**Owner Surrender**

To provide service and support to Virginia Beach residents requesting to surrender/rehome their pets to the Virginia Beach Animal Services Bureau (VBASB) through counseling, problem-solving, and a managed admission approach supported by pet retention and shelter intake mitigation resources. VBASB will provide counseling and resources to all.

This managed intake approach to owner surrender/relinquishments promotes a community-minded goal of aiding/educating citizens on responsible pet ownership, which includes responsible rehoming.

### Intake Timeline

An Urgent Owner Surrender is defined as the need to relinquish an animal within a short time frame to avoid a potential adverse effect on the community, resident, and/or the animal.

Non-urgent intake requests are scheduled out at a minimum of 3 days. This allows the owner to take responsible action with our applied assistance in keeping an animal out of the shelter and responsibly rehomed. Time may be extended or canceled by request of the owner.

## Policy:

Virginia Beach resident approaches VBASB with regards to relinquishing their pet in person, via telephone, calls for service, or email. If contact is with VBASB staff, they will gain an understanding of the resident’s current situation through dialogue. If there is a request to relinquish an animal due to a medical emergency, public safety, or exigent circumstances VBASB may accept these animals immediately, depending on the evaluation criteria. If contact is through Emergency Communications and Citizen Services (ECCS) the call taker will direct the citizen to the VBASB or a call for service will be entered for an Animal Enforcement Unit to respond.

## Procedure:

### Plan of Action

1. Those who desire to keep their animal(s):
	1. VBASB will provide problem-solving support in finding and/or providing the necessary pet retention resources.
	2. A resource guide will be provided, and relevant information explained by the VBASB staff.
2. Those in need of an intake appointment who can appropriately house their animal(s):
	1. VBASB will provide an intake appointment through our animal intake Outlook calendar. Collecting pertinent owner and animal information in the appointment comment fields.
	2. A resource guide will be provided, and relevant information explained by the VBASB staff.
	3. An animal surrender questionnaire will be provided for the owner to complete at home with as much detail as possible.
	4. VBASB staff will follow up 24-48 hours prior to the intake appointment to check on the status and go over the intake process.
	5. Appointments can be extended out or removed if a successful outcome is secured, the owner requests more time, or if space is not available at the shelter and the owner is able to accommodate a date change.
3. Those who need urgent/immediate assistance in the form of an animal intake will be assisted through exhausting all Safety Net Team (SNT) strategies including but not limited to:
	1. Private Euthanasia
	2. Assistance finding low-cost veterinary care and/or urgent care.
	3. Crisis boarding-housing options: evictions, experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence.
	4. Behavioral concerns: food aggression, hyper-activity, mouthy, and minor bite incidents.
4. If all available SNT options are exhausted, and VBASB staff or the Animal Enforcement Unit determines that an urgent or immediate surrender is necessary, the animal surrender questionnaire and all required intake paperwork must be completed at the time of intake.

**Lost/Stray**

***Purpose***:

To provide service and support to Virginia Beach residents who have found lost/stray animals within the city of Virginia Beach. Through education and guidance, we will assist citizens with options to help reunite missing pets with their owners. For animals in need of sheltering, we will act as a safety net facility and bring them into the VBACAC.

***Policy***:

Statistics show the highest reunification rates are within the first 48 hours of being found. Virginia Beach resident contacts VBACAC with regards to finding a lost pet. VBACAC staff will discern if the animal is able to be safely maintained by the finder or if the animal needs to be impounded into the VBACAC shelter due to:

1. Animal is ill or in need of medical attention.
2. Animal is behaving aggressively or in an otherwise unsafe manner.
3. Animal is unable to be safely maintained by the finder until an owner is located.
4. Finder is not eligible to qualify as a foster or adopter with VBACAC.

***Procedure:***

**Plan of Action**

1. Citizens who have found an animal and can safely care for them while looking for the owner:
	1. **MUST** have the finder's name checked through the public courts system (staff) or through AXON/VCIN (enforcement) to ensure they have no convictions of animal cruelty, failure to provide duties of ownership of animals/failure to provide adequate care, domestic violence related offenses, violent crime convictions, convictions of moral turpitude, history of protective order(s), or history of violent/aggressive behavior.
		1. If they do, the animal should be impounded for the stray period at the shelter as the finder would not meet the qualifications to foster or adopt from the shelter.
	2. Finders of lost pets are required by law to file a found pet report with VBACAC. The ACO or shelter staff will scan the animal for a microchip, take a photo of the face, and from the side, collect the finder and animal information required for the found report. They will also educate finders on posting the pet on social media, walking the neighborhood, and posting on any community pages/resources.
	3. Found report information and photos are emailed to the shelter staff and photos are added into the case notes in AXON.
	4. Provide the finder with a small bag of pet food.
	5. If owner reunification has not occurred after 48 hours/2 days. The finder can bring the animal to the shelter during operating hours and either leave it at the shelter **OR** complete the finder-to-foster process and receive additional supplies, a basic vet exam, and preventatives/vaccines.
2. Finder-to-Foster Program Process
3. VBACAC will email the foster application to the finder to complete in advance.
4. VBACAC staff will complete an animal intake form to officially bring the animal into the shelter’s care and custody.
5. VBACAC will have the finder complete the foster application, home inspection, and foster agreement form.
6. Shelter will continue to post animal as stray and reunification efforts during the stray hold. If the animal’s owner is located, the reclaim paperwork will be completed at the shelter by the owner. The finder-to-foster will be notified by shelter staff of a confirmed reclaim and arrangements made for the animal to be reunited.
7. Animal will receive communicable disease prevention veterinary care and any needed supplies as available. A foster manual will be provided with shelter hours and contact information. An appointment will be scheduled for final vetting/surgery on the surgery list following the stray hold completion. Finder-to-foster will be given an appointment date and instructions on drop-off.
8. Once the legal stray hold is completed with no reunification, the finder-to-foster will drop off animal for their vetting/surgery date and can elect to adopt that day or leave the animal at the shelter to be placed up for adoption.
9. Finder-to-foster families hold first choice preference on adopting.
10. Citizens who found an animal and are unable to safely care for them while looking for the owner are deemed ineligible.
	1. The animal is taken into the Virginia Beach Animal Care and Adoption Center as a stray and follows the impoundment/intake process.

Overall, the finder-to-foster process relies on the collaboration and dedication of individuals, animal shelters, and rescue organizations to provide temporary care and support to animals in need, ultimately leading to successful reunifications or permanent adoptions.