

## **Decision to Euthanize Policy**

No-kill means that we save all the healthy, treatable, manageable, and rehabilitatable animals, regardless of age or appearance. It does not mean that no animal is ever euthanized. Animals may be euthanized for two primary reasons:

- Medical: poor medical prognosis
- Aggression: dogs who pose a genuine risk to public safety, which may include aggression toward humans or other animals

Standard Process:

- Euthanasia must be approved, in advance, by a total of three individuals: an initiator (any staff member), an approved staff member, and the Animal Services Director.

Approved staff members include individuals in these roles:

- Animal Services Director
- Operations or Community Programs Manager
- Veterinarian
- Animal Services Manager

The Director must also approve these decisions. If the Director is not available in person, approval may be given over the phone. The Director may also delegate this authority to specific other individuals during times of prolonged unavailability. Euthanasia walk through will occur daily at 5pm with Vet or Vet tech and Director to discuss each animal prior to approval.

Medical Euthanasia Exception Process:

The only authorized individuals are veterinarians. In addition to the authorized veterinarian's signature, only one additional signature is needed for medical euthanasia. It does not require Director approval. In the event that none of these individuals are available in person, phone approval may be given. In the event that neither an approved veterinarian nor the Director is readily available in person or by phone and delaying the euthanasia would result in substantial

physical suffering for the animal, another veterinarian and one staff Manager OR a staff Manager and the Animal Services Manager may authorize the euthanasia. Medical Euthanasia's must be reported in writing to the Director daily.

#### Guiding Principles for Euthanasia:

- Irremediable suffering: Non-savable animals include irremediably suffering animals. Irremediable suffering shall include any animal with a medical condition who has a poor or grave prognosis for being able to live without severe, unremitting pain. Irremediably suffering animals shall be euthanized immediately to minimize suffering.
- We consider each animal as an individual.
- No animal shall be killed simply because of a time or space limitation or because the animal is geriatric.
- We do not kill animals simply because an owner has requested that we euthanize the animal. We make our own decision based on the well-being of the individual animal. If it is in the best interest of the animal, we will euthanize the animal for medical reasons. If the animal is vicious and determined to pose a risk to public safety, we may euthanize the animal for aggressive behavior (history or observed). Otherwise, we will seek a suitable situation for the animal.
- Vicious dogs or aggressive non-rehabilitatable animals may be euthanized if we determine that they pose a public safety risk.
- The euthanasia list will be made available 24 hours in advance to Rescues in order to provide alternate positive outcomes.
- The euthanasia list will be provided each day to the Pet Retention office in order to call owners or finders a chance to provide alternate outcome.

#### Medical Severe definition:

- Illness with poor prognosis for recovery to good quality of life
- Severe neurosis that is unresponsive to medications

- Injury with poor prognosis for recovery to good quality of life
- Age-related problems with poor quality of life
- Failure to respond to treatment within a one-month period combined with advanced age

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