# Animal Intake Policy and Procedure

The Animal Care and Adoption Center is an open admission shelter in that we will never turn away an animal, excepting healthy feral cats.

An ID is required to drop of a stray, or surrender an animal to the shelter. Persons surrendering an animal must be at least 18 years of age.

If people ask if the shelter is ‘Full’ they can be informed whether or not the shelter is at capacity so they can determine if they still wish to leave the animal there or make other arrangements. It is our mission and mandate that we accept every animal. We evaluate each animal individually and will make decisions regarding adoption, transfer, foster or euthanasia based on the animal and his or her ability to be safely re-homed.

**Animal Process**

Greet the person: “Is this your animal?” “Where is the animal?” if it is in the car – ask if the animal is on a leash or in a carrier?

If the animal is not on a leash or carrier –and the animal belongs to the person, provide the owner with a leash or transfer cage for the animal. Instruct the owner to secure the animal in the car with the doors shut – i.e. dog on the leash or cat in the carrier before they open the car doors. Whenever possible have the owner bring the animal inside and place them in the cage, as this is less stressful on the animal.

If the animal is a stray, follow them to the car and escort them and the animal to the front desk of the shelter – if staffing allows. You may need to get the assistance of animal control or kennel staff if the animal is fractious or you feel that you cannot control the animal.

If the animal is a feral cat, see the Intake Procedure for Feral Cats.

Dogs and cats are placed in the intake area runs or cages for that species.

**Animal Control Intake**

When animal control brings an animal in, a completed animal custody record will be provided to the intake staff as well as any important information on the animal. Intake staff will then input the animal in the computer, and finish the intake process. Any details on the animal or the situation it came from will be added to the computer by the officer.

**Stray Animal Intake**

Animals with any form of identification must be held for 11 days, animals with no identification must be held for 6 days. Forms of identification include but are not limited to: Collars, tags, licenses, bandanas, microchips, tattoos, sweaters, shoes, or ribbons.

When a citizen brings in a stray animal:

* Staff must be sure to get the citizens name, address, and phone number entered into the computer with the animal information. An animal custody record must also be completed.

When someone brings in a stray and wants it back after the stray period:

* Explain the stray hold state law. Ask them to fill out an adoption application on the animal and inform them of the next steps.

**Owner Relinquished Intakes**

When someone is bringing in their animal:

* The owner must read the release statement and sign and date the intake paperwork. The owner’s information and driver’s license number must be noted on the intake paperwork.
* Input the owner and animal information into the computer, and complete an animal custody record.
* If the animal is obviously not adoptable (animal is sick, animal has bitten people, etc.) the person handling the intake must inform the owner that the animal is unlikely to be placed for adoption and could be euthanized. We do not want to give people a false sense of what we can do. This will give them an opportunity to take the animal somewhere else.

When someone is bringing in another person’s animal:

* We must call the owner at the time of relinquishment to get a verbal release – we read the release statement to them from the intake paperwork and then indicate the date and time of the verbal release. We also must write on the intake slip the name and drivers license number of the person who did bring in the animal.
* If the animal is obviously not adoptable (animal is sick, animal has bitten people, etc.) the person handling the intake must inform the owner that the animal is unlikely to be placed for adoption and could be euthanized. We do not want to give people a false sense of what we can do. This will give them an opportunity to take the animal somewhere else.

When a person who relinquished their animal calls wanting the animal back:

This is a situation that must be handled by the Adoption Coordinator, Shelter Supervisor, or if they are not available, the Executive Director.

* Check to see if the animal is still here, and if so, put an immediate Supervisor Hold on that animal’s computer record and cage card.
* If the animal has an adoption application, list the previous owner as a backup pending approval of the first adoption application.
* Ask why the person wants the animal back, what has changed, what is the reason?
* If the situation appears ok for the animal, place a hold in the animal’s computer record. The previous owner follows the adoption process as all potential adopters do.
* If the situation is acceptable and there is a first hold on the animal, inform the owner that they will be placed as a back-up pending the outcome with the first hold.
* The animal must be spayed or neutered before release.

**Intake Procedures for Feral Cats**

Feral cats, unless sick, injured or creating a serious public nuisance are not accepted by the Animal Care and Adoption Center. If a sick or injured feral cat is brought in by a citizen or from an animal control vehicle, they should be transported in a wire transfer cage or the trap already covered with a towel or sheet to minimize stress. Be sure to get the exact location where the feral cat was taken from.

**Completing the Intake Process:**

After creating a record in the computer for the animal, take a photo of the animal. See Photographs for animal record. If the animal is frightened or you cannot safely control the animal, do not try to take a picture at this time. Print out the cage card and place the cage card in the plastic sleeve on the cage into which the animal is placed.

When owner relinquished animals come in with collars, the collars are to be removed and discarded.

When strays enter with collars, any ID, rabies tag, license information on the collar or the tags are entered into the computer and the front office staff then starts tracing the information to find the owners. Stray animal collars are removed and then placed in a zip lock bag with the animal number noted on the outside of the bag with a Sharpie pen. Bagged collars are then kept with the animal behind his/her cage card in the sleeve. If the animal is moved to adoption, then the collar is thrown away.

The animal is then taken to the exam room by the Kennel Attendant for a physical evaluation and preventive treatments, such as parasite treatments and vaccinations. The person performing the evaluations must fill out an animal intake form and determine if vet care is required. See *Seeking Veterinary Treatment.*

# AGRICULTURAL ANIMALS

Occasionally agricultural animals are brought in by Animal Control. These animals will be housed separately from the dogs and cats, as the presence of predators can be very stressful for farm animals. Finding foster care for these animals is very important and foster care providers must be willing to hold on to the animals for five days awaiting an owner, and then throughout animal control’s abandonment procedures as outlined in Virginia code section **§ 3.2-6569 Seizure and impoundment of animals; notice and hearing; disposition of animal; disposition of proceeds upon sale**.

**Livestock:**

Livestock will be housed in an outside exercise yard until an owner or foster care provider can be located.

Livestock includes animals such as:

* Horses
* Cows
* Pigs
* Goats
* Sheep
* Llamas
* Alpacas
* Food Rabbits

**Poultry:**

Poultry will be housed in crates or cages indoors, or in the outdoor meet and greet rooms until the owner or a foster care provider can be located.

Poultry includes animals such as:

* Chickens
* Ducks
* Turkeys
* Guinea Fowl
* Peafowl
* Quail
* Pheasants

# EXOTIC ANIMALS / POCKET PETS

The center does accept some exotics and pocket pets as owner surrenders and as strays when animal control finds them.

Stray exotics or pocket pets are considered companion animals and are subject to the same stray holding period as dogs and cats of 6 days without identification and 11 days with identification.

When surrendered by the owner they animal MUST come with an appropriate cage or enclosure, as well as any special food or equipment required to properly care for the animal. An owner surrendered exotic animal or pocket pet can be turned away if the center does not feel they can properly care for the animal due to lack of facilities or staff.

All exotic/pocket pet intakes (excepting animal control intakes) MUST be approved by the Shelter Supervisor or the ACAC Director.

Exotic pets include:

* Snakes
* Lizards
* Frogs/Toads
* Turtles
* Birds
* Fish

Pocket Pets include:

* Rats/Mice
* Gerbils/Hamsters
* Rabbits
* Ferrets
* Sugar Gliders
* Hedgehogs