

## House Training

Bringing home a new dog will require some work on house training. It is not uncommon for even well-established dogs to have accidents when adjusting to a new environment. Whether you are adopting a new puppy or an established older dog, here are a few tips that will get you started.

**Keep an eye on your dog.** It is imperative that a responsible human is watching your dog at all times. It can be helpful to use a leash in the house to keep your dog from wandering out of sight. If no one is able to watch your dog they should be in a crate or place of confinement where they will not go to the bathroom. Watch for signs that your dog may need to go out (circling, sniffing, or starting to squat) and get them out quickly. Ideally, you will catch them right before they go, get them out, they will go, and you will reward them (with food).

**Stick with a schedule.** Dogs are creatures of habit and will do best with house training if they have a consistent schedule. While you are determining their schedule, take them out 1) first thing in the morning; 2) within 20 minutes of eating; 3) each time you return home; 4) after a play session; and 5) basically anytime you think they may need to go out (*"When in doubt, let them out"*).

**Protip:** *Write down every time they potty whether it was an accident or not. You may find they are on a schedule already!*

**Reinforce good behavior.** Reward your dog with a favorite treat every single time they potty in the desired location *as they are eliminating or within a second after*. To make this easy, keep treats right by the door you use to let your dog out.

**If there is an accident.** Oops! You've missed the opportunity to train. Dogs will only relate an action to a consequence if the two happen within a couple seconds of each other. Taking them outside after an accident has already happened will not teach them to potty outdoors. Resist the urge to scold your dog if you do catch them in the act-if they learn that pottying in front of you is a punishable offense, they will be even less likely to do it in the proper location. It will be better to try to interrupt them and, if you're successful, bring them outside promptly. In either situation, calmly clean up any mess, make a note of the approximate time it happened if you can, and be sure to monitor your dog more closely moving forward.



**Questions or concerns about house training? Contact HSCC by emailing our trainers at [HSCCTrainers@hscvvt.org](mailto:HSCCTrainers@hscvvt.org), or contact the Helpline by emailing [helpline@hscvvt.org](mailto:helpline@hscvvt.org), or calling (802) 862-0135 ex. 29.**