**Operating Procedures**

**Highland County Animal Shelter (HCAS)**

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**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this operating procedure is to establish guidelines and requirements for accurately completing the animal intake and disposition documents as required by law.

**II. Policy**

The HCAS will make accurate records of all animals received. Such records will be retained for a minimum of two years or as required by law.

**III. Procedure**

Every animal received by the HCAS will be documented on the animal intake form. Current year forms will be filed at the HCAS. Past years forms will forms will be filed with the ACO until disposed of.

**A. Surrender:**

 1. An owner shall be defined as per Virginia State Code 3.2-6500 (definitions).

 2. Owners will provide proof of Highland County residency (DL, Utility bill, etc.).

3. The Animal Control Officer (ACO) shall advise the owner that once surrendered, they relinquish all rights, and disposition of the animal.

4. The ACO will advise the owner that they will not be allowed to adopt said animal back into their custody.

5. The ACO will fill out the owner’s information (DL, etc.) on the intake form.

6. The ACO will document the surrendered animal on the intake form.

**B. Strays:**

 1. Citizens brining stray animals to the HCAS will provide the following information:

 a. Name, address, phone number

 b. Date and location where animal was found

 2. The ACO will enter all information onto the intake form.

 3. The stray will remain at the shelter until its final disposition.

**C. Quarantine:**

1. Animals being quarantined at the HCAS whose owners plan to redeem, shall be documented on the intake form.

2. Quarantined animals will be isolated for a length of time determined by the Veterinarian (Vet).

3. After the Vet has cleared the animal, it may be either put in general population, or transferred to a releasing agency.

**D. Rabies: (Refer to 3.2-6522)**

1. The ACO will be guided by the local Health Department, and provide them with access to the animal in question.

2. If a companion animal is brought to the HCAS with no proof of current rabies vaccination, and it may have been exposed to an animal with rabies either through a bite, saliva, or central nervous system tissue, that will be held for no longer than 6 months (para D). The animal can be given the rabies vaccination at the beginning of the holding period.

3. If a companion animal is brought to the HCAS with proof of current rabies vaccination, and exposed in the manner above, the animal will be revaccinated, and held for 45 days (para D).

4. At the discretion of the local Health Director, any animal that may have exposed a person will be held for 10 days (para E).

**E. Intake Procedure**

1. Animals will be scanned for a microchip as soon as possible after intake. Exceptions to this will be feral cats, and aggressive dogs.

2. Animals will be documented on the intake forms, and given an intake identification number (year-month, day). Example: Day of pickup/drop off is 1-20-25, the ID# will be 25-0120. If more than one animal was dropped off, then an alpha numeric will follow the number (25-0120 A, B, etc.).

3. Upon intake all animals will be given an initial health inspection to determine if Vet care is needed.

**F. Holding Period (Refer to 3.2-6546)**

1. If an animal is turned in with no identification, it will be held for 5 days, not counting the day of intake. Animal can be released sooner if claimed by owner.

2. If an animal is turned in with identification, it will be held for 10 days, not counting the day of intake. If the owner is identified, every reasonable effort will be made to contact the owner within 48hrs following its confinement. Animal can be released sooner if claimed by owner.

**G. Final Disposition**

1. After the timeframe has expired listed above, the animal’s disposition (transferred, euthanized, etc.) will be documented on the intake form and filed for 30 days. You may keep the records for the yearly report to Richmond.