



Loudoun County Animal Services Standard Operating Procedure

Subject: Animal Intake Procedure		Number: #332
Effective Date: 3/17/2016	Approved By: Nina Stively	
Date Revised: 10/16/2020	Date of Next Review: 10/16/2022	

I. Purpose:

To set a policy to ensure intake of animals to Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS) is handled in a humane, progressive and consistent manner. It will set forth guidelines and procedures to ensure animal intake, housing and record keeping are performed correctly and in accordance with applicable laws and shelter guidelines.

II. Policy:

Per the Code of Virginia, 3.2-6546, Loudoun County shall operate a facility to accept dogs found running at large in Loudoun County during business hours. As there is no ordinance pertaining to other species of companion animals or livestock "running at large" in Loudoun County, there is no lawful requirement for the LCAS animal shelter or staff to accept these animals. However, LCAS will make all reasonable efforts to accept stray, injured and unwanted companion animals over the counter, within the guidelines of modern industry standards of intake, including but not limited to:

- **Managed admission:** Whenever possible, owners of companion animals seeking to surrender their pets are asked to make an appointment. Appointments are to be made during specific business hours in order to maximize the information obtained from the owner, and provide the owner with time to consider alternate arrangements for their pet.
- **Capacity for care:** Capacity for care dictates that population is limited by the facility's ability to appropriately provide daily care and appropriate physical and mental wellness to animals in shelters. At a minimum, this shall be calculated at 15 minutes of staff time per animal per day. However, there are many circumstances which will require larger amounts of time per animal, such as times of disease outbreak, disproportionate numbers of baby animals, caged pets or livestock, or a larger than average

percentage of animals with special medical or behavioral needs. In those cases, capacity for care must be reassessed by the Lead Animal Care Technician and Animal Shelter Operations Manager.

- Limited intake during times of emergency: As dictated in the LCAS disease management protocols, intakes of specific or all species may be frozen, with rare exceptions, during times of emergency (such as local disaster, facility conditions, or disease outbreak).

As LCAS is committed to minimizing the need to euthanize companion animals for lack of space or inability to care for due to limited resources, staff are encouraged to work transparently with owners and the community to identify the best options for homeless or unwanted pets. The Department may refuse admission of animals to preserve the health (mental and physical) and safety of the surrendered animal or animals in the facility, or in the event that appropriate housing in the facility is a limiting factor. In such cases, staff is encouraged to assist the owner in finding alternate placement options.

Animals are only to be accepted from owners living in Loudoun County, or found running at large in Loudoun County or from a pre-arranged transfer orchestrated by the Behavior and Transfer Coordinator, or their designee. Exceptions may be made by the shift supervisor on a case by case basis. Detailed notes regarding the decision are to be entered into the animals profile.

Livestock may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, as resources to provide care for these species are limited. A mandatory \$200 surrender fee is attached to each large livestock species being surrendered, and only the Director or her designee may approve their intake and/or any fee change.

III. Procedure:

Animals received over the counter or in the field:

Upon arrival of all pets to the shelter or within HLEO custody, staff should begin the animal's assessment process. This process begins with the collection and recording of as much information as possible from the owner or finder of the animal.

If assisting a customer with a surrendered animal (front counter and/or HLEO), counsel the owner in regard to the Department's surrender policy and procedure. In addition, collect and record as much information as possible about the health and behavior of the pet in the home as well as a detailed description of the reason for surrender. This information should be obtained both verbally, and in the form of a written personality profile. It is highly encouraged that all animals are surrendered with a written personality profile. All information obtained verbally must be recorded in Chameleon in the "Animal Note" screen.

If assisting a customer with a stray animal, whether the retrieval is occurring in the field or at the shelter, collect as much information as possible from the finder. This may include, but is not limited to, the location of where the animal was found as well as any interaction he or she may have had with the animal, or behaviors they have witnessed. Notation of any and all identification is to be made in the animal record, microchips are to be entered in the tag screen, collar color and type information is to be entered in the animal screen and tag or other owner information is to be entered into the animal note. Detailed notes regarding attempts at contact are also to be entered into the animal notes. Staff (front counter and/or HLEO) is expected to scan the pet for a microchip,

take a picture, and check lost reports as part of the intake process. If it is unsafe, or causes undue stress to the animal to perform any of these tasks, a note must be recorded in Chameleon and a supervisor should be alerted.

Found companion animals with a collar, tag, microchip or any other form of identification must be held as strays for ten days, excluding County holidays. Companion animals without identifying information must be held for five days, not to include County holidays. These dates are in accordance with County ordinance and State code and must be listed in Chameleon as “due out” date.

All information including, but not limited to, health, behavior, surrender reason, and identification information must be recorded in Chameleon via an animal note. Each note should begin with a date and time stamp) followed by all information collected during the consult and concluded with staff initials/AC unit number.

A folder labeled with the animal number and date of intake must be created and filed appropriately. All appropriate paperwork must be included in the file, e.g., surrender paperwork, vet records, personality profile, etc., if available.

Care must be taken to minimize stress during this crucial time (the intake period) in order to minimize problems, which may delay or even prevent acclimation or adjustment to the shelter environment and prolong or intensify anxiety and mental suffering.

Animal Housing:

During normal business hours, any animal brought in by an HLEO, that HLEO or dispatcher is expected to alert the animal care staff as soon as possible prior to or upon arrival via shelter radio. If the animal arrives overnight via an HLEO, the care technician assigned to that kennel should assess new arrivals the following morning and address their intake exam immediately. Upon intake, animals should be taken by an animal care technician to their designated area for an intake exam. The tub room should be used for examining dogs and small animals and cat clinic used for examining cats. The intake exam is an initial assessment for both health and behavior. As part of each animal’s intake exam staff should record the following:

1. Overall physical exam
2. Weight and Body Score
3. Temperature (as appropriate)
4. Gender verification
5. Oral de-worming administration (Pyrantel)
6. Appropriate vaccination administration
 - a. FVRCP (cats)
 - b. DHLPP and Bordetella (dogs)
 - c. If the animal was surrendered with current vaccination records, this information must be recorded in Chameleon.
7. Microchip scan – this should be the 2nd scan of the animal and should be completed even if it was performed previously by another staff member.
8. Assessed for body condition, e.g., wounds or injuries, fleas, ticks, ringworm, ear mites, etc.

9. Identification should be physically affixed to the animal (e.g., collar or tag) for the duration of the animal's stay unless this poses a safety risk for animals and/or staff. Tag must include the animal's A number.
10. Animals displaying extreme weight loss/gain, are geriatric, ill, or debilitated should be evaluated by a veterinarian as needed for appropriate case management.
11. Just as care is taken to note any physical problems that may require attention, behavioral problems (stress, fear, anxiety, aggression) that require intervention or affect how that animal can be safely handled should also be noted at the time of intake and entered into an animal's record.
12. All incoming animals should be examined for bite wounds; animals who have potentially been exposed to rabies or have wounds of unknown origin should be reported to the staff veterinarian. Once the WOU has been identified, it should be indicated in the condition field of the animal's record. A WOU template should also be entered into Chameleon by the medical team.

If it is unsafe or causes undue stress to the animal to perform any of the above tasks, a note is to be placed in Chameleon and a supervisor should be alerted via email or in person. Cats arriving in traps should be placed in a net, and scanned for a microchip and vaccinated with FVRCP, parasitic controls applied before being transferred to a pass-through kennel. If this is not possible or causes undue stress to the cat, use the long distance scanner to scan through the trap. Place a note in Chameleon that the long distance scanner was utilized to indicate the need for a more thorough scan.

All information obtained during the course of intake exams must be entered into Chameleon promptly. Behavior notes should include, but are not limited to, reaction to new environment and handling, general disposition, behavior concerns or cautions and any information gathered during intake. Each note should begin with a date and time stamp followed by information collected during the exam and initials of the staff member conducting the exam.

If the intake staff person was unable to obtain a picture it should be captured during the incoming exam by the animal care technician. If any animal appears injured or unhealthy please consult the supervisor on duty before housing, handling or relocating the animal in order to reduce risk of disease transmission.

Kennel Selection:

Careful consideration should be given to the kennel selection for each animal. Below are a few considerations, not intended to be a comprehensive list:

1. Provide as much space between each animal as possible, keep an empty cage in between when possible and avoid housing cats in cages on top of one another
2. Consider the individual needs of each animal (examples: do not place an intact male next to an intact female, a scared cat should not be housed next to an over-aroused cat, reactive dogs should not be side by side or across from one another, etc..)
3. Before co-housing any animals, (other than small animals currently co-housed) consult the supervisor on duty.
4. Consider the kennels closest to the door to be a last resort for housing.
5. All cages should be set up with bedding, water and appropriate toys and treats. All cats shall be given a hidey-box.
6. Feral or fractious cats shall be housed in a pass-through cages

7. Prey species (e.g., birds, guinea-pigs, hamsters, gerbils, rabbits) should be housed away from predatory species (e.g., ferrets, cats, dogs) at all times

Cats:

- Kittens less than 6 months and mothers with kittens should be placed in Cat Intake A.
- Cats 6 months of age and over that are able to be handled safely should be placed in Cat Intake D, C or B, depending on cage availability.
- Any cat or kitten showing symptoms of illness but not requiring immediate veterinary attention should be placed in Cat Sick Isolation.

Dogs:

- Puppies under 6 months with no vaccination history should be placed into Sick Dog Isolation.
- Dogs 6 months of age and over that are able to be handled safely should be placed in Dog Intake A or B, depending on cage availability.
- Any dog or puppy showing symptoms of illness but not requiring immediate veterinary care should be placed in Sick Dog Isolation. If there is a healthy puppy in the Sick Dog Isolation, please consult with the supervisor on duty before placing a sick pet in the kennel.
- Any fractious dog should be placed in Dog Observation.