



## Tugboat 300252: What to Expect

**Tugboat is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Tugboat is your typical lab; affectionate, active, friendly, loving, and playful! Tugboat came to OHS through our Second Chance program from another rescue, where his owner could no longer handle his energy levels due to their age. Tugboat is eager and loves to learn new things and has caught onto training very quickly. He already knows how to sit and lay down and is working on waiting at doors and walking nicely on leash. Tugboat got his name due to his curious and excited nature, especially when on a leash as he can pull hard to investigate his surroundings. We have been successful at OHS using positive reinforcement training and walking tools to teach Tugboat to slow down and walk with us, instead of against us. He has made great progress, but new owners will need to keep up this training so he's successful long term.

Tugboat is a happy go lucky lab, who gets very excited at the start of any adventure, and this is displayed in jumping, mounting, and door darting. We've been working on teaching Tugboat calming and incompatible behaviors during these moments of excitement, like sitting for petting or leashing, sitting and waiting at doorways, and waiting before chasing toys. Consistent practice helps create new habit, it will be important his new family continue to practice these behaviors to help reduce his arousal and display calmer behaviors in moments of excitement. Tugboat in his previous home has darted out of gates, front doors, and on a few occasions at the shelter slipped opened door to escape confinement. Tugboat's intentions are exploratory and curious and he recalls back with little resistance, but it will be important his new family reinforce waiting at doors and manage his door darting so he cannot practice this behavior.

While Tugboat is friendly and social with other dogs and enjoys playing with them off leash in controlled environments, it will be important to not let him greet other dogs on leash. This can reward pulling on the leash creating frustration and an ingrained habit that can be laborious to alter. While out on walks, people and dogs should treat Tugboat like he's a service dog and not interact with him. After a few months of training and once you feel he can remain calm during introductions you can allow people to interact, only if he remains sitting during the interaction. On leash interactions with other dogs are not advised for any dog as it can create frustration, pulling, anxiety, and since we don't know how other dogs will behave, can lead to dangerous interactions. It's best to continue training and have Tugboat interact with known dogs in controlled environments like a backyard or Sniff Spot and never on leash.

### **Here's how to help Tugboat settle in during your first months together:**

**Use routine to get Tugboat comfortable in their new home.** It will take a couple weeks for Tugboat to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home.

**If you're having people over, put Tugboat on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.** Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Tugboat to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

**Be your dog's advocate.** It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Tugboat gets too excited with people and is learning to be calm when out on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people and remain relaxed. Distance is calming.

**Tugboat needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Tugboat loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

**Work on having Tugboat settle on a mat, dog bed, or cot** and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Tugboat is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

**Don't take Tugboat to busy places** where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

**Walk Tugboat on an appropriate walking tool.** We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Tugboat to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Tugboat sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly curious about his environment and want to sniff everything and everyone, causing him to pull. It will be important to never let Tugboat run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

**Practice crate training.** Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. When you cannot monitor your dog in the home, allow them some time to settle and relax in the crate.

**"Puppy proof" your home and practice tether training** to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Tugboat on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Tugboat drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate "freedom", but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn't. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate Tugboat when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn't get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

**Take a training class.** Tugboat would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Tugboat does very well at the vet, they handle meeting new people well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

## **We're here to help!**

We want Tugboat to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Tugboat, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Annika at **(503) 802-6713** or [annikah@oregonhumane.org](mailto:annikah@oregonhumane.org).

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!

## **Behavioral Medication**

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog's medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.