

[organization logo]

[Agency Name]:
Manual of Standard Operating Procedures

What is this Document?

This Microsoft® Word document contains basic standard operating procedures (SOPs) for some of the most commonly performed tasks in animal shelters. It is designed for you to edit and expand to reflect your agency's policies and procedures.

Current, clear SOPs are vital to the smooth, safe, and humane operation of an animal shelter. All staff and volunteers should be not only familiar with the SOPs, but also trained in the SOPs that apply to their responsibilities and held accountable for performing their jobs in accordance with the SOPs.

SOPs are the backbone of how each agency runs. The development and implementation of SOPs not only helps ensure consistent work and care for the animals in your charge but also how the public is treated when interacting with your agency. SOPs provide the foundation for training and evaluation of your staff.

Every agency has policies and procedures that are appropriate for their mission, the kinds of animals they care for, their staffing levels, facility, funding, and so on. Many of your agency's protocols may be similar to those described in this document, while others may be quite different. So, how can this manual help?

Our intent is to help you jump-start the important task of creating your agency's SOPs by providing:

- A list of the kinds of policies and procedures that agencies need to document
- A model of the level of detail your SOPs should provide
- Specific procedures that are examples of current best practices for shelter operations
- Content that you can edit, add to, and delete as needed until you have procedures that are appropriate for your agency

The SOPs in this document directly relate to open-admission shelters. If your admission philosophy is different, you can edit the information to reflect your policies and procedures.

How to Use this Document

Use this document after reading the series of articles on www.ASPCApro.org that provide step-by-step instructions for [creating, implementing, and maintaining SOPs](#).

Next, as you read this document:

- Review the notes at the beginning of each SOP that provide guidance and suggestions for customizing the SOP for your agency.
- Flag the content in any SOPs that differs from the policies and procedures that you have in place. Some of the procedures in this document may help you see a different approach that could improve operations in your agency. And some may simply not work for you.
- Identify (and track down) any additional SOPs used in your agency that aren't covered in the manual.
- Mark places where you will need to add your agency name, change job titles, or department names to correspond to those used in your agency.

Then, using the SOP articles on our website, begin working with your staff to make this document your own.

Best of luck, and contact us as outreach@apsca.org if we can help.

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COVER LETTER TO STAFF**Notes:**

- Modify for your agency.

Begin Sample Cover Letter to Staff

This is your personal copy of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Manual. SOPs are a key tool for the operation and management of [agency]. They establish a baseline for how all staff and volunteers perform routine shelter tasks. The consistency and predictability that SOPs can provide helps make life less stressful for the animals — and for people, too.

The Standard Operating Procedures were written with everyone's input, and all staff are accountable for following them. These SOPs enable us to be consistent about expectations for every employee and to determine whether performance meets, exceeds, or falls short of expectations. Be sure to read the entire document and then review the sections that relate to your job. Discuss any questions that you have with your supervisor.

The SOP manual is a 'living' document that will be updated as we identify better ways of doing our jobs and responding to the needs of the animals in our care and of the human community we serve. The formal procedure for suggesting and making changes to SOPs is outlined below. The Director of Operations will have the master and current copy of the SOPs.

Process for changes, updates or clarifications to the SOPs:

To avoid confusion and inconsistency, only the Director of Operations can make the actual written changes to the SOPs. However, all staff can suggest changes as described below:

- If you have suggestions for change, deletions, or additions, ask your supervisor to include SOPs on the agenda of the department staff meeting.
- After discussion with the entire department, the department supervisor advises the director of operations of his/her team's suggestions or needed clarification.
- The director of operations evaluates the requested change and if necessary discusses it with the Executive Director (ED) or leader.
- If the Director of Operations and the ED agree to make the change, that section of the master SOP manual (both electronic and physical copy) is updated with the new wording and instruction.
- A memo then goes out to the entire staff with a summary of the update, and the page and section number that was updated. Each staff person also receives a printed copy of the new revised section for the staff member to update their own manual.

This manual is the foundation for the continued excellent performance of our staff and the organization. The manual will be used as a training document throughout the agency. We strongly encourage you to review SOPs in your department staff meetings on a regular basis. The supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff understand and follow the SOPs that apply to their roles in the agency.

Thank you for all the hard work you do each day for the animals in our care.

Sincerely,

[CEO Signature]

Shelter Operations 000-01
[Effective Date]

HOURS OF OPERATION

Notes:

- Modify for your hours of operation.

Begin Sample SOP

General

The hours of operation are designed to ensure that all domestic and wild animals are properly and humanely cared for and that the public has adequate and ample opportunity to conduct business at the [Enter your shelter name].

Adoption Hours

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

Business Hours

The Shelter is open for all other animal-related services (that is, except adoption) during the following hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., seven days a week.

Emergency Service Hours

The Shelter promptly responds to animal emergencies 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Any situation is considered an emergency in which a domestic or wild animal is in danger or is creating a danger to the community.

Shelter Operations 000-02
[Enter effective date]

DISPOSITION OF ANIMALS

Notes:

- Describe the possible outcomes for animals who enter your facility.

Begin Sample SOP

General

Domestic animals housed at the [Enter your shelter name] leave in one of following ways: they're adopted, returned to owner, euthanized, rehabilitated or transferred. Wild animals are released, sent to a certified rehabilitator, or euthanized.

Adoption

Information about animals adopted from the Shelter must be recorded on the computer record. This includes the date of adoption and the name, address and telephone number of the adopter.

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 (i.e. puppy thru adult pictures), proof of rabies or licensing, and/or medical records.

The owner's name, address, and telephone number and the date of return should be noted on the computer record.

If someone claims an animal after the stray hold date or there is lacking proof of ownership, the [Enter your shelter name] can choose to adopt the animal pending an approved application and the animal is spayed or neutered prior to adoption.

Euthanasia

When deemed necessary for medical, behavioral, or space reasons, domestic and wild animals may be euthanized. Unweaned, critically ill, or seriously injured domestic animals may be euthanized prior to conclusion of the stray holding period to prevent any additional suffering (only with the recommendation of the veterinarian).

The date of and reason for euthanasia, the dosage and type of drugs used, and the technician's initials are recorded in the computer record and the hard copy of the cage card.

Rehabilitation

Domestic animals, such as chickens, and wild animals may be placed in rehabilitative care. The name of the wildlife rehabber and the date of release should be noted on the computer record.

Release

Depending on the condition of the animal and circumstances regarding rabies control in [Your jurisdiction], wild animals may be set free in a safe release area. Personnel should indicate disposition in the computer record.

Transfer

Animals are released to shelter and rescue partners, if the receiving agency is approved by the [Enter your shelter name].

Shelter Operations- 000-03
[Enter effective date]

ANIMAL INTAKE PROCEDURE

Notes:

- The sample SOP describes intake for an open-admission facility.
- Cover routine intake of the types of animals you accept.
- Create separate sections for animals and situations in which your intake procedure is different, such as for feral cats.

Begin Sample SOP

The [enter your agency name here] is an open admission shelter in that we will never turn away an animal.

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 there 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 technician if the animal is fractious or you feel that you cannot control the animal.

If the animal is a feral cat, see the *Intake Procedure for Feral Cats*.

Dogs and cats are placed in the temporary hold or new arrival runs or cages 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.

Intake Procedures for Feral Cats

Feral cats brought in over the front counter or from an animal control vehicle should be transported in a wire transfer cage (animal control) or the trap (front office) already covered with a towel or sheet to minimize stress. The cat will then be brought to the clinic for an exam.

Counseling Owner Relinquished Intakes

When someone is bringing in another person's animal:

- We must call the owner at the time of relinquishment to get a verbal release – we read the release statement to them from the intake paperwork and then indicate the date and time of the

verbal release. We also must write on the intake slip the name and drivers license number of the person who did bring in the animal.

- If the animal is obviously not adoptable (animal is sick, cat that has a long history of not using the litter box, animal has bitten people, etc.) the person handling the intake must inform the owner that the animal is unlikely to be placed for adoption and could be euthanized. We do not want to give people a false sense of what we can do. This will give them an opportunity to take the animal somewhere else.

When a person who relinquished their animal calls wanting the animal back:

This is a situation that must be handled by the Front Office Supervisor, the Director of Shelter Operations, and if they are not available, the Executive Director.

- Check to see if the animal is still here, and if so, put an immediate Supervisor Hold on that animal's computer record and cage card.
- If the animal has an adoption application, list the previous owner as a backup pending approval of the first adoption application.
- Ask why the person wants the animal back, what has changed, what is the reason?
- If the situation appears ok for the animal, place a hold in the animal's computer record. The previous owner follows the adoption process as all potential adopters do.
- If the situation is acceptable and there is a first hold on the animal, inform the owner that they will be placed as a back-up pending the outcome with the first hold.
- The animal must be spayed or neutered before release.

When someone brings in a stray and wants it back after the stray period:

- Explain the stray hold state law. Ask them to fill out an adoption application on the animal and inform them of the next steps.

Completing the Intake Process:

After creating a record in the computer for the animal, take a photo of the animal. See *Photographs for animal record*. If the animal is frightened or you cannot safely control the animal, do not try to take a picture at this time. Print out the cage card and place the cage card and the original paperwork in the plastic sleeve on the cage into which the animal is placed.

When owner relinquished animals come in with collars, the collars are to be removed and discarded.

When strays enter with collars, any ID, rabies tag, license information on the collar or the tags are entered into the computer and the front office staff then starts tracing the information to find the owners. Stray animal collars are removed and then placed in a zip lock bag with the animal number noted on the outside of the bag with a Sharpie pen. Bagged collars are then kept with the animal behind his/her cage card in the sleeve. If the animal is moved to adoption, then the collar is thrown away.

The animal is then taken to the vet clinic by the vet tech for the complete physical exam and preventive treatments, such as parasite treatments and vaccinations. The person who moves the animal to a permanent run/cage (after the physical exam) also puts on a secondary blue (male) or red (female) collar on each animal with their intake number written on the collar as a back-up identification.

Shelter Operations- 000-4
[Enter effective date]

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR ANIMAL RECORD

Notes:

- This describes photos for identification purposes, not those used to advertise the animals for adoption.

Begin Sample SOP

A good photograph of each animal is necessary for matching animals in the shelter with owners looking for their lost pets.

To help ensure that the animal is readily identifiable in the photo, check to be sure that:

- Animal is sideways and picture includes the feet and tail
- Person holding animal does not block body of animal
- Picture is properly lit and animal can easily be seen

Please take time to be sure the picture is good. Check the printed cage card picture and if necessary re-take pictures. Look at the photo **CRITICALLY**, as though you are an outside critic of the agency reviewing the animals on our site.

Also if an animal came in on a control pole or you must leash muzzle the animal, or the animal is fractious at the time of intake, do not attempt to take the picture at this time. Enter intake information for the animal in the computer and print out a cage card with a sticky to take the picture of the animal after he/she calms down or is in the cage.

Shelter Operations- 000-5
[Enter effective date]

HOUSING DECISIONS AFTER INTAKE

Notes:

- Identify the different areas your agency has for segregating different groups of animals (e.g., by species, age, wellness, etc.).
- Describe how each area is used.
- Identify who makes housing decisions and the information they use to decide when placing animals in each area.

Begin Sample SOP

Housing Areas

There are six different areas in the shelter for housing animals.

Temporary housing for dogs/cats - spaces for dogs or cats when these animals first arrive at the shelter. These are temporary runs/cages for the animal to wait until he/she is taken to the vet clinic and/or given an exam and preventive healthcare treatments. Animals placed in these areas should not be handled by anyone except the staff.

Adoption area (dogs and cats) – these are the areas where the animals that have been deemed adoptable by the organization are housed. The public can visit these areas without being escorted by the shelter staff.

Healthy Hold – these runs/cages house healthy dogs or cats that are either strays in their hold period or owner-relinquished animals who need time to calm down and time for a behavior evaluation. The public is not allowed in this area unless escorted by a staff member.

Quarantine– these runs house bite case animals, confiscated animals, and aggressive animals. Animals in this area should not be handled by anyone except experienced staff. When animals that are acting aggressive relax and calm down, they are moved to Healthy Hold. The public is not allowed in this area unless escorted by a staff member.

Isolation Area- these runs house sick and injured animals away from the general population to help prevent the spread of disease. It is very important to strictly follow our protocols for preventing the spread of disease because the animals housed here are identified as sick by the vet staff. The public is not allowed in this area unless escorted by a staff member.

Feral Cat Area – this room is designed specifically for feral or fearful cats. The cages are set up with Feral Cat Handling Cages, which provide extra quiet and safety for the cats and the staff. This room is kept calm and lights low to minimize stress for these fearful cats.

Decision Process

After the physical exam and preventive healthcare, all animals are housed in Isolation, Quarantine, Feral Cat, or Healthy Hold. After the animal is placed in the appropriate cage, the staff person who housed the animal updates the computer record with the location of the animal. The Kennel Supervisor and/or the Veterinarian decide during the daily walk through whether animals are to be moved to another area.

The person conducting the daily walk through will have a cart with a laptop so each animal's record can be accessed and notes made regarding that animal and any decisions. During this walk through, decisions will be made as to how animals are routed. Animals will be listed as:

- "Behavior Hold"— Put on behavior evaluation status, meaning they are ready for evaluation.
- "Kept in Hold Status"— Being held through stray hold only.
- "Ready for Spay or Neuter" — Animals who are considered candidates for adoption based on behavior and health evaluation and are scheduled for spay/neuter.
- " Adoptable" Hold —After animal is spayed or neutered and waiting for move to adoption area.
- "Consider for Foster" — Animal should be move into foster care.

Immediately notify the kennel supervisor or the veterinary staff of any animal who shows any signs of illness so that the animal can be moved to the isolation area. We cannot house sick animals in the healthy sections because this puts healthy animals at risk of disease.

Decisions about euthanasia are made by the kennel manager, director of shelter operations, and the veterinarian and take into consideration:

- Any notes based on the behavior evaluation or the animal's situation
- How the animal is handling the shelter environment
- Prognosis of the animal
- Behavior of the animal
- Length of time at the shelter
- Number of animals waiting in Healthy Hold for adoption consideration

Shelter Operations – 000-6
[Enter effective date]**LIMITING TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE****Notes:**

- Explain why even seemingly healthy shelter animals are at risk of illness.
- Identify the routine practices staff and volunteers should follow to maintain animal health and limit transmission of diseases.

Begin Sample SOP

Animals come to the shelter from many different levels of care; some known and some unknown, but mostly unknown. Most shelter animals have not received prior benefit of routine preventive health care. The stress of entering a shelter, the shelter environment itself, and several other factors contribute to an increased risk for developing illness.

When animals arrive at the shelter, they are evaluated medically with a physical examination, vaccinated, treated for internal and external parasites, and may be treated for injury and illness.

We vaccinate upon entry to limit widespread disease in the population and protect each individual animal as much as possible, but vaccines are not a guarantee against infection.

Disease can be transmitted in several ways, and we must work diligently to prevent transmission as much as possible. The 5 main modes of disease transmission are:

- Direct contact (one animal to another, such as nose to nose)
- Fomite (indirect) transmission (germ transmission on an inanimate object, such as a mop, hand, shirt)
- Aerosol (in the air, such as via a fan)
- Droplet (sneezing, coughing, less than 1 meter distance transmission)
- Vector (via a flea, mouse, tick)

Common diseases seen in shelter environments include: feline upper respiratory infection and canine infectious upper respiratory disease (kennel cough). These are spread mainly through aerosol, droplet transmission and through fomite transmission, such as via the hands, feet, and even on clothing of staff and volunteers.

For this reason, please wash your hands (use hand sanitizer) between handling each animal and/or wear disposable gloves. Sanitizer bottles and dispensers are located throughout the kennel area. You do not have to sanitize your hands between the mother and puppies or kittens in a litter, but you must do so before you interact with another dog or cat.

Other diseases, such as parvovirus in dogs and panleukopenia (the cat form of parvo virus), are spread mainly through fomite transmission of bodily secretions, such as vomit and feces. These viruses are very environmentally hardy and can be difficult to eradicate from the shelter environment if proper sanitation procedures are not in place.

Staff or volunteers who observe animals exhibiting any signs of illness (such as diarrhea, vomiting, sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge etc.) should immediately notify the kennel supervisor or vet clinic staff.

Every-day Practices that Help Prevent Spread of Disease

- Report any animal that appears sick to the kennel supervisor or the vet clinic immediately.
- Wash your hands between animals.
- Do not let animals housed apart interact or touch noses.
- Immediately pick up all feces once a dog has defecated on the grounds.
- After picking up feces, wash and then disinfect any cement or solid surface.
- Any time you disinfect, rinse or wipe the area thoroughly.
- Wash the laundry and dishes according to the posted written protocol.
- Don't keep dirty dishes lying around – take them to the dirty dish bin quickly.
- Change trash liners on a regular basis; don't let the trash receptacles overflow.
- Sanitize equipment such as coaxing sticks between cats; disinfect control poles and pooper scoopers between use.

If we all follow the same procedures the risk of having a disease problem will be greatly minimized.

Shelter Operations 000-7
[Enter effective date]

KENNEL DUTIES

Notes:

- List all the kennel duties that staff perform in the course of a typical day. Describe the details of specific duties in separate SOPs following this one.

Begin Sample SOP

Morning Duties

The first staff on duty each morning are responsible for feeding the animals. After the animals are fed (this should take a total of 45 minutes for dogs and cats) morning clean up starts. All staff are to follow the instructions on the assignment board at Information Central regarding what areas they are assigned. Staff cannot change these assignments. If you are not able to work in the area assigned, discuss the situation with the kennel supervisor.

Afternoon Duties

Kennel Inventory - The Kennel Supervisor will walk through the kennels and make decisions about what animals are to be moved. For instance, a dog or cat in healthy hold that is ready to be moved to adoption or a dog in adoption that needs to be moved to isolation.

The Supervisor will use "stickies" to indicate to the shelter staff "move to adoption" or "move to isolation." This way, the kennel staff can, during clean up, move the animal to the new area and ensure the old kennel is thoroughly disinfected. The staff person moving the animal is responsible for making the change in the computer record by noon that same day.

After Clean-up, On-going Duties

- Spot clean animals after morning clean-up and three times during the afternoon
- Disinfect and set up dirty cages; see *EMPTY CAGE DISINFECTING (AFTER ANIMAL LEAVES)*
- Sweep/mop floors
- Walk the dogs in Healthy Hold and other behind the scenes areas
- Re-stock supplies based on schedule
- Check water for all animals
- Assist with intake of incoming animals
- Clean toys from exercise yard
- Assist with incoming animals working in concert with the veterinary/clinic staff
- Bathe and groom animals as needed
- Socialize those animals that are frightened or scared
- Foam the exercise areas with bleach solution using the foamer
- Other duties as assigned

Closing Duties

- Spot check dogs and cats one last time/ scoop kennels
- Check water

- Walk all housebroken dogs
- Clean break room
- Clean euthanasia room, wash room
- Keep intake areas clean, organized and neat
- Intake any animals that arrive; do not leave animals in temporary holding without food, water, or litter
- Put away supplies in the appropriate place
- Turn off the lights in the shelter
- Lock the door as you exit

Shelter Operations- 000-8
[Enter effective date]

DOG AND PUPPY FEEDING

Notes:

- The information below is an example of one feeding schedule. Depending on the type of food you are using, quantities and serving sizes will vary. Animals under veterinary care may also be on special diets or feeding schedules.
- Edit to describe your agency's practices.

Begin Sample SOP

Morning Feeding

Using two large Rubbermaid containers, mix up hard kibble with six cans of wet food for each container. Add enough water to create appropriate moisture so the food is more appetizing to the dogs.

Keep the area clean as you make the food; discard the cans and can tops in the trash.

Using two carts place one full Rubbermaid food container on each cart along with both large and small clean dishes working in teams of two. Going down each row, start with Adoption, move to the other animal areas, and end with the animals in Isolation areas.

IF THERE IS A "DO NOT FEED" SIGN ON AN ANIMAL'S CAGE, DO NOT FEED THAT ANIMAL!! ANIMALS THAT ARE FED BEFORE SURGERY CANNOT BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED.

Amounts per serving are as follows

- X-Large dogs (90 lbs and over) = 5 cups of mix
- Large dogs (60 - 90 lbs) = 4 cups (not heaping) of mix
- Medium dogs (35 - 50 lbs) = 2 cups of mix
- Small dogs (5 - 30 lbs) = ½ to 1 cup of mix, more wet than dry
- Puppies = ½ cup of each with mostly canned food (FEED TWICE A DAY)

If there is any food left over in the Rubbermaid bins, go back and give more food to the skinny dogs or the large dogs.

Staff assigned to clean puppies are responsible for feeding the puppies and the nursing mothers. Use puppy chow and wet food. If there is a mother nursing she gets puppy chow also. Puppies must be fed in a large flat bowl that allows all the puppies to eat easily. If necessary, use two bowls.

After feeding, take the Rubbermaid containers to the dish washing area and wash them.

The food dishes are collected during clean up and taken to the dish area for cleaning and disinfection.

Afternoon Feeding (Puppies and Underweight Dogs)

Puppies 6 months and younger are fed again at 3pm along with any animal who needs to gain weight. Kennel staff mark on the animal's cage card if they want the animal to be fed twice a day.

Shelter Operations- 000-9
[Enter effective date]

DOG MORNING CLEAN UP

Notes:

- The protocol below is for runs with guillotine doors used as designed. There are other ways to clean if shelters are designed differently. It is quite possible to clean your facility without hosing animals in their runs or risking too much cross contamination, which leads to disease outbreak and spread.
 - For single sided runs, leave one run open at all times at the end of each row. In the morning the staff will move the dog (s) in the dirty run that is next to the clean run into that clean run (that is, move down one run). Clean/disinfect the run the dogs were in, squeegee the floor and move the next dog (s) into the one just cleaned. Repeat that until you have moved each dog into a clean run, and you will have an empty run at the other end from where you started. The next morning do the same thing only start with the empty run.
 - Use runs that you build outside to correspond in number with the number of runs you have inside. These should have cement floors and covers. Staff walk each dog to the corresponding cleaning run outside and then clean inside in the manner illustrated below. After the runs are clean and dry, walk the dogs back to their original run.
- Incorrect use of disinfecting and detergent products is a very frequent factor in the spread of disease in shelters. For example, many disinfecting products do not have detergent action, so additional cleaning steps with a detergent are needed. Also, many disinfecting agents require a 10-minute contact time. Verify the instructions for the products that you use, and spell out the specific requirements very clearly in the SOP.

Begin Sample SOP

The dog morning scrub begins right after the dogs are all fed. The morning scrub for all animals must be complete by noon each day.

Work in teams of two based on the assignment board from the kennel manager or manager on duty:

- One team of two people starts in the front with the healthy dogs.
- The other team of two starts at the back of healthy hold.
- When done, both teams clean quarantine and lastly isolation.

Equipment needed:

- 5 gallon bucket lined with a trash bag and secured with a bungee cord
- Pooper scooper
- Foamer with disinfectant [enter type used]
- Long handled scrub brush
- Squeegee

Daily Cleaning Process

Call all the dogs to the same side of the cage in one row. Close the guillotine door behind them.

DO NOT LET IT DROP.

- Scoop up all the solid fecal material or toy parts with the scooper in each run all at once.
- Spray detergent [enter type used] on every surface of the run.
- Scrub with a stiff brush all the areas, removing the organic material.
- Rinse run/cage.
- Go back to the start of the run section, and spray the walls, floor, and the gate of each run with the disinfectant solution.
- When you are finished with the entire row, and it has been at least 10 minutes to ensure proper contact time for disinfectant to work, go back to the first run and rinse with clear water.
- Fill clean water bucket/pails.
- Squeegee each run and walkway.
- Replace beds if needed.
- Provide toy.
- Move all the dogs back to the clean side, close the guillotine door after them and repeat above process on the other side.
- When finished, open the guillotine door and let the dogs have access to both sides.
- Empty the poop pail into the dumpster.
- Soak the scoopers in the disinfectant bucket.
- Empty the trash for your area and replace with clean bags

When you remove a dog from his/her cage permanently, place a red "dirty cage" card on the cage to indicate that the cage needs to be disinfected. (See *EMPTY CAGE DISINFECTING (AFTER ANIMAL LEAVES)*).

Shelter Operations- 000-10
[Enter effective date]

CAT MORNING CLEANING

Notes:

- Spot cleaning, which is described below, when used appropriately, may reduce stress and therefore illness in the feline population. Spot cleaning means that cleaning occurs around the cat while she/he remains in the cage.
- Proper cleaning and disinfection is still a critical part of the many factors that contribute to shelter disease control and should occur on a regular basis. A weekly sanitation is recommended.
- It is critical that you track disease outbreaks to monitor what works best for every individual facility. Some shelters may not experience a positive result when switching from more traditional methods to spot cleaning. Spot cleaning is not appropriate during times of disease outbreak, or if cages are heavily soiled (mucous, feces, blood, urine), if the cat poses a danger to human safety, or when a new cat is being placed into a cage vacated by another cat.

Begin Sample SOP

Non-Feral Cats:

- At the beginning of cleaning, kennel staff will check each animal and its environment in their assigned section, including inside and outside of the animal's cage, to determine if it needs immediate attention or if spot cleaning is inappropriate.
- Always work in order of age and susceptibility when cleaning
 1. Pediatric
 2. Vaccinated healthy adult
 3. Unvaccinated adult
 4. Sick
- Always wear a set of new disposable gloves for each cat.
- Whenever possible, cats should be provided an area to hide in their kennel. A feral cat den, paper bag, box etc will work well for this purpose. The cat can be encouraged to enter the hiding area (often will enter on her/his own) while spot cleaning occurs. If double sided cages are available, cats can be placed on the opposite side of the cage. Handling should be minimized during cleaning.
- Whenever possible, use disposable items.
- Kennel walls can be wiped down with a paper towel and animal-safe disinfectant or mild detergent to remove any organic material.
- Litter box should either be disposed of or soiled litter should be disposed of and fresh litter replaced.
- Empty water bowls and refill with fresh water.
- Provide fresh food based on kitten or adult.
- Shake bedding out to remove litter and food, and return to cage if not soiled. Provide clean bedding if needed.

The rest of the animal area (floors, garbage) etc should be cleaned as usual.

Feral Cats:

If a cat is in the feral cat handling box, use a coaxing stick to shut the circle door. Remove the whole box and place the cat in the box on the floor.

- Remove the dirty litter box.
- Discard any paper food dish, empty the water, and remove the newspaper.
- If you have a film or body grease build up, spray animal-safe disinfectant or mild detergent on all surfaces and wipe down all surfaces with a paper towel.
- Set up the cage:
 - Place clean newspaper in the cage.
 - Return the cat in the feral cat box back to the cage in the back of the cage. The circle door should be facing the front of the cage.
 - Place a fresh litter box in the cage.
 - Place fresh water and food bowl in the cage.
 - Securely shut the cage door.
 - Reach through the bars and using the coaxing stick, open the door to the feral box so it stays up.
- Repeat for other feral cats.
- Sweep and mop the room.
- Turn off the lights.

Shelter Operations 000- 11
[Enter effective date]

EMPTY CAGE DISINFECTING (AFTER ANIMAL LEAVES)

Notes:

- Identify how staff should flag cages or runs that need cleaning and those that have been cleaned.
- This step is a **MUST** if you are spot cleaning cat cages.
- Incorrect use of disinfecting and detergent products is a very frequent factor in the spread of disease in shelters. For example, many disinfecting products do not have detergent action, so additional cleaning steps with a detergent are needed. Also, many disinfecting agents require a 10-minute contact time. Verify the instructions for the products that you use, and spell out the specific requirements very clearly in the SOP.

Begin Sample SOP

Cages that require disinfecting should have a red “Dirty Cage” sign hanging on the cage. The person removing the animal from the cage (for Return to Owner (RTO), Adoption, Euthanasia, or Transfer) is responsible for hanging the card.

- Empty the entire cage, and take dishes, any blanket or toy to the washing area.
- Scoop out any organic material
- Spray detergent [enter type used] on every surface of the run.
- Scrub with a stiff brush all the areas, removing the organic material.
- Rinse run/cage.
- Apply disinfectant or bleach solution to all surfaces of cage/run including the top, sides and gate.
- Let it sit for 10 minutes, rinse, and wipe or let dry.

Disinfected dog run set up:

- Hang a clean water pail on the outside of the run, which provides the visual cue that this is a clean run.
- Remove the “Dirty Cage” sign and put back in the sign area.

Disinfected cat cage set up:

- Set up with newspaper lining and a full litter pan in the back of the cage.
- Place an empty water dish in the center of the cage upside down.

This setup is a visual sign for all staff and volunteers that the cage is disinfected and ready for a new animal.

Shelter Operations 000-12
[Enter effective date]

MEDICAL PROTOCOL FOR INCOMING ANIMALS

Notes:

- Develop this section with your veterinarian or medical advisor.
- Be sure to investigate your state and local laws relating to the practice of veterinary medicine.
- Refer to American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) or the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) for panel expert guidelines for vaccinating shelter animals.
- Refer to the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program website for additional shelter medicine resources.

Begin Sample SOP

Enter all medical treatments, including injections, topical treatments, and oral treatments into the animal's computer record when they are administered ..

Healthy and Potentially Adoptable Dogs

- Take the dog into the clinic area.
- Perform a visual and hands-on physical examination, nose to tail and record directly into the computer system or the intake form.
- Check for spay scar or for neuter. If observed, note in computer or intake form.
- Scan for microchip, and check for tattoo or other ID.
- Apply external parasite treatments.
- Administer vaccines.
- Administer internal parasite treatments.
- Based on examination, place the animal in the appropriate facility area (healthy hold, isolation, or quarantine).

Healthy and Potentially Adoptable Cats

- Take the cat into the clinic area.
- Perform a visual and hands-on physical examination, nose to tail and record directly into the computer system or the intake form.
- Note if ear is notched, which indicates that the cat belongs to a feral cat colony (Flag this animal so we can call caregivers in the area to see if this is their cat.)
- Note if declawed or polydactyl.
- Check for spay scar or for neuter. If observed, note in computer or intake form.
- Scan for microchip, and check for tattoo or other ID.
- Apply external parasite treatments.
- Administer vaccines.
- Administer internal parasite treatments.
- Based on examination, place the animal in the appropriate facility area (healthy hold, isolation, or feral, quarantine)

Fractious Animal Medical Protocol

- The veterinary staff perform a visual health scan, with a hands-on examination if possible.
- If possible animals will be vaccinated.
- Scan for microchip if possible.

Shelter Operations- 000-13
[Enter effective date]

TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR SICK/INJURED ANIMALS OR ANIMALS BREAKING WITH VIRUS/DISEASE

Notes:

- A table like the one below is a useful tool for clarifying conditions your shelter treats and does not treat.
- Complete the table with your veterinary provider, keeping in mind your ability to isolate infectious disease and your budget to treat illness.
- Refer to the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program website for additional shelter medicine resources.
- Many agencies’ decisions regarding what animals to treat depend somewhat on the physical design of the shelter. For instance, ideally, a separate air system would exist for both dog and cat isolation. At a minimum, a separate room and strong SOPs on handling animals to properly prevent fomite transmission are necessary.

Begin Sample SOP

It is critical that we evaluate the animals in our care daily. This is done primarily by the clinic staff in their daily walk through, but also by the kennel staff who bring problems to the attention of the clinic staff for their follow up. The table below gives guidance about viruses/diseases we treat and situations that would cause us to make euthanasia decisions.

Problem	Hold or Not Hold?	Treatment	Treatable	Comments
Severe Mange covering more than 50% of the body. Not bleeding, just itching				
Severe Mange covering more than 50% of the body – open sores, bleeding				
Ringworm				
URI – Major – crusted eyes shut, cannot eat				
Kennel Cough				
Parvo Symptoms				
Hookworm				
Giardia				
Tapeworm				
Coccidia				
Distemper Symptoms				
Broken Bones/injuries				

Shelter Operations- 000-14
[Enter effective date]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Notes:

- Work with your medical advisor to develop the protocol for the physical exam.

Begin Sample SOP

Exam Process

[provide your protocol here]

Finalizing the Exam

- Place a secondary ID collar on each animal: blue for males, red for females. Write the animal's ID number on the collar with a permanent marker.
- Place the cat in its carrier or dog on a leash.
- Record your examination findings. In addition, record vaccination and parasite treatments in the computer record and/or intake form. Record any abnormalities observed and action taken.

Kenneling Cats after Exam

- Find a clean disinfected cage. Such cages have a clean litter pan in the back and empty food and water bowls upside down in the center of the cage.
- Fill the food dish with appropriate (kitten or adult) food, and fill the water bowl.
- Place the cat in the cage.
- Place the cage card in the plastic sleeve on the front of the cage.
- Ensure that the cage is properly closed but do not slam the door.
- Place special needs notes on kennels of cats with special needs. Special needs include but are not limited to feeding, medical treatment, or calm down needs.
- Remove all newspaper from cat carrier(s) and return carrier to the dirty crate area for disinfecting.

Kenneling Dogs after Exam

- Find a clean disinfected run (identified by an empty water bucket hanging outside the run).
- Place the dog in the run.
- Fill up the water bucket.
- Give dog an appropriate amount of food. (See *DOG AND PUPPY FEEDING*.)
- Give an appropriate toy.
- If the dog is a small dog or frightened, place ½ of a carrier with a towel inside so the dog can curl up and gain some confidence.
- If the dog is fractious or very fearful, take a blanket and use clamps to hang the blanket in front of the run to create a quiet, calmer environment. This helps the dog to relax.

Shelter Operations- 000-15
[Enter effective date]

USING MEMOS IN THE ANIMAL RECORD

Notes:

- Update for your agency's policies and process for communicating about specific animals.
- Your goal is to have "one-stop shopping" for information about a specific animal. This helps you avoid the mistakes — annoying to heartbreaking — that can occur when important information is not available to people when they need it.

Begin Sample SOP

The way to communicate anything about an animal is to place a hold on that animal in the comment field of the computer record or intake form. It is imperative that you use this format to communicate. Before any decision is made about an animal, the Director of Shelter Operations, Kennel Supervisor, or designee will review the computer record or intake form for that animal to be sure there are no holds for that particular animal.

If the finder is interested in adopting a stray, or the animal has an adoption application, or a rescue group has been contacted for this animal, these communications must be in the memo field or on the intake form. A sign on the cage is not a guarantee as that paper could get lost or destroyed in the daily activity in the kennel.

If an animal has been selected for euthanasia or transfer to a rescue group and there is a hold in the computer record, suspend the euthanasia or transfer until you address the hold.

To be official, all holds must have the name of person who put the hold on the animal and the date of the hold along with description of the situation.

A hold without a name or date will not be considered a formal hold.

Shelter Operations- 000-16
February 23, 2006

PREPARING A LIST OF ANIMALS FOR TRANSFER TO PARTNER SHELTERS OR BREED RESCUE

Notes:

- Update for your agency's policies and process for moving animals to other agencies.
- Everyone in your agency and in receiving agencies should know your policy for selecting animals for transfer/export.

Begin Sample SOP

The Director of Shelter Operations, kennel manager or other designee can prepare a list of animals for transfer, export or offsite adoptions.

- Animals are selected for possible transfer during the daily walk through by the kennel supervisor.
- Animals are selected based on their ability to be adopted by the receiving agency, time at the shelter, health, and how they are doing in this environment. We will also transfer animals that have borderline behavior concerns that are workable in a different environment.
- We do not transfer problem animals just so we do not have to euthanize them.

The following must be done by the person preparing the list.

- Access the computer record or intake form for each animal and check the memo field for holds or notes about that animal that would prevent the transfer or export.
- Check the lost reports for each of the animals on the list for possible matches.
- Give the list to the volunteer coordinator or staff person who will contact our partner shelters and our approved breed rescue list.
- Change the computer routing status for each animal to **rescue**. Enter a note in the memo field that the animal is being transferred to (enter the group name and contact information and the date) or being exported to (enter what agency), and your name and date.
- Breed rescue groups are given up to [enter number of days you can hold animals for rescue groups] days to pick up the animal.

Shelter Operations- 000-17
[Enter effective date]

Meet Your Match® SAFER™/DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Notes:

- MYM SAFER™ is a tool that requires strong animal handling skills, body awareness, and a keen understanding for objectively observing canine behavior. Certification is necessary to ensure each person conducting SAFER™ is doing it properly

Below is a description of how an agency using SAFER™ should use the data to determine the next steps for the animal. As each shelter is unique and has different resources available, next steps will vary from shelter-to-shelter.

- If staff and cage space are available, the dog might be given another twenty-four hours to settle into his surroundings and then be re-assessed.
- If the shelter employs behavior staff, the dog may be put on a behavior modification program and re-assessed after the program is complete.
- Some shelters have behavior foster homes in which to house dogs with potential behavior issues for a trial period. Experienced foster volunteers follow through with the shelter's behavior modification program and observe the dog's behavior in a 'real life' setting.
- Shelters without behavior departments may utilize community dog trainers to devise additional behavior modification protocols, work with the shelter dogs or serve as foster homes – paid or unpaid.
- Local rescue groups may be interested in taking a dog that would not be a good candidate for shelter adoption. Sharing the assessment with the group allows them to make an informed decision about whether or not they have the resources to meet the animal's needs.

Whether your facility is a high volume, open admission agency with few resources, or a shelter with many resources you can use SAFER™ to assist you. For instance:

- If you are a shelter with few resources and little time MYM SAFER™ might be used to help identify the behaviorally soundest pit bulls and guarding breeds to ensure that those placed up for adoption will be great ambassadors for both their breeds and your shelter.
- The MYM SAFER™ aggression assessment may help supervisors make euthanasia decisions, but the assessment alone should never be the only input considered. Relinquishment surveys done at intake, veterinary reports from the health check, and input from animal care technicians, volunteers, and foster parents should also be considered whenever a life or death decision is made.

Before conducting behavior modification and management work, three important programs should first be in place in your facility.

- A general enrichment program
- An adoption follow-up program
- A standardized program for analyzing progress of animals receiving behavior interventions – in essence a mechanism to determine if the behavior modification is working.

The ASPCA strongly recommends that program 1 (enrichment) and program 2 (adoption follow up) be put in place and working well before focusing on behavior modification. Together, these programs help ensure success by supporting the needs of both the animals in your care and adopters.

Begin Sample SOP

The Meet Your Match[®] SAFER[™] evaluation determines predictability for aggression; it does not indicate an animal's ability to "handle" a shelter environment.

The kennel supervisor uses the feedback from the veterinarian, the trainer, and her staffs' observations of the dog to make the decision about adoption or euthanasia. There must be excellent communication between the veterinarian, the trainer and the kennel supervisor.

Process:

Owner relinquish survey given at intake – when possible a one-on-one interview between staff and relinquisher.

MYM SAFER[™] must be administered by a certified assessor with a trained observer.

All assessments are videotaped.

When enrichment is available and resources permit assessment should be conducted after 36-72 hours. If resources are short and enrichment is not available, assessment should be conducted before dog is placed in a kennel.

Assessment should be reviewed by assessor and observer.

- Dogs that score 1's and 2's with no history of aggression at intake can be tracked to adoption as soon as possible. If the assessment was conducted at intake, re-asses food/toy assessment.
- Dogs that score 3's, 4's, and 5's, no decision should be made until the recorded assessment is reviewed for verification that the correct identification of behavior and correct handling took place in the assessment. If there was incorrect handling during the assessment, the dog should be re-assessed 24 hours later using proper technique. Enrichment should be provided during the 24 hour period.
- When 3, 4, and 5 behavior is correctly identified, all other information (from relinquisher report, medical report, foster, identified behavior, staff and volunteers report) should be considered prior to making decision about adoption, foster, release to rescue partner, behavior modification, or euthanasia.
- Decisions regarding euthanasia, adoption etc of dogs that score 4 and 5 should be made based on available resources. High risk dogs should not be the primary focus if other companion animals (dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens) are being euthanized for treatable illness or euthanized for fear, under socialized behavior, or other behaviors that are not aggressive. The facility should have a standardized enrichment program for all companion animals before resources are allocated to dogs at higher risk for aggression.
- Adoption and euthanasia decisions should not be made by the assessors.

Shelter Operations- 000-18
[Enter effective date]

SPAY/NEUTER SURGERY

Notes:

- Update for your agency's policies and process.

Begin Sample SOP

Adult animals scheduled for surgery are fasted from the night before.

Pediatric patients (those between 6 and 16 weeks of age) should not be fasted. They should be fed a small meal 2 to 4 hours before spay/neuter surgery. Water should not be withheld.

After recovering from surgery, animals are returned to their cage/run.

The person returning the animal to the cage/run must circle on the cage card that the animal is spayed or neutered.

The animal's computer record and/or intake form is updated to indicate the animal is now spayed or neutered.

Shelter Operations- 000-19
[Enter effective date]

ADOPTIONS

Notes:

- Placing terrific animals in new forever homes is one of the most rewarding and most challenging assignments in animal welfare. These guidelines are an example of how one shelter has defined a structured adoption process.
- The Adoption pages of www.ASPCApro.org contain detailed information about implementing open and learning-centered adoptions that you may want to consider.

Begin Sample SOP

Guidelines for adoption procedures and the handling of adoption applications/surveys ensure that potential adopters are given an equal opportunity to adopt. Front office staff are responsible for adhering to adoption procedures, for reviewing and approving or declining adoption applications and for handling adoption contracts and fees.

Adoption procedures. The following procedures are designed to help place an animal in a suitable home.

- Adoption area. [enter specifics relating to what geographical area you adopt].
- Application/Survey. Potential pet adopters must complete an adoption survey before meeting the animals available for adoption outside their kennel or cage. This information provides staff with a better understanding of the pet adopter's past animal history, their expectations for a pet, lifestyle, and the environment in which a new animal would be placed.
- Family/household members. Because the decision to adopt a lifelong companion is a big step in one's life, it is recommended that family and household members participate in the selection of a pet.
 - If possible, children under the age of 8 years should be observed interacting with the proposed animal.
 - Adult members of the household must be a part of the selection. This can be completed with a phone call when one of the adults cannot come to the shelter.
- Consultation. Once an animal is selected, the computer record is reviewed for information about that animal and to inform the applicant of any current holds on the animal or medical issues.
 - If there are holds, explain them to the applicant and encourage the applicant to complete the process and be a back up adoption.
 - Front office staff will work with the applicant and the animal they are interested in and engage in a dialog with the applicant to determine if this is a suitable match.
- Yard Check.
 - If the application is for a Pit Bull, Rottweiler, Doberman, German Shepherd or other protective breed, a yard check must be completed and approved before the adoption is approved.
 - A yard check will be scheduled with animal control.

- Spay/Neuter. Most of the animals available for adoption have been spayed or neutered. This should be verified by the staff. Any animal that has not been sterilized must be before it will be allowed to be adopted or leave the shelter. A note should be made in the animals computer record and an e-mail to the Director of Shelter Operations to request this animal be added to the spay and neuter list.

Processing an adoption application/survey. The adoption process is designed to give Shelter staff more information about the adopter's household, expectations, and experience with animals and generally assist in making a good match between animal and home.

- First applicants. Adoption of animals from the Shelter is on a first-come, first-served basis. An individual or family who have selected an animal and whose home appears to be acceptable are given until close of business the next day to complete the application or survey.
 - All active applications are kept on a clipboard at the front office counter.
 - Any time there is an application on a specific animal that is not finalized by an adoption that same day, the animal's status must be changed to "Adoption Pending" This places a hold for that person on that animal [enter hold time] to allow the applicant time to complete the application.
- Back-up applicants. We will accept back up applicants on animals who will be eligible to adopt that animal if the applicant ahead of them forfeits. Office staff should record in the animal's computer record these back up applications. Back-up applications with a copy of the Adoption Status Form, are kept on the clip board as well.
- Adoption Status Form. There may be occasions where an application is pending because other family members want to visit the selected pet or for other reasons. When an Adoption Status Form is given to an applicant a hold MUST be completed for that person in that animal's record.
 - Applicants are given until close of the next visiting day on the selected animal to complete the needed steps.
 - The staff person reviewing the application will complete the two-part Adoption Status Form indicating the time period we will hold the application. IT IS CRITICAL THAT STAFF EXPLAIN THE DOCUMENT AND IT IS CLEAR TO THE APPLICLANT WHAT THEY NEED TO DO AND IN WHAT TIME FRAME.
 - The applicant will then receive the top (white) copy of this completed form clearly communicating the next steps in the adoption process.
 - The other copy is stapled to the back of their application.
 - The information must also be indicated in the animal's record with the specifics on what they need to do and in what time frame
 - Holds can be extended ONLY if there is no other person as a back up on that animal.
- Declining an applicant. Staff should carefully review each application. In the event an individual appears unstable or intoxicated or does not agree to abide by reasonable adoption conditions, the application may be declined. Justification should be given to the individual and, if handled tactfully, can be an excellent opportunity to educate.
 - Office staff should write the reason for denial on the application, which is submitted to the adoption program manager, as well as in the computer record
- Finalizing an adoption.

The final adoption process includes witnessing the adoption contract, payment of adoption fees, issuance of medical information, checking for microchip information and completion of in-house forms.

- Review the contract completely, including all the medical information at the bottom; get client's initials where required and signature at the end.
- Collect payment.
- Ring amount of sale into register

- Adoption contract. Adopters are required to carefully read the adoption contract and affix their signatures to this document indicating agreement to its terms, conditions, and spay/neuter and health exam requirements. A staff member will witness and date the contract.
- Be sure to explain where the medical information is and remind them to take their copy of the contract to their veterinarian on the first visit. The pet adopter will receive his or her copy of the contract. The original and Shelter copies of the contract are submitted to the Front Office Supervisor.

- Medical information. All medical information is kept current in the animal's record. This information is to be given to the adopter so their veterinarian knows what we have done for the animal.
 - When the animal's previous medical history is released to the adopter, staff will eliminate any reference to the previous owner's name and address.

- Documentation. The animal's record is updated to record the date of adoption and the name, address, and telephone number of the adopter. Pet behavior evaluations can be given to the new owner. Any pending applicants listed on the tracking slip should be notified that the animal has been placed in a new home.

- Refunds. No matter how careful the Shelter is in attempting to match the right pet with the right family, there will be occasions where animals will be returned to the Shelter. Adoption fees are non refundable. Managers can override this policy.

Shelter Operations- 000-20
[Enter effective date]

ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR ADOPTIONS

- Notes:**
- The table below is one way to summarize your agency’s policies on specific issues that can occur with some adopters.
 - For each issue, enter your agency’s policy and a brief explanation of why the policy exists. It is helpful to use language in this explanation that your staff can use to when explaining your policy to potential adopters.

Begin Sample SOP

Issue	Agency Policy	Rationale and Comments
Commitment of family and/or other adult household members		
Landlords/Renting		
Outside-only Dog		
Guard Dog		
Pit Bulls		
Fences and Dog Houses		
Chaining		
Yard Checks		
Outside Cat or Inside/Outside Cat		
Declawing		

Shelter Operations- 000-21
[Enter effective date]**FOSTER PROGRAM*****Notes:***

- Depending on the depth and number of your foster program you may expand the type and situation you would foster an animal.
- The most important aspect is that you can track and account for the animals in foster care at any given time.

Begin Sample SOP

We want every animal brought to us to have a chance for a long and happy life. Because of our limited resources and personnel, we are not able to care for the many sick, injured and very young but otherwise adoptable animals as we would like to. Foster care will allow some of the young ones to grow and the sick and injured to heal.

The Foster Care Program brings caring individuals and needy animals together, providing special care in a home setting until the animals are ready for adoption.

Animals eligible for foster care:

- Very young kittens and puppies that are approved by the veterinarian and the kennel supervisor.
- Animals with a treatable illness, with reasonable intervention
- Animals with a treatable injury, with reasonable time and treatment
- Single raised kittens and puppies, when they can be added to an existing group of siblings with a mother to learn cat/dog behavior.
- Others as approved by the veterinarian AND kennel supervisor.

Animals usually not eligible for foster care:

- Animals with serious medical problems and a poor prognosis for recovery or rehabilitation
- Animals with serious behavior problems, such as serious aggression issues that put humans or other animals at risk of harm
- Unthrifty young animals

Staff fostering:

- Staff requesting to foster must get the approval of the veterinarian and the kennel supervisor. Dogs considered for behavioral foster only must be approved by the Director of Operations.

- Staff fostering the animals need to understand that ongoing decisions about care will remain in the hands of the shelter and are dependent on financial resources and prognosis for recovery.
- Any animal that leaves the shelter in foster care must be recorded as such. The hard copy of the animals record is filed in the Animals in Foster file (this is in the front of the shelter with all the outcomes) with the name and contact person who is the foster provider and a note in the computer record about where the animal is and the date the animal went into foster.
- When the animal is returned to the shelter, the file hard copy is retrieved and placed with the animal and the computer record is updated showing the animal has been returned.

Volunteer fostering:

- When an animal is a candidate for foster, we use trained and supervised volunteers who are approved for foster.
- The approval for the animal to be fostered must first be obtained by the kennel supervisor AND the veterinarian. The status of the animal is changed to “ready for foster.”
- The volunteer coordinator working in concert with the foster care coordinator will work to find a foster provider.
- Volunteers that are approved to foster are organized by [enter the title of the staff who coordinate fostering].
- Volunteers fostering the animals need to understand that ongoing decisions about care will remain in the hands of the shelter and are dependent on financial resources and prognosis for recovery.
- Volunteers also need to be aware that the shelter makes all medical/surgical decisions about foster animals. The shelter provides a contact for medical emergencies. Volunteers will not be reimbursed if they take an animal to another veterinarian for exam, diagnostic testing, treatment, etc.
- Any animal that leaves the shelter in foster care must be recorded as such. The hard copy of the animal's record is put in the kennel supervisor's box with the name and contact person who is the foster provider and a note in the computer record about where the animal is and the date the animal went into foster and the date that the next examination/recheck is due.
- When the animal is returned to the shelter, the file hard copy is retrieved and placed with the animal and the computer record is updated showing the animal has been returned.

Shelter Operations 000-22
[Enter effective date]

DOG WALKING

Notes:

- Identify which dogs can be walked and by whom. Be sure to indicate how staff or volunteers will know which dogs to walk.
- Identify the location for walking and any other considerations for your location.
- Include instructions for tracking which dogs have been walked, when, and by whom.

Begin Sample SOP

When removing a dog from the cage or run, always use a thick slip lead. Never use the clip end of a leash on the collar. Frightened animals may pull back when being walked, and they can easily slip out of the clip collar and run away.

Leave an "I am being walked" notice on each kennel dog's cage to indicate that the dog will be back in kennels shortly.

As you walk outside, keep the dog on a short leash and do not allow the dog to interact, sniff, touch noses, etc. with any other dog or person.

Only staff are allowed to walk animals from the quarantine area and the isolation area.

Volunteers can walk dogs from the adoption area only. Trained volunteers can walk dogs from Healthy Hold if the dogs have been behavior evaluated. Any dog in the healthy hold area with a sign that says "do not walk" should be walked only by staff.

Dogs that are indicated by the staff as being housebroken should be walked at least twice a day. Please keep poop bags with you and pick up any feces.

If a dog gets away from a staff person or volunteer, never chase the dog. Instead, alert the staff and encourage the dog to come back to you with soft voices and treats.

When a dog has been walked, please indicate the time on the animal care sheet on the kennel.

Deposit the feces in the trash can.

Walk dogs in the designated area. Follow the protocols posted on the gate of the dog exercise area.

To reduce the spread or outbreak of infectious disease, the dog walking area will be sanitized every night following a posted protocol.

Shelter Operations 000-23
[Enter effective date]

WORKING IN THE FOOD PREP AREA

Notes:

- Edit this information to be specific to your facility.

Begin Sample SOP

GENERAL

- Please keep this area clean and neat.
- If supplies of rawhides and biscuits run low, re-stock the area from main inventory supplies.
- Keep the stock of canned dog food on the shelves complete, re-stocking as needed.
- Immediately take all dirty dishes to the dish washing station for disinfection.
- Please do not leave open bags of dog food lying around. All food should be in the rolling bin either labeled “dog food” or “puppy food.”
- Use a bleach spray to keep the table clean; be sure to mix the bleach fresh each day.
- Keep the tops tight on the food holders for adult and puppy food.
- When these food holding containers are empty, roll them over to the supply corner and re-fill with appropriate food type.
- Sweep up any spilled dog food after each feeding.

Filling Water Pails

- The water at the shelter is potable.
- Fill the watering can with water.
- The water pails are to be hung on the inside front of the cage to the side of the gate, so it is easy to fill the bowl without opening the cage.
- When putting water in cages of puppies, place the bowls to the back of the cage – they are less likely to be tipped over.
- When there are no available bowls, please try to use sturdy, flat bottomed bowls – preferably stone crocks or rubber bottomed stainless steel if possible – this will save you lots of cleaning of spilled water!

Shelter Operations 000-24
[Enter effective date]

WASHING THE DISHES

Notes:

- Edit this information to be specific to your facility. For example, this SOP is written for a facility in which a dishwasher is not available.

Begin Sample SOP

Note: bleach becomes inert after exposure to light and air, so yesterday's mixture is no longer effective.

Please mix up fresh cleaning solution first thing in the morning and set up 4 separate tubs.

- Fill the first wash tub with water and detergent.
- Fill the second wash tub with plain water for rinsing.
- Fill the third tub with a bleach mix: [enter how much bleach to water based on the amount of water the tub holds]
- Fill the last tub full with plain water for rinsing. (The rinse after bleach may also be performed under running water.
- When finished with the dishes, drain all the tubs.

Disinfecting Dishes:

- Clean any food particles from the dishes by wiping them out into the trash.
- Place dishes in the detergent solution and scrub completely with a green scrubbie (no sponges) inside and place the bowl in a clear water rinse:
- Place dishes in the bleach solution and leave for a minimum of 10 minutes.
- Place dishes in the rinse water and thoroughly rinsed under running water until there is no bleach residue.
- Stack dishes upside down so they can drain on the racks next to the dish area.
- When dishes are dry, take them back to the proper area: clean dish area for dogs and cats or the food prep area. Do this by the end of the day so there are clean dishes for the next day.

Shelter Operations- 000-25
[Enter effective date]

FELINE ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT:

Notes:

- A few examples of cat and kitten enrichment are included below. Add your agency's strategies for providing enrichment to shelter cats.

Begin Sample SOP

Benefits of Enrichment for Cats and Kittens:

While kenneled in Healthy Hold (an average of two to five days), Isolation, or Quarantine, cats and kittens have limited handling contact, although they also have some interaction with people as staff and patrons walk through the area-- usually responding to the animals by talking to them. Many of these animals are high-energy and need outlets for mental and physical energy. Cats and kittens are usually more inclined than dogs and puppies to invent play with "found toys," even without a playmate.

Examples of Active Toys:

- hard, round plastic shower curtain rings, linked in pairs and attached to gate bars (high enough to encourage jumping and reaching)
- small rolling balls (with or without bells inside) to move around the cage floor and to hide under a towel -- a single shower curtain ring can also serve this purpose

Here are some basic health and safety requirements for cat toys:

- Toys must be easily and thoroughly able to be disinfected, or be disposable after single use. Disinfect toys before giving to another animal using the procedure used to disinfect dishes.
- Rolling toys must be too large to fit between cage bars.
- Any toys for kittens or cats must be safe; that is, of sturdy construction and appropriate materials so that cats cannot ingest toy parts or injure themselves with the toy or its components.

Providing a Secure Area:

Provide as needed a hiding area for cats, specifically for cats or kittens who appear frightened. Consider hanging a towel over the front of the cage to allow the cat to relax.

Shelter Operations- 000-26
[Enter effective date]

CANINE ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT:

Notes:

- A few examples of dog and puppy enrichment are included below. Add your agency's strategies for providing enrichment to shelter canines.
- Refer to the Enrichment for Shelter Dogs section of www.ASPCApro.org for a low-cost but highly robust canine enrichment program that you can implement with your staff and volunteers.

Begin Sample SOP

Benefits of Canine Enrichment:

Enrichment helps dogs and puppies maintain their mental, physical, and emotional health so that they remain good adoption candidates and don't become behaviorally at risk.

Examples of Enrichment for Dogs and Puppies:

- Very hard rubber chewable toys. Kong toys, if the appropriate size is given to each dog, are too rigid to be chewed into pieces.
- In addition, volunteers should be encouraged to use "dog walk time" to its greatest advantage and as much more than simply the chance to eliminate.
- Individual exercise opportunities should average 15-20 minutes, including leash time, talking, petting, and interactive play. Active "people time" allows an outlet for mental AND physical energy through focused, interactive play.
- By focusing on a specific task (repeatedly returning a ball, Kong, or Frisbee; playing "hide-and-seek" with treats or toys, etc.), dogs are able to expel much more pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. Therefore, they greatly reduce stress due to confinement, isolation, and boredom.

Here are some basic health and safety requirements for dog and puppy toys:

- Toys must be easily and thoroughly able to be disinfected, or be disposable after single use. Disinfect toys before giving to another animal using the procedure used to disinfect dishes.
- Toys must be of sturdy construction and appropriate materials so that they pose no danger if ingested or damaged.

Shelter operations 000-27
[Enter effective date]

LOST ANIMALS

Notes:

- The issue of lost and found animals is a highly sensitive one, requiring policies that balance the needs of the animal, the shelter, pet owners, and sometimes law enforcement.
- Edit the details in the following sample to document your agency's policies and procedures for handling lost and found animals.

Begin Sample SOP

It is the goal of the [Enter your shelter name] to return all strays entering the Shelter to their owners and to provide assistance to those who have lost pets or to individuals who have found animals. The [Enter your shelter name] defines reasonable attempts to contact the owner as:

- checking lost reports;
- checking found reports;
- checking newspaper ads;
- listing the animal on the website.

If the owner is known, reasonable attempts include phone calls, internet messages, and a certified return receipt letter to the last known address.

Holding Animals for Law Enforcement

The [Enter your shelter name] occasionally is asked to hold animals while their owners are being detained by law enforcement. It is critical that we get the following information from the Police or person delivering the animal:

- name and badge number of police person,
- name of owner,
- contact phone numbers of the owner,
- location of owner, any known relatives, etc.

Holding Period for Lost Animals

Office staff are to record the date each animal is available for release on the animal's record. The stray hold is [Enter your stray period].

Sick or Injured Stray Animals

The veterinarian will determine the correct treatment for the pet.

- If the pet is severely injured or ill, the veterinarian will determine if euthanasia is appropriate.
- Pets that, in the opinion of the veterinarian, are experiencing extreme pain or suffering, may be euthanized after the staff has exhausted reasonable efforts to contact the owner.
- If the pet is wearing identification, the veterinarian will determine appropriate treatment to make the pet comfortable while reasonable attempts are made to contact the owner.

The pet MUST BE HELD FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS, as we attempt to track the owner. All attempts must be documented on the animal's computer record. If the animal cannot be kept calm or free of pain during this period or the animal is dying, a veterinarian must decide whether to euthanize the animal.

Matching Animals

The description of the animal, date lost or found, location where animal was lost or found, and any forms of identification are important factors used for matching animals. Our goal is to assist the person who is looking for their lost pet!

Taking a Lost Pet Report

- Ask the person if they have previously filled out a lost report.
 - If they have, ask them when (we keep reports for 30 days from the date of the report).
 - If they filled out a report within the last month, check to be sure the report is on file.
 - If the report is still active for that animal, escort the person through the shelter.
 - If their report has expired, they need to fill out a new report before they can be escorted through the shelter.
 - If the report is for a pit bull, ask the client/patron to stay in the front office while the client care staff takes the written report and walks through the shelter to see if there is a match.
- Only if the client care staff person feels there is a match will the person filing the report be escorted directly to the animal that may be a match.
- All reports must be reviewed by the client care staff or volunteer to ensure the information is clear, the description is clear and the contact information is complete.
- Explain to the patron they should visit the shelter every 3-4 days to check. We do check daily but there are many animals and sometimes descriptions do not match.
- Explain the stray hold period.
- Explain that their lost report will be held in our system for 30 days from the day it was filed.
- Give them the lost pet flyer that gives them information on how to keep checking for their pet.
- Encourage them to post flyers around their neighborhood and to ask the mailperson or paper delivery person to look for the lost pet too.
- The staff or volunteer who took the report will at this time check the found animal binder to see if there are any matches.
- When there is time, client care staff or trained volunteers should call people who have filed lost and found reports to see if they have found their animal or found the owner. Many times they forget to call us back.

Calls From Citizens Reporting Lost Animals

Any time an individual calls to report a lost animal, ask them to come to the shelter to complete a lost report. The shelter does not accept lost reports over the phone unless the person is handicapped or elderly and unable to come to the shelter.

Checking Lost Reports Daily

The client care supervisor will assign lost report checking to client care staff and/or trained volunteers so the duties can be spread out over more people. The following daily checks need to be made:

- Lost reports against found reports
- Lost reports against Shelter on hand animals
- On-hand animals against the Lost Pets section of the newspaper and Craigslist

These checks are done by walking through the shelter with the lost reports in front of you and looking at each animal to see if there is a possible match.

Shelter Operations 000- 28
[enter effective date]

FOUND ANIMALS

Notes:

- Edit the details in the following sample to document your agency's policies and procedures for handling found strays and animals with traceable identification.
- Review your policies with your legal adviser. In most states, animals are considered personal property.

Begin Sample SOP

Animals with Traceable Identification

- The staff person who intakes the animal will enter all the information in the animal's record, and create a memo and HOLD in the record that you have started tracing the identification.
- That same person will start tracing the identification information to locate the owner (call the vet hospital to trace the tag even if it is long distance, call the owner listed on the ID tag, call the microchip company and find out the owner's information if it is available).
- Make notes in the animal's record that the attempts have been made and the result. i.e. contacted owner – current contact information, what the status is of being picked up, your name and date.
- If able to contact the owner, explain the fees, what our hours are, that the animal must leave the shelter in a carrier or on a collar and leash.
- If there is no response from the phone call or from an agreement by the owner to come in to reclaim the animals within 3 days of the initial contact, then a certified, return receipt letter must be sent mailed to the owner.
- A copy of the letter is kept in the front office in a 3-ring binder titled "certified letters."
- A note is made in the animals' record when the letter was mailed and when the return receipt is received.
- Only after the return of the receipt of letter has occurred can the animal be adopted, transferred, or euthanized.
- If the letter was never received and there is no return receipt after 25 days from when the certified letter was sent, we have taken reasonable steps to track down an owner, and the animal can legally be ours. Complete notes must be noted in the computer record and decisions can be made about adoption, transfer, or euthanasia.
- A copy of the letter must be attached to the hard copy of the cage card after disposition and kept on hand for one year.

Stray Animals

The person handling the intake of a stray animal brought to the Shelter by a citizen or Shelter personnel will promptly check:

- lost reports on file,
- lost reports from the [enter your local paper],
- Craigslist.com; and
- lost pets on Petfinder and Petharbor.

The animal computer record should reflect the date and time the animal was found, the initials of the employee, and the date lost reports were first checked.

Matching

The description of stray animals that have been brought to the Shelter by citizens or through the animal control department should be immediately cross-checked with lost animal reports.

If a match is made, owners should be **promptly** called and notified of the process involved for the release of the animal. Should the owner be unreachable by telephone, personnel will post a notice at the door of the residence.

- A Hold is put on the animal's record of a possible match and return to owner.
- A note is put on the cage card of the animal with the date and name of the staff person writing the information.
- The possible owner is provided the information or steps he/she must take to finalize the return to owner.

Office staff should educate citizens reporting lost animals about the benefits of spaying or neutering, the hazards of leaving animals outside unattended and the importance of identification.

Calls from Citizens Reporting Found Animals.

When individuals call or visit the Shelter to report a found animal, office staff will complete the appropriate form and obtain as much detailed information as possible.

Lost animal reports should be promptly checked.

- If a match is made, the person should be referred to the owner of the animal.
- If no match is made, office staff should encourage the person to bring the animal to the Shelter if he or she is unable to keep it and report the found animal to other local shelters, to post signs in the area the animal was found and to advertise in a local newspaper.

Processing Reports

Lost/found reports are kept in a current file until a match is made or 30 days after the report was filed. Staff and volunteers should call owners of lost animals and citizens reporting found animals on a frequent basis to see if they found their pet or found the owner as way to clear out reports and/or update the lost/found reports.

If animals are reunited with owners with Agency assistance, the lost/found reports are submitted to the Controller for adding to the membership mailing list. All other reports are transferred to a secondary file. Staff is responsible for re-checking the secondary file on a weekly basis.

Return to Owners: Proof of Ownership

Our mission is to GET THE ANIMAL HOME. Therefore the following guidelines have been put into place. Proof of ownership can be determined in many ways:

- ID tag, rabies tags or license tags
- Veterinary records
- Pictures
- Bill of sale
- Registration papers

If the above are lacking, take into consideration:

- Where the animal was lost compared to where found
- Zip code
- Description
- Coordinating dates
- How the animal reacts to the person
- Neighbors identification

You may also try:

- Calling the vet or the groomer
- A call to a neighbor or friend
- If all these fail a patron may put a finders hold on the animal.
- Notify your manager about all ownership disputes.

Animals are personal property and cannot be withheld from an owner without due cause.

Persons claiming a stray animal as their own must provide proof of ownership (see above). Pictures will be accepted only if they can show time, i.e. several pictures taken over time. Furthermore, pet owners may have to pay certain fees to reclaim the animal. If there are vet fees the owner will be responsible for those fees. The Director of Shelter Operations should have fees noted in the computer record in case an owner comes forth.

Impound

[Enter your impound fees]

- First offense, the impound fee is \$75.00 (\$25 is for rabies vaccination, and \$50 is the exclusive impound fee. If the owner can show proof of rabies, the impound fee is only \$50)
- Second offense is \$125.00
- Third offence is \$150.

Rabies Tags

[Enter your process for issuing rabies tags]

Boarding Fees

For each night a stray animal is housed at the Shelter, a boarding fee of [enter your daily fee here] per animal will be charged to the owner.

Owners of unsterilized pets are to be encouraged to spay or neuter their animals. Upon the approval of a supervisor, impound and boarding fees may be reduced if the owner purchases a spay/neuter certificate from the Shelter. The receipt should reflect the reason why fees are being reduced and be signed by a manager.

In cases where a stray animal is being returned to an owner and the animal entered the Shelter without identification, office staff should explain to the individual the importance of identification and encourage the person to purchase a tag. In addition, owners should be cautioned about leaving animals outside unattended.

Leashes and collars can be made available for a \$1 fee to send the animal out the door with a collar.

Cats should be placed in a cardboard carrier to ensure they make it home safely.

Shelter Operations- 000-30
[Enter effective date]

EUTHANASIA DECISIONS

Notes:

- The purpose of this SOP is to provide a guideline and basic criteria to be considered in all euthanasia decisions.
- A consistent, documented decision process helps everyone understand the process and know what to expect, which is particularly important for one of the most heart-wrenching aspects of animal welfare work.
- Evaluate your state and local laws as they relate to euthanasia before a stray hold period ends. Most states and localities have laws that only a licensed veterinarian can make this decision, so investigate these laws carefully before establishing your policies.
- Be sure to review all of this SOP carefully with your medical advisor, and edit this information to reflect your agency's policies and protocols for euthanasia.

Begin Sample SOP

We are an "open-admission" shelter, which means that every companion animal in need of shelter and care is welcome here. We offer all animals 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 [Enter your shelter's name] 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
- personal attachments by staff and volunteers
- requirements ordered by the courts or Animal Control

Our evaluation process assesses an animal's behavior, temperament and health. The evaluation process is a tool to help the Director of Shelter Operations, Kennel Manager, Veterinarian and Behavior Manager 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 [Enter your shelter's name] 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 daily. When there are conflicts about a euthanasia decision, the management team will review the case and make a final decision. Staff members must bring questions about euthanasia decisions directly to the Director of Shelter Operations.

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

Daily Walk-Through Process

The kennel supervisor, and/or the Director of Shelter Operations, in consultation with the veterinarian if necessary, walk through the shelter daily to select animals for possible euthanasia, taking into account the animal's health, behavior assessment, "holds", and adoptability.

During this walk through the shelter each afternoon animals are evaluated.

- If an animal is sick or it is showing signs of an oncoming illness, the animal is moved to the isolation area for that species, notations are made on an animal's kennel card and in the computer record as to the type of illness and its severity.
- If the animal is treatable with medication, therapy will be offered and documented by the veterinarian.
- If an animal's illness is contagious (i.e. it may infect the entire kennel or human health) or if the animal is suffering, the veterinarian may authorize euthanasia and note accordingly.
- Animals with clinical signs and a positive Parvo snap test are immediately euthanized.

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. 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.

- This checklist is then checked against lost reports on file.
- Pull files for any animals in the adoption area who are on the checklist, and clip these files to the checklist.
- The checklist with any file attachments is given to the Director of Operations for final approval.
 - The DO pulls up the computer record and ensures that the checks the animal against lost reports, adoption applications, special holds, etc., to ensure then animal can be euthanized and no mistakes are being made.
 - The DO then creates a memo that says “approved and scheduled for E and D”
 - The checklist is complete when it is approved, signed, and dated by the DO.
 - Any animals on the list currently in the adoption area must then moved to the back to ensure no mistake is made. The DO should do this at the time the list is approved.

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 Animals

Strays are kept for 5 days before we can make the decision to place the animal up for adoption, or consider euthanasia. However, if the animal is suffering due to severe injury or illness, the animal may be euthanized before hold period ends with a veterinarian’s approval. Records must be clearly noted with the medical reasons for euthanasia. (See next page for the full policy.)

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

Owner-surrendered Animals

The Shelter will euthanize animals of citizens requesting this service. There may be occasions when a pet owner requests euthanasia but the staff member receiving the animal feels that it is adoptable. The employee may discuss this with the owner and may consult a supervisor. If the owner remains adamant, the animal should be euthanized.

Purebred Animals

Because many breeds have rescue groups, purebreds are not to be euthanized without first attempting to place the animal in rescue. All efforts must be exhausted before euthanizing these animals. However, if the animal is aggressive or ill, he or she may be euthanized without consulting rescue.

Illness or Injury

Animals can be considered for euthanasia if:

- their injuries or illness is untreatable
- treatment is cost prohibitive for the average person (i.e. severely broken bones, broken backs, and extensive burns)
- keeping the animal alive would result in pain or a poor quality-of-life

Other circumstances may also affect euthanasia decisions:

- If a veterinarian has noted that an animal has a serious 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 veterinarians immediately of any sick, injured, or suffering animal.
- If the animal has an injury or condition that is painful but not life-threatening, he or she is to be medicated to relieve the pain. However, if evaluating for space reasons, injury or illness may be considered a reason for euthanasia.
- Owner-requested euthanasia will be performed immediately.

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 Polaroid picture of the animal. Take these to the client care office and placed them in the 3-ring binder labeled "STRAY EUTHANASIA/DOA".

It is the responsibility of the person actually performing the euthanasia to take the picture and make the copy of the intake and bring it to the client care office. Since only the staff 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.

If the animal is taken to an emergency clinic and euthanized at the clinic, it is the responsibility of the animal control officer to take the picture and make the copy of the form and bring it to the binder in client care.

- Bag the animal and place the bag in the Freezer with a HOLD sign filled out and taped to the bag. This will prevent the animal from being picked up by the crematory service until the stray period is over.

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

The STRAY EUTHANASIA/DOA binder should be reviewed daily by client care staff against any lost reports filed in addition to the shelter inventory. After the stray hold has expired, the intake form and photo can be discarded.

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. leaping up, trying to escape, 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 barrier aggressive.

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 using Meet Your Match[®] SAFER[™].

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

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.

Wildlife

Generally, most wildlife comes to us injured, and rehabilitation is not possible or extremely difficult or stressful for the animal. If the veterinarian feels the animal (other than raccoons) can be rehabilitated, a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility or rehabilitator is located.

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.
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.
Pet-of-the-Week	A date on top of the paperwork is the ending period for holding.

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- 000-31
[Enter effective date]

EUTHANASIA TECHNICAL PROCEDURES

Notes:

- The purpose of this SOP is to provide detailed information about the technical approaches you use in performing euthanasia.
- Be sure to review this SOP carefully with your medical advisor, and edit this information to reflect your agency's policies and protocols for euthanasia.
- Your State Animal Welfare regulations/ordinances should be reviewed as you write this section.
- Review your State Controlled substances and Federal DEA regulations.
- It is highly recommended that you receive and review The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Euthanasia Training Manual (enter link to order book)
- It is critical that you are clear in the details so the leaders of your organization are assured that procedures around euthanasia are performed with compassion, care, and technical skill.
- Suggested areas to cover as you write your procedure for this section:
 - Animal Handling
 - Presence of other animals
 - How to control entry into the room during the procedure
 - How to determine this is the correct animal (checking paperwork, signing off procedure)
 - How solution administered (route, amount, and pre-euthanasia procedures)
 - How the animal is cared for after injection
 - Determining death
 - How to log the controlled substances.

Shelter Operations- 000-32
[Enter effective date]**SAFETY RULES***Notes:*

- Document your agency's safety policies to ensure the safety of animals and people and humane treatment of the animals.

Begin Sample SOP**PERSONAL SAFETY**

Following these common sense rules will help prevent many accidents.

- **Report all injuries**, no matter how slight, to your supervisor.
- All Operations personnel and administrative persons working with animals are required to purchase and wear **skid- or slip- resistant shoes**.
- Do not attempt to lift/push objects or animals that are too heavy--ask for help. Bend at the knees and hips and lift with your legs. Adjustable tables should be lowered to the floor for animals weighing over 75 lbs., or for any employee unable to lift an animal onto a table.
- Identify and remember the location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull boxes, and emergency exits. NEVER block these areas with materials or equipment. Keep floors and aisles free of debris at all times.
- Use personal protective equipment as described below:
 - Goggles, safety glasses, gloves must be worn when working with chemicals (quaternary ammonia, degreaser, etc.) or while performing or holding for euthanasia.
 - Safety glasses are also to be worn when preparing rabies specimens.
 - Maintenance staff will wear customary safety equipment when performing applicable tasks.
 - Ear protection is provided and should be worn when working in Dog Holding, Kennels, or any other high noise area.
- Horseplay is prohibited.
- Seat belts are to be worn at all times when driving on business, whether in agency vehicles or personal automobiles.
- When restraining animals over 60 lbs. seek assistance if necessary. (See the Animal Handling SOP for detailed instructions.)
- Any person known or observed to be under the apparent influence of drugs or alcohol will not be allowed to work, and will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.
- Any person willfully violating safety procedures and/or endangering the safety of other employees will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

HOUSEKEEPING AND CLEANING

- All employees are responsible for maintaining the general orderliness and cleanliness of their work areas. Keep floors and aisles free of debris at all times. Housekeeping is an important part of maintaining a safe work environment. It reduces the spread of disease harbored by clutter and waste and eliminates tripping and falling hazards.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics, or store food in areas where animals are handled. These practices encourage the spread of disease.
- ALWAYS wash your hands in between handling animals to minimize the transmission of disease, and after handling chemicals to avoid potential allergic reactions.
- Non-hazardous spills are to be cleaned up promptly, and a “**Wet Floor/Caution**” sign placed in the area until the floor is dry. Aisles should be kept clear at all times.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- Report all hazards to a supervisor immediately.
- Only properly trained employees are to undertake any repair work involving electrical equipment.
- Do not overload outlets.
- Know the safety precautions for each chemical BEFORE you use it. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) sheets can be found in the outside Information Central.
- Refer to the Hazard Communication Program SOP for more specific policies for dealing with workplace hazards.

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[Effective Date]

ANIMAL HANDLING SAFETY

Notes:

- Document your agency's policies for handling animals to ensure the safety of animals and people and humane treatment of the animals.

Begin Sample SOP

This information is a general overview of safe animal handling practices. **It is not intended to replace actual safe animal handling training conducted by the behavior department.** When handling animals, be sure to:

- take your time,
- don't over stimulate the animal, and
- remember that the animal may *perceive* a threat, even though you do not intend to threaten.

If you do not feel comfortable handling an animal, DON'T!! Get a supervisor to help you--don't risk getting dragged, scratched, or bitten!

CATS

- When removing a cat from a kennel, be sure to get the cat's attention before opening the gate.
- Allow the cat to check out your fingers before you pick it up. The cat should come to you, not the other way around. Talk to the cat calmly and softly to avoid over-stimulating the cat.
- When handling a cat, control the head and neck at all times. Hold the cat firmly—left hand controlling the head and neck, right elbow supporting/gripping the hindquarters, right hand controlling the front paws. Take a moment to readjust your grip if you need to. Keep the cat's face away from other cats. (You can reverse this procedure if you are left-handed.)
- Always use a carrier to transport the cat more than a few feet.
- Watch for signs of stress/fear--enlarged pupils, thrashing tail, growling, hissing, and attempting to hide or escape. If these signs appear, carefully remove the cat from the source of stress--out of the visiting room or into a less stressful kennel.
- If a cat is fearful, do not make direct eye contact. Approach the cat at his or her level. Do not reach over the cat's head. Move slowly because rushing the cat only adds more stress, leading to unpredictable behavior and increasing the likelihood of injury.

DOGS

- When removing a dog from a kennel, distract the dog, and enter the kennel with your leash ready.
- Attempting to "noose" a dog through the gap in the gate can lead to an escape by the dog.
- Approach the dog from the side. Do not attempt to "noose" it over the top of its head, as this will only intimidate the dog. If the dog has a kennel mate, remove the kennel mate from the kennel if he or she is making it difficult to get the dog you need. Talk calmly to the dog to avoid over-stimulating him or her.
- When moving the dog, keep the dog away from other kennels, and break his or her line of vision. Use proper leash techniques, looping the handle of the leash over your thumb and across your palm (like a joystick). Keep the leash short, bend your arms and knees and use both hands for better control.
- Only small dogs and puppies should be carried, and then only as you carry a cat. Carrying a dog like a baby is not permitted. If the dog won't move on the leash, coax the dog by moving in front and down low. Dragging a dog is never permitted.
- Watch for signs of stress/fear:
 - ears back,

- hackles raised, tail down,
- dilated pupils,
- lifted lip,
- submissive posture,
- growling, snarling, barking, or lunging.

If these signs appear, remove the dog from the source of the stress--out of the visiting room, away from other animals, or into a less stressful kennel.

- If a dog is fearful, do not make direct eye contact. Approach the dog at his or her level. Do not reach over the dog's head. Move slowly because rushing the dog only adds more stress, leading to unpredictable behavior and increasing the likelihood of injury.

WITH ANY ANIMAL

- Inform a supervisor immediately if an animal is displaying signs of aggression and/or may be a threat to other animals or people.
- Wear protective gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and shoes with closed toes (no sandals) to reduce the degree of injury from bites and scratches.
- **If you have questions, ask a supervisor. If you feel uncomfortable handling an animal,**
- **DON'T!**

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[Enter effective dates]**RESTRAINT OF ANIMALS*****Notes:***

- Document your agency's policies for handling animals to ensure the safety of animals and people and humane treatment of the animals.

Begin Sample SOP

It is the goal of [enter your shelter name] to treat all animals as humanely as possible. We expect everyone to use the least amount of restraint necessary to both secure the animal and protect the staff and volunteers. The following policies for restraint, from least to most restraint, are the only ones that are appropriate to use:

- All staff must have a slip leash on their belt at all times.
- Pick up and carry or place the animal in an appropriate sized carrier. No dragging, ever.
- If necessary, use a leash muzzle wrap when picking up an animal.
- Frightened dogs or cats that try to bite or are fearful can be safely and humanely moved by wrapping the animal in a heavy blanket or towel and carrying the animal to the run or cage.
- When lifting animals, work in teams of two. Both people lift the animal : one supports the animal's weight and the other controls the animal's head.
- Use control poles only when absolutely necessary and only by staff who are properly trained on their use. Do not use control poles on cats.
- Use cat nets only when handling fractious cats.
- Transport all cats in transfer cages covered by a towel to minimize stress. Never hold cats in your arms to transport from room to room.
- Use the feral cat box to transport feral cats for surgery or euthanasia, and then transfer the cat to a squeeze cage where the drugs are administered. While the cat is in the squeeze cage it will be covered with a towel to minimize the stress for the cat.

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[Enter effective date]

APPROACHING FEARFUL KENNELED ANIMALS

Notes:

- Edit this information to reflect your agency's policies to ensure the safety of animals and people and humane treatment of the animals.

Begin Sample SOP

When approaching a fearful animal, you should make every effort to be as non-threatening as possible. Remember that a caged animal may not show you signs of fear until it feels cornered (i.e. when you close off the only visible exit path).

Consider your purpose: Are you evaluating the animal, attempting socialization, or trying to catch the animal to move and/or treat it?...and only approach as close as is absolutely necessary.

- **Remember that the animal may PERCEIVE a threat**, even though you do not intend to threaten.
- **Move slowly and deliberately.** Quick, sudden, or tentative movements may produce more fearful reactions. Be sure that the animal sees you.
- **Do not make direct eye contact.** While you obviously need to watch where you are going and what you are doing, direct eye contact is very intimidating and threatening to the animal. Look to the side, above the head, or toward the floor.
- **Approach at the animal's level.** Even if you are not a very large person, you are taller than the animal and may seem to loom over it. Crouch down (bending at the knees) or kneel or sit on the floor; you should be stable in whatever position you choose. (When working with higher cages, try to bring your hand in from the bottom, rather than the top, of the cage.)
- **Do not reach over the animal's head.** Reach out and touch under the chest or chin, or behind and under the ears, rather than over the head. Allow the animal to sniff your fingers first if he wants to investigate you. (Cats will generally "tell" you where they prefer your finger to touch them; the jawbone is often selected!)

Rushing an animal increases stress for the animal and the situation. Increased stress means more unpredictable circumstances, which lead to dangerous situations.

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[Enter effective date]

SECURITY OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Notes:

- Check with your State oversight agency, federal DEA regulation, state Board of Pharmacy, state and local laws, and your supervising veterinarian to ensure you meet the regulations that apply to your agency.

Begin Sample SOP

Controlled substances

- All controlled substances, needles and syringes are to be kept securely locked and should never be accessible to the public or any unauthorized persons.
- Only staff members who have been adequately trained to use such supplies will have access to them.
- Drugs are kept under lock and key in the medical treatment room and only trained employees should have access to the key.
- No controlled substance is to be removed from the Shelter.

Recordkeeping

- Each time any amount of a controlled substance is used it must be completely and accurately documented in a bound book with numbered pages kept in the medical treatment room.
- The following information must be documented according to the Drug Enforcement Agency: date, animal's intake number, and description of animal, weight, amount used, balance remaining, technician, assistant and (if appropriate) reason for euthanasia (e.g., health, age, behavior). The animal's record should be updated to record the date of and reason for euthanasia, weight of animal, the type and amount of controlled substance used, and the technician's initials.
- Immediately report any discrepancy in the drug balance to the kennel supervisor, the lead veterinarian, operations director, or the executive director.
- The supervisor will conduct daily checks of this book to ensure proper accounting of the substance is being followed.

Inventory.

- All controlled drugs must be carefully inventoried.
- The general supply of drugs are locked in the main supply drug safe, and only managerial employees have the combination to the safe.
- Each time a shipment of a controlled drug is received, it should be immediately placed in the safe and the appropriate paperwork completed, to include matching the invoice with the order slip.
- Each bottle should be numbered in sequential order to allow for extra accounting oversight.
- A bound book is kept in the main supply safe listing the type and amount of each controlled drug within.
- Each time a drug is removed from the safe, the person taking the drug is to mark it in the book and then re-count the bottles and provide that tally in the log book. This helps keep the inventory accurate.
- Under no circumstances should a page be removed from the book. If a mistake is made, a thin line should be drawn through the error with the necessary correction being made and initialed.

- Any time the supply safe is opened, either to add drugs from a shipment or to remove a bottle the process must be witnessed by another staff person. The witness should sign the inventory book along with the person removing the drugs.
- All entries should be made in ink, and no entry should be erased or completely obliterated. Any discrepancy should be immediately reported.
- A complete inventory should be conducted twice annually and kept in the file, to be provided to any inspecting agent.

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[enter effective date]**HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM****Notes:**

- Be sure to review the following information and your agency's current hazard communication policies against the most recent OSHA regulations. These regulations change frequently.

Begin Sample SOP**Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**

The [enter your agency name] does not expect its employees to use a chemical that does not have a MSDS to explain the hazards and safety precautions that should be used with the chemical.

The Director of Shelter Operations will be responsible for obtaining MSDS for each new chemical used at the facility. If a MSDS is not delivered with the first shipment of a new chemical, the Director of Shelter Operations will call the company providing the service and request an MSDS to be faxed over immediately.

The Director of Shelter Operations will also maintain hard copies of each MSDS in a the MSDS folder hanging at Information Central outside the staff/volunteer break room, a place accessible to all employees at all times.

Container Labeling

Each department manager is responsible for checking arriving containers in their department to verify that they are appropriately labeled. If a container is not labeled, the department manager will obtain a label from the kennel manager for the chemical immediately.

Any container with a worn or missing label needs to be brought to the kennel manager who will then label the container before it goes back into use. The kennel manager is also responsible for ensuring that "in-facility" containers are labeled.

Hazards in Unlabeled Pipes

All pipes that are accessible to the public or employees will be labeled with their contents.

Non-Routine Tasks

Before any employee engages in a non-routine task the employee shall consult the SOP for that particular task.

Information Exchange with Other Employees

The [enter your agency name] will verbally give the information on where our MSDS are located to each employee.

Employee Training and Information

Hazard Communication Training for employees will be given at the time of initial assignment, twice a year, and whenever a new hazard is introduced. Training will include the following:

- The nature of hazards posed by chemicals in the workplace.
- Right to Know
- Measures that employees can take to protect themselves from these hazards.
- Instructions on work practices, personal protection equipment, and any special procedures to be followed in an emergency.
- An explanation of the hazard communication program, including information on labeling and MSDS.

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[Enter effective date]

TELEPHONE INTERACTION

Notes:

- Phone calls are frequently the public's first experience of your agency. If you want your community to see your agency as courteous, knowledgeable, and helpful, phone etiquette is a great place to start.
- A few suggestions appear below. Add your agency's policies and procedures for handling phone calls.

Begin Sample SOP

Telephone etiquette is important for establishing good community relations. In addition, the information line voice-mail system provides important information to individuals needing assistance with animal-related problems.

Answering Calls

All incoming calls will be answered with the following greeting: Hello, [Enter your shelter's name], this is {say your name}, how may I help you?

If You Must Place a Caller on Hold

Answer as follows: "The [Enter your shelter's name], this is {say your name} do you have an animal emergency?" Wait for a response, in case the caller has an animal emergency, and then ask "may I place you on hold?"

Don't let callers linger on hold. Offer to take a message, or suggest a time to call back when they are more likely to reach the person they need or when staff will be available to assist them.

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[enter effective date]

MEDIA CONTACTS

If you are contacted by a reporter or representative of any TV, radio, newspaper, or magazine reporters, or by other media reps, you need to direct him or her to the Executive Director.