

**TITLE:** ANIMAL INTAKE POLICY

**SOP NUMBER:** 2.1

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 24, 2023

**AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:** SOP 2.1 dtd \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW DATE:** Annually – (Before 12/31/23)



## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the policy and procedures for the intake of animals from the public and animal control. Timely and accurate record management is paramount to the success of reuniting owners with lost animals and re-homing abandoned animals.

## **II. POLICY**

The Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center (SVASC) is the municipal animal shelter for the cities of Waynesboro, Staunton and Augusta County, Virginia. The three localities (stakeholders) each provide appropriate funding to operate the shelter. We are an open admission shelter and accept stray and owner surrender animals from each of the localities as well as intakes from Animal Control. SVASC offers education and resources to the community as an alternative to surrendering an animal, but will accept all surrenders and stray animals.

## **III. PROCEDURE FOR INTAKE**

### **A. The following procedures apply to all animal intakes:**

- 1. Intake Form:** Each animal brought into SVASC will have an individual intake form filled out in its entirety by appropriate staff. The purpose of the Intake Form is to provide staff general information on the health and assessment of the animal.
- 2. Animal Information:** Intake staff will conduct a basic assessment of the animal's appearance, including color, estimate of age, gender, weight, breed or mix. Any identifying information, such as collar, tags, or microchip will be noted. If the animal is microchipped, staff will contact the agency. Medical and behavioral information will be documented, if known. Each animal will be photographed and imported into the Shelter's database. Once the animal is entered into the database an ID number is generated. The ID number will be documented on the intake form and initialed by the intake staff. Once the Intake Form is completed, a Kennel Card is issued through the database and printed. The Kennel Card will be placed on the animal's cage while in custody of the Shelter.

3. **Kennel/Cage:** Each animal will be placed into a cage or kennel that is appropriate for the type of animal based upon its size, species, and overall condition. Each animal will be provided water, a bed or blanket, and food specific to their needs. Some animals may be co-housed if they are bonded, are a part of a litter, or nursing mothers with their young.
4. **Animals Found Outside of Staunton, Waynesboro, or Augusta County:** Any animal found outside of this jurisdiction will not typically be accepted and the finder will need to take the animal to the locality it was found in. Shelter can provide information on who to contact such as the animal control, police office or sheriff's office. In cases where the health or life of the animal is at risk, the director and/or his/her designee may determine if the animal will be accepted and animal control and/or the locality it was found in will be immediately contacted to coordinate emergency care.

## **B. STRAY ANIMALS**

1. **Animals without Identification:** Animals without any form of identification are held for a period of 5 days. On the 6th day, the animal will be considered abandoned per Virginia State Code 3.2-6546 and will become the property of SVASC.
2. **Animals with Identification:** Animals with identification are held for a period of 10 days. When identification includes a tag or microchip, every effort will be made to contact an owner. On the 11th day, the animal will be considered abandoned per Virginia State Code 3.2-6546 and will become the property of SVASC.
3. **Lost and Found Reports:** SVASC maintains a lost and found report book for owners searching for lost or found animals. When a new stray animal arrives, staff will check reports and every effort will be made to check social media to confirm if the animal has been reported lost. If an owner can be identified, staff will make every effort to notify the owner that the dog is at the shelter. All strays are cross-checked with the SVASC "Lost and Found" report journal, as well as social media for owners searching for lost or found animals.
4. **Stray Exotic and Livestock:** SVASC accepts any and all abandoned or stray small companion animals, including small mammals, reptiles, and birds (other than wildlife) as well as poultry and livestock. Intake procedures and custody records are the same as for dogs and cats except there are no intake vaccinations. Since there is no established holding period defined in State Code 3.2-6546 for poultry or livestock, animal control will need to be contacted in order to proceed with regulations within State code 3.2-6569 if necessary.
5. **Wildlife:** SVASC does not take healthy or injured wildlife. All Citizens should be referred to the Wildlife Center of Virginia located at 1800 S. Delphine Ave, Waynesboro, VA 22980. (540) 942-9453.

## C. OWNER SURRENDERED PETS

1. SVASC accepts owner surrender animals during normal business hours. Appointments are encouraged for surrenders, but not required. If an owner arrives at the SVASC with an animal they want to surrender, then the animal shall be taken in. Intake Staff will conduct an interview with each owner to gather as much information possible regarding the animal's health (including medical records), behavioral issues, and adaptability with other pets and children.
2. All citizens surrendering a pet must sign the disclosure form indicating whether or not the pet has bitten in the past as required in State code § 3.2-6509.1.
3. Citizens must also sign an animal surrender statement that states the following language **"I hereby relinquish ownership of the above animals to the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center (SVASC). I certify that: I am the owner of these animals; no other person has a right of property in these animals; and I understand that this animal may be immediately euthanized, adopted, or transferred to another state approved organization; and these animals have not bitten or scratched anyone in the last 10 days."**

Va code 3.2-6500 defines an owner as ""any person who: (i) has a right of property in an animal; (ii) keeps or harbors an animal; (iii) has an animal in his care; or (iv) acts as a custodian of an animal, however VA code 3.2-6546 which governs "County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief" states a "Rightful owner means a person with a right of property in the animal". The mere presence of an animal on someone's property for any period of time such as 30 days will not give "rightful" ownership of an animal and allow them to surrender the animal to the SVASC.

In the event there is a concern or discrepancy of ownership, shelter staff should contact animal control while the animal is on-site. Many cases of ownership (i.e. roommate, ex-spouse) can be handled with animal control versus any risk of sending the animal away.

4. **Owner Surrender Fees:** Only Individuals who meet the requirements above and are surrendering animals to SVASC are asked to pay a surrender fee. The fee schedule is approved by the owners annually upon review of this policy.

If the director or manager determines that the pet is in danger of being abandoned, or the situation warrants immediate surrender, they may take the animal without any fees. Animal control will not charge or collect any fees for animal surrender animals.

### **Owner Surrender Fees (Continuing Care Fee)**

The following fee scale is effective for this policy.

- Dogs: \$15
- Litter of Puppies With or Without Mother:\$20
- Single cat or kitten: \$10
- Litter of Kittens With or Without Mother: \$15
- Small Animals: \$10

### **D. PROCEDURE FOR COURT CASES AND DANGEROUS DOGS:**

1. If an ACO bring an animal to SVASC that is considered dangerous, or is pending court action, the dog shall be placed in the court/dangerous dog hold area of SVASC. The public shall not be allowed into this area, and SVASC employees shall take appropriate precautions in caring for these animals. These animals must follow State Law when being handled or taken out of their kennel. Dogs that are dangerous or pending court action cannot be released to owners unless the ACO responsible gives authority to release. The custody form will identify the restrictions of the dog and the ACO to contact.

### **IV. VETERINARY CARE:**

"Emergency veterinary treatment" Is required for all animals within the care of SVASC. Routine veterinary care and vaccinations of animals in the care of SVASC will be handled in accordance with guidelines set by the attending supervising veterinarian. Additional details in Policy 2.3.

1. **INJURED ANIMALS:** If a sick or injured animal is brought to SVASC, management staff will coordinate treatment with local veterinarians. Sick or injured animals may be held at the Veterinarian's office until the animal is stable.
2. If an ACO picks up an injured animal, the ACO will determine if the animal needs to be seen by a veterinarian. The ACO is assessing for obvious and severe medical issues that require immediate attention, i.e. lacerations, broken bones, malnourishment, neurological disorders, or very sick. If a medical emergency is not identified by an ACO, but shelter staff determine that an animal needs veterinarian care through the Shelter's medical protocols, SVACS staff will arrange and seek medical attention, i.e. diarrhea, ear mites, virus symptoms, minor abrasions, etc.

**APPROVED BY:**

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**President of SVASC Owners Group**

**Date:**

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Created 01.10.2023