



Home check policy

Written 2025

Contents

Purpose of home checks	3
Scope.....	3
Legal and welfare framework	3
Who may conduct home checks.....	4
Types of home checks	4
In-person home checks	4
Virtual home checks.....	4
General home check assessment criteria	5
Safety	5
Shelter and comfort.....	5
Food and water	5
Supervision and companionship	5
Dog-specific home check guidelines	6
Containment and fencing	6
Yard and exercise.....	6
Housing	6
Training and handling.....	6
Cat-specific home check guidelines	7
Indoor settling-in period.....	7
Litter management	7
Enrichment and safety.....	7
Outdoor access (If Applicable)	7
Multi-animal households.....	8
Children and vulnerable individuals	8
Rental properties and permissions	8
Red flags and grounds for declining.....	8
Follow-up and monitoring.....	9
Ethical conduct.....	9
Final authority.....	9

Purpose of home checks

Home checks are conducted to ensure that animals placed through Furever Friends Foundation are adopted into environments that meet their **physical, emotional, behavioural, and welfare needs**.

The objectives of a home check are to:

- Assess suitability of the living environment
- Ensure animal safety and welfare
- Match animals appropriately to adopters
- Reduce failed adoptions and returns
- Provide education and guidance to adopters
- Protect the long-term interests of the animal

Home checks are **not inspections**, but welfare assessments conducted in a respectful, supportive manner.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All **dog and cat adoptions**
- Foster placements
- Permanent placements

Home checks may be conducted:

- **In person**
- **Virtually** (video call, photos, or live walkthrough)

Legal and welfare framework

Home checks are conducted in alignment with:

- Animals Protection Act, No. 71 of 1962
- SPCA Act, No. 169 of 1993
- Relevant municipal by-laws
- Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare
- Ethical, force-free animal handling principles

Animal welfare is the **primary decision-making factor** in all assessments.

Who may conduct home checks

Home checks may be conducted by:

- Trained Furever Friends Foundation staff
- Approved volunteers
- Designated animal welfare partners

All assessors must:

- Be familiar with this policy
- Conduct checks objectively and consistently
- Declare conflicts of interest
- Maintain confidentiality

Types of home checks

In-person home checks

Used where:

- The animal has specific behavioural or containment needs
- There are safety concerns
- The placement is considered high-risk
- Virtual checks are not suitable

Virtual home checks

Used where:

- Distance or logistics prevent in-person visits
- The home environment is straightforward
- Follow-up checks are required

Virtual checks must include:

- Live video walkthrough OR
- Clear photographs of all relevant areas

General home check assessment criteria

The following minimum standards apply to **all homes**:

Safety

- No obvious hazards (open pools, exposed wiring, toxic plants)
- No access to roads and neighbouring properties
- Secure gates and doors

Shelter and comfort

- Protection from heat, cold, rain, and wind when outdoors
- Clean, dry sleeping areas
- Suitable bedding

Food and water

- Access to fresh water at all times
- Appropriate feeding plan and storage

Supervision and companionship

- Animals not left alone for excessive periods
- Plans for care during work hours, travel, or emergencies

Dog-specific home check guidelines

Containment and fencing

Assess:

- Fence/ wall height and condition
- Gaps under or between fencing
- Secure gates and locks
- Suitability for the dog's size, strength, and behaviour

Unacceptable practices include:

- Chaining or tethering
- Electric fencing used as sole containment
- Permanent confinement to small spaces
- Breeding
- Dog fighting
- Use of aversives
- Outdoor only

Yard and exercise

- Adequate space for movement
- Daily exercise plan appropriate to breed/type
- Access to enrichment and stimulation

Housing

- Dogs should live **with the family**, not be isolated
- Garages, cages, or kennels are not acceptable permanent housing

Training and handling

- Commitment to **force-free, humane training**
- No use of aversive tools (shock collars, prong collars)
- Willingness to attend training if recommended

Cat-specific home check guidelines

Indoor settling-in period

- Cats must be kept **indoors for a minimum of two weeks once adopted**
- Safe, quiet space for initial adjustment
- No immediate access to outdoor environments

Litter management

- Appropriate number of litter boxes (general rule: one per cat plus one extra)
- Clean, accessible placement
- Safe disposal plan

Enrichment and safety

- Scratching posts
- Vertical spaces (cat trees, shelves)
- Secure windows and balconies

Outdoor access (If Applicable)

- Only after the settling-in period
- Sterilised and vaccinated cats only
- Safe access methods encouraged

Multi-animal households

Assess:

- Current animals' temperament and health
- Introduction plans
- Space and resource availability
- Ability to manage conflict
- Other animals are vaccinated and sterilized

Slow, supervised introductions must be planned and understood.

Children and vulnerable individuals

- Age-appropriate supervision plans
- Education around respectful animal handling
- Safe interaction guidelines

Rental properties and permissions

Adopters must provide:

- Written landlord or body corporate permission
- Proof of pet allowance where applicable

Red flags and grounds for declining

Adoptions may be declined if:

- Containment is unsafe
- Breeding is intended
- Veterinary care is not financially planned for
- Aversive training methods are insisted upon
- There is a history of neglect or repeated relinquishment
- The adopter is unwilling to make reasonable improvements

Declines must be:

- Documented
- Communicated respectfully
- Centred on animal welfare

Follow-up and monitoring

- Follow-up checks may occur post-placement
- Support and guidance offered
- Welfare concerns escalated where necessary

Ethical conduct

Assessors must:

- Be respectful and non-judgmental
- Avoid personal bias
- Provide education, not criticism
- Act in the best interests of the animal

Final authority

The final decision on any placement rests with **Furever Friends Foundation**, based on welfare considerations and professional judgement.