



ASPCA Field Investigations and Response Team Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

What happens once I submit my application?

Once your application is received, please allow up to 2-4 weeks for processing. A staff member will review your application to ensure you have completed the requirements for deployment. If you have submitted all of the requirements including completed information form, signed volunteer release of liability and certifications – you will receive a welcome letter and will be added as an active volunteer in our responder database. You will begin receiving emails from the Field Investigations and Response Team (FIR), including opportunities to deploy to field operations. If any information is missing from your application, you will receive an email to notify you of what is missing

How do I get deployed?

Once you become an active volunteer and are added to our roster, you will begin receiving emails from our Resource Unit. Our Resource Unit is your primary point of contact during an operation, ensuring you have the information you need for your deployment. The Resource Unit sends out availability requests when operational needs arise. If your skill sets and availability meet the operational needs, you will be activated for deployment. Geography and other factors are considered during the planning of an operation, as we want to be as efficient and cost conscious as possible. Typically deployment requests are for 7 day rotations. It is important that you consider pet sitting and other personal arrangements you may need to make at home prior to submitting your availability. Responders may only have 48 hour notice prior to traveling to a field operation. Disaster and cruelty operations are highly dynamic and needs can change quickly. Your deployment dates may be changed or canceled on short notice. Flexibility is required.

What am I expected to pay for?

You will receive Reimbursement Guidelines upon confirmation for deployment with specific reimbursement policies. The ASPCA will pre-arrange your travel, lodging, ground transportation and meals while you are deployed with limited out of pocket expenses to you.

When will I get to deploy?

When operational needs arise we reach out to our list of volunteers for their availability. Volunteers will be deployed based on geographic location, available dates, skill sets and relevant experience. If you are unable to volunteer for our current deployment, you will remain in the responder database and will continue to receive emails for future deployments, however we ask that our responders make themselves available for at least one deployment annually and keep your training and information records up to date in order to remain on our active roster. Responders that do not meet these minimum requirements will be removed from our active responder list but can re-activate in the future.

What can I expect as a FIR Team volunteer?

Due to the dynamic nature of field operations, flexibility with the tasks assigned is essential. During operations, responders may be asked to perform a variety of tasks, some of which relate to experience while others may be new to you.

Roles may include hands on animal care, but many also include transportation, administrative duties and logistics or technical expertise. To ensure we find the right role for you, **we ask that you review task descriptions ahead of time and disclose any animal related allergies PRIOR to deploying.** The nature of this work is fast paced and physically demanding. Responders should expect to work long, hard hours. Work often requires walking, standing, bending, scrubbing, kneeling, stooping and other similar movements, often while wearing Tyvek coveralls or other Personal Protective Equipment for extended periods of time. You may also be required to lift up to 50lbs. Many tasks are performed in a kennel environment with regular exposure to high noise levels, chemical cleaning agents, animal dander and wet floors. The ability to comply with ASPCA protocols is required. Rescued animals may be sick or abused which can be emotionally challenging. Please ensure that you are prepared for the physical, mental and emotional demands of volunteering.

What do I need to bring on deployment?

You will receive a Responder Guide prior to your deployment with specific recommendations; however, responders should pack the following for all operations:

- T-shirts from your organization (logoed) or ASPCA uniform T-shirts (these will be provided if you don't already have one.)
- Weather appropriate clothing (coats, hats, gloves, etc. for cold weather deployments)
- Black BDUs or Tactical Pants
- Sturdy shoes – boots or hiking type shoes (required)
- A small notebook and something to write with
- Personal backpack
- Comfort items
- Medicines
- Flashlight
- Multi tool
- Non-perishable snacks (especially if you have specific food requirements)
- Humor and a positive attitude!

Can I share information relating to my deployment with others?

We encourage you to share your experiences with family and friends however; there are stipulations in place to keep people and animals safe. Posting of approved public content available on official ASPCA websites is acceptable. If you are unsure if the content is approved or if you have questions about information that can be shared, consult with your team lead prior to posting.

Information that is shared with friends and family, the media or on social networking sites during a disaster or cruelty case can be detrimental to the operation. Posting photos or comments of owned pets can cause unnecessary stress for owners during an already stressful time. Taking photos/videos of animals is strictly prohibited. Posting any information or comments on your participation in an operation or your personal opinions on a criminal case or disaster response via social media websites is also strictly prohibited.

The confidentiality of seizure locations and dates is critical to the success of the case. The temporary shelter address is kept confidential to ensure responder and animal safety. For all these reasons, it is prohibited to post participation in any upcoming deployments online. Animals under the care of the ASPCA are considered

evidence in a court of law. You should be extremely mindful while sharing your experiences with your family and friends ensuring you keep specific details confidential.