

## Home Evaluation Guide

### Environment

Would you leave your own dog here? \_\_\_\_\_

Yard? \_\_\_\_\_ Fencing? \_\_\_\_\_ Height of fence? \_\_\_\_\_ Outdoor area secure? \_\_\_\_\_

Be aware of doghouses, pens, and runs. Inquire about the dog being outside (how long, supervised or alone, in what weather, etc). Are there stakes or tie-outs?

Inside the house, will the dog have free roam? \_\_\_\_\_ If not safe for dog to free-roam, is there a crate? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the crate large enough? \_\_\_\_\_

Will the dog be restricted to certain rooms? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where does the family spend their time? (You don't want the dog isolated in the basement and the family in the den.) \_\_\_\_\_

If family had/has previous or current pets, ask about them and look for evidence (worn floors or molding) or an indication that the dog truly lived in the house with the family. Is the house a showcase palace or "lived-in?" \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that they understand that Leos tend to bring dirt, drool and hair into the home.

Is the neighborhood urban, suburban or rural? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the home on a busy road? \_\_\_\_\_ Are there other dogs? \_\_\_\_\_ Does it appear safe? \_\_\_\_\_ Look for potential challenges inside (loose banisters) or outside (gaps in fence).

How close are nearby neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_ Are they pet friendly? \_\_\_\_\_

### People

What's the family composition? \_\_\_\_\_

Who's the primary dog person? \_\_\_\_\_ Does everyone appear happy about the prospective adoption? \_\_\_\_\_ Is anyone in the household unsure about getting a dog? \_\_\_\_\_

If there are children, what are the ages? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the behavior appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_ If pets currently reside, how do the children interact with them? \_\_\_\_\_

Previous pet experiences? \_\_\_\_\_ Large dog

experiences? \_\_\_\_\_

Training plans/methods? \_\_\_\_\_

### Pets

If there are current pets, observe the health condition/appearance, temperament, and training and look for evidence of access in home and yard and quality of interaction. If there are no pets currently, does the owner speak with kindness of

the memories of previous pets? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Tips**

- Be objective
- *Ask open-ended questions to solicit information.* An example of this technique is to ask the prospective adopter “what kinds of activities do you plan to do with the dog?” instead of “do you plan to take the dog with you when you swim?”
- Listen carefully and look for non-verbal cues (body language).
- Always be courteous and respectful of prospective adopters and their homes.
- Use the home visit as an opportunity to educate prospective adopters about Leonbergers and to suggest participation in club and rescue lists or activities.
- Do not push your personal views on your host. For example, you may believe in raw food or in kibble – but neither position is relevant to evaluating the home. You need only determine that the person will be conscientious in caring for nutrition and health needs—not the specific manner.

**Don't make any promises regarding placement. Explain to the family that you are not the decision-maker.** Tell them that you are there to evaluate whether this might be a safe and happy environment for a rescue Leo and that your detailed report will help determine what kind of Leo might be the best match for their situation.

Following visit, please email a report and discuss your findings with the LeoRescuePALS member who asked you to perform this service.