

Animal Intake Policy

Mission Statement: **To provide temporary shelter for stray, abandoned and surrendered animals to return them to their owners or find them permanent suitable new homes. To provide cost effective sheltering through a regional partnership to ensure the highest live release rate practical for our community.**

Section 1: Animals

Animal Intake

1. General. Accurate and consistent record keeping and tracking of all animals housed at the RCACP are essential for overall control and evaluation.
2. Receiving an animal. Staff must accept animals without judgment. No animal will be turned away from our service area described as Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Botetourt County and the Town of Vinton. Customer Service Supervisor or Director of Operations approval is required to accept animals from other than our service area. In addition, there is a fee required for out of area animals. See Fee Schedule. Front desk staff should provide information on the benefits of spaying and neutering to those individuals surrendering litters and strongly encourage sterilization of the parent animal by either the person’s veterinarian of one of the areas reduced cost spay/neuter programs, such as Mountain View Humane, Angels of Assisi or Planned Pethood. Also, staff should encourage citizens to attempt to contact local No Kill Rescues to see if they have space for the animal and to use us as a last resort. Citizens relinquishing an animal due to a medical condition should be given information about lost cost vet care through Angels of Assisi.
	1. Before a citizen can turn in an animal, they must first sign the “RCACP facts you should know about Relinquishing an Animal Form”

For OWNER RELEASE animals, according to the protocol of the Code of Virginia, staff will assist the owner in completing the “Owner Relinquishment Form” for each animal. This form asks for specific information such as dog/cat, pet name, color/breed, age, weight, sex, whether it is spayed or neutered, disposition, surrender reason, vaccines given, pet’s veterinarian, medical or behavioral issues and whether the animal was adopted from the RCACP or another facility. The RCACP employee will ensure that a citizen bringing in an animal shall initial the red sentence on the release form stating that the person is in fact the owner and that the owner understands the animal may be immediately euthanized. Staff will ask the citizen surrendering an animals to fill out a pet personality profile in order to increase the chance for a proper evaluation and subsequent adoption. For owned animals, staff will request identification from any person surrendering an animal, preferably a driver’s license and make a copy of the identification. Lastly, staff will enter the animal information from the form into Shelter Net (our shelter management software). Shelter Net automatically assigns a number to the animal that stays with the animal until the animal’s final disposition.

All animals should be scanned for a microchip at intake before being placed in a kennel.

In every case, staff must ensure that the person brining in an animal understands that, “though the animal will be evaluated for adoptability and every reasonable effort will be made to place the animal through adoption or rescue, there remains the possibility the animal may be euthanized (put to sleep).

Tact and discretion must be used in explaining to the citizen how animals are handled at the RCACP. If the discussion becomes heated due to the delicate nature of the fact that some animals brought here do not find homes, the person may be taken to a more private location to discuss options for the pet and the owner. The Customer Service Supervisor, Director of Operations or Executive Director are available to assist the front desk staff. Do not hesitate to ask for help with a situation that you do not feel you can handle.

The front desk staff then calls for an animal attendant who then places the animal in a kennel or cage. When the animal is securely in its cage or kennel, the animal attendant returns to the front desk and give the cage number information to the front desk clerk who enters the cage number into Shelter Net.

The front desk staff should then make a copy of the “owner release” form, stamp it “copy” and place it in the inbox that hangs outside the Executive Director’s office. Animal attendants are responsible for placing the copy on the appropriate cage. The original paperwork is kept with the rest of the day’s work to be reported by the Customer Service Supervisor on the Daily Sheet the next morning.

If the citizen asks to be notified before the animal is euthanized, they shall be told that it is not possible to notify everyone making such a request due to the large volume of animals received, but that they can call to inquire about the animals’ disposition if they would like.

RCACP generally holds owner relinquished animals a minimum of 48 hours unless there is no room available, the animal has a critical medical condition or if the animal poses a threat to staff.

For STRAY RELEASE animals, according to the protocol of the Code of Virginia, staff will complete the “Stray Relinquishment” form for each animal. This form asks for specific information such as dog/cat, pet name, color/breed, age, weight, sex, whether it is spayed or neutered and very pertinent details such as a license number, rabies tag number, tattoo number, whether or not a collar is present, other identification (including a microchip), location found, medical and behavioral issues, how long the animal has been held and if the citizen is interested in adopting the animal. Special attention should be placed to any identification of the animal as this determines the animal’s required length of stay at the facility. Staff will also request identification from the finder, preferably a driver’s license, of which a copy is made. Lastly, staff will enter the animal information into Shelter Net. Shelter Net automatically assigns a number to the animal that stays with the animal until the animal’s final disposition.

 Before a citizen can turn in an animal, they must first sign the “RCACP Facts You Should Know about Relinquishing an Animal” form.

In every case, staff must ensure that the person brining in an animal understands that, “though the animal will be evaluated for adoptability and every reasonable effort will be made to place the animal through adoption or rescue, there remains the possibility the animal may be euthanized (put to sleep).

Tact and discretion must be used in explaining to the citizen how animals are handled at the RCACP. If the discussion becomes heated due to the delicate nature of the fact that some animals brought here do not find homes, the person may be taken to a more private location to discuss options for the pet and the owner. The Customer Service Supervisor, Director of Operations or Executive Director are available to assist the front desk staff. Do not hesitate to ask for help with a situation that you do not feel you can handle.

The front desk staff then calls for an animal attendant who then places the animal in a kennel or cage. When the animal is securely in its cage or kennel, the animal attendant returns to the front desk and give the cage number information to the front desk clerk who enters the cage number into Shelter Net.

The front desk staff should then make a copy of the “Stray Release” form, stamp it “copy” and place it in the inbox that hangs outside the Executive Director’s office. Animal attendants are responsible for placing the copy on the appropriate cage. The original paperwork is kept with the rest of the day’s work to be reported by the Customer Service Supervisor on the Daily Sheet the next morning.

If the citizen asks to be notified before the animal is euthanized, they shall be told that it is not possible to notify everyone making such a request due to the large volume of animals received, but that they can call to inquire about the animals’ disposition if they would like.

1. Front desk staff will scan each animal for a microchip. Animal attendants will also scan each animal in their assigned rooms for a microchip and remove any collar to check for owner information.
2. Collars, license tags, microchips or other forms of identification attached to stray domestic animals are noted on the intake form and every attempt should be immediately made by staff members to locate the owner. This includes calling the microchip company or treasurer’s office to obtain the owner’s phone number and address, calling the owner, asking an Animal Control officer to leave a custody notice at the place of residence, or if these attempts fail, mailing a letter to the address. See found pet letter.
3. Staff should examine each domestic animal to check for injury, illness or infection with parasites. If an animal appears sick, place the animal in the appropriate isolation room and notify the Kennel Supervisor and medical staff. Very sick animals that are “owner released” may be taken back and immediately euthanized.
4. Surrendering clause/signature. Every individual surrendering a domestic animal must sign a statement, part of the intake form, that ownership of the animal is relinquished to the RCACP. This surrendering clause also attests to the knowledge that the signee is: not the owner, does not know of an owner, certifies that the animal has not bitten an animal or person during the last 10 days, that the animal will be cared for as prescribed by the laws of VA, and that the Public Animal Shelter shall be held harmless for any liabilities.
5. Staff should make certain that individuals surrendering their pets understand that the release form is a transfer of ownership contract and that they relinquish all rights of property in the animal to RCACP.
6. Release date. ShelterNet will calculate the date each animal is available for release. All animals shall be scanned for microchips upon entering RCACP if time allows, and within 24 hours regardless.
	1. Surrendered owned animals. The animal is available for adoption, rescue or euthanasia on the date of surrender. However, a 48 hour hold should be observed to have the animal properly evaluated. If the owner has a “change of heart” Front Desk staff should immediately place a supervisor hold on the animal. Staff then works on establishing a deadline date which will be placed in the “comments” section in ShelterNet.
	2. Animals with identification. Stray animals that may have some form of identification, including collar, tattoo or microchip upon arrival at the RCACP are held for a period of not less than ten days, such period to commence on the day immediately following the day the animal is initially confined in the facility, unless sooner claimed by the rightful owner thereof. The animal is then available for adoption, rescue or euthanasia.
	3. Animals without identification. Stray animals without identification are held for a period of not less than five days, such period to commence on the day immediately following the day the animal is initially confined in the facility, unless sooner claimed by the rightful owner thereof. The animal is then available for adoption, rescue or euthanasia.
	4. Animals deemed feral. Nothing shall prohibit any feral dog or feral cat not bearing a collar, tag, tattoo or other form of identification that, based on the written statement of a disinterested person, exhibits behavior that pose a risk of physical injury to any person confining the animal, from being euthanized after being kept for a period of not less than three days, at least one of which shall be a full business day, such period to commence on the day the animal is initially confined in the facility, unless sooner claimed by the rightful owner. A disinterested person shall not include a person releasing the animal or reporting the animal.

INTAKE OF ANIMALS FROM ANIMAL CONTROL

1. Officers from the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, Botetourt County and the Town of Vinton bring animals into the facility through the 3 bay doors. The field form, a three part form, is taken with the animal to the appropriate holding unit.
2. The pink section is placed in the cage card holder, the white copy is placed in the rack by the bay doors to alert RCACP Front Desk staff of a new arrival and the yellow copy is retained by the animal control officer. (Some jurisdictions choose to retain the white copy and provide the yellow copy for RCACP staff-if this is the case, the Front Desk staff, for reporting purposes, should stamp the yellow sheet “original”.
3. Upon notice that a new animal has arrived, a Front Desk staff member shall remove the sheet from the rack and take it to the front desk for entry into the computer. This intake is processed as an “impound”. If there are any unusual remarks of circumstances (medical, etc.) noted on the Animal Custody Card, Front Desk staff will provide this information to the Kennel Supervisor and /or medical staff.
4. Special needs animals, such as court case, quarantined or injured animals shall be dealt with immediately with proper location and veterinary care. If the medical staff at RCACP is unable to provide the proper care, and the animal is a stray, Animal Control for the intake locality should be contacted to transport the animal to an outside veterinarian.

All animals will have an intake exam, performed by the Animal Health Coordinator or the Medical Animal Care Assistant within 48 hours of arriving at RCACP. See Intake Exam form.

Photographs for Animal Record

Animals will be photographed daily based on the prior day intake. Pictures are uploaded to ShelterNet, which in turn automatically loads to the website: [www.rcacp.org](http://www.rcacp.org/). The hope is that by allowing citizens to view the animals being held at RCACP on the website, we will reunite them with their owners sooner.

If you receive a picture and description of an animal being held at another facility:

1. Go to Shelter Site Admin
2. Add pet
3. Add dates by clicking on calendar and choosing day
4. The date available will be the last day of hold
5. The site expiration date will be the next day.
6. In the name field, enter RCACP #
7. Enter type (dog, cat)
8. Enter gender
9. Make sure you choose RCACP as the agency
10. Enter in the Description field: “This \_\_\_ was picked up as a stray in \_\_\_; it will be held at (facility name) until \_\_\_
11. Click add
12. Browse list of photos
13. Choose headshot, check as default, submit
14. Brows again, add body shot, submit
15. Hit submit under the description box.

Movement of Animals through the Building

1. When an animal is brought in by a citizen, the Front Desk staff will page for an
Animal Attendant.
2. The Animal Attendant will proceed to the vaccine room to administer intake vaccines to the animal.
3. The Animal Attendant will place the animal in the room/cage appropriate for the size/species of the animal.
4. If the animal shows any sign of illness or injury, it should first be taken to the clinic to be examined and then to the room/cage appropriate for the size/species of the animal. All sick animals must be placed in the Isolation rooms. This is critical to prevent disease exposure.
5. The Animal Attendant should then report the cage # to the Front Desk staff, who will enter it in ShelterNet.