

Shelter Operations

December 2014 - Revised November 17, 2015

EUTHANASIA DECISIONS

We are an “open-admission” shelter for Madison County, which means that every dog and cat in need of shelter and care is welcome here. We offer a refuge, regardless of whether we believe that animal is adoptable. We are dedicated to preventing animal suffering and cruelty and to providing quality care for every animal.

Humane euthanasia of animals - a practice acknowledged by most animal protection organizations as an acceptable means for alleviating or preventing suffering – is still necessary due to the surplus of animals received at our shelter and those in the surrounding communities. Euthanasia is not a decision we take lightly, but one we must make nonetheless.

We sincerely wish that every animal that comes to us could be adopted to a caring, responsible home. Unfortunately, there aren't enough quality homes for placement. We evaluate the health and temperament of each animal on an individual basis. We use our experience and protocol to evaluate an animal's needs and balance those needs with the greater good of the animal population in our care. Since euthanasia is the final act of kindness that can be shown to an animal, it is the policy of the Wanderers' Rest Humane Association that animals be handled with respect and sensitivity and protected from stress, fear, discomfort, and pain.

Each animal who comes to us is evaluated in entirety; taking into account both behavior and medical conditions. Euthanasia must be considered:

- ◆ When an animal is felt to be suffering mentally, emotionally or physically with a poor prognosis, protracted painful recovery, or incurable illness
- ◆ When an animal is deemed to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, itself, or the public

We also recognize the adoptability of animals in shelters may be impacted by:

- ◆ temperament
- ◆ previous history, age, breed, health
- ◆ ability to cope with kennel stress
- ◆ space, time of year
- ◆ foster care resources, human resources, budget
- ◆ requirements ordered by the courts or Animal Control or the Courts
- ◆ Veterinary recommendations

Our evaluation process assesses an animal's behavior, temperament and health. The evaluation process is a tool to help the Shelter Manager and staff assess an animal's behavior and health. This information

is used to determine if an animal is healthy, treatable, or unhealthy/untreatable:

- ◆ Animals that rate high in the evaluation are healthy and adoptable.
- ◆ Treatable animals may be borderline but could respond with treatment.
- ◆ Unhealthy animals are clearly sick or are unsafe for the community.

Animals may display behavior patterns or have physical conditions that would make them difficult to care for at the shelter or in a home environment. Some animals may be dangerous to people or other animals and it would be not be in the best interest of Wanderers' Rest Humane Association or the community to place such animals.

Information from the behavior and health evaluations is included in the decision making process. Management reviews euthanasia decisions as requested. When there are conflicts about a euthanasia decision, the Shelter Manager will review the case and make a final decision. Staff members must bring questions about euthanasia decisions directly to the Shelter Manager.

Evaluators clearly document the specific reasons for euthanasia decisions based on the language used in the guideline. All animals slated for euthanasia will be scanned for a microchip and checked for a tattoo. If the animal is a stray, a final search will be conducted in lost animal reports.

THE DECISION MAKERS

The Animal Care staff and Shelter Manager in consultation with a veterinarian if necessary, will assess animals for euthanasia, taking into account the animal's health, behavior assessment, "holds", and adoptability.

- ◆ The Animal Care staff will pick animals for euthanasia based on behavior, temperament, illness, etc.
- ◆ A euthanasia request is printed using the PetPoint Program and submitted to the Shelter Manager for review.
- ◆ Any medical history, behavior evaluations, or incident reports should be submitted with the euthanasia request. Behavior evaluation videos may be reviewed at the time of request.

The Shelter Manager will sign off on the euthanasia and submit it to the euthanasia technician(s). Euthanasia will be completed within 24 hours of the request being submitted (exception being animals that are suffering).

NOTE: Although an animal may be considered for euthanasia, if euthanasia is not immediate and the animal can be kept comfortable, the animal is still given medications to increase his or her comfort and reduce pain.

Alternatives

Alternative options will always be reasonably explored for animals initially accepted for adoption but that fail to continue to meet the criteria for adoptability. Animals that are clearly dangerous or suffering do not fall within this category. Some examples of options to pursue include cooperating with other placement facilities and assisting with appropriate foster care. The shelter works with many reputable breed placement partners who may also be able to assist.

Pre-euthanasia Checklist.

- ◆ Checked against lost reports on file.
- ◆ Checked against rescue correspondences
- ◆ Checked against adoption applications
- ◆ Checked against foster correspondences

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ANIMALS FOR EUTHANASIA

It is critical for staff and volunteers who do not make euthanasia decisions to understand the pain, emotion, and guilt associated with this role. The decision-makers face a difficult task, and their selections must be respected, even if they are different from your own.

We strive to be compassionate, fair, and professional as we accept the responsibility for managing the thousands of homeless animals that enter our shelter each year. Making euthanasia decisions is difficult and emotional for those who must choose.

Determinations regarding some animals are clearer than others. To assist the staff who must perform that role, criteria are listed below that may help in those grueling moments.

Stray Dogs

Unlicensed stray dogs are kept for 7 days before we can make the decision to place the animal up for adoption, or consider euthanasia. Licensed dogs must be held for 10 days while shelter staff make every effort to contact the known owner. However, if the animal is suffering due to severe injury or illness, the animal may be euthanized before hold period ends if the animal control officer has been alerted and with a veterinarian's approval. Records must be clearly noted with the medical reasons for euthanasia. A veterinarian must sign their approval on any stray on its stray hold.

If the dog is neither ill nor claimed, he or she can be considered for adoption, transfer to partner rescue, remain at the shelter, or euthanized on the eighth day.

Owner-requests

Wanderers' Rest Humane Association will not euthanize animals for the public. Staff will advise the public to speak with their veterinarian about this decision.

Illness or Injury

Animals can be considered for euthanasia if:

- ◆ their injuries or illness are untreatable
- ◆ treatment is cost prohibitive for the average person or the shelter (i.e. severely broken bones, mange, wounds, broken backs, extensive burns, etc)
- ◆ keeping the animal alive would result in pain or a poor quality-of-life
- ◆ Provided treatment for an illness has not been effective

Other circumstances may also affect euthanasia decisions:

- ◆ If a veterinarian has noted that an animal has an illness, that animal is to be selected for euthanasia over a healthy animal.
- ◆ If an animal is suffering, euthanasia is to be performed on the same day. The kennel staff must advise the euthanasia technician(s) immediately of any sick, injured, or suffering animal.
- ◆ If the euthanasia technician(s) is unavailable the animal will be taken to one of our rotating veterinarians for euthanasia.

Stray Animals Euthanized before Stray Period or Brought in Dead on Arrival (DOA).

When an animal is euthanized before the stray period expires, communicate this information to the front office in case any owner comes in looking for that animal.

In addition:

- ◆ Update the euthanized animal's computer record.
- ◆ Copy the intake form with the reason the euthanasia was performed, and obtain a digital picture of the animal. The photo and intake information will be placed in PetPoint and marked as "STRAY EUTHANASIA/DOA".

Since only a veterinarian can authorize the euthanasia of a stray animal still in the stray period, the veterinarian or those directed by that person are responsible for following through the process.

- ◆ Bag the animal and place the bag in the Freezer with a tag containing the control number and end of hold date. The bag will remain in the freezer until the HOLD period is complete.

Any DOA's picked up are handled in the same manner.

DOA's will be marked in the computer as such. A lost report will be filed. Place a tag on the bag with the animal's control number and date of arrival.

Animals in Adoption Area

Euthanasia decisions must be made when there are animals in the healthy hold area of the shelter who are adoption candidates and need to move to adoption. Animals who have been in the adoption area who may fall in one of these categories may need to be considered for euthanasia:

- ◆ Dogs whose behavior is becoming worse: i.e. trying to bite, and charging the gate.
- ◆ Dogs who have been up for adoption for weeks/months with no interest and are becoming lethargic, aggressive, or kennel stressed.

Alert the Executive Director of animals being euthanized in the adoption area as many of them may have been in the paper, newsletter, or on T.V. The ED should be given at least 48 hour notice prior to euthanasia.

Aggressive Animals

Any animal regardless of its size, sex, or breed who is known to be aggressive or exhibits signs of aggression towards people or other animals may be euthanized. Determination of aggression can be made from past history, day-to-day interaction with the staff and volunteers, and through a behavior evaluation.

Aggression includes:

- ◆ defensive and threatening behaviors
- ◆ actual attacks
- ◆ lunging at humans
- ◆ baring teeth
- ◆ exhibiting other characteristics that may make it a poor family companion for the average adopter
- ◆ Attacking other animals

Generally, cats need more time to adjust to the surroundings and noises. They should be placed in a quiet cage, with the front covered with a towel, and then re-evaluated after they have been given time to relax.

Holding Times

Individual animals may be marked “Do not E&D” which means that animal cannot be euthanized without permission from the Executive Director or the person who asked for the animal to be held. Holding animals makes euthanasia decisions extremely difficult. It is important to understand that if one dog is held, another is euthanized in its place.

If “do not E&D” is placed on the animal’s record, it must also contain the full name of the staff person who placed the hold.

Below are standard holding times:

Rescue	Animals may be held for 14 days after contacting rescue, but every attempt must be made to move the animal immediately. Any contacted rescues will be alerted 24 hours prior to euthanasia to let them know the animal will no longer be in shelter.
Off-site Adoption Days	Off-site adoption days are generally held on Saturdays. If animals do not get adopted and come back to the shelter, they will be held until the following Monday (9 days) before being euthanized.

Summary

Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It's a decision no one wants to make or carry out. But, we also know there isn't another option unless the animals are housed indefinitely in a cage or kennel off-premises. Quality-of-life is our guiding principle. We don't believe in warehousing animals for the sake of saving their lives.

We hope there will be a day when healthy animals are no longer euthanized for space or lack of homes. Our educational and veterinary programs are attacking the problems at the source with aggressive spay/neuter, education, and adoption programs. Until that time comes, we have assumed the responsibility of humanely euthanizing those animals that have found no home.

Shelter Operations

November 17, 2015

Case worker Procedure

Wanderers' Rest Humane Association has instituted a program where each animal care staff member takes on the roll of a case worker with a case load. This policy/procedure is used in conjunction with the current adoption and euthanasia policy (revised in December of 2014) and would allow staff up to 90 days to work with and adopt out marginal animals (perceived as being potentially unadoptable). The Shelter Manager retains the right to deem an animal unadoptable and/or decide upon euthanasia at any time dependent on the animal's quality of life, space restrictions, or other reasoning as laid out by the general euthanasia policy.

Supervisory Staff

Executive Director
Shelter Manager
Animal Care Coordinator

Case workers

Animal Care Specialists

Medical Staff

Shelter Manager
Animal Care Coordinator
Senior Animal Care Specialists

Flow

Reception: Intake of all animals. Ensure paperwork is filled out entirely, that signatures are received, and that information is passed to medical staff for an intake physical and vaccinations immediately after intake. Create and give printout of the intake form. Ensure pertinent information is passed along on the intake form.

Medical Staff: Responsible for administering vaccines, de-wormer, and completing an initial evaluation at the time arrival. A basic evaluation may be made at this time pertaining to basic behavior and medical status. Medical staff will be responsible for notating any treatments and findings in PetPoint and on the intake form. Medical staff will assign the animal to a room or case worker and place the intake form in the case worker's mailbox for review.

Case Worker: Receives paperwork after arrival in their assigned mailbox. Responsible for setting up behavior or medical evaluations as well as marketing while the animal remains in the shelter. Case Workers will be responsible for:

- Setting up medical or behavioral evaluations in the shelter
- Maintaining a checklist for each animal on their case load
- Maintain updated photos and locations of each animal
- Take animals to offsite locations or schedule others to do so
- Set goals and market accordingly
- Communicating with the supervisors regarding each animal's adoptability and general needs
- Communicating with co-workers regarding their animal's status
- Setting up medical evaluations with rotating veterinarians (any off-site expenses need to be approved by the SM)
- Keeping detailed notes on each animal (in PetPoint and in binder)
- Provide adoption recommendations and Petango draft to the SM

Animal Checklist

Day 1-10: Evaluation Period

Intake Date: _____

Day 10: _____

Intake Physical and vaccines administered: YES/NO Date: _____

Behavior Evaluation Completed: YES/NO Date: _____

FELV/FIV or HW Status: POSITIVE/NEGATIVE Date: _____

Adoptable Behavior Modification (90 days)* Medical Needs (90 days)** Unadoptable

Behavior Modification Plan (if checked)*:

Date to re-evaluate behavior modification: _____

Medical Need**:

Seen by: _____ Date: _____
Prognosis and recommendation or estimate attached

Seen by: _____ Date: _____
Prognosis and recommendation or estimate attached

Seen by: _____ Date: _____
Prognosis and recommendation or estimate attached

Date to re-evaluate medical status: _____

Day 11-45: Adoption Period

Day 11: _____

Day 45: _____

Three clear photos uploaded (one face, two full body): YES/NO Date: _____

Short video uploaded: YES/NO Date: _____

Spayed/Neutered: Already Altered/ SX date Set Date: _____

Adoption description drafted and sent to Shelter Manager: YES/NO Date: _____

Adoption Recommendation and Profile Completed: YES/NO Date: _____

Updated Kennel Card: YES/NO Date: _____

Behavior/Modification Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Medical Needs Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Utilize at least 3 Social Media Resources by day 45 (date: _____):

<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Posting	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dino Pet of the Day	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/Print	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Craigslist	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Date	Name

At least 3 Offsite Events or Community Visits by day 45 (date: _____):

Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date

Day 46-75: Adoption Period

Day 46: _____

Day 75: _____

Moved to satellite location or kennel moved: YES/NO Date: _____

Moved to a Foster Home: YES/NO Date: _____

New photos uploaded to website: YES/NO Date: _____

Updated/modified adoption Description: YES/NO Date: _____ **Reduced**

Adoption Fee: YES/NO Date: _____ Amount: _____

Behavior/Modification Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Medical Needs Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Utilize at least 2 additional Social Media Resources:

<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Posting	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dino Pet of the Day	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/Print	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Craigslist	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Date	Name

At least 3 Offsite Events or Community Visits:

Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date

Day 76-90: Adoption Period

Day 46: _____

Day 75: _____

Behavior/Modification Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Medical Needs Re-evaluated: YES/NO (refer to notes) Date: _____

Utilize at least 2 additional Social Media Resources:

<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Posting	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dino Pet of the Day	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/Print	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio	Date	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Craigslist	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Date	Name

At least 3 Offsite Events or Community Visits:

Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date
Location	Date

Transfer being sought: YES/NO

Rescue/Shelter Contacted: _____ Date: _____

Rescue/Shelter Contacted: _____ Date: _____

Rescue/Shelter Contacted: _____ Date: _____

MANAGEMENT ONLY

The Executive Director and Shelter Manager may grant an extension beyond 90 days if warranted.

Extension granted beyond 90 days: _____ Date: _____

Reason:

The Shelter Manager may recommend an animal for euthanasia at any point dependent on quality of life, space restrictions, or any other reason as laid out in the WRHA euthanasia policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason:
