



Intake Policy

The purpose of this SOP is to outline the VBSPCA's policies and procedures regarding animal intake and provide guidelines for the front desk during the relinquishment process.

General

- A. The VBSPCA accepts owner surrendered animals and unweaned, stray kittens under 8 weeks old
- B. Our adoption focus means we work to find homes for all the healthy and treatable animals under our care, with euthanasia reserved only for untreatable and unmanageable animals.
- C. We have an open door relinquishment policy.
 - a. We do not require appointments for owners to surrender their pets, and we attempt to take all animals that are brought to us.
 - b. Animals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and we accept all animals that can be housed and managed with the resources available to the shelter.
- D. Sometimes owners come to us to surrender animals for whom owner requested euthanasia is a more compassionate option
 - a. We provide counseling to owners in these circumstances, and we offer compassionate euthanasia in our clinic, with owner present if desired, as an alternative that prevents unneeded suffering.
 - i. Only approved Managers should speak to owners about request euthanasia
 - b. If after counseling, an owner of a medically untreatable or behaviorally unrehabilitatable animal still prefers to surrender their pet rather than request a compassionate euthanasia, we will accept the animal into the shelter and will inform the owner that euthanasia is the probable outcome.
- E. Despite our best efforts to find forever homes for all the animals that come into our care, some animals after being accepted into the shelter become untreatably ill and must be euthanized. Others may develop or display behavior or emotional problems that make them unsafe or unsuitable for adoption into a home.



The Conversation

- A. Every owner surrendering an animal should be asked the following questions
 - a. What kind of animal are you bring in?
 - i. We do not accept ferrets, chinchillas, reptiles, fish, or amphibians
 - ii. If they have birds, we ask that they bring in a cage for them
 - 1. If they do not have a cage, check with the Cattery Manager to make sure we have a size appropriate one.
 - b. Where did you originally get your animal?
 - i. Some shelters/rescues want their animals back and we ask the owner if they checked with the other organization. However, never turn an animal away because they came from another facility. If they cannot return them to the other organization, take the animal in, make a note, and notify a Coordinator by email
 - ii. If the animal was originally adopted from us (Return to Shelter, RTS), make every effort to take that animal in, even when we have a waitlist
 - 1. Always check with a Manager before turning an RTS animal away
 - c. Why are you surrendering?
 - i. There are times when we can prevent surrenders by giving owners information on resources available in our area
 - d. Any behavior or medical issues?
 - i. If the animal has any medical or behavior issues, regardless of breed or species, a qualified Manager should assess the pet
 - e. How long have you owned the animal?
 - i. There is no “time limit” that dictates ownership. However, if they have owned the pet less than 30 days, further counseling is required
 - 1. They should understand that they are signing a legal document that states that they are the sole owner of the pet or that any other people who could claim ownership have been notified that the pet is being surrendered here
 - f. How old is your pet?
 - i. Puppies and kittens under 4 months must be quarantined
 - 1. Notify the Isolation Manager or Lead in Isolation that day
 - ii. All other animals will be put in a Receiving room
 - iii. **SENIOR PETS**



1. Senior pets should be approved by a qualified coordinator prior to intake. At times, these pets may need to be taken to the clinic for an intake evaluation. ONLY MANAGERS should take pets over to the clinic.
 2. Cats – 10 and up
 3. Dogs – 7 and up
 4. Rats, guinea pigs, mice, hamsters – 2 and up
 5. Rabbits – 5 and up
 6. Dogs or Cats ages 10 and up should be brought to the veterinarian on referrals that day to have their heart and lungs examined
- B. Has your animal bitten anyone within the past 10 days?
- i. Cats and dogs that have bitten a person must be quarantined for 10 days to make sure the animal does not have rabies
 - ii. We cannot accept animals during their 10 day quarantine UNLESS the animal is a return to shelter
- C. After all the questions have been asked, the owner should be given a surrender form with a personality profile
- a. Encourage the owners to be open and honest about their pet
 - b. The information on the behavior profile is critical to making informed decisions about the animal, including on how to best match them to their new home
- D. STRAY ANIMALS**
- a. We cannot accept lost or stray pets EXCEPT for unweaned kittens under 8 weeks old
 - b. We always scan the animal for a microchip and attempt to contact the owner if one is found
 - c. Otherwise, we thank the finder for taking the time to help the animal and request that they take the pet to Virginia Beach Animal Care and Adoption Center (VBACAC)
 - i. This ensures that there is one place to look for lost animals for the entire city
 - d. If they do not want to take the animal to VBACAC, we should take down their contact information, where they found the pet, and get copy of their driver's license
 - i. Then proceed calling VBACAC at 385-4444 to request that an animal control officer come pick up the animal



- e. For further details on receiving stray kittens, see “Front Desk Kitten Receiving Guidelines.”

Revised by EO on 7.15.19

Approved by Emily Olley, Director of Shelter Operations _____

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