

Board Member Expectations

Governance Document Applies to All Directors of the Rescue

1. Commitment to Mission, Values, and Ethical Standards

Board members shall:

- Uphold and protect the Rescue's mission, vision, and Core Values
- Ensure all decisions align with the Rescue's ethical standards
- Prioritize the safety and wellbeing of animals, fosters, adopters, volunteers, and the public
- Support a culture of compassion, integrity, transparency, and accountability

This expectation is foundational to board service.

2. Adherence to Bylaws and Governance Documents

Board members shall:

- Read, understand, and follow the Rescue's bylaws
- Comply with all board-approved policies and procedures
- Complete all required annual acknowledgments and disclosures
- Ensure decisions comply with legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements

Directors cannot govern effectively without understanding the governing framework.

3. Strategic Leadership and Forward-Looking Decision-Making

Board members shall:

- Think strategically and long-term
- Make decisions that support sustainable, intentional growth
- Avoid reactive, emotional, or impulsive decision-making
- Evaluate risks thoughtfully and objectively
- Ensure the Rescue remains mission-aligned as it grows

Directors are responsible for the organization's future, not just its present.

4. Fiduciary Duties

Board members shall:

- Exercise the Duty of Care by preparing for meetings and making informed decisions
- Exercise the Duty of Loyalty by placing the Rescue's interests above personal interests
- Exercise the Duty of Obedience by ensuring compliance with laws, bylaws, and policies
- Review financial reports and budgets
- Protect the Rescue's assets, reputation, and long-term stability

These duties are legal obligations, not optional guidelines.

5. Professional Conduct and Communication

Board members shall:



- Communicate respectfully, directly, and professionally
- Avoid gossip, triangulation, and divisive behavior
- Address concerns privately and constructively
- Support board decisions once made
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information
- Represent the Rescue positively in all interactions

Professionalism is essential to maintaining trust and credibility.

6. Participation, Engagement, and Reliability

Board members shall:

- Attend and actively participate in board meetings
- Prepare in advance by reviewing materials
- Respond to communications in a timely manner
- Complete assigned tasks and follow through on commitments
- Participate in board training and development
- Engage in annual board and self-evaluation processes

Inactive or disengaged directors weaken governance.

7. Conflict of Interest Integrity

Board members shall:

- Disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest
- Recuse themselves when appropriate
- Avoid using their position for personal benefit
- Maintain transparency in all relationships and decisions

This protects the Rescue from ethical and legal risk.

8. Support for Leadership and Organizational Structure

Board members shall:

- Respect the President's role and authority
- Support the Founder's Operational Manual and leadership philosophy
- Avoid undermining leadership or creating parallel power structures
- Provide feedback constructively and through proper channels
- Support the rescue's culture of clarity, boundaries, and professionalism

This ensures stability and prevents internal conflict.

9. Commitment to a Drama-Free Culture

Board members shall:

- Model emotional maturity and professionalism
- Avoid reactive or inflammatory communication
- Resolve disagreements respectfully and privately
- Protect the Rescue from toxic dynamics

- Support a culture of kindness, clarity, and accountability
- Culture is one of the Rescue's most valuable assets.

10. Stewardship of Reputation and Public Trust

Board members shall:

- Represent the Rescue with integrity
- Avoid public criticism of the Rescue or its leadership
- Maintain professionalism on social media
- Protect confidential information
- Uphold the Rescue's credibility in the community

Reputation is critical to the Rescue's success and sustainability.

11. Accountability

Board members shall:

- Accept feedback and coaching
- Take responsibility for mistakes
- Correct behavior that does not align with expectations
- Understand that failure to meet expectations may result in board action, including removal under the bylaws

Accountability protects the Rescue and strengthens governance.

Approved by the Board of Directors

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