

TITLE: ANIMAL INTAKE POLICY and PROCEDURES

SOP NUMBER: 201

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 10, 2019

REPLACES/RESCINDS: September 15, 2018



I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and outline the procedures for the intake of animals.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Department of Animal Sheltering (DAS) to take in stray animals in need, to manage the intake of owner surrendered companion animals when the owner is no longer able or willing to keep the pet, and to house and care for companion animals that have been seized or taken into custody by Animal Protection Police. This policy extends only to Fairfax County residents and animals found in Fairfax County. DAS does not intake healthy stray, outdoor, feral, or free-roaming community cats unless they are injured, declawed, aged, ill, malnourished, or otherwise in danger.

III. PROCEDURE FOR INTAKE OF STRAYS

A. The DAS accepts all stray dogs brought by residents or Animal Protection Police (APP).

1. If a resident comes to the Shelter with a stray dog, the counselor shall create a "found" custody record in the Shelter management software system (PetPoint). The following information shall be included:
 - a. Description of dog (color, size, gender, type)
 - b. Location where found
 - c. Identification: collar, tags, tattoo, license, microchip, markings
 - d. Name, address and phone number of finder
 - e. Information about circumstances
2. The dog shall be taken to "Receiving" where a caretaker will assess whether the dog appears healthy or needs immediate medical attention. A photo will be taken prior to seeking veterinary care. Vaccines may be postponed if the dog is seriously injured, obviously ill, or too stressed for staff to safely handle.
3. If the dog appears healthy, staff will take a photo for the PetPoint file and give a bordetella and distemper vaccine, a dewormer and flea and tick treatment.
4. If there is no identification, staff will check lost reports to search for an owner.

5. If an owner can be identified, staff will make every effort to notify the owner that the dog is at the Shelter.
6. Stray dogs are held at the Shelter either 5 full days (no identification) or 10 full days (found with some identification like a collar or tags) before the Shelter assumes ownership of the dog.

B. The DAS does not accept healthy stray, outdoor, feral, or free-roaming community cats.

1. If the counselor determines the cat should NOT be taken in, they will discuss this with the person bringing in the cat. Some common situations in which the Shelter will not accept a stray community cat are the following:
 - a. Cat is healthy and has no identification.
 - b. Cat is healthy and has an ear tip, marking it as part of a managed community cat colony.
 - c. Cat is healthy and is feral and over the age of eight weeks.
 - d. Litter of neonatal kittens that may have a mother; resident will be asked to return the kittens to the location where found and watch for the mother's return.
2. The intake counselor shall inform the visitor of the Shelter's decision to NOT intake the cat and will explain the reason behind this decision.
3. If the person refuses to take the cat with them, the counselor shall alert a supervisor and ask for assistance. If the person makes any threats to the animal and the counselor feels the cat's well-being is at risk, the counselor shall find a supervisor, or in the absence of an available supervisor, shall intake the cat.
4. If the counselor determines the cat should not be taken in, the counselor shall take a FOUND report and will ask the person to return the cat to the same place it was found. If the cat was found close to a busy road or other potentially dangerous area, the counselor shall ask the person to return it to a safe area nearby.
5. If the resident inquires on the phone rather than in person, a found report shall be taken. The counselor or volunteer answering the phone will either request that the resident leave the cat alone, or if they are concerned for the cat's welfare, they may ask the caller to bring the cat to the Shelter.
6. If the counselor determines that the cat is ill, injured, declawed, aged, malnourished, otherwise in danger or in need of medical attention, or if the cat has identification (a collar, tags, tattoo, microchip), the counselor shall intake the cat.
7. The cat shall be taken to "Receiving" where a caretaker will assess whether it appears healthy or needs immediate medical attention. A photo will be taken prior to seeking veterinary care. Vaccines may be postponed if the cat is seriously injured, obviously ill, or too stressed for staff to safely handle.

8. If the cat appears healthy, staff will take and upload a photo to the PetPoint file. The cat will be given a distemper vaccine, a dewormer and flea and tick treatment.
 9. If there is no identification, staff will check lost reports to search for an owner.
 10. If an owner can be identified, staff will make every effort to notify the owner that the cat is at the Shelter.
 11. Strays are held at the Shelter either 5 full days (no identification) or 10 full days (found with some identification like a color or tags) before the Shelter assumes ownership of the cat.
- C. The DAS accepts any and all abandoned or stray small companion animals, including small mammals, reptiles, and birds (other than wildlife). Intake procedures and custody records are the same as for dogs and cats except there are no intake vaccinations.
- D. The DAS accepts stray or abandoned poultry and livestock. Intake procedures and custody records are the same as for dogs and cats except there are no intake vaccinations.
- E. The DAS does not take healthy or injured wildlife.
1. Residents bringing healthy wildlife are instructed to return the animal to where it was found and release it.
 2. Residents bringing injured or orphaned wildlife are referred directly to a local veterinarian or the Wildlife Rescue League.
 3. If there is suspected rabies or exposure to a human or companion animal from a rabies vector species, an Animal Protection Police Officer must be called to speak with the resident and determine the course of action.


IV. PROCEDURE FOR INTAKE OF OWNER SURRENDERED PETS

- A. The DAS accepts owner-surrendered pets by appointment.
- B. Residents who want to relinquish a pet to the Shelter will be asked to provide information about their pet, including species, age, medical and behavioral history and reasons for surrender. They will be given the next available appointment date.
- C. Residents requesting surrender of a pet will be counseled on other options and where needed will be provided information on medical, behavioral or training resources to help them keep their pet if possible.
- D. When a pet is relinquished to the Shelter:
1. The intake counselor should do an initial inspection of the animal to determine its health and overall temperament.
 2. All pets should be scanned to determine if they have a microchip.

3. If the owner is requesting medical or end of life euthanasia, the counselor shall use the intake type ("Owner Surrender") and sub-type "Euthanasia Request".
 - a. The owner should be told that staff and/or a veterinarian will evaluate the pet to determine whether or not euthanasia is the appropriate disposition. (See decision tree attached.)
 - b. If the owner is not willing to sign the pet over as a surrender without assurance of euthanasia, Shelter staff should counsel the owner on the option to take their pet to their own veterinarian.
4. Intake counselors shall request the owner fill out a behavior profile, to be filed in pet's file, along with any medical documents the owner provides.
5. Intake counselors shall have a conversation with the owner and make appropriate notes of that conversation in PetPoint as an 'Intake' memo, detailing the pet's behavior and medical history.
6. All residents surrendering a pet must sign the disclosure form indicating whether or not the pet has bitten in the past.
7. If the intake counselor is concerned that the pet being surrendered may have medical issues (skin problems, emaciation, apparent illness, wounds, etc) as a result of abuse or neglect, the intake counselor shall contact the Animal Care Manager, Manager on Duty, Shelter Director, or other manager to evaluate the animal and determine if Animal Protection Police involvement is necessary.
8. If the Director or a manager determines that the pet is in danger of being abandoned, or the situation warrants immediate surrender, they may take the animal without making an appointment.

This SOP becomes effective September 10, 2019, and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED AND APPROVED BY:



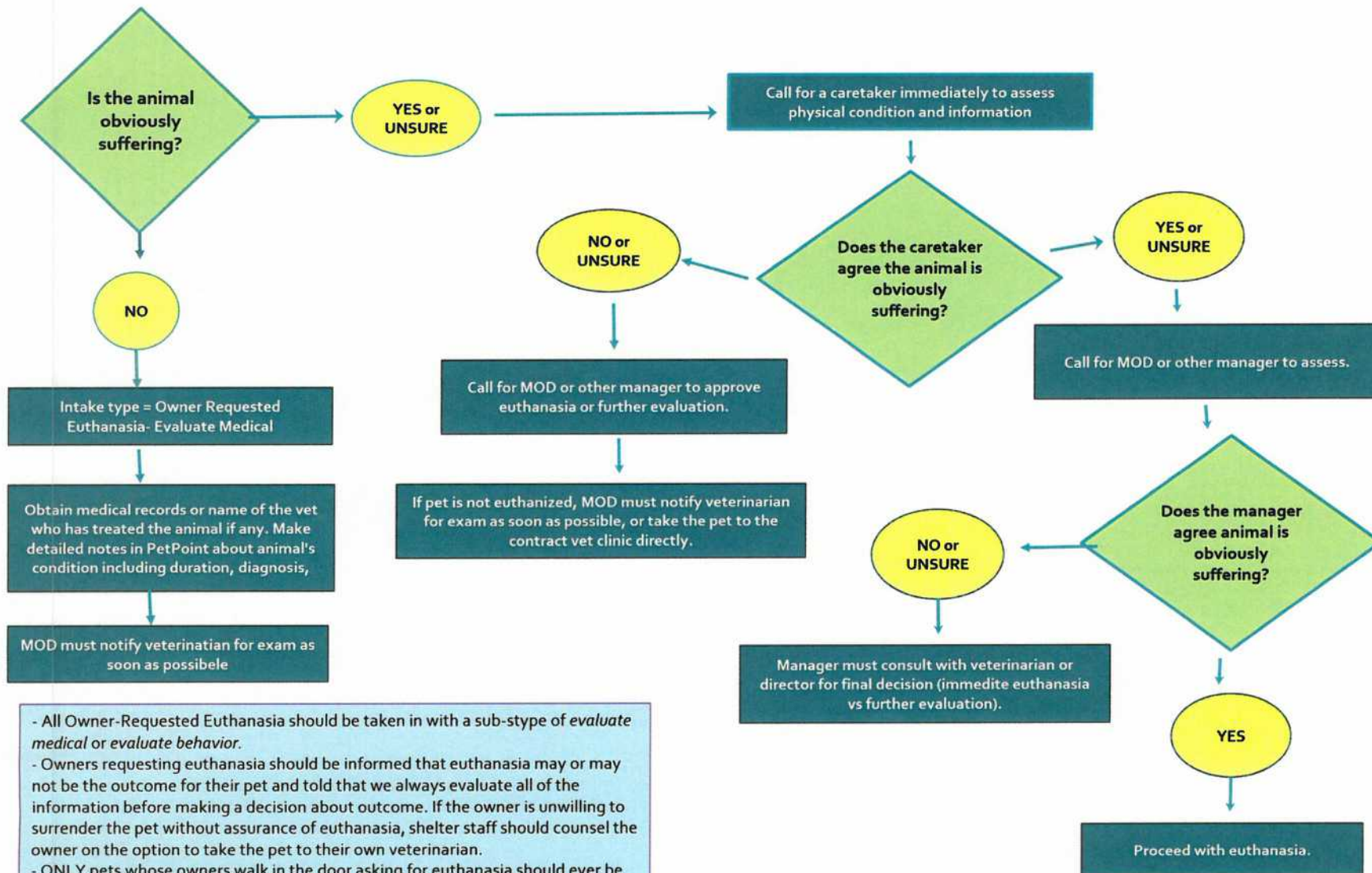
Director, Department of Animal Sheltering

REVIEWED BY:



Deputy County Executive for Public Safety

Owner Requested Euthanasia Decision Tree



- All Owner-Requested Euthanasia should be taken in with a sub-type of *evaluate medical* or *evaluate behavior*.
- Owners requesting euthanasia should be informed that euthanasia may or may not be the outcome for their pet and told that we always evaluate all of the information before making a decision about outcome. If the owner is unwilling to surrender the pet without assurance of euthanasia, shelter staff should counsel the owner on the option to take the pet to their own veterinarian.
- ONLY pets whose owners walk in the door asking for euthanasia should ever be intaken as Owner Requested Euthanasia. If they ask for anything else, even if