

BRATS – Badger Rescue Animal Transport Services

BRATS is an all-volunteer group of dedicated people, living all over the State of Wisconsin. BRATS volunteer drivers use their personal vehicles to transport animals in need of a ride in shelter-to-shelter and shelter-to-rescue exchanges. Shelters and rescue groups often join the BRATS network by volunteering their staff, volunteers, and vehicles to assist with transports.

The purpose of BRATS is to enable shelters and rescues to easily move animals to new locations. This movement gives the animals more options for adoption and reduces euthanasia rates for pets in Wisconsin.

To request a BRATS transport, please contact Lynn Mitchell at lmitchell@charter.net. Many shelters and rescue groups are using the Alliance of Wisconsin Animal Re-homing Efforts (AWARE) Internet group to find shelter or rescue space for animals or to alert others that they have space available. If you are interested in joining this network, please go to <http://www.awarewisconsin.com/> and click on Join AWARE.

Working with BRATS will be a great experience for your organization and your animals. In order to keep the relationship helpful and productive, please observe these guidelines.

BE a Good Communicator

- **Provide BRATS with the name, phone number and email address of your shelter contact person. During transports this person should be readily available. A cell phone number is preferred. BRATS drivers will communicate with your contact, as necessary, during transports.**
- **Provide your shelter address, phone number and hours you are available for pick-up or delivery.**
- **When arranging the transport, tell the BRATS coordinator about any and all special conditions required to safely and comfortably transport the animal.**
- **If you need to change or cancel a BRATS transport, do it as soon as possible. BRATS drivers have arrived at shelters only to be told, "The animal was adopted yesterday." This is not acceptable.**

BE Thorough with Records

- **Have all records prepared in advance of the scheduled pick-up time. Please remember, the BRATS drivers are running on a schedule and may be picking up animals at other locations.**

- **Provide all known medical and physical conditions regarding the animal being transferred.**
- **Provide the results of a thorough and competent temperament assessment and inform both the BRATS driver and the receiving shelter of special situations.**
- **Provide any other known information about the background or conditions regarding the animal. Some examples – the animal is afraid of crating, has fleas, is a risk for flight, is dirty or not groomed. It is critical for BRATS drivers to know if the animal has aggression issues with other animals or people.**
- **Place paperwork in a separate file folder or plastic sleeve for each animal. Make sure the documents are properly marked with the animals name, ID number, description etc.**
- **Review the animal passenger list with the BRATS driver upon exiting or entering your shelter.**
- **BRATS requires their drivers to carry emergency contact information on their dashboards. The animal records should be placed with this document. In the event of a problem or accident, these documents enable First Responders to access necessary information about the animals on board.**
- **If contagious medical conditions presents after the animal has arrived at the receiving shelter, please contact BRATS and the shelter that sent the animal immediately.**

BE Mindful of Creature Comforts

- **DO NOT feed animal in the morning prior to transport. The animal will be fed at the receiving shelter. This helps to avoid elimination in the transport crate and makes the trip far more pleasant for the driver and the animal.**
- **Please make sure the animal has had ample time and opportunity to eliminate prior to being loaded.**
- **Giving the animal water prior to transport is advised.**

BE Honest

- **BRATS is not a system to move or "dump" marginal animals onto others. Always be completely honest about the description and condition of the animal(s) you are sending out. Help to keep the doors of your partnering humane organizations open to you by being direct and honest about the animals you are asking them to take. Failure to be honest and direct could cause others to choose not to accept animals from your organization in the future.**

BE Helpful

- **Shelter personnel should be available to assist the BRATS driver in loading or unloading the animal. Often it is best to bring the crate into the shelter. The BRATS driver should not be expected to do this without assistance.**
- **If the mammal, bird or reptile cannot be transferred to another crate or vehicle, the surrendering shelter may need to provide the carrier or crate. For some reptiles, a secondary barrier is sometimes used. A crate inside a crate can be helpful in these situations.**
- **If a specific temperature needs to be maintained for a particular animal or reptile, the surrendering shelter should advise the transporter in advance of those conditions.**

BE Courteous

- **In the event of any change in plans, it is important that the shelters communicate promptly and fully to the transporter. Your shelter or rescue partner in the exchange should also be notified promptly.**
- **In most cases, the transporter has already traveled a distance to arrive at your location. Please offer the driver a rest stop, beverage, and a place to clean up.**
- **Offer help with cleaning crates or carriers. Your driver may be picking up other animals on the trip and will need clean and sanitized crates to load them.**
- **Offer clean crate pads or liners if you have them available.**
- **Make sure to thank your BRATS driver and ask if there is anything you can do to help their trip go smoothly.**

BE Generous

- **Consider sending animals that are up-to-date with vet care and are altered. Animals that are vetted, cleaned and groomed can be placed up for adoption more quickly by the receiving shelter.**
- **Offer crates and crate pads to BRATS when you have them to spare. You may give up these items when an animal leaves your shelter, but you will likely get similar items back when an animal comes into your shelter.**
- **Remember that BRATS drivers are volunteers and are donating their time, vehicles and gas to help your organization. Please consider giving them a gas card to help cover expenses.**