

GREYHOUND RETIREMENT PREPARATION GUIDE

A complete guide to assisting with the retirement preparation of a racing Tasmanian Greyhound



***Tasracing
Integrity Unit***

Prepared for Retirement Preparation Volunteers

Please read this guide alongside your signed
Conditions of Greyhound Retirement Preparation Volunteers arrangement.

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1. Welcome

Thank you for opening your home to a greyhound to assist with its preparation for rehoming. Preparation to retirement is the bridge between the racetrack and a permanent family home - the place where a greyhound is exposed to pet life experiences and to help gather valuable information to assist in finding the most suited home for them.

This guide brings together the practical, legal and welfare information you need as a Retirement Preparation Volunteer (RPV) in Tasmania. It should be read together with your signed Conditions of Greyhound Retirement Preparation Volunteer agreement, which is the legal document governing your placement. Where this guide and your signed agreement differ, the signed arrangement takes precedence.

How to use this guide

Read Sections 2–4 before your greyhound arrives - they cover the program, the arrangement, and home preparation.

Keep Sections 5–10 handy during the placement as day-to-day reference.

Section 11 covers the law you must comply with whenever you're out in public.

Section 12 explains exactly what to do in an emergency - read it now, not when you need it.

2. Understanding the Retirement Preparation Program

2.1 Why retirement preparation matters

A racing greyhound spends most of its life in the same types of environments, with a regular training and racing routine, they may have little to no exposure to household experiences. Retirement preparation gives a greyhound the guidance and gentle exposure it needs to become a confident, well-adjusted pet - and gives its eventual owner a much better picture of the dog they're adopting.

2.2 The 28-day wind-down

The wind-down form is required to be completed and lodged by the licenced participant. Foster Care is the next phase.

Under Tasmanian greyhound racing requirements, every greyhound retiring from racing must complete a minimum 28-day wind-down before it is rehomed permanently.

- **No racing activity.** The greyhound must not take part in any racing, trialling or race-training activity during the wind-down period.
- **Daily socialisation.** Genuine, daily efforts must be made to socialise the greyhound to non-racing settings and environments - this is the core purpose of your preparation placement.
- **Owner's obligation.** The registered owner is responsible for lodging the wind-down notification, but the day-to-day socialising work happens in your home.
- **After 28 days.** A greyhound can move on to a permanent home at any point once the 28 days are complete, it is settled and ready and **all** retirement documentation has been completed and lodged.

2.3 How the volunteer period works

Your Conditions of Greyhound Retirement Preparation Volunteer agreement sets the volunteer arrangement at a maximum of three (3) months from the date of signing. In practice, the actual length of a placement can vary - some greyhounds are ready for their permanent home sooner, others need longer. The ideal care preparation period should be 3-4 weeks, long enough for the dog to become comfortable to the experiences they are being exposed to, but not so long that they become completely settled. The key things to know:

- **Return on request.** The greyhound must be returned to the Owner at the end of the three (3) month period, or earlier if the Owner asks for the greyhound back.
- **Considering adoption.** If you and your household have fallen for your greyhound and would like to become its permanent home, speak to the Owner as early as possible - this is a conversation for you and the Owner to have directly.

3. Your Responsibilities as Retirement Preparation Volunteer

These responsibilities reflect the terms of your signed Conditions of Greyhound Retirement Preparation Volunteer agreement. As a RPV, you are caring for the Owner's greyhound - not for a dog that is legally yours - and the Owner must be able to rely on you to meet the standards below.

3.1 Care standards

- **Address.** Keep the greyhound at the address specified in your agreement.
- **Welfare.** Provide industry best-practice animal welfare at all times, including sufficient food, water, shelter, exercise and health care.
- **Security.** Ensure the greyhound is kept in a secure environment that it cannot escape from.
- **Follow instructions.** Carry out the instructions in this guide and any further instructions given by the Owner.

3.2 Reporting and access

- **Report promptly.** Notify the Owner immediately if the greyhound is lost or becomes ill or injured.
- **Inspections & vet access.** Make the greyhound available for inspection or veterinary treatment if reasonably necessary, or if directed to do so by the Owner.
- **Property access.** Allow the Owner or Tasracing Integrity Unit staff to enter your property to inspect the greyhound at any reasonable time, with or without prior notice.

3.3 Equipment

- **Owner's property.** Any equipment supplied to you with the greyhound (collar, lead, muzzle, coat, crate, etc.) remains the property of the Owner and must be returned at the end of the arrangement.

3.4 In public and around others

- **Legal compliance.** Comply with all applicable laws at all times (see Section 11).
- **Leash and muzzle.** Whenever the greyhound is in public, it must be leashed, muzzled, and under the effective control of a responsible adult who can competently handle it.
- **Maximum two dogs.** A responsible adult may only have effective control of up to two greyhounds at any one time, in compliance with the Dog Control Act 2000.
- **Supervision.** Never leave the greyhound unattended with children. Never leave the greyhound unattended with other animals until you are completely confident with their interactions.

4. Before the Greyhound Arrives

4.1 Prepare your home and yard

- **Secure fencing.** Check fences are at least 1.5m high with no gaps a dog could squeeze through or over. Greyhounds are fast and agile and can clear low or damaged fencing easily. While greyhounds are not noted for jumping fences, they are very curious and like to go exploring.
- **Check for gaps.** Walk the boundary looking for gaps under decks, gates, sheds, and garden beds.
- **Doors and gates.** Be extremely cautious about doors, gates, and car doors being left open - a greyhound can be gone in seconds.
- **Prepare a bed.** Set up a quiet, draft-free sleeping area with a soft, padded bed. Greyhounds have very little body fat and can feel the cold - they should sleep indoors or in a weather-proof outside kennel.
- **Water safety.** If you have a pool or pond, install a temporary barrier.

4.2 Equipment checklist

☐	Well-fitted collar (martingale-style collars reduce the risk of slipping out)
☐	Secure lead
☐	Correctly fitted muzzle
☐	Comfortable bed
☐	Food and water bowls
☐	A coat
☐	Crate or pen, if being trained to use one

4.3 Get the greyhound's history

Ask the registered Owner for what's known about the greyhound before it arrives: racing name, temperament notes, any known reaction to cats or small dogs, vet records, and its current wind-down status. This helps you plan a safe, well-paced introduction.

5. The First Few Days

Racing greyhounds may have never lived in a house. A pet home is an entirely new sensory world - new people, new floor surfaces, new sounds, new smells, and without the clear barriers and structures of a kennel environment. Go slowly and let the greyhound set the pace.

5.1 Settling in

- **Decompress first.** *Keep in mind the 3-3-3 rule with any dog. The first three (3) days allow the dog to settle in and decompress.* Keep visitors to one or two at a time who are quiet. Don't go on long walks or visit highly stimulating areas. Give the dog time to get to know you in the quiet of your home first.
- **One space at a time.** Introduce your home one room at a time, on lead, so you can guide the greyhound calmly past furniture, stairs and glass. Restrict the areas the greyhound can wander to initially. Baby gates can be useful.
- **Safe retreat space.** A crate or pen with the door left open can provide a safe space for a greyhound to retreat to when it feels overwhelmed. Because racing kennels are much larger than domestic crates, many greyhounds will be unfamiliar with them. They will need gradual, positive reinforcement training to help them feel comfortable and secure using a crate in the home environment.
- **Set a routine.** Establish a predictable routine for meals, toileting and exercise as early as possible - greyhounds are used to a routine life and this will help them to settle faster with consistency.

5.2 Toilet training

Treat a newly arrived greyhound much like you would a young puppy when it comes to toileting. Racing greyhounds are accustomed to humans deciding their toileting schedule, so they may not yet know how to signal that they need to go outside. For the first few days, take the dog out every couple of hours, especially after meals, naps, and play. Praise it when it toilets outside. Watch for pacing, circling, or sniffing, as these often indicate it needs to go.

Introducing the greyhound to your home **on lead** for the first day can help prevent indoor marking. If an accident occurs, do not scold the dog; simply take it outside immediately. If you catch it in the act, a firm verbal "NO" is appropriate before calmly removing the dog and taking it outdoors.

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6. Everyday-Life Exposure

The core job of retirement preparation is gentle, positive exposure to the things a pet greyhound will encounter for the rest of its life. Introduce them at the greyhound's pace and pair it with calm praise or a food reward. Never force or rush - step back if the dog shows discomfort and try again later. Seek advice if you are having any problems.

6.1 Around the house

- **Stairs.** Many greyhounds have never used stairs and find them awkward at first. Start with just a few steps, use food rewards, and consider a carpet runner for extra grip. Discourage leaping up or down, which risks injury. Where possible commence stair training on solid filled in stairs, once very confident you can progress to stairs that have an open space at the back.
- **Slippery floors.** Tiles, polished floorboards and lino can feel slippery and unsettling for some greyhounds, especially if they lose their footing. Placing non-slip mats or rugs across these areas can create safe pathways. The distance between these can be increased as your greyhound becomes more comfortable.
- **Glass doors and windows.** Some greyhounds don't register glass doors or windows as solid barriers. Walk the dog gently past each glass panel and consider marking eye-level glass with tape until it reliably notices the barrier.
- **Household noises.** Household appliances - TVs, vacuum cleaners, hairdryers, washing machines - can be startling the first time. Gentle, gradual exposure over a few days is usually all that's needed.

6.2 Out and about

- **Car travel.** Most greyhounds travel well in cars, but many are used to being lifted in and out to protect their limbs. Because people often can't lift a greyhound, it's important to teach them to get in and out of the car on their own. Using treats or a favourite toy placed in the car can encourage them to jump in. If they hesitate, gently place their front feet in the car and then support their hindquarters, rather than lifting their whole body at once. If they still won't jump in, teach them to wait with their front feet up until you can help the rest of their body in. Practice simple cues to help your greyhound stay calm and wait when getting in or out of the car.
- **Traffic and street noise.** Take short walks, building up exposure gradually. Traffic, prams, bikes and general street noise are best introduced from a distance before working closer.
- **Chase instinct.** Because greyhounds are sighthounds, plastic bags, small animals or joggers can trigger a chase response. Always keep the dog on a lead, no longer than 2m (as required by the Dog Control Act 2000) and **never** use a retractable lead or tie the dog to a fixed point - both carry a real risk of injury.

6.3 Weather and the elements

Greyhounds are a short-coated breed with minimal body fat and can feel the heat and cold more than other breeds. They should sleep indoors or in a weatherproof kennel and must have proper shelter from sun, wind and rain if left outside during the day. A dog that becomes too hot or too cold can lose condition quickly, so a coat for winter and shade and water in summer are essential.

7. Feeding, Health & Grooming

7.1 Diet and exercise

- **Diet.** Feed a consistent, good-quality diet in two smaller meals rather than one large one and avoid sudden diet changes. Discuss their current diet with the owner. Additives like sardines and Greek yoghurt can assist with coat condition and stomach sensitivities.
- **Water.** Fresh water should always be available.
- **Exercise.** Regular daily walks of no more than 20–30 minutes are recommended. Greyhounds are sprinters built for short bursts of speed, not endurance athletes, so they aren't well suited to jogging or long-distance exercise. The preparation phase is about the greyhound taking a step back from being an athlete.
- **Stay on lead.** Never exercise a greyhound off-lead in any public area or unfenced space, including dog parks - this is one of the most common causes of injury and loss.

7.2 Grooming and handling

- **Handling.** Most racing greyhounds are used to being groomed, having their feet, ears and face handled. If you notice the greyhound is sensitive in any areas note this and discuss with the owner.
- **Nails.** Dog should arrive with nails trimmed.
- **Teeth and ears.** Check teeth and ears periodically as part of a normal grooming routine, if you notice any concerns, notify owner immediately as veterinary attention may be required.

7.3 Health and wellbeing

- **Sleep-startle.** Sleep startle is when a sleeping dog growls or snaps after being suddenly disturbed. This is an automatic, instinctive reaction to being abruptly woken from deep sleep and is perfectly normal. Greyhounds are used to sleeping undisturbed in individual kennels and are not familiar with being touched while asleep. Because of this, some may react with a startled growl or snap if woken suddenly.
Always make sure a sleeping dog knows you are there before you touch it and be especially careful with children around a resting greyhound. Greyhounds can sleep with their eyes open. Before approaching them say their name or make some noise to wake them. Only approach once you can clearly see that they are awake and alert.
- **Resource Guarding.** Any dog may display resource guarding, which means protecting something they value, such as food, a bed, the couch, a person or a toy. If you see any guarding behaviours, prioritise your safety and calmly move the greyhound away from the item or area. Offering a safe swap, like a treat, can help them let go of the guarded object. Let the owner know immediately so they can seek professional advice.
- **Signs to watch for.** Watch for vomiting, diarrhoea, limping, lethargy, or any sign of injury or illness.

Contacting the Owner about health

Notify the registered Owner immediately if the greyhound becomes ill, is injured, or goes missing. Follow the Owner's instructions about veterinary care, and do not authorise treatment or medication without their knowledge.

If it's a genuine emergency and the Owner can't be reached, seek immediate veterinary attention first and notify the Owner as soon as possible afterwards.

8. Behaviour & Training Basics

8.1 Setting the dog up to succeed

Consistency and patience help a greyhound be a confident, happy and well-adjusted. Set household rules from the start - where the dog sleeps, feeding routines and daily expectations - make sure everyone follows them the same way from day one.

- **Basic cues.** Use simple, consistent cues such as *yes, wait, leave it, this way and on your bed*. Reward calm and desired behaviour.

8.2 Play and enrichment

Some greyhounds may not be used to having toys available. Give you dog access to toys and observe how they interact with them. If they begin to destroy a toy, remove it immediately. Watch for any resource guarding and act safely if it appears.

Some greyhounds may play excessively; monitor play sessions so they don't overdo it and become exhausted or dehydrated. Play is an important part of settling into pet life. Avoid squeaky toys, as the sound can overstimulate some dogs.

8.3 Behaviour to discourage

Gently and consistently discourage the following behaviours using positive, reward-based methods:

- Constant barking
- **NB:** Growling is a dog's way of communicating discomfort. It should not be punished. Report growling to the owner immediately, including how the situation occurred.
- Jumping up on people
- Digging or destructive chewing
- Pushing or barging through doorways
- Leaping into the car before being invited
- Counter surfing - taking food from benches or tables. Limiting kitchen access with a baby gate is often the easiest solution.

9. Introducing Other Animals

9.1 Other dogs

Greyhounds are usually sociable with other greyhounds; they may have had little to no experience with other breeds. Introductions should be done carefully. Have a second handler so both dogs can be meet on lead and avoid face-to-face greetings at first. Allow brief interactions of only two (2) seconds before moving away.

Ideally introduce on neutral territory. A short walk together works well; walk parallel and gradually reducing the distance between them. Once home, walk both dogs around the property on lead before bringing them inside together.

If either dog shows aggressive behaviour, stop the introduction immediately. The greyhound should wear a muzzle for all early interactions until you are confident in both dogs' behaviours.

9.2 Cats and small animals

Volunteers should **not** introduce an unassessed greyhound to a cat or small animal. Prey drive is genetic, and most sighthounds have a **natural instinct to chase**. Only greyhounds formally assessed as cat or small animal safe should be allowed near them.

9.3 Feeding around other animals

Feed pets in separate areas and stay alert during mealtimes - food is a common trigger for conflict between animals that are still getting to know each other. Remove bowls after meals and avoid leaving food out.

10. Children & Visitors

Most greyhounds are gentle and tolerant with children and will often move away rather than react if they feel pestered. However, all dogs must be closely supervised around young children, and - as outlined in your agreement - a greyhound must **never** be left unattended with children.

Watch for signs that a greyhound is uncomfortable, such as stiffening, increased lip licking or showing the whites of their eyes. These are early warnings that the dog needs space.

- **Mealtimes.** Children should not approach a dog that is eating.
- **Handling.** Children must not hang on the greyhound's neck, grab their face, pull their tail or climb on their back. These actions can injure the dog or make it feel threatened.
- **New visitors.** Introduce visitors calmly, one or two at a time. Allow the greyhound to approach in its own time rather than being crowded.

11. Public Outings & Tasmanian Law

Legal requirements

The greyhound must be muzzled whenever it is in public, unless it holds a current exemption from muzzling. At the preparation phase a greyhound will not have been assessed.

The greyhound must be always kept on a lead in all public places this applies even to a muzzle-exempt dog.

A responsible adult may have effective control of no more than two greyhounds at any one time.

Never let a greyhound off-lead in a public area, including "greyhound-friendly" reserves. A greyhound in the preparation phase can be easily injured or make a poor decision. DON'T put them in this situation.

The greyhound remains the property of its registered Owner at all times - do not rehome, on-sell, or transfer its care to anyone else at any time.

These requirements apply **every time** the greyhound leaves your property.

12. Emergencies & Reporting

12.1 If the greyhound is lost

- **Act immediately.** Search the area on foot and by car and notify the Owner straight away.
- **Check nearby vets and council.** Contact local vet clinics and council rangers; found dogs are often taken to one of these first.
- **Contact Greyhounds As Pets (GAP).** GAP is commonly contacted when a greyhound is found.

12.2 If the greyhound is ill or injured

- **Report to the Owner.** Notify the Owner immediately and describe what you've observed.
- **Follow instructions.** Follow the Owner's directions regarding veterinary care; don't authorise treatment unless it's a genuine emergency.
- **Genuine emergencies.** If the Owner cannot be reached and it's an emergency, seek immediate veterinary attention and inform the Owner as soon as possible afterwards.

12.3 Inspections

The Owner or Tasracing Integrity Unit staff may inspect the greyhound at any reasonable time, with or without notice, as set out in your agreement. This is a normal part of the Retirement Preparation process and not an indication of concern about your care.

13. End of the Foster Period

- **Return of the greyhound.** The Retirement Preparation arrangement runs up to three (3) months from the date of your agreement. The greyhound must be returned to the Owner at the end of this period, or earlier if requested. The ideal preparation period is 3-4 weeks.
- **Return of equipment.** Any equipment supplied with the greyhound (collar, lead, muzzle, coat, crate, etc.) remains the Owner's property and must be returned at the same time.
- **Wanting to keep the greyhound.** If your household wishes to offer the greyhound a permanent home, raise this with the Owner as early as possible during the preparation period.
- **Record Behaviours.** Keep a simple record of behaviours observed during the preparation period to assist with the greyhound's transition and future placement.

14. Quick Reference

14.1 Daily exposure checklist

Use this as a rough guide during the preparation period - tick off each item as the greyhound becomes comfortable with it, at its own pace.

☐	Walking on different surfaces: tiles, floorboards, carpet, grass, gravel
☐	Stairs (up and down)
☐	Glass doors and windows
☐	Household sounds: TV, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, doorbell
☐	Car travel, getting in and out without assistance
☐	Meeting calm, resident dogs on lead
☐	Everyday street noise: traffic, prams, bikes, skateboards
☐	Meeting a small number of calm adults and well-briefed children
☐	Being left alone for short, gradually increasing periods

14.2 Do's and Don'ts

Do

Keep the greyhound on a lead in every public space, always.
Muzzle the greyhound in public unless it holds a current exemption.
Introduce new experiences gradually and positively.
Notify the Owner immediately of illness, injury, or if the dog goes missing.
Allow the Owner or TIU staff to inspect the greyhound as required.

Don't

Let the greyhound off lead in any unfenced or public space.
Leave the greyhound unattended with children.
Authorise veterinary treatment without the Owner's knowledge, outside a genuine emergency.
Rehome, sell, or permanently transfer the greyhound.
Take control of more than two greyhounds at any one time in public.

Thank you for the time and patience you bring to the preparation for rehoming.