airmen and their families while enjoying the company of a companion animal.

For more information on the content of this handbook or P.A.W.S., the Seymour Johnson AFB pet owners support group, please contact Lt Col Eric Ostendorf at eric.ostendorf.3@us.af.mil or (757) 268-5264.