# DISPOSITION OF ANIMALS AND ANIMAL INTAKE PROCEDURE

# DISPOSITION OF ANIMALS

**General**

Domestic and exotic animals housed at the Pittsylvania Pet Center leave in one of following ways: they’re adopted, returned to owner, euthanized, or transferred. We do not accept wild animals or livestock. This includes chickens, ducks, cows, pigs, horses and goats.

**Adoption**

Information about animals adopted from the Shelter must be recorded in our shelter software. This includes the date of adoption and the name, address and telephone number of the adopter. Completed adoption files are stapled and filed appropriately.

**Return to Owners**

Owners claiming a stray animal as their own must provide evidence of ownership such as a bill of purchase, pictures that document ownership over time, proof of rabies or licensing, and/or medical records.

The owner's name, address, telephone number, and the date of return should be noted in our shelter software and on the Animal Custody Report. Completed RTO files are stapled and filed appropriately.

If someone claims an animal after the stray hold date or there is a lack of proof of ownership, the Pittsylvania Pet Center can choose to follow standard adoption protocols. The prospective adopter will pay standard adoption fees and the animal must be spayed or neutered prior to adoption.

**Euthanasia**

When deemed necessary for medical or behavioral reasons, domestic animals may be euthanized. Critically ill or seriously injured domestic animals may be euthanized prior to the conclusion of the stray holding period to prevent any additional suffering (only with the recommendation of the veterinarian). Animals will not be euthanized for behavior reasons prior to the conclusion of the stray hold period.

The date of and reason for euthanasia, the dosage and drugs used, and the veterinarian’s initials are recorded in the computer record and the Animal Custody Record.

**Transfer**

Animals are released to shelter and rescue partners, if the receiving agency is approved by the Pittsylvania Pet Center. In order to be approved, a transferring organization must typically hold a 501(c)3 tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. The Pittsylvania Pet Center reserves the right to deviate from this policy based on the need and the organization in question.

# ANIMAL INTAKE PROCEDURE

The Pittsylvania Pet Center is an open admission shelter in that we will never turn away a domestic animal.

We are managed intakes, meaning that whenever possible we will schedule owner surrenders to ensure the animal in question receives the proper space and care needed. Bite cases, or if an animal or person is any danger, or the animal is sick/injured will be taken in immediately.

If people ask if the shelter is ‘Full’ they can be informed whether or not the shelter is at capacity so they can determine if they still wish to leave the animal at the shelter or make other arrangements. It is our mission and mandate that we accept every animal. We evaluate each animal individually and will make decisions regarding adoption, transfer, foster or euthanasia based on the animal and his or her ability to be safely re-homed.

**Animal Process**

Greet the person: “Is this your animal?” “Where is the animal?” if it is in the car – ask if the animal is on a leash or in a carrier?

If the animal is not on a leash or carrier –and the animal belongs to the person, provide the owner with a leash or transfer cage for the animal. Instruct the owner to secure the animal in the car with the doors shut – i.e. dog on the leash or cat in the carrier before they open the car doors.

If the animal is a stray, follow them to the car and escort them and the animal to the front desk of the shelter – if staffing allows. You may need to get the assistance of an animal care attendant if the animal is fractious or you feel that you cannot control the animal.

If the animal is a feral cat, see the *Community Cat Policy of Pittsylvania County*

Dogs and cats are placed in the appropriate kennel or cage space for that species.

If a person bringing in a stray refuses to sign intake paperwork– just write in the signature area “refused to sign” and your name. The animal will be reflected as a stray and held for the stray period.

**State Hold Policies**

The State of Virginia requires stray animals and found animals showing indication of ownership be held to allow their potential owners to locate them prior to being adopted, transferred, or euthanized. The Pittsylvania Pet Center’s hold policies meet the state requirements and are as follows:

* Stray Animal with no ID or sign of ownership – Shall be held for 5 days, not to include the day the animal is brought in. On the 6th day, it is evaluated and becomes the property of PPC.
* Stray Animal with ID or signs of ownership – Shall be held for 10 days, not to include the day the animal is brought in. On the 11th day, it is evaluated and becomes the property of PPC. Signs of ownership include collars, tags, tattoos, harness, leash, microchip, clothing, or painted nails.

**Court Hold**

If Pittsylvania Animal Control brings an animal which is to be held on court hold it will be noted on the intake form by the officer. In our shelter software, the status will be Court Hold. The date available will be left blank until we have a court date. If Animal Control releases an animal from court hold, they must write ‘released from court hold’ on the intake form and sign. At this time, front desk staff will change the status in our shelter software and notify management.

**Bite Quarantine**

PPC accepts animals that will be placed on a quarantine period that have bitten a person or attacked and severely injured another dog. We accept these animals through our Animal Control Officers and through citizens of Pittsylvania County when necessary.

The following steps must be taken if the animal is received by a citizen:

* If the bite occurred on PPC property, verify with a manager that a bite report has been filed and record the date of the incident, name of the victim, the circumstances of the incident, and treatment facility the victim was seen by.
* Fax the report to the Pittsylvania County Health Department and file the report in the rabies log.
* Notify a manager so that he/she can place a Bite Quarantine tag on the animal’s kennel or cage.
* Place the animal’s status to Bite Quarantine in our shelter software. This is a ten day hold starting the date of the bite incident.
* If the report was filed outside of PPC, contact the Pittsylvania County Health Department at 434-432-7232 to ensure they are aware of the quarantine. Write the animal’s info in the bite log.
* File the record in the stray hold drawer in the folder labeled bite quarantine.

**Microchips or Tags**

If an animal comes in with a microchip or tags, the front desk staff will make every effort to find and notify the owner that we have their animal. This will be recorded in the animal’s record in our shelter software. If the owner is contacted and no longer wants the animal, ask them if there is anything that PPC can help with and if not, then ask them to come to the shelter to sign ownership over to PPC. If the owner says they gave the animal away, ask if they will provide this persons information so we can contact them to help reunite them with the animal.

**Community Cats (feral)**

The Pittsylvania Pet Center and Pittsylvania County Animal Control will no longer pick up, or receive wild, or “feral” community cats unless they show signs of being sick or injured in accordance with Virginia Code. Citizens will instead be advised that just removing the cats causes a vacuum effect allowing more cats to move in. We will instead, with the assistance of the SPCA of Pittsylvania County and some other experienced trappers direct them to take these wild animals to local clinics which we will coordinate with for spay/neuter, vaccinations, FIV/FELV (feline AIDS / feline leukemia) testing. These cats will be ear tipped and can be released back where they came from. The cost for TNR will be covered by grant funding as long as funds are available. We will continue to seek out additional funding to address these needs. Cats testing positive for feline AIDS or Leukemia will be humanely euthanized to prevent the spread of disease. The objective of this program is to humanely trap, spay or neuter, vaccinate, test and ear tip each of these community cats and return them to their original habitat or colony. Historically, thousands of these cats were caught and euthanized. This approach has proven ineffective and costly, as the problem has continued to grow.

The Pet Center will coordinate assistance as needed by the SPCA and experienced citizens willing to help trap feral, or community cats. We will also have some traps available for citizens to check out. We can also offer food that has been donated to assist citizens managing colonies upon request. By all of us working together, we are confident that Trap/Neuter and Release will over time will reduce the numbers of wild cats, transmission of illness and disease, and decrease the numbers of unwanted cats/kittens received by our shelter for care.