

SHAW PIT BULL REFUGE



PORKCHOP'S
PHAT FARM
COLUMBUS, MS

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Animal Care & Property Staff
A paid nonprofit position

Hands-on work with dogs, pigs, goats, poultry, and property
About seven acres · Columbus, Mississippi

Animals come first. No exception.
If something in this handbook is unclear, ask management before you guess.

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Welcome

Welcome to Shaw Pit Bull Refuge (Shaw PBR) and Porkchop's Phat Farm (PC Phat Farm). This handbook is for paid staff. It explains how the property runs, what the job requires, and how we expect people to work with the animals and with one another.

Shaw PBR is a hands-on, on-site nonprofit 501(c)(3) rescue. Most of the dogs in our care arrived as strays or after abuse. Porkchop's Phat Farm sits on the same property and is home to pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, geese, and other farm animals. Together the refuge and farm cover about seven acres.

Your work decides whether animals eat on time, stay healthy, stay contained, and get adopted. Clean kennels, full water buckets, accurate records, and calm handling are not extras. They are the job.

How This Role Works

This is a paid nonprofit job for a reliable, self-starting animal care and property worker. We cannot offer a large starting wage or a traditional benefits package. The work is physical, detailed, and often done with no one standing next to you.

Staffing

This job is mostly done alone. There is not a volunteer crew to fill gaps. Two other people are on staff:

- One part-time person (about 10 hours per week) handles medications and play time.
- The co-owner is part-time and semi-retired, maintains equipment, and helps in different areas as needed.

Both can step in if something urgent comes up, but they have their own work. We need one person who can look around, see what needs doing, and take care of it without being walked through every minute of the day.

The Priority

Animal care is the top priority. Keep the animals safe, fed, watered, medicated, and properly cared for. Everything else on the property supports that.

Management

Day-to-day direction comes from Shaw PBR management. Kenneth Shaw is the primary contact for hiring and on-site questions. When management gives an instruction about animals, gates, feeding, medication, or public contact, follow it. If two instructions conflict, stop and ask before you act.

Management keeps an open door for questions. Raise problems early. Do not wait until an animal is at risk or a visitor is involved.

Code of Conduct

Staff are expected to:

- Show up on time, ready to work, and stay until the animals and property are left safe.
- Treat animals, coworkers, visitors, and neighbors with respect.
- Take instruction and constructive criticism professionally, without excessive argument or attitude.
- Tell the truth in records, reports, and conversations with management.
- Keep personal drama, public complaints, and gossip off the property and off social media.
- Never handle animals, drive for work, or operate equipment while impaired.
- Protect the reputation of the refuge. You represent Shaw PBR while you are on duty and whenever you speak for the organization.

We have thick skin here. Rescue and farm work is messy, loud, and sometimes thankless. A strong work ethic and the ability to keep moving after a hard morning are part of the job.

Employment Basics

This job requires:

- A working, dependable vehicle. You must be able to get here in all ordinary weather and stay through your shift.
- A valid driver's license.
- No open warrants.
- A strong work ethic and the ability to work alone for long stretches.
- Thick skin: the ability to take direction, stay professional under pressure, and not take every comment personally.
- Comfort around animals — or, at minimum, a solid ability to read animal body language and a healthy respect for what animals can do. Fear that makes you freeze, rush, or ignore protocol is a safety problem.
- The physical ability to lift, scoop, walk dogs, work in heat and cold, and stay on your feet.

This work is high-stress and requires clear judgment around unpredictable animals. You must be able to stay calm, focused, and safe for yourself and the animals. If you cannot do that on a given day, say so and do not handle animals.

Qualifications on the job

Staff who work in direct contact with animals must be willing to learn proper handling, follow protocols, get dirty, and pitch in wherever the property needs work that day. The right person is self-motivated, mature, dependable, and able to take direction.

Probationary period

The first 30 days are a probationary period. Management and the employee both use that time to decide whether the job is a fit. Performance, reliability, handling, and willingness to follow protocol will be watched closely. Finishing the 30 days does not guarantee continued employment.

Animal safety and termination

We reserve the right to end employment immediately if an animal is harmed, put at risk, or neglected because protocol was not followed. That includes failing to secure gates and kennels, skipping feeding or medication, ignoring handling rules, leaving gates unlatched, or leaving animals unsupervised when they should not be.

Health and fitness for duty

You must be in generally good health and able to do the physical work you were hired to do. Ask your doctor if you have questions about working with animals, lifting, heat, cold, or allergens. This sits alongside any release or waiver you signed at hire. If you are hurt, sick, or unable to focus, say so right away. Animals still have to be cared for, but you should not handle dogs or heavy farm work if you cannot do it safely. Contact management as soon as you know you cannot work a scheduled day.

Hours and scheduling

You set your own schedule, up to 40 hours per week. Hours are flexible. When you can, be available during public open hours, Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visitors, adoptions, and other non-routine work are generally by appointment. You may work a weekend day in place of one weekday. Weekend events may also be available. Once you accept a shift, we count on you to be there. If you cannot work, contact management as soon as possible and, whenever you can, clear changes in advance. Keep staff informed when your hours change.

Examples of typical days: 8 a.m.–4 p.m., 9 a.m.–5 p.m., 7 a.m.–3 p.m. We do not pay overtime. Hours over 40 in a work week do not receive overtime pay. Extra hours accrue and carry to the following week as regular time to finish that week's hours.

Paid lunch (full-time employees)

Full-time employees receive a one-hour lunch break. That hour is paid whether you take lunch or not. You may eat on site or leave the property. If desired, you may leave an hour early the same day if you do not take your lunch break - just note this on your timesheet.

Vacation and Holiday pay

We do not offer health insurance, retirement, or similar benefits. Vacation accrues at 1 hour for every 40 hours worked, up to 52 vacation hours a year.

Holiday pay is based on your hours from the previous five working days. Example: 32.5 hours over those five days $\div 5 = 6.5$ hours of holiday pay. If a holiday falls on a weekend, we may pay up to 4 hours on the previous workday. That amount uses the same five-day average, then is cut in half, and will not exceed 4 hours. Same example: $32.5 \div 5 \div 2 = 3.25$ hours.

Payroll schedule

The work week runs Wednesday through Tuesday. Payroll must be sent in by 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Checks are available the next day (Wednesday). We cannot do cash or direct deposit. We can pay by check, Cash App, Venmo, or PayPal.

Drug testing

Shaw PBR does occasional drug testing. By working here, you agree that testing may be required. ***Impairment on this property is a firing offense.*** Animals and heavy work leave no room for it.

Dress

- Wear non-skid shoes and clothes you can ruin. You will get dirty, wet, torn, and stained.
- Do not wear hoop earrings or long necklaces. Paws and gates catch them.

Conflict resolution

Raise misunderstandings or concerns promptly and directly with the person who can act on them. Do not let a problem sit until it becomes a safety issue or a public complaint.

Duties and Responsibilities

You will handle animal care, kennel and farm work, light facilities work, and some office and outreach support. The list below is not an excuse to ignore something obvious that needs doing.

Daily animal care

- Feed every animal on schedule, including personalized dog diets and special farm diets. Check each animal every day and adjust the amount: feed more if an animal is thin, less if it is overweight.
- Give medications as directed when that is part of your shift. Keep water filled. Clean and sanitize bowls and buckets on schedule. Notice who ate and who did not.
- Watch and record appearance, behavior, appetite, and any sign of illness, injury, or unusual activity. Notify management immediately of medical or behavioral problems.
- Exercise dogs daily as assigned. Learn which toys and enrichment each dog can have safely. Wash and rotate ropes and toys as needed.
- Scoop yards and kennels daily, and more often when needed. Rake gravel, keep gates working, and keep walkways clear. Help with handling for medications, nail and hoof trims, and other care as needed.

Porkchop's Phat Farm

- Follow feeding order and protocols for poultry, goats, and pigs, including special feeding for individual animals.
- Keep the wrong animals out of the wrong pens.
- Carry and pour heavy feed. Work calmly around a crowd of hungry animals.
- Brush and treat designated pigs as directed.
- Gather eggs, date cartons, and rotate them correctly.
- Maintain water in pools, bowls, and mud holes. Hose animals who want it. Repair openings in pens as they appear.
- Scoop farm areas. Rake hay and waste from barns and houses on schedule. Replace hay as needed.
- Let designated pigs in and out of the barn and check hay feeders.

Kennels, facilities, and property

- Clean interior and exterior kennels. Apply odor eliminator and disinfectant on schedule. Deep-clean as needed.
- Inspect and maintain beds, windbreaks, fans, pools, and play-yard water.
- Check pool chemicals and vacuum. Drain and scrub the small pool weekly.
- Keep all gates and doors closed and locked. Keep lock batteries current.
- Pick up debris, trash, broken ties, glass, string, and anything that does not belong.

- Unpack donations, stock supplies, note what came in, and flag when supplies are running low.
- Keep tools, carts, and equipment put away. Report problems right away.
- Mow, weed-eat, spray weeds, do minor repairs, help with larger repairs, and handle pest control as directed.
- Move pavers, blocks, wood, and other heavy materials when needed.
- Sweep, mop, and wipe buildings, porches, and work areas as needed.
- Winter: sweaters, blankets, laundry, and clothing storage as appropriate for each dog.
- Summer: extra cooling, fan upkeep, bird-poop cleanup on kennels and fans, and monthly baths with nails, ears, weights, and records.

Dog walking and training support

- Dogs may be walked only in the designated walkways. No exceptions.
- Place the slip-lead on the dog while the dog is still inside the kennel. Never let a dog come out first and then try to leash it.
- Close and secure every gate and door as soon as you pass through it, including kennels and outside gates.
- Dogs must be supervised at all times.
- Never put two dogs together unless management instructs you to.
- Pick up waste in the play area.
- If you work with a dog on behavior, tell management how the dog is responding. Adopters need accurate information.

Social media and outreach support

- Take photos and videos as directed.
- Help with weekly live streams when asked.
- Keep cottage and dog closet clothes/dress-up items put away.
- Help with social content that showcases the animals and the farm.

Other support work

- Help plan or staff fundraising and public events when able.
- Write or update adoption bios when asked. A clear bio helps a dog go home.

Safety, Disease Prevention, and Accident Reporting

Shaw PBR aims to keep a clean, safe workplace. Training, attention, and personal responsibility reduce them. If you see spilled food, open containers, tools left out, broken gates, or an animal behaving in an aggressive or unusual way, report immediately and correct if you can do so safely.

Accident reporting

If you are injured by an animal or in any other way on the property, tell management immediately so the injury can be treated and documented.

Signs of illness in animals

Notify management at once if an animal shows any of the following:

- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Eye or nasal discharge

- Sneezing or coughing
- Loss of appetite, lethargy, or dehydration
- Abnormal gait or muscle control
- Excessive salivation

Disease prevention on the property

- Vaccination, proper sanitation, and isolation of infected animals
- Avoid overcrowding
- Ventilation and fresh air
- Control of internal and external parasites

Zoonotic disease (illness that can pass between animals and people)

The most effective prevention is simple and consistent:

- Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling animals and before eating or drinking.
- Wear gloves when handling dogs or cleaning kennels and farm areas.
- Disinfect scratches and bite wounds immediately.

Illnesses that can pass from dogs to people include ringworm, external parasites (lice, mites, fleas), leptospirosis, Lyme disease, worm infections, rabies, and salmonella. This list is not meant to alarm you. Animals are vaccinated and treated on arrival. A rescue and farm still carry risk.

Protecting animals at your own home

- Keep your own animals current on vaccinations.
- Change out of work clothes before you socialize with pets at home, and the reverse.
- Check the soles of your shoes before you leave. Designate a pair of “refuge shoes” and take them off before you enter your house.

Animal Handling

Some animals are easy. Some are terrified, in pain, medically fragile, pushy, or carrying a history of abuse. A dog’s reaction can change in an instant. Approach every animal with caution.

Approaching dogs

Dog bites happen in rescue work. Take every reasonable step to prevent them.

- Ask about a dog’s personality and cautions if you are unsure or uncomfortable.
- Do not handle any dog you believe is a threat. Bring that concern to management.
- Acknowledge a dog before you approach or enter a kennel.
- Approach slowly and calmly. Use a soothing voice. Do not tower over the dog.
- Call for help if you feel at risk.
- Some dogs give no warning before they bite.
- If a dog shows unwelcoming signals — stiff body, trembling, cowering, low head, hard stare, wide eyes, growling, lunging, showing teeth — stop and back away.
- Do not turn your back on an angry dog. Back away slowly.
- Do not walk dogs past each other if you are unsure of their reaction.
- If you think a dog will bite, put something between you and the dog: a chair, a fence, a jacket.
- If a fight starts, get help immediately. Do not try to break it up.

If a dog does not want you, do not push it. Never pet a dog that does not seek affection. Do not push limits unless management instructs you to. Forcing contact often makes a fearful dog choose aggression.

Bites

There is a difference between play-biting and an aggressive bite. Every bite must still be reported to management as soon as it happens. If you are bitten, secure the dog in the nearest empty kennel or room. Wash the wound with antibacterial soap for at least five full minutes. Apply pressure if there is bleeding. You will be asked to describe what happened. Depending on severity, you may be directed to a doctor or emergency room. Management will evaluate the dog and decide what happens next.

Farm animals

Pigs, goats, and poultry can crowd, shove, and startle. Work calmly. Follow the feeding order so the wrong animals do not end up in the wrong pens. Watch your feet, gates, and hands. Report broken fencing the same day you see it.

Some pigs can become semi-aggressive and charge. Stay calm and move to a protected area. Goats may head-butt, and their horns can be dangerous. A livestock prod and handheld tasers are available as deterrents. Do not make contact or shock an animal. The sound alone is usually enough to stop them.

Daily Priorities and Working Conditions

Be alert all day

- Pay attention to what you are doing, what others are doing, and what the animals are doing.
- Keep doors, gates, and kennels shut. Confirm no other gates are open before you open a kennel.
- Make sure leashed dogs cannot reach each other, including when leaving or returning to kennels.
- Animals feed off human energy. Anger and defensiveness travel.
- Pick up after yourself. Do not leave open food containers. Put tools away.

Working conditions

Work is indoors and outdoors in heat, cold, rain, and mud. You will get dirty. Expect odors, noise, animal waste, allergens, and the chance of nips, scratches, bumps, and stepped-on toes. Some animals are fearful, pushy, or medically fragile.

The animals still need to eat, drink, get medicine, and have clean living space every day. Weather and staffing do not pause that requirement.

Communication, Privacy, and Public Information

Do not share adopter information, donor details, medical records, or internal disputes. If a visitor or follower asks a question you cannot answer, send them to management rather than guessing.

If you post about work on your own accounts, keep it accurate and kind to the animals and the organization. Public complaints about coworkers or management are not how we solve problems.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I take lunch off the property? Yes. Full-time staff get one paid hour either way.

What if I work through lunch? You are already being paid for that hour, so working through lunch wouldn't result in additional pay.

How is holiday pay calculated? Average of your previous five working days. Weekend holidays may be paid the day before at half that average, up to 4 hours.

Do you drug test? Yes, occasionally.

Do I need my own car? Yes. A working, dependable vehicle and a valid license are required.

I am nervous around some animals. Can I still work here? You do not have to love every animal. You do have to read body language, follow protocol, and treat animals with respect and caution. Panic and guesswork are not acceptable.

Contact Information

Office: 368 Old New Hope Road, Columbus, MS 39702

Phone: 662.386.SHAW (7429)

Hiring / on-site questions: Kenneth Shaw, 662.386.9153

Email: info@shawpbr.org

Websites: shawpbr.org / whatisabaitdog.org

Social: facebook.com/ShawPBR / instagram.com/shawpitbullrescue

Dogs and farm animals come and go. The care you give while they are here is what they remember, and it is what makes the next home possible.

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Shaw Pit Bull Refuge and Porkchop's Phat Farm Employee Handbook. I understand that it describes the duties, safety rules, pay practices, and conduct expected of staff.

I understand that the first 30 days are a probationary period. I understand that the organization is a nonprofit and that pay and benefits are limited as explained during hiring. I understand that animal care is the top priority, that animals come first with no exception, and that employment may be ended immediately if an animal is harmed because protocol was not followed.

I understand the paid-lunch, makeup-time, vacation, holiday-pay, and occasional drug-testing policies. I understand that I must have a working, dependable vehicle and a valid driver's license, that I may not have open warrants, and that I am expected to work independently, take direction, and raise problems promptly rather than in public.

I understand that this handbook does not cover every situation and that management may update duties and procedures as the property and the animals require. If I have questions, I will ask before I act.

Employee name (print)

Date

Employee signature

Management signature

Date

[illegible]