

### Behavior Euthanasia Protocol

Austin Pets Alive! consistently has a canine save rate of 97% or higher. This is an incredible achievement for any animal shelter organization, let alone an organization like APA! that intentionally takes in all of the behaviorally and medically at-risk dogs and cats from the Austin community. While we strive to move that save rate as close to 100% as possible, we know that the life-saving programs that allow us to be a safety net for thousands of animals also opens us up to a small percentage of inevitable heartbreak. The vast majority of dogs at APA! were already not selected for adoption for various reasons at the city shelter, and while we know we will be successful with almost every single dog we take in thanks to our progressive programs, there will always be the rare exceptions that are indeed unsafe to place in the community.

Below is a description of the 3 specific behaviors that Austin Pets Alive! does not place in the community:

#### **1. Offensive Aggression to Humans**

This is a dog that has shown a willingness to choose aggression over other alternative behaviors. In other words, they choose "fight" over "flight", and have gone out of their way to bite a human without provocation. This is not to be confused with Defensive Aggression, which is when a dog does not have ample opportunity to choose flight, therefore leaving them with fight being the only option. True offensive aggression to humans is quite rare, as most bites on a human are defensive in nature. Some dogs start out as defensive, but learn over time that aggression is the most effective way to ward off threats, thus resulting in a dog that becomes offensive in their aggression as they gain confidence and reinforcement for biting.

#### **2. Unpredictable Aggression to Humans**

This is a dog that has shown inconsistent/random triggers for aggression on a human. We do not require that a dog be friendly with every random stranger he/she may come across, however, we cannot safely or effectively train a dog to be a safe adoption candidate if the dog is unpredictably aggressive to humans. This mainly pertains to a dog's ability to safely form a relationship. If we can't pinpoint when or why a dog will react aggressively towards a person, that dog would be considered unpredictably aggressive, and therefore not an adoption candidate.

#### **3. Uninterruptible Drive**

This generally pertains to a dog's reaction towards other animals (other dogs, cats, etc), and is not simply an issue of dog aggression or prey drive. Dog aggression and prey drive are considered "normal" aspects of dog behavior. Uninterruptible drive is when a dog has an uncontrollable/unstoppable drive to seek out conflict with other animals. If all attempts to interrupt a dog when they are engaged in a predatory or aggressive act towards another animal fails, this dog would be classified as displaying uninterruptible drive.

When a dog demonstrates one or more of the aforementioned behaviors, APA! protocol requires a meeting to be conducted between the Dog Behavior Program Manager, Director of Lifesaving Operations, and Executive Director in order to determine the outcome of the dog. When all 3 members reach a consensus, the dog is then scheduled to be humanely euthanized within 24-48 hours. The euthanasia is only scheduled after it is determined that there are no alternative placement options available/suitable for the dog. During the 24-48 hour timeframe, every effort is made to communicate with any volunteers and staff that are personally invested in the dog. The

euthanasia is performed by an APA! veterinarian, and any members of APA! that have a personal relationship with the dog are permitted to be present.

These cases are always extremely upsetting, and will always result in significant emotional distress for everyone involved due to the rarity in which these cases occur. In spite of this, it is our organizational philosophy that we will always choose to endure this occasional heartache in exchange for the overwhelming majority of dogs that go on to thrive as cherished family pets thanks to APA! giving them one last chance.

**Before Euthanasia Procedure for Dogs**

Animal ID and Name	
Age	
Intake Date	
Origin	

<b>Actions Taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Incident notes confirmed		
Witness statements obtained (if applicable)		
Previous owner contacted (if applicable)		
Finder contacted (if applicable)		
Medical evaluation (if applicable)		
Volunteer advocates notified		
Staff Notified		

**REASON FOR EUTHANASIA (Check all that apply):**

- Offensive aggression to humans
- Unpredictable aggression to humans
- Uninterruptible drive

**ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION**

- Notes detailing the incident(s) which led to the decision to euthanize the animal
- Copy of euthanasia explanation email sent out by Dog Behavior Program Manager to the staff and the dog's volunteer advocates
- Notes regarding any groups or individuals who declined on animal with reason for decline.

**Form Completed By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dog Behavior Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Director of Lifesaving Operations Review:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive Director Review:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_