



P.O. Box 73
Bowling Green, VA 22427
(703) 583-HSKY
petharbor.org

PUPPY POLICY

Q - I'm considering adopting a puppy. What are your requirements?

A -

- 1) **Biting**. Puppies have sharp, razor-like teeth. And they use their teeth in play. If you have small children, you can expect those teeth to break skin. If your children are babies, instead, consider an adult dog. The same thing applies if you have senior citizens or those with medical conditions in your home who have frail, easily torn skin. Get an adult dog, not an untrained baby with razor teeth. Having two puppies may help. Siberians are pack animals.
- 2) **Stress**. Also, if you have small babies, you have your hands full. Raising a puppy and baby at the same time causes problems in most households. Unless you have lots of help, get an adult dog, not a puppy, while you have human babies.
- 3) **Time**. Because puppies are babies, just like human babies, they need warmth, love, & nurturing. A good rule of thumb (also our requirement) is not to leave puppies alone without humans more **total** hours a day than the puppy is months old. If you work, perhaps you have a dog-friendly office, grandma will babysit, or schedules overlap. There are also puppy daycare centers. When pup gets older (7-10 months) but still a pup, consider having a midday walker.
- 4) **Size**. If size is important to you, do not get a mixed-breed puppy. We can only make educated guesses about how big or small mixes will be. If size is important to you, get an adult dog or a purebred puppy. Purebred Siberians can be expected to weigh approximately 45-60 pounds for males and 35-50 for females.
- 5) **Confinement**.

INDOORS: Just like you wouldn't leave human babies alone, canine babies cannot be left alone. They must be confined so they don't get hurt when alone. It also might save your couch, your doorframe, your remote control, your curtains, your wires, just to mention a few of the things puppies famously demolish. You must for the puppy's safety have and use a crate when puppy is unsupervised. (We recommend IATA-compliant hard plastic crates for in-home use.)

OUTDOORS: NEVER tie a puppy or leave a pup outside unattended. In fact, puppies cannot be on the ground until about 4 months of age. See #11 below.

*Pet Harbor Rescue is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
To the extent allowable by law, donations are tax-deductible.
Our mission is to save lives of & educate people about Siberian Huskies & cats.*

- 6) **Noise.** Pups are quite loud and disruptive and can get into trouble, just like human babies. Because of this and destructiveness, pups and young Siberians do not make good apartment pets. Older Siberians do, however. If you live in an apartment, look at dogs around age 3 and up.
- 7) **Training.** All dogs need training. An untrained puppy is an unhappy dog & makes for an unhappy family. Get the puppy into training as soon as possible.
- 8) **Housebreaking.** Puppies do not automatically know where to potty. They have to be taught. Siberian Huskies are generally fairly easy to train in this area, but they must be trained. The crate & treats are wonderful tools in this endeavor. It takes a lot of patience and time. Remember, puppy bladders aren't as big as adult dogs' bladders. They can't hold it as long as a grown dog can. Is this commitment doable for your household?
- 9) **Family.** As noted above, if you have children or senior citizens in the home, understand that puppies will chew on them. In addition to the razor-sharp teeth, puppies knock down tiny people and can hurt them that way. Puppies play as rough as children do, which means children can get hurt. Their hair can get pulled also because they are right at the puppy level. Make sure your family consists of the right age group of humans prepared for all that a puppy entails.
- 10) **Commitment.** If in 5-10 years you expect to be traveling or moving somewhere you cannot have pets or will be retired and don't want to be tied down, do not get a puppy. Get an older dog. You can expect a puppy (under a year old) to live 13-15 more years. Older, calmer dogs make wonderful pets. There is nothing worse than a dog having a home for a few years and then becoming unwanted. BE SURE your commitment is for the life of the pet.
- 11) **Supervision.** Besides the fact that you have to watch a puppy all the time, just like a human baby, you cannot put the puppy on the ground until 4 months of age & enough vaccine protection in areas other than your own fenced yard. Anywhere the puppy can pick up germs or diseases on public ground is off limits. Puppies don't have enough shots & haven't built up enough immunity for that yet. Of course, consult with your veterinarian on this. You must carry the puppy when outside your fenced area. If you don't have a fence, you'll have to use paper in the house. We give preference to puppy homes with existing fences.
- 12) **Cost.** First, you have to be approved to adopt. It all starts with an application. If you are approved, one part of the contractual process is you are required to make a donation to the organization. That donation is tax-deductible & must be a minimum of \$400 for purebred Siberian Husky puppies. You will be given the pup's medical file. We accept cash, cashier's checks, & postal money orders only. The cost of a puppy does not stop there. You also need to consider the cost of caring for a pet for many years. That includes not only food but grooming, medical expenses, & boarding when you travel, toys, & training, etc.