

# SUMMARY AGENCY ASSESSMENT



## HOUSTON BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION & CARE



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## **IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE SUMMARY ASSESSMENT**

Consistent with the scope of work requested by BARC, this is a summary or “snapshot” assessment of BARC operations that occurred based on a limited document review and two-day onsite evaluation. As a result, there was no review of field services and only summary review of other departments. Nor is this report going to analyze the allegations involving breaches of animal care made against BARC by community stakeholders, some of which have appeared in media accounts over the past several months. By virtue of the limited mandate, it covers the areas observed during the assessment period.

By contrast, a full comprehensive top-down assessment of the shelter includes a ten-day onsite evaluation, covers over fifty areas of shelter operations, requires over 300 hours of review and analysis, results in hundreds of pages of assessment and recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations; and would include a very community specific plan.

By virtue of what was asked and expected, this report is therefore of limited scope and, in some areas, generalized. However, there should be enough detail and recommendations based on findings to allow BARC leadership to make substantial inroads in correcting observed operational deficits.

## **PART I: ASSESSMENT**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most animal shelters respond to public concerns about the level of lifesaving by saying that since a majority of animals brought to the facility are not claimed by owners, or because the “availability of homes outweighs the numbers of animals,” they are “forced” to kill large numbers of unwanted animals. But this is not factually accurate.

National studies show that roughly 17 million people are looking to bring a new dog or cat into their home, have not decided where they will acquire the animals, and can be influenced to adopt from a shelter. Given that roughly 3,000,000 savable shelter animals nationally require a new home, even if roughly 80% acquired their animal from someplace other than a shelter, shelters can still zero out the killing of savable animals.

In fact, if shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to the needs of the community, they could increase the number of homes available and replace population control killing with adoptions. In other words, shelter killing is more a function of market share, than “public irresponsibility.” That is not meant to infer that public irresponsibility does not exist or that it does not cause large numbers of animals to be impounded into shelters; quite the contrary. Nonetheless, the rate of lifesaving is more a direct function of shelter policies and practice. Other communities which take in more animals per capita than Houston shelters have higher rates of lifesaving, some as high as 93% of all impounded animals.

In addition, if an employee cuts corners and does not clean and sanitize water bowls daily leading to a parvovirus outbreak, or an employee does not scrub cat cages leading to spread of panleukopenia, large numbers of animals will be needlessly killed. If a shelter does not maintain adequate adoption hours, if staff are not held accountable to policies, if the public doesn’t get support on the telephone, if customer service is poor, or an adequate foster care program is not in place, lifesaving will also be compromised.

Contrary to what many shelters believe are the primary hurdles (e.g., public irresponsibility), the biggest impediments to lifesaving are directly in shelter management’s hands. Effectiveness in shelter goals and operations begins with staff accountability, rigorous implementation of key programs, and good relations with the community.

And the first step is a decision, a commitment to reject killing as the primary shelter population management tool. By undertaking this assessment, BARC leadership has potentially signaled that commitment. The next step comes in following the recommendations and doing the work of putting in place the infrastructure to save lives.

But several words of caution are in order. First, if the effort is allowed to fail, as it has in some communities, it usually fails because of egos and politics. Over 150 years ago, in

the first speech on animal protection in the United States, Henry Bergh, the founder of North America's first SPCA, put it best:

This is a matter purely of conscience. It has no perplexing side issues. Politics have no more to do with it than astronomy. No, it is a moral question in all its aspects.

Many people have since lost sight of that first principle. Working in such an emotional, and at times, political environment can be challenging, but if all parties focus on the task at hand, BARC can decrease the numbers of animals who are killed and, in so doing, improve local satisfaction with the job it is doing.

Second, the purpose of the evaluation is to build an understanding of what the problems are at BARC in order to empower its leadership to undertake recommendations for change. It is neither designed to embarrass BARC, nor to provide fodder for those who have different ambitions than those of lifesaving. The task at hand requires a forward looking perspective that keeps the animals first. And that starts with understanding the past, not to find blame or excuse failures, but as a basis for developing sustained change for the future. The problems associated with BARC are addressed in a very straight forward manner for one purpose: *you cannot know what needs to be done, without understanding what is wrong.*

As such, I've tried not to editorialize as much as possible. Since some of the problems identified in this report were addressed with the leadership during the onsite portion of the assessment and some recommended policies were provided in follow-up correspondence, my expectation is that they have either already been corrected or are in the process of being corrected. Moreover, the vast majority of operational deficits are easily fixed with comprehensive implementation, oversight, and enforcement of basic policies.

Having said that, conscience compels me to make an observation which must always be at the forefront of policy makers as they review this report and prioritize the list of recommendations: there are some conditions at the shelter—such as the lack of timely and adequate feeding of kittens, employees “washing” and “rinsing” cat bowls in old litter buckets, puppies being washed down the trench drains, dogs being killed because their legs get caught in home-made drain holes with no covers, and the lack of hot water—which are simply not acceptable for the specialized agency of the fourth largest city in the United States. They must be fixed and fixed immediately.

Third, following a commitment to saving lives is the need for accountability. Accountability means having clear definitions, a lifesaving plan, and keeping track of successes and failures. Clear protocols should be established, and staff properly trained to ensure that each and every animal is given a fair evaluation and a chance for

placement or treatment. But accountability also allows, indeed requires, flexibility. Too many shelters lose sight of individual animals, staying rigid with shelter protocols, believing these are engraved in stone. They are not. Protocols are important because they ensure accountability from staff. But protocols without flexibility can have the opposite effect: stifling innovation, causing lives to be needlessly lost, and allowing shelter employees to hide behind a paper trail. The decision to end an animal's life is an extremely serious one, and should always be treated as such. No matter how many animals a shelter kills, each and every one is an individual, and each deserves individual consideration.

And finally, to meet that challenge BARC leadership needs to get the community excited, to energize people for the task at hand. Because the measure of how much BARC succeeds—or fails—is as much a function of what happens in the community-at-large, as it is about the protocols and procedures within the shelter. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform a community.

I look forward to seeing BARC realize its lifesaving goals.

## 2.0 FACILITIES

The current facility was completed in two major phases. The main shelter, or North Kennels, was built in 1989, and the adoption area, or South Kennels, was added in 2004. The shelter is located at 3200 Carr Street in a warehouse/industrial district far removed from retail, residential, recreation, and other prime sectors of the city.



*BARC's location is in an industrial area away from prime retail, residential, and recreational corridors of the city more conducive to adoptions, volunteerism, and other community support.*

It was built in an area of the city with no foot traffic, no retail traffic, far away from where people “live, work, and play,” ensuring it would be “out of sight, out of mind” and, by virtue of its poor and substandard design and out of the way location (a common complaint by community stakeholders throughout my visit was that “most people do not know where BARC is or have travelled to that neighborhood”) appears to have been built for the purpose of warehousing and killing animals at the lowest possible cost.





*Trash is a common sight near BARC's facility.*

There is no signage near the major intersections approaching BARC (although I am told that signage does appear along the freeway), and it is an area known for factories, barbed wire, and trash. There is a residential neighborhood behind BARC, which appears to be economically distressed. It is not on a major thoroughfare with lots of traffic and there is no foot traffic of any kind. As a result, it must specifically be a destination for people to come across or if they want to go to the shelter.

I arrived prior to the opening of the front gate and was greeted with two signs that had different hours of operation. The first indicated that BARC was open at 11:30 am on the day of my arrival.



*A sign indicating "Hours of Operations" is factually inaccurate for many BARC services.*

The second indicated that it was open for drop off of animals at 8 am.



*A different BARC sign has more expanded hours, but times for "Animal Drop-offs" is no longer accurate.*

Because I arrived prior to 8 am, the gate was still locked, and there were no other vehicles in the vicinity, I attempted to call the telephone number which appeared on *both* signs in front of the facility: (713) 547-9410. The number was disconnected and no longer in service. There was no forwarding information provided.



*Two signs in front of BARC give a telephone number that is disconnected and no longer in use. No forwarding number is provided on the recording.*



I drove around the neighborhood looking for a staff entrance. I found the rear entrance and was able to pass through the guard entrance after explaining my purpose.

According to BARC, there are 365 total cages/kennels in the facility. It is difficult to ascertain, with any degree of rigor, how many animals are impounded into the facility annually. In the past, mothers and litters were counted as “one” intake and “one” outcome. Even BARC staff admits that “Because of the lack of reliable data; we really don’t know the total number of animals that we have received and how they left.” In fact, while onsite, I asked for the kennel activities report for 2008 and was given a document that showed the total number of animals killed exceeded the total impounds for the year. This is simply not possible, even with carryover from 2007.

Nonetheless, it is clear there are simply not enough dog or cat spaces to accommodate the intake, and communities with smaller intake numbers have larger facilities overall and more dog and cat holding spaces. Although many dogs are losing their lives, this disproportionately impacts cats, and given the lack of a rigorous adoption, reclaim, and foster care programs, BARC responds by killing large numbers of healthy and treatable cats.

I was told that there are plans for building a cat adoption room to expand the South Ward cat room, which is welcome news, but given the location of the facility, BARC must significantly branch out into a more suitable location conducive to adoptions next to prime retail, working, neighborhood, and recreational corridors of the city (in addition to expanding its offsite adoption program, which it is currently doing) if it is going to substantially decrease rates of killing. I was heartened to hear that city officials are pursuing “a more attractive, easier to reach location” for the “Ann Young Adoption facility” currently being contemplated.

Aside from the traditional stainless steel cat cages, the dog kennels in the North Ward are some of the most poorly designed I have seen. It is impossible for large dogs to stand tail to nose in a straight, normal posture, and many of the dogs (especially those in Ward D for bite cases who are held for at least ten days and in some cases, much longer\*) are forced to live, sleep, eat, and lay in their own waste. None get any socialization. During my stay, they also received substandard care.

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\* One dog (DD42) has been living in that environment since June 12, over two months prior to my arrival.



*The North Ward dog kennels are some of the most poorly designed I have seen. Large dogs are not able to stand nose to tail, and are often forced to stand or lie in their own waste.*

In addition, new mats which were installed to improve conditions were not cut appropriately resulting in a puppy falling into the trench drain and drowning. In addition, all of the drain covers in the medical care kennels were missing. According to staff, dogs have gotten their paws caught, and staff has killed dogs in their kennels because they could not extricate them. The covers have not been reinstalled.

During my visit, there were no enrichment items in the North Ward kennels, no soft beds to lie on (they would not fit), no toys of any kind, and no socialization by volunteers (for the dogs). There was, however, one volunteer in the stray cat room.



*Drain holes have rough edges and are not covered. Staff reported that dogs have gotten trapped and had to be killed in kennel to be extricated.*

Not only is the facility itself poorly designed, but it appears to be in a state of disrepair. The entire second floor appears unused except for occasional meetings, and has become a depository of unused furniture. Moreover, there is no hot water in either Ward for use in cleaning animal spaces, which makes thorough cleaning and sanitizing difficult, if not impossible, and contributes to the spread of disease.



*There is no hot water in the North or South Wards making thorough cleaning and disinfection impossible.*



In addition, three of the four faucets in the Men's employee bathroom did not function. The fourth had no hot water, making good hygiene difficult.



*Three of the four faucets in the employee men's North Ward bathroom do not work. There is no hot water from the fourth.*

There are no hallways leading from the front of the facility, where animals are being impounded over the counter, to the rear of the facility, where animals are often processed. As a result, staff uses either the stray cat room or the hospital dog ward as a point of ingress and egress. This is problematic for several reasons.

First, the cats are often recent intakes, and used to living in homes or on the street. They are at heightened stress in the small cages, and the loud and poor smelling environment. As a result, they are compromised in their immune systems. Roughly half of them have not been vaccinated. Yet, employees walk by with sick cats, sick dogs, healthy animals, and loud carts. The use of hospital wards as a point of pass through is also contradicted by medical care standards for reasons which are immediately obvious: these animals are very sick and can expose other animals to disease. On light switches and door knobs, and throughout, substandard cleaning leads to a build-up of pathogens which cause animals to get sick. Walking them through sick wards makes things worse, both for the newly arrived animals and for the sick animals.

There are no sinks in most of the animal rooms, some of the rooms (such as the Kitten Isolation area) do not even have drains, and none had waterless hand washes, all of which are crucial to providing a sanitary environment and help reduce the spread of disease. The North Ward and South Ward hand washes were instead located in hallways, on the outside of the wards.



*Pathogens are spread by doorknobs, light fixtures, and other common surfaces of the shelter.*

Diseases are most often carried and transmitted by fomites (an object that transfers an infectious agent from one place to another). In cases of respiratory infections, the most common fomite is the hand. In cases involving gastrointestinal issues, marked by diarrhea, the most common fomite is the shoe.



*Waterless hand washes are placed outside of the Wards, not inside where they would be more likely to be used between handling animals.*

To combat this, employees were asked to wear gloves during cleaning and handling and to replace them between each animal. But neither the attendants, nor most of the veterinary technicians who should know better by virtue of their medical training, appeared to do so.

In the South Ward, the dog (but not cat) wards had bleach mats for people to step on in order to curtail the spread of pathogens. While laudable, two of three were dry and randomly placed in different areas: one was right in front of the door, but dirty and dry; one, though it was filled with fresh bleach, was tucked in the corner where it would not be used by anyone; and the third of three was placed to the right of the door, but also dry.







*Diseases are carried by the shoe. Bleach mats to help curb the spread of pathogens are placed in different places depending on the kennel attendant in the South Ward. The one most likely to be used (in front of the door) was dirty and dry. The one least likely to be used (tucked away in the corner) is the only which had fresh bleach.*

Although the South Ward kennels are an improvement over the North Ward design, they also evidence a lack of commitment to high quality facilities and services. The floors were not sloped properly or not anticipated for cat cages. In order to balance them, the cat cages were resting on various pieces of wood, some of which had protruding rusty nails.



*Cat cages are balanced with wood containing rusty nails.*

Like most North Ward rooms, there were no sinks in animal rooms, waterless hand washes in the kennel areas, trash cans, places for the public to sit except one bench in the cat adoption room, or hot water necessary for proper cleaning and disinfection. In addition, to get to the South Ward, potential adopters have to walk through the narrow hallway of the North Ward—and through the sick animals of the public visiting the clinic—and around the Administration building.

Kennel cards are placed on each holding space in a plastic sheet, many of which are both dirty and unsanitary (they do not appear to be cleaned); or, they are being shredded and possibly eaten by the animals who are potentially ingesting the plastic.



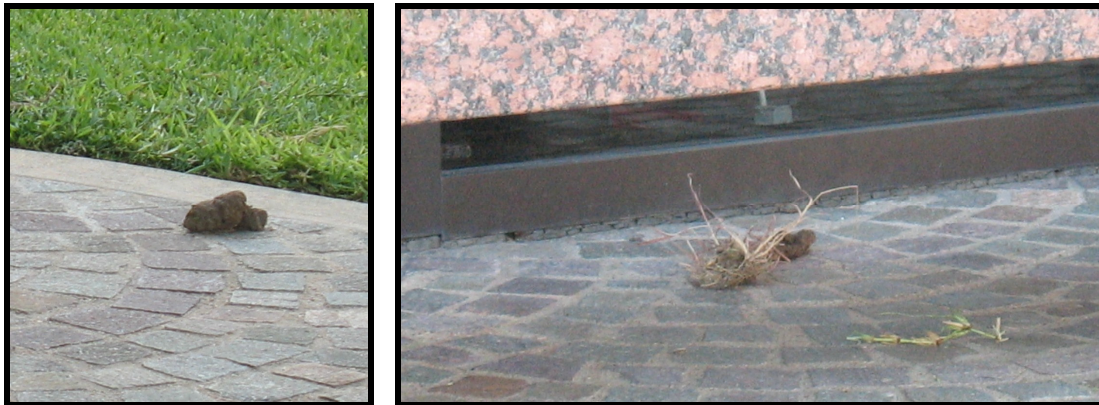


In addition, the shelter had an infestation of cockroaches. I was told that these roaches are all over Houston. I do not know if it is true or not. I can say, however, that this is my third trip to the Houston area. During my first two trips, which did not include a visit to BARC, I did not see them. I didn't see them at my hotel, in the parking garage I used, or the restaurants I ate at. I did not see them at the law school where I gave my seminar. I only saw them on my third trip and only at BARC, which was far from clean.



*BARC has a cockroach infestation.*

The grass around the front of the facility (Carr Street parking lot) was freshly mowed and kept clean, but the area directly in front of the doors had what appeared to be old, calcified dog waste. The piles were present on my arrival and they were still present when I departed the facility.



*Dried dog waste greeted visitors to BARC on both days of my visit.*

The signage on the front door is a mix between professional and haphazard, and in addition to the two signs outside the gates, provides further confusion as to BARC hours. The large sign gave inaccurate hours for drop-offs. And the clinic sign says it is

open “Sunday-Saturday.” This could be interpreted to mean just weekends, or it could be interpreted to mean every day. It should read “every day” or “Seven days a week excluding holidays.” At any rate, it is difficult to read because it was taped on sloppily, and curled over in the heat and humidity.



*Signs at the BARC entrance are poorly worded and unprofessionally displayed.*

The entryway has potentially very welcoming. A bullet proof window, which limited contact with employees was removed recently, and there is animal friendly art work throughout, evidencing an attempt to soften BARC’s image as a public health and enforcement agency, and to reflect the desire of community stakeholders toward a more animal-friendly, customer service orientation.





*The entrance to BARC has good potential to be friendly and inviting.*

However, the process of entering the facility does not reflect the change. In order to visit with the animals, all members of the public must check in with a security guard by showing identification, stating their business, and signing in. The security guard is not an employee of BARC. On Saturday, during the shelter's bi-monthly adoption campaign "From Wags to Whiskers" where adoption costs are halved and members of the public are treated to free food by Friends of BARC, the line stretched to the front door, at least ten different families. Some of those arrived with animals to surrender; some arrived to use the clinic; but, most were there to look at the animals for adoption. The process was inefficient and cumbersome.

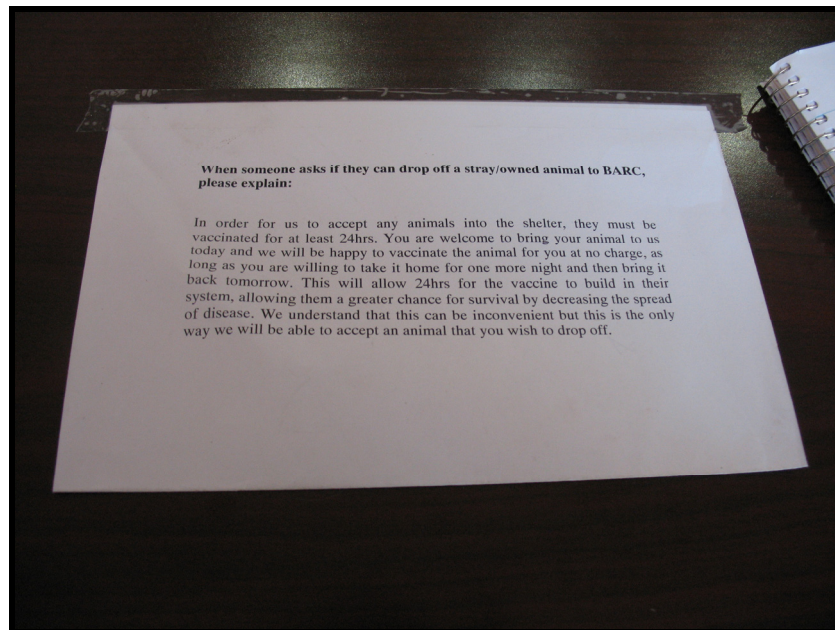
One individual who was trying to surrender an animal he had found as a stray was arguing with the security guard about the newly enacted rule that all animals will be given vaccinations, sent home for 24 hours with the owner or finder and then returned. The others were forced to wait and hear the particularly unfriendly and unprofessional exchange. As the security guard did not appear to fully understand the rationale for the rule, and did not use common sense by calling for either a supervisor or shelter employee for assistance, they seemed to be talking past each other; with one saying it was not his dog, and the guard simply repeating "I can't tell you anything else."

On another occasion, a couple brought in a very sick—dying—puppy and were held up at the security counter. They then were admitted to speak to the staff at the front desk. But the two staff members were having a conversation and ignored them, even though I could clearly see that the woman had been crying and the puppy appeared to be very sick. A supervisor came in and told the staff to please assist the clients. It appeared they were going to finish their conversation before assisting them.

It should be noted that the actual conversation was also inappropriate at a time they should have been working and appeared to be for my benefit: one of the employees stated that “No Kill is not going to happen” at BARC, that the killing was not their fault, as they simply did not have the space. They also discussed the fact that they wanted more security and appeared upset that BARC officials took down the bullet proof glass.

The third, and most disturbing, example occurred shortly after my arrival. A gentleman came in with a very young puppy. He explained to the security guard that he worked in a local machine shop and the puppy wandered in. He was told by his foreman to take the puppy to the shelter.

The security guard told the gentleman that BARC has a new policy where all animals are given vaccinations and then owners or finders are required to take the animal home and bring them back after 24 hours. There was no explanation as to the rationale for the policy. (It should be noted that there is a sign on the security guard’s desk explaining the rationale for the policy, but this was not explained to the finder.)



*A note on the security guard’s desk explains BARC’s 24-hour vaccination policy, but was not adequately explained to upset people who had found stray animals.*

The gentleman explained to the guard that there was no place to take the puppy, because he could not be in the shop and the dog did not belong to them. The guard simply reiterated the rule to the man, without giving him an appreciation for why. He asked her if BARC did not pick up dogs on the street, or if they were vaccinated on the street and left there and then impounded 24 hours later, assuming they did not wander off. She did not reply but reiterated the rule.

He then ostensibly called his boss on a cellular telephone and explained the situation. After getting off the telephone, he told the guard that his boss told him not to return with the dog, and that he had no choice but to abandon the puppy on the street: "Not my dog, I can't take her back to the shop or I'll lose my job. You are leaving me no choice." To which, the guard replied once again: "I can't tell you anything else."

Putting aside the point that the security rules regarding entering into BARC should not exist (If the facility wants security, they should stand off to the side and not interact with members of the public except as to be courteous and friendly and direct people if people request it), at this point in the conversation, the guard should have explained the rationale for the rule and offered an alternative or she should have asked the gentleman to wait while she asked for assistance from a BARC employee who understand the rule and can articulate the rationale and further discuss any options with the individual. At this time, there were three BARC employees behind the front counter who could clearly hear the exchange, but chose not to intervene, even after he informed the guard that he was going to dump the puppy on the side of the road and left the facility. I could not allow that to happen.

I followed him outside and asked him to please wait while I got a supervisor. He agreed. I did find a supervisor who agreed to take the dog in. The gentleman was grateful and explained that he could not afford to lose his job and had no place for the dog.

The rationale for the 24-hour rule as explained to me by a BARC supervisor is that BARC has had a number of animals, particularly puppies, get sick and die after being adopted into a home. In order to give the animals some protection, the idea was to give them a head start on developing immunity before being exposed to the pathogens in the shelter. The thinking is actually understandable and appreciated.

Vaccinations are an important prong in the strategy to keep animals from getting sick and thus reducing deaths in kennel or the "need" to resort to lethal injection due to illness. While poor vaccination procedures potentially impact all animals, they disproportionately impact very young animals who are highly susceptible to viral infections. It is therefore critical to establish immunity as soon as possible. The University of California at Davis shelter medicine program recommends that,

In almost all cases, shelter animals should be vaccinated immediately upon intake. A delay of even a day or two will significantly compromise the vaccine's ability to provide protection... (In some cases, the chance of the vaccine preventing disease may be 90% or better if given the day before exposure, but will drop to less than 1% if given the day after exposure.)

It is my belief that when explained, most people would be willing to accommodate this rule and, in actuality, it is commendable that this is being attempted to help reduce needless deaths. However, this was not explained to the gentleman and there was no contingency plan in the event the person had no alternatives to the 24-hour rule, as was apparent in this case.



*A stray puppy was almost abandoned on the street.*

Under these circumstances, allowing a puppy to be abandoned on the side of the road is not, *a priori*, humane. In addition, thorough and thoroughly enforced vaccination, cleaning, sanitizing, handling and care standards could have protected this puppy and others like her, without the threat of abandonment in the small percentage of cases where people cannot or will not accommodate the rule.





*A dirty table was used to give vaccinations to a stray puppy.*

When the puppy was impounded, she was taken to the immunization room (and given vaccinations) near the two free roaming cat rooms. But the employee did not wash their hands before handling the puppy and the puppy was put on a clearly dirty table, needlessly exposing her to disease. She was then taken to the back for processing and placed on a dirty scale, which was encrusted with dried bodily fluids and looked like it had actually never been cleaned.



*A dirty scale was used to weigh a stray puppy.*

The puppy was then put in a room specifically created to isolate stray newly vaccinated healthy puppies from the rest of the shelter population, in order to reduce their exposure.



*A room to isolate puppies from the rest of the population is also used to house sick dogs with contagious illnesses.*

Unfortunately, this room was not only being used for “Stray Puppies with Vaccination.” There were three sick adult dogs housed in the room and the puppy was placed in a cage next to them. (There were also a number of cats on bite holds in an alcove of the room.) One of those dogs (A0997767) was in the room being treated because he had “been housed with another dog with clinical signs of distemper” and was noted as “exposed to distemper.” The dog displayed the following symptoms: Sneezing, serious nasal discharge, distended abdomen and was diagnosed with an upper respiratory infection. A second dog (A0999958) had “bilateral ocular and nasal purulent discharge” and was also diagnosed with an “upper respiratory infection.”



In addition, the person who cleaned that room did not change his gloves between each animal, even though the others were clearly ill.\* There will always be *individual* cases of parvovirus or panleukopenia in shelters, but *epidemics* or spread of such diseases is almost always a result of sloppy handling and poor cleaning practices by staff.

A community's animal shelter is the heart of an animal care and protection program and facilities and grounds should be maintained so that they are attractive and welcoming to the public. The physical building itself can be—or can appear to be—reflective of how strong and caring the internal programs are and the commitment to animal care is.

Modern shelters in communities with demonstrative commitments to lifesaving are spacious places, where animals are housed in home-like environments, are clean and well lighted, and provide ample opportunity for public and animal interaction. They are public meeting places, shelters to visit for fun, they reduce costs of care for illness, reduce reliance on utilities through skylights and picture windows and other use of natural light, keep animals healthy and stimulated, increase adoptions by decreasing length of stay and increasing public traffic, and improve community satisfaction with the job the shelter is doing. Staff is customer service oriented, knowledgeable, and thorough.

First impressions are lasting and as visitors approach the shelter, the impression they receive should be positive and inviting. I did not find BARC to meet this standard. While some of the changes require infusion of capital dollars, some simple and inexpensive modifications and changes in practices can also vastly improve the public perception of the shelter.

#### Short-term Recommendations:

- A thorough cleaning and disinfection protocol would eliminate the need to spray caustic pesticides and chemicals to rid the facility of cockroaches.
- Add signage on roads leading to the facility focusing on adoptions.
- Replace signage that is either unprofessional in appearance or contains factually inaccurate information (times of service, contact information) in front of the shelter. Eliminate the multiplicity of handmade signs and keep signs, professionally made and to a minimum.
- Stop using animal wards (including Stray Cats, Hospital, and the Clinic) as a pass through for staff in North Kennels.

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\* Thankfully, this puppy (A1001167) was adopted. She could just as easily gotten sick and been killed or died. In fact, the quarantine period at BARC actually increases a puppy's chance at distemper as the puppy is more likely contract it at BARC than enter the facility with it.

- Eliminate any role for the Security Guard to screen the public and remove the Security Guard station.
- House animals, especially cats, in the lobby for adoption at all times. Customer Service staff can clean those cages in the morning, while they assist the few customers who arrive from 8 am until 11:30 am.
- Install benches for people to be able to sit and relax while viewing dogs. This will increase the amount of time the public spends in the shelter. The longer they are in the shelter, the more likely they are to adopt.
- Use flat bleach mats that the public can walk over without having to do so intentionally.
- Install drain covers in dog wards.
- Fix all mats so they fit security in the kennels preventing puppies from falling into trench drains.
- Provide nursing mothers, feral cats, shy cats and stressed cats hiding boxes so they do not feel exposed, and relocate them to quieter areas of the shelter.
- The front lobby and all hallways should be swept and mopped with a combination of bleach and detergent diluted in water. This should occur, at a minimum every morning, and then throughout the day as needed.
- Staff should do regular walk-through and spot cleaning of shelter spaces, particular dog and cat kennels on at least an every 15 minute interval following main cleaning duties.
- Utilize volunteer “greeters” who welcome people, ask what they need, and then inform and direct them accordingly.
- There was some good educational material from BARC in the lobby. This is an opportunity to reach a “captive” audience about volunteer opportunities, adoption policies, and other BARC related business. Install a more centrally located literature display and keep it neatly stocked with BARC related flyers and brochures, focusing as much on lifesaving programs as BARC does on enforcement issues.
- Continue to use fans in animal housing areas that are not air conditioned; however, make sure the fans are regularly cleaned. In addition, the air from fans should not blow directly on animals.
- Put waterless hand washes and foot pedal sinks in every room of the shelter where animals are housed.
- Invest in a hot water system for proper cleaning and disinfection in all rooms.
- Fix broken faucets in the bathrooms.

- Some of the kennels have cracks, which are difficult to effectively clean, and result in spread of disease because they are permeable. They should be sealed with animal shelter quality epoxy.
- Clean public areas with completion times first so that they are ready when the public is allowed into the building.
- Require all staff and volunteers to wear uniforms. Volunteers can be given a t-shirt which indicates they are a volunteer. For staff, a neatly presented, practical uniform specifically designed for direct animal care work enhances professionalism and helps to improve public respect. These uniforms should not be the “police type” currently used by some staff, including field officers. They should be friendly and more retail oriented, such as t-shirts for kennel attendants and polo-type shirts for customer service staff, managers, and field officers.

#### Room Reallocation:

- Determine flow and placement in animal housing areas which maximizes adoption space, promotes efficient movement of animals through the system, is public friendly and separates: sick animals from healthy animals, puppies/kittens from adult animals, and provides a separate holding area for feral cats.
- People visiting the clinic, including their sick dogs, block the hallway used to get to South Ward. Either reset clinic hours, create a waiting area for clinic clients where they are called when ready, and build a direct route to the adoption wards from the outside.

#### Longer-term Recommendations:

- Invest in the modification of the shelter’s heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems to comport to modern requirements in all animal rooms which do not have one. HVAC systems in animal shelters should allow for a minimum of twelve 100% outside air exchanges per hour.
- Improve drainage at the shelter, especially in rooms such as Kitten Isolation, and all rooms in which animals are housed.
- Add camera systems to rooms which house animals to ensure staff is properly caring for animals.
- Build a new shelter reflective of the community’s value and which shows a commitment to high quality animal care and public service. The current one will always be a limiting factor in BARC’s success.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT FACILITY MAINTENANCE:**

There are no standardized or written protocols for routine or extraordinary facility maintenance except as it relates to the Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning system. Maintenance is handled by another city department.

According to the BARC corrective plan:

Comprehensive list of facility issues was created to ensure that we dedicated resources to those elements that had a negative impact to the well being of the animals and provided such a depressing work area for employees. Surgical area was identified as needing immediate attention, kennel standards of cleanliness were improved, increased number of hours that animals had direct care by kennel staff.

This was not apparent, however, as routine inspection and a preventative maintenance program by BARC does not appear to be in place. Even simple tasks do not appear to get completed in a timely manner: Some lights in the free roaming cat rooms and women's bathrooms are not functioning and their bulbs have not been replaced, even though at least one volunteer told me she has repeatedly requested it.



*A light in one of the free roaming cat rooms is out, as is the light in the public women's bathroom.*

Routine inspection and preventative maintenance would be more cost effective and will ultimately decrease the number of costly repairs that have to be initiated because of overlooked problems. In the case of flush drains small enough for puppies to fall into, or

missing drain covers where animals get trapped and are then killed to extricate them, it will also help save lives.

Recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive facility maintenance plan that includes regular inspection of kennels, cages, floors, equipment and lighting.
- Shelter management should walk through the facility on a regular basis and record areas of need before they became more costly, and follow up to ensure that they are completed in a timely manner.
- If needed, meet with city officials to develop a protocol for timely response to maintenance requests.

### 3.0 SHELTER OPERATIONS

#### 3.1 HOURS OF OPERATION

BARC is open 11:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday through Friday and 12:00 to 4:00 pm on weekends for adoptions. The shelter is closed for adoptions during most holidays. The sign in front of BARC indicates that the shelter is open 8 am to 6 pm seven days a week to surrender animals, and that there are “no after hours animal drop offs” but BARC staff stated that animals “can be dropped off 24/7. The back security guard assists outside of shelter operation hours” in response to my information request form.



*Hours of operation reflected on signage at BARC are not accurate.*

I subsequently received an update from BARC indicating that the hours for owner and stray surrenders has changed from 8 am to 5:30 pm Monday through Friday, and 8 am to 4 pm on Saturday and Sunday, but that is not reflected on the signs.

The policy of differential hours for adoptions versus surrenders is justified on the grounds that shelter staff is cleaning in the morning, which would make adoption viewing inadvisable. And while BARC does provide adoption hours for working people and families, this is limited to a short time during the week and only four hours on each of the weekend days. As a result, BARC adoption hours effectively limit these two

demographics from adopting most of the time that BARC is open to the public. Combined with a poor location, it is not surprising that adoptions significantly lag behind intakes.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT HOLIDAYS:**

Holidays are an important time when families are together and an agency seeking to increase lifesaving to the maximum extent possible cannot afford to be closed when the adoption potential is great. With properly integrated public relations and adoption incentives, organizations have found that holidays can provide not only positive public relations, but provide a great source of adoptions.

On July 4, Indianapolis Animal Care & Control remained open and adopted out 153 animals who would have otherwise lost their lives. Likewise, on January 1, the Nevada Humane Society opened its doors and found homes for 49 animals.

Recommendations:

- Increase the number of adoption hours.
- In addition to increased adoption hours at the shelter, it is imperative that the shelter maximize adoption locations outside the shelter, something the placement team has already identified as a priority and is working on. These can and should also be only staffed by volunteers when necessary so that staffing is not a limiting factor.

### **3.2 INCOMING ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION/PROCEDURES**

Animals come in to BARC in one of two main ways. They are brought in by field officers or they are brought in “over the counter” by members of the public. Because of high disease rates and some public incidents of adopted and reclaimed animals dying, BARC has changed its vaccination protocols as follows:

- Field officers are required to vaccinate dogs in the field;
- Animals brought in by the public over the counter are vaccinated when they arrive, and the owners and finders are asked to return the animal after 24 hours, as discussed above.
- New rules also indicate that dogs and cats brought in by officers or not vaccinated as above, are to be vaccinated at or near the time of impound.

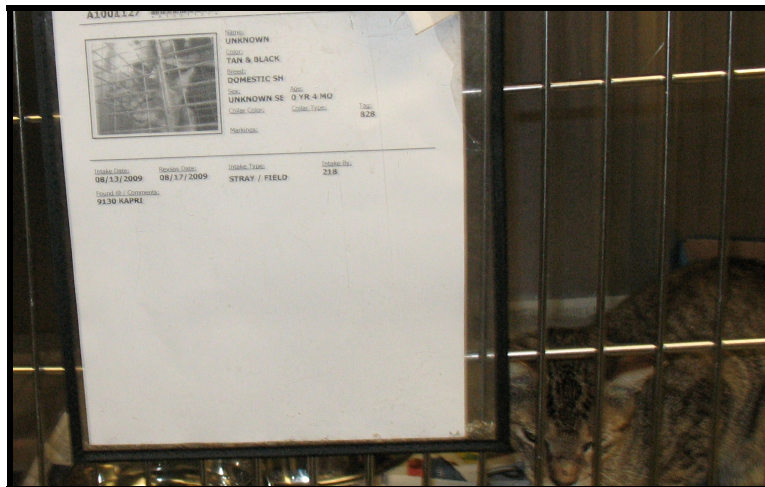
A review of field services was outside the scope of the evaluation. There were problems administering the second, as it resulted in a “hit or miss” opportunity depending on the voluntary compliance by the public and whether the security guard or BARC employees



explained the rule (it appeared more likely to be followed if the latter.) As to the third, this is not being routinely done, and there are still far too many unvaccinated animals.

In the cat stray ward during my visit, 24 of the cats had received their vaccinations and 28 of the cats had not. Most of those not vaccinated had been at the facility for more than one day. Some had been there for several. This occurs for many reasons: staff thinks the cat is feral but turns out to be frightened, and calms down after a day or two, but no further evaluation is done and the cat goes unvaccinated. Kittens are considered (often erroneously) “too young” when they arrive, but no further follow-up is done when they become old enough. Staff simply does not do it.

There is no effective mechanism in place to ensure that vaccinations are given to these cats (and dogs surrendered over the counter) if they fall through the cracks of being vaccinated on intake. And even though veterinarians and veterinary technicians are ostensibly doing daily rounds, they are not vaccinating those who need it.



*A cat impounded August 13 was still not vaccinated on August 15.*

Although BARC official policy mandates it, animals are not receiving a thorough, or even cursory, physical examination at intake.\* Under BARC parlance, this is called a “Workup” of an animal and is supposed to include vaccinations and testing (generally, heart worms for dogs and FIV/FelV for cats). But this is not being done in a timely manner. In fact, staff responsible for adopting animals, placing animals in foster or rescue, or taking them offsite for adoptions had difficulty getting animals the “workup” they needed.

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\* As part of the document review, I asked for written policies as well as a statement of variance when actual practice deviated from written protocols. In this, and many other cases, I was given the written policy. See, e.g., “Procedure for Workup of Incoming Animals.” However, there was no variance reported, even when I followed up with a request for variance, indicating that BARC took the position that there was consistent administration of policy. During the onsite review, this was found not to be the case.



I was told by many different people that “things are getting better” from the days when rescue groups would wait for as long as three or more hours at the facility to rescue one animal for the animal to receive a “workup.” During my visit, however, the Placement Team were going to as many as five different offsite adoption events and had identified animals they needed worked up the day before. Some of them had been in the facility for far too long not to have had it. Although they were told the animals would be done by the following day (the day of the offsite adoptions), some had not been done. I found a member of the Placement Team waiting for an extended period in front of the clinic for an animal to be worked up, an incredibly inefficient use of their time.

It is, therefore, important that the intake evaluation be done routinely and consistently and includes:

- Eyes/Nose: check for discharge, growths, sneezing, and cloudy eyes
- Mouth: check for ulcers on tongue, loose or bad teeth, growths, gum coloration
- Ears: check for mites, dirty, smelly, goopy
- Lymph Nodes: check to see if enlarged/swollen
- Skin: check for growth, masses, hair loss/mange, wounds
- Belly: check to see if distended, same as skin
- Sex: check sex, testicles or spay scar (even if the owner claims the animal is already sterilized)
- Anus: check for growth, masses, fecal matter, or wounds
- Do testing and give vaccinations.

This can be done by computer entry or a list form, later audited by management to ensure consistency and compliance.

One of the problems stems from the lack of interdepartmental cohesion: BARC departments do not seem to regularly communicate, coordinate goals, and sometimes appear to operate at cross purposes. As one staff member indicated: “It is frustrating to rely on people who don’t seem as committed to lifesaving as we are.”

For example, the staff of the call center is often the first contact people who are experiencing animal related problems have with BARC, and these call center operators can make a difference between a successful outcome, and a potentially disastrous one. In progressive shelters, these are part of the team that make up the front lines of “pet retention” programs, or what one shelters calls their “Animal Help Desk.” In addition to providing basic information, they help resolve problems that reduce intakes and subsequent killing.

At BARC, however, three engineered calls offering various scenarios for resolution to the call center failed to elicit any helpful information that could have led to a positive outcome. On August 26, my associate called with the following scenario:

I told her I have been periodically feeding wild cats and want to know what to do with them, what the process is to surrender them. She said I would need to get a trap, trap them, then call this same number (713-229-7300) and someone would come collect them, and then leave the trap with me. I asked what would happen to the cats, to which she said they would be brought in and a vet would “make the final decision as to whether they are adopted or euthanized.”

Instead, the caller should have been informed about the agency’s TNR program and referred to a member of the Placement Team for resolution short of impoundment.

In a separate call again on August 26, my associate called with the following scenario:

I told her that my neighbor was complaining because my dog was barking. She said that noise abatement is handled by a different department. I said that I did not want any trouble and thought that maybe I should just surrender the dog. She said I could bring the dog in, they would give the dog a distemper vaccine, I’d have to take the dog home for the night and I could bring her in the next day.

I told her I wasn’t sure what to do, but she did not say anything else. I then asked, “the dog is fairly well behaved, what will happen to the dog?” She said the dog would go to a foster home or a rescue group. I asked if the dog could be killed. She said “No.”

In addition to providing factually inaccurate information about the potential for being killed, the call center missed an opportunity to resolve the barking problem by giving the caller information to help resolve the behavior problem.\*

The lack of timely workup of incoming animals has other negative impacts. It makes animals more susceptible to disease. It also directly and indirectly costs animals their lives in other ways. Adoption staff admitted that they have been in the unfortunate situation where an adopter or rescue group was interested in an animal, only to find the animal was positive for disease after testing. These are animals who were subsequently killed after tying up cage space for weeks, while other animals were killed for “lack of space.”

Recommendations:

- Ask for a donation to help care for the animal when accepting animals and proceeding with paperwork.

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\* The third call is described below under Section 3.3: Lost & Found.

- Residents who surrender animals must be told that their pet may be killed in writing.
- Allow owners and finders to put a “Call Before Killing” hold on an animal. Before killing an animal, check to see if a CBK has been requested. If so, allow them the option of retrieving their animal.
- Have call center staff schedule surrender appointments for those who are committed to doing so, and can hold on to the animal for a short time. In the interim period, mail them a copy of fact sheets which may help them solve problems or use the time to provide counseling. Jurisdictions have reported between 30% and as high as 80% attrition in surrendering in some cases.
- Intake staff should make an independent verification of breed, coat length, age and other information and then update the computer immediately and accordingly.
- Personality and information profiles should be filled out by owners and made part of the animal’s file to encourage good matches with adopters.
- All the requested information should be asked for, even while staff makes independent verifications. What an owner may report as “aggression to other dogs” may actually be “dominance play.”
- Animals should be worked up on impound, to avoid adoption delays.

### 3.3 LOST & FOUND

On August 25, my associate called BARC at (713) 229-7300. One of the BARC call center operators who did not identify herself by name answered the telephone. The woman appeared rushed (“It was clear to me that she was trying to keep the call short.”) My associate told her he found a puppy and was not sure what to do with the dog. She asked how old the puppy is and he said he didn’t know. She said to “bring the dog in.” He then asked her what would happen to him. She said they would give him a shot and see if he is adoptable. I followed up by asking whether they had a lost and found, “you know, people looking for lost dogs,” to which she said “we don’t do lost and found animals.”\*

Every animal reunited with his/her owner releases needed kennel and cage space to allow BARC to save more lives. A reclaim by an owner is as important as an adoption of an animal who is not reclaimed.

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\* BARC stated in the document request response, as amended, that it “Recently hired outreach and adoption staff had started to check for matches.” This is both insufficient, and contradicted by call center staff.



*A board of lost pet flyers “maintained” by the security guard does little to help reunite them with their families. BARC’s 1% redemption rate for cats and 7% for dogs is well below the national average and seven times below national leaders.*

According to BARC, other than scanning for a microchip and a bulletin board at the front of the shelter “maintained by [the] security [guard who is not a BARC employee],” BARC does not have a lost pet report or cross reference lost with found animals. BARC did claim someone looks at the bulletin board daily when animals come in, but this strains credulity. A subsequent variance request did result in an admission that “this process is not always consistently maintained and managed.”

One of the most overlooked areas for reducing killing in animal control shelters is owner reclaims. Too many shelters looking to improve save rates tend to focus all of their efforts on providing spay/neuter services, developing foster care programs, and increasing rates of adoption. Clearly these are important and should be done, but shelters can achieve dramatic reductions in death rates by focusing effort on reuniting lost pets. Unfortunately, besides having pet owners fill out a lost pet report, something BARC does not even do, very little effort is made in this area of shelter operations. This is unfortunate because doing so—primarily shifting from passive to a more proactive approach—would have a significant impact on lifesaving.

In a typical shelter, 1-2% of cats are redeemed by their families, while roughly 20% of dogs are. Those rare communities who have systematized their approach and become more proactive have more than doubled this. Washoe County Animal Services in

Nevada, for example, reclaimed 7% of cats and 60% of dogs despite taking in over two times the number of animals per capita than the national average.

Take, for example, an animal control shelter that impounds 10,000 stray dogs per year. In that community, only 2,000 dogs will be redeemed and, given rates of non-rehabilitatable illness and aggression in dogs, another roughly 700 will be truly “not savable” (sick, ill or aggressive with a poor prognosis for rehabilitation) and killed outright. That leaves 7,300 stray dogs, above and beyond the owner surrendered animals the shelter must find a home for annually to avoid killing them.

Now, take that same community with Washoe County level success. In that community, 6,000 of the 10,000 dogs will be redeemed. Combined with the number of unsavable dogs, that reduces to 3,300 the number of stray dogs it must find a home for. (Add other programs such as pet retention efforts and the number could drop to around 1,700).

By contrast, BARC redeems only 1% of cats and only 7% of dogs. This would leave 8,600 dogs. The difference between Houston and Washoe County is striking, but even more so because this latter community is only scratching the surface of what could be accomplished. Some communities have achieved a nearly 65% reclaim rate for stray dogs and even higher outside of the United States, and the reclaim rate for cats can—and should—match these, rather than remain at deplorably low current averages.

#### Recommendations:

- Implement a lost and found reporting system, with field, intake staff, and supervisors doing a daily census.
- Lost & Found searches should be conducted for specific categories of animal on intake, after temperament evaluations for dogs especially if the dog fails, and for all animals before killing.
- The general public has poor capabilities when it comes to the proper identification of a found dog or cat by breed. Staff should not place reliance on such information to match lost reports with found reports or against impounded animals. The initial cross check should be general, (e.g., species and zip code) and then proceeding through multiple searches to more specific criteria. If the initial cross check produces possible matches, other factors should be used.
- Instead of a free-for-all situation where one staff member can call a dog “tan” and another “beige,” all entries into the Lost & Found database should allow only for a pre-determined list of choices. In other words, the Lost & Found lists should allow only for standardized descriptions instead of staff filling in blanks in order to keep answers consistent and prevent lost matching opportunities.
- Train staff to identify breeds correctly.



- Using local experts such as feral cat caretakers, provide training to county staff in determining the difference between a shy or frightened lost pet cat and a truly feral cat. Studies show that as high as 20% of owned cats act “feral” on intake due to fear or stress.

### 3.4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION & ENFORCEMENT

While BARC has ample written policies, which are outlined fairly clearly, they are not comprehensively implemented and enforced. This is also true of the necessary daily physical inventory of animals, physical examinations, cleaning, feeding, and spot cleaning throughout the day to keep animals clean and healthy.

The end result is two-fold:

1. Substandard animal care; and,
2. Unnecessary levels of killing.

Animals are vulnerable and at risk for being killed at BARC. They depend on a knowledgeable, skilled staff to work at a high level of effectiveness in order to give them the best possible opportunity to find a home. In addition, the service people expect from BARC is compromised, leading to reduced public image, and increases in animal suffering.



*A litter of sick kittens in the isolation room is not fed or given fresh water until 3 pm, when I gave it to them.*



For example, during my visit, I noticed that the most vulnerable animal populations (kittens) were not being adequately or timely fed. In addition, the *most vulnerable* of the vulnerable (sick kittens) were also not being adequately cared for, despite written protocols to the contrary. On my first day onsite, the kittens in the Kitten Isolation room did not have food or water as late as 3 pm.\* (These kittens also did not receive their antibiotics on 8/13.)



*The same litter of kittens eating when I gave them food.*

Feeding kittens is not a specialized task. And it is not a new duty that the specialized agency of the fourth largest city in the country should have to learn. Nonetheless, this basic duty was overlooked repeatedly during my visit.

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\* At this point, I fed the kittens myself.



*The Kitten Isolation room houses adult cats and does not have standards of care commensurate with the needs of the animals.*

When I brought this to the attention of supervisors, I found that the kittens in the infirmary were fed the first thing in the morning during my second day. However, they were not fed again throughout the day. By mid-day, the kittens were once again crying for food near empty plates.



*The same kittens were fed early the following morning, but not again for the rest of the day. By mid-afternoon, they were crying at the front of the cage for food.*



Once again, I had to feed them.



*The same kittens eating after I fed them.*

During this feeding, I noticed that one of the kittens had his foot caught in his collar, which is likely to have gone unnoticed until at least the next day, since staff had “completed” their initial—and only—cleaning duties in the room.



*Because there is no spot checking, cleaning, or feeding, this kitten would have gone a whole day before staff noticed that he had his paw stuck in his collar. I noticed it when I fed the kittens and had it removed and replaced.*

Moreover, kittens in other parts of the shelter were not still fed in a timely or adequate manner. Hungry kittens are stressed kittens, and stress is the leading indicator for susceptibility to disease. In the stray cat ward, unvaccinated kittens were not being fed first thing in the morning and certainly not again after they finally were.



*Other kittens in the shelter also did not receive timely and adequate feeding. Here, kittens in the South Ward cat room are vocalizing for food, which by 11 am, they still have not received.*



*A nursing mother with newborn kittens licks an empty food bowl. Her water bowl is also empty.*



In other words, the supervisor fixed the very specific problem (kittens in isolation not fed in the morning), but not the systemic failure: feed all kittens in a timely and consistent manner. As a result, the specific kittens were fed in the morning, not again for the rest of the day, and the others were fed whenever staff got around to them.

The next day, nursing mothers and kittens in the stray cat ward were subject to the luck of the draw. The two kennel attendants decided to start on opposite ends of the room and meet in the middle. If the kittens were on one end, as the two worked their way to the middle, they were fed early. If they weren't, they were forced to wait. At 11 am, they still had not been fed. A nursing mother cat was licking an empty food bowl (the water bowl is also empty) and the kittens were clawing at the front of the cage, vocalizing loudly, with two kennel attendants ignoring their pleas. The kittens fell asleep at the front of the cage. When the kennel attendants left the room, I fed them.



*A dog is forced to lie in a waste filled kennel. This ward would not have been cleaned, and the dogs not fed or given water, had I not finally intervened at 5:45 pm.*

By way of another example, during my first day, the supervisor on duty in the North Ward changed the schedule but forgot to print out a copy. This is a simple error, which does occur from time to time in any environment. But because there was no actual oversight to ensure staff met their obligations (checking each room to make sure staff is doing their jobs) or any built in redundancies to ensure compliance, the fact that no one was assigned to clean the North Ward bite room went unnoticed. In actuality, there was one redundancy, but it did not have the desired effect as staff is inconsistent in their application and therefore the quality of the observation is a “hit or miss” affair. The dogs are required by law to be observed two times a day for rabies symptoms (which according to the cage card records, did not consistently occur),\* but the employee assigned apparently failed to notice that the dogs were not fed, had no water, and had not been cleaned.

Release Date 8/13/2009 12:00 Time am/pm Date of Impoundment 8/6/2009 12:00 Investigated by

Cage# QD508 Tag# 0661 Owned/Stray TWICE DAILY RABIES QUARANTINE CHECK

Activity# A09-463654 A1000409 Description of Animal BOXER WHITE BLACK Sex M

Case# B09-041677 Condition: NORMAL By: 504

Date of Bite 8/5/2009 12:00 Time 9:40 am/pm Date of Impoundment 8/6/2009 12:00 Investigated by

Release Date 8/15/2009 12:00 Time am/pm

Date	Day	Time	Checked by Initials	Behavior Change	Lack of Muscle Coordination	Food/Water Intake Change	Comments
8/8	1	8:30 am	AM	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
		5:00 pm	AM	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
8/8	2	am	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
		11:00 pm	AS	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
08/09	3	08:16 am	LC	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	BAR NSF
		7:10 pm	LC	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	BAR NSF
08/10	4	08:04 am	LC	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	BAR NSF
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
8/11	5	11:55 am	AS	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
		1:00 pm	AS	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
8/12	6	9 am	MC	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	BARKS
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
	7	am	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
08/14	8	07:40 am	LC	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
		4:45 pm	og	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Noisy
	9	am	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
	10	am	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
	11	am	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		
		pm	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		

Released by Date Time am/pm

Staff is supposed to do twice daily observations of rabies suspect animals. This is not consistently done. In a photograph taken in the afternoon of August 15, staff failed to do a walk-through on August 13 or the morning of August 15. The staff who did the walk through on August 14 failed to notice that the dogs had not been fed, given fresh water, or cleaned.

\* No rabies observations were done on August 13, 2009 or the morning of August 15, 2009 according to BARC records.



By 5:45 pm, as staff was leaving the facility or preparing to leave, I pointed it out to the shelter veterinarian. An overtime crew was assigned. Otherwise, these dogs would have been left in their own waste, with no food or water until the following day.



*Dogs in the North Ward bite room are forced to spend a whole day in their own waste. Supervisors failed to check to see if the room had been cleaned and the animals fed. One of the dogs also had blood in the floor of his kennel.*

Most staff who responded to the staff survey I conducted excused the poor state of BARC by indicating that they were overworked, undertrained, and needed more help. There is little doubt that the ratio of staff to animals is too low. There is also little doubt that training is poor to non-existent. But claims of being overworked did not stop staff from being observed socializing during work hours and working very slowly.

For example, a kennel attendant took two and half hours to clean the “Stray Puppies with Vaccinations” room, even though there were only six cats (on bite hold) and four dogs. Given how much time he took, the room should have been spotless (nor can this be blamed on the temporary workers present due to the transitional nature of BARC at this time, as the employee was wearing a uniform indicating he was a staff member). It wasn’t. In fact, the cats were not fed, they did not have fresh water, and their cages were not cleaned. (This was done by a different staff member at the end of the day.)



*Bite ward cats go until late afternoon with no care.*

Subsequent to the cleaning of the dogs, three underaged temporary workers came in and swept and mopped together (a process that does not require three workers). They came back 30 minutes later to again sweep and mop or, more accurately, to hide while they socialized: one pushed a broom, the other talked, and the third was playing with a bite hold cat.

By way of another example, on Friday, there were three people working on in the North Ward stray cat room which contains roughly 70 cages. They started cleaning at 8 am. When I returned at 11:30, there were four people, and they were nowhere close to being done.

Most of the staff members I talked with had never seen their job description and were not even sure if one existed. And while new staff members who were brought in to change the culture and dynamic at BARC appear enthusiastic and want to help, they are not being given the oversight, mentoring, direction, and goals they need to get the job

done. Nor are they being tasked with creating the systems methodically themselves. As a result, they are trying to create programs with little support, once again a “hit or miss” affair which depends on the abilities, knowledge, and internal ethics of the person in the position. And as hard as some of them are in fact trying, as correctly indicated by one of them: “We’re kind of flying blind here.”

Holding staff and management accountable begins with a clear identification of duties and responsibilities in the job description, a thoughtful and reasonably comprehensive manual, followed by written protocols and policies, training, consistent application, supervisory oversight, and periodic feedback. Unfortunately, other than written procedures which are not enforced, such systems are not in place.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT STAFFING:**

As a practical matter, the industry has failed to come up with a method of calculating an appropriate staff to animal ratio with any degree of scientific precision. The decision on types and volume of staff members is always a function of available resources, shelter goals, desired levels of service, programmatic commitments, public expectations, and desires of shelter leadership.

#### **Kennel Staff/Animal Caretakers**

Kennel cleaning staff is the backbone of animal shelter operations. Each shelter and animal care facility must be staffed each day with the appropriate number of kennel personnel to insure that every animal is properly cared for in a safe and humane manner and to maintain a safe working environment for employees.

According to one agency,

Caring for sheltered animals requires daily cleaning and sanitation to reduce the spread of disease, maintain the health of the shelter population and to maintain a clean and odor free facility. Shelters and animal care facilities must maintain an appropriate daily feeding schedule for each animal in its care and insure there is adequate staff and time to complete all the other duties and responsibilities of caring for sheltered animals including but not limited to laundry, dish washing, lost and found, stocking and inventory of supplies, janitorial, and supplemental waste removal throughout the day.

It is the responsibility of every animal shelter and animal care facility to meet or exceed the minimum standards of animal care for all impounded animals by maintaining a staffing level that insures that the minimum animal care standards are adhered to on a daily basis without putting staff at risk of injury.

But kennel staff impact shelter operations more than this. As noted earlier, if an employee cuts corners and does not clean and sanitize water bowls daily leading to a parvovirus outbreak, or an employee does not scrub cat cages leading to spread of respiratory infections or panleukopenia, large numbers of animals will be needlessly killed. Saving lives requires a shelter to keep animals healthy and happy, make the shelter more inviting for the public, and allow animals to move through the system as quickly as possible. Animals who become sick reduce a community's ability to save lives.

Regardless of public access hours, shelters are a 365-day per year operation. Even on days the shelter is closed, animals must be cared for, fed and cleaned. The responsibility for this falls on the kennel attendants.

### Customer Service

Where animal caretakers keep the animals clean, healthy and safe, adoption support staff is the primary “eyes, ears and faces” of the organization. They answer telephones, greet people at the door, impound animals, resolve problems, match lost with found pets, license pets, and, most importantly, place animals with adopters.

These duties are not simply ministerial. A good customer service representative can make the difference between someone surrendering their pet and someone resolving environmental, behavioral or medical problems that allow them to keep the pet.

### Animal Handlers and Community Programs Coordinators

To design a well run program requires consideration of a number of operational areas. Today's animal shelter is as complex an operation as any municipal department. For example, a modern shelter interested in reducing killing to the maximum extent practicable must meet certain mandatory minimums. These are:

1. Providing nourishment, medical care and social enrichment/behavioral rehabilitation for all domestic animals in its care;
2. Providing basic health screening for all animals;
3. Providing a preventative disease control program;
4. Remaining open seven days per week to adopt out animals;
5. Humanely killing by barbiturate injection those animals that are not savable;
6. Providing shelter care for animals in protective custody and under observation or quarantine;
7. Providing a volunteer and foster care program through which members of the community can get actively involved in helping the animals;
8. Providing lost and found services;
9. Providing information and access to subsidized spay/neuter services for low income pet owners in a community and for unowned feral cats;
10. Maintaining accurate and thorough records on all animal-related activities;
11. Providing community education.



To reach its goals, these duties translate into several key program areas including working with rescue groups, providing access to low cost spaying and neutering, developing a community-based volunteer, foster care and offsite adoption program, providing options and solutions to overcome medical, behavioral and environmental issues that may cause caretakers to relinquish their pets, medical and behavioral programs and rehabilitation, disease control and socialization, and a proactive and positive public relations and marketing campaign.

These positions and programs are essential to a well run shelter. They allow animals to remain healthy and well behaved, increase adoptability, improve a shelter's delivery of services, and promote a proactive positive public image. All of this translates into more lives saved.

#### *Community Programs Coordinator*

A community programs coordinator would manage the shelter's relationships with rescue groups, develop and grow a volunteer foster and volunteer program, coordinate the offsite adoption and other community based events, provide a liaison with other city agencies, private businesses and not-for-profit organizations who can assist the shelter, help coordinate spay and neuter, provide post-adoption support, and eventually assist in fundraising to augment development support of the shelter.

For example, the City of Houston has a strong rescue group network. These groups can vastly increase the shelter's lifesaving rate if the shelter treats rescue groups as partners. As indicated elsewhere,

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing and disposal of the animal's body, and improves a shelter's rate of lifesaving. Getting an animal out of the shelter in an appropriate placement is important and rescue groups, as a general rule, can screen adopters better than the shelter.

In addition, not only does a foster program maximize the number of animals rescued, it allows an organization to care for animals who would be difficult to care for in a shelter environment—orphaned or feral kittens, sick or injured animals, or dogs needing one-on-one behavior rehabilitation. For animals who may need a break from the shelter environment, foster care provides a comfortable home setting that keeps animals happy and healthy.

#### *Animal Handlers*

The primary function of an animal handler is as follows:

1. evaluating animals for aggression;

2. socializing dogs and working with dogs undergoing behavior rehabilitation;
3. socializing cats and working with cats undergoing behavior rehabilitation;
4. driving animals to and from their medical appointments, off-site adoption locations, and to other shelters;
5. assisting the adoption staff;
6. assisting foster parents; and,
7. assisting kennel staff/animal caretakers as needed.

Socializing dogs and cats will improve disposition, calm frightened animals, and improve their adoptability. By contrast, animals who sit in their kennels and cages for extended periods of time develop anti-social barrier behaviors (i.e., “cage craziness.”) By implementing an in-house behavior program, the shelter can be well on its way to saving even more lives.

But animal handlers do so much more. As the staff most familiar with individual animals, they provide a key source of community satisfaction and engagement and provide a uniquely personal experience to potential adopters, much like a sales associate at a retail store. They know the animals and can help match lifestyle with pet. In short, they are vital to excellent community service.

In addition, by working with the animals, they also help in determining not only suitability for adoption (therefore preserving public safety and protecting the reputation of the adoption agency), but suitability for events such as offsite adoption venues, placement in foster care, transfer to an appropriate rescue group and potentially to other shelters.

Animal handlers also drive animals to and from their veterinary appointments, as well as to offsite adoption venues and other community-based events, and provide utility support to clerical and kennel cleaning staff, stepping into those roles as needed.

#### Recommendations:

- Rewrite all job descriptions.
- Any job requiring access to animals should require random drug testing and no record of any misdemeanor or felony criminal convictions of any kind.
- Create written policies and procedures for all aspects of shelter operations including disease control, adoption, volunteers, hours of operation, customer service, animal identification, socialization, and handling. (See Part III for recommendations)
- Cross train staff to work with both dogs and cats, and other areas of the shelter as needed. The focus should be on a system of “utility players,” not specialization at the level of line staff. The current system of specialization

precludes good programs or a customer service orientation. In addition, cross training will reduce the overall number of staff needed and allow the shelter to put people where it needs them on any given day or hour.

- Remove Internet access for all computers, except those who have a substantial and demonstrable need.
- Enforce a “no cell phone” rule while staff is working.
- All changes in policies and procedures should be done via written memo and distributed to all staff.
- Hold managers accountable for lack of oversight up to and including termination.
- Provide staff periodic feedback through employee job performance reviews.
- Stagger breaks so that staffing is constant. Do not allow staff to go to lunch during peak periods or before they have completed their animal care cleaning duties.

#### 4.0 ANIMAL CARE & HANDLING

It would be difficult to design a more stressful or frustrating environment for an animal than a shelter. Many of these animals are used to living in homes or on the streets, and additionally, many of them come into the shelter in a compromised physical state. To bring them into a shelter with strange noise and smells, as well as inconsistent handling techniques, adds to the stress and can lead to anti-social behaviors or illness, which at BARC, like at many shelters, has historically been a death sentence. And while a shelter can do many things to reduce stress, it cannot eliminate it altogether. It is therefore crucial that shelter employees take reasonable precautions not to add to animal stress and, conversely, to take reasonable steps to help lower it. Changes to several current shelter practices would go far in this regard.

First, as discussed above, young animals should be segregated if possible and fed first thing in the morning, and repeatedly throughout the day.

Second, shelter employees should not be allowed to play music during cleaning. This is done for the benefit of the employees and not for the comfort of the animals. Several shelters have reported good results with playing classical music at appropriate volumes as an alternative (which may actually help calm the animals), but because supervision is currently spotty and inconsistent, this rule will be difficult to enforce. Unless management can pipe in music through a centralized system it controls, it should not be allowed in animal rooms.

Third, in response to requests for information, BARC claimed that “Animals seem very happy and healthy during their stay with BARC” and claimed “staff interaction with the animals and the training for staff” as one of its core strengths. There was little evidence to support either claim, at least in the North Ward.

Part of the problem is that staff does not receive formal training. Sixty-four percent of staff responding to the survey indicated they either received no training or described their training as “inadequate” in animal handling. Not a single employee said it was “good.”

In speaking with staff, I found an employee on his first day on the job at BARC being “trained” by someone who started working at BARC just the day before. That individual was simply told to “go clean kennels” when he arrived. Staff must be taught good handling, restraint and transport of animals, as well as cleaning and disinfection protocols, and how to interact with animals. Once taught, they should be held accountable to those standards. This training must be formalized. Otherwise, staff’s lack of awareness of basic principles and incorrect handling techniques are passed on from one generation of employees to the next by virtue of the ill-advised “on the job



training.” (Shadowing employees is the last step to independently working a shift following training; it should not be the entirety of training.)

Fourth, except for one or two volunteers in the North Ward cat room, none of the other North Ward animals received enrichment, and little to no socialization, “people” or out of kennel/cage time, which leads to anti-social behavior and increases stress.\* (It was very different for the dogs (though not the cats) in the South Ward on Saturday during the Friends of BARC Wags to Whiskers adoption event.)



*A “clean” cage has hair, grime, and dirt on the door of the cage.*

Fifth, aside from lack of enrichment and socialization, one of the most important aspects of keeping animals healthy is a thorough cleaning protocol. The operations manual had procedures for cleaning, but these are not enforced. Cat cages had smeared bodily fluids even after cleaning. In addition, cats were removed from their cages and placed into a temporary cage, which was reused without cleaning between cats. Gloves and rags were reused, and none of the cage doors were wiped down or cleaned.

In the free roaming cat room, cleaning was even more superficial. Aside from litter and food, and a cursory sweep, little else was done.

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\* BARC states that South Ward dogs get out of their kennels for scheduled socialization by volunteers two times per week.



*The free roaming colony cat rooms after they have been “cleaned” are still very dirty. Here, the rooms show hair, dirt, and grime.*

Dogs were often left for much of the day with fecal material in their cage and once cleaned, kennels were not consistently spot cleaned throughout the day. In addition, the front of both dog kennels and cat cages were caked with grime, hair, and fluids. While it is impossible to completely eliminate disease-causing pathogens in a shelter environment, a good cleaning and disinfecting protocol can vastly reduce their impact. Unfortunately, the practices of BARC not only fail to reduce disease transmission, they actually help ensure its spread.



*Cleaning is superficial and helps spread pathogens. Here, after kennel attendants finished “cleaning” the room, cages show more than a day’s worth of hair, dirt, and grime.*

To begin with, cleaning and disinfection is not the same thing. Cleaning is accomplished with a detergent that removes dirt and debris so they do not interfere with the disinfection process. Disinfection is accomplished with a chemical solution that destroys microorganisms. Some commercial disinfectants used by shelters are compromised in their effectiveness by organic material such as feces and hair, which is why it is important to thoroughly clean before they are applied. Adequate and thorough cleaning is necessary to maintain a healthy shelter population. Combined with good ventilation (and a comprehensive vaccination protocol), they can dramatically reduce illness.

In actuality, the “cleaning process” is a three-step procedure that involves dry cleaning, wet cleaning with a detergent, and wet cleaning with a disinfectant. In the first step, staff removes everything from the cage or kennel (bowls, litter boxes, newspaper, etc.). They also remove as much hair, fecal matter, and other organic material. In the second step, a detergent is applied *with hot water* to reduce the number of microorganisms so that disinfection will be effective (in cats, wiped with paper towels—not rags—which are then discarded to avoid cross contamination; in dogs, scrubbed with a steel bristled brush which is then soaked in disinfectant). In the final step, a disinfectant is applied, allowed to stand, and then rinsed thoroughly.

All kennels, cages, and runs must be cleaned daily with *hot* water and a broad-spectrum disinfectant proven to be effective against various bacteria and viruses common in a shelter environment (including distemper and parvovirus). Each enclosure should be cleaned, scrubbed, and disinfected before a new animal enters. For cats (and alternate days for dogs), I recommend a combination of chlorine bleach (mixed with water in a 1:32 dilution). That translates into ½ cup of bleach for every 1 gallon of water. It is important that only one or two people do the measuring so there is consistency. (With higher concentrations of bleach, you can see respiratory irritation that actually contributes to disease.) This concentration works to kill parvovirus in dogs and calicivirus in cats, the two most difficult to kill agents of most interest in a shelter environment. (However, the efficacy of the disinfectant is compromised unless all fecal/organic matter is removed and the area cleaned with a detergent beforehand.)

It is also vital that it is mixed up fresh *daily* and covered in an opaque container as its effectiveness over time is limited. Unfortunately, the bleach solution in the cat room is mixed in a large drum and used until it runs out at BARC. In addition, do not expose animals to water or disinfectant. During cleaning, place all animals in separate holding areas or in carriers; animals should never be left in the cage or kennel. Make sure enclosures are completely dry before animals are returned to them.

However, cleaning is not limited to cat cages and dog kennels. Pathogens can be spread by air, and tracked by human and animal traffic throughout the shelter. This requires light switches, door knobs, counters, sinks, lobbies and hallways to be cleaned daily by

shelter staff trained to clean in a shelter environment—not just janitorial or facilities crews who have generic policies for city buildings.

A general cleaning protocol is as follows:

1. Remove the animal from the run or cage and place him in a separate holding area or carrier, then remove bedding, toys, and all food and water containers;
2. Remove all solid waste such as feces and hair. Do not hose solid waste into the drainage system; rinse away only urine with water;
3. Wash enclosures using a high pressure sprayer, steam-cleaning machine, or long-handled, stiff-bristled scrub brush;
4. Using a scrub brush and a solution of detergent/disinfectant, scrub all surfaces within the enclosure including the floor, sides, resting board, top, and gate, according to specific manufacturer instructions;
  - For cats, it is recommended that the daily bleach (1:32 ratio of bleach to water) solution be used.
  - For dogs, it is recommended that an alternating system be used as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday: a bleach (1:32 ratio of bleach to water) and detergent (any household detergent); Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday: Parvocide and detergent. (This reduces the corrosive effects of the bleach.) However, if there is parvovirus in a kennel, or there is a parvovirus outbreak in the shelter, use only the bleach solution until it is eliminated (and only after thoroughly cleaning the areas with a detergent).
5. Allow the solution to stand for at least five to ten minutes (or the length of time recommended by the manufacturer);
6. Thoroughly rinse all surfaces with a steady stream of water (preferably hot);
7. Dry the run or cage as completely as possible using a squeegee or rag. If possible, ventilate the area prior to returning animals to it;
8. Clean and disinfect beds, toys, food dishes, and water bowls;
9. Use disposable litter trays;
10. Clean and disinfect the holding area or carrier after each animal has been removed.





*A dirty chair and food bowl in a room after it has been cleaned. The chair is the only place to sit in the room.*

Since there are no sinks (except for the North Ward cats), and most waterless hand washes are located outside the rooms in the hallways, it is important for staff to change their gloves between handling animals of different cages or kennels. This did not occur. In fact, even most of the vet techs who were medicating sick animals failed to change their gloves (one veterinary technician was observed to be very diligent about this). In the South Ward cat adoption room, while the staff was changing gloves, they were not changing rags/towels used to clean between cages.



*A large drum of bleach solution loses its effectiveness if not mixed fresh daily. This does not occur at BARC. By the time, the drum reaches the amount of disinfectant it had when I visited, it no longer effectively kills microorganisms.*

Furthermore, because of the lack of a sink in the cat adoption room, dishes were being cleaned in an old litter bucket by being dipped in either detergent or bleach and simply wiped down. This does not clean them, sanitize them, or rinse them of caustic chemicals adequately before they are filled with cat food and given to the cats.



*Because the cat adoption room has no sinks, staff "clean and rinse" bowls in litter box buckets exposing the cats both to disease and caustic chemicals.*

None of the dog cleaners were scrubbing the front of the cages, nor actually scrubbing the detergent or chemical with a steel bristled brush. They simply applied it (without a pre-chemical detergent), and then rinsed it.

Though labor intensive, a good cleaning protocol reduces workload over time by allowing animals to remain healthy and therefore move quickly through the shelter system. In addition, saving lives is a shelter's primary mission. This can only be accomplished if animals can be kept healthy. Finally, all shelter animals deserve cleanliness and proper care—even if they are currently scheduled to be killed.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT CATS:**

The first 24 hours in a shelter are an important time for cats to settle down. They should have a hiding box in their cage, and should have a predictable schedule for feeding and cleaning. A carrier (cardboard) should be assigned to the cat at intake that remains with the cat throughout his or her stay, and goes home with the cat when adopted. This carrier is also used to house the cat when the cage is being cleaned. Ideally, a modern carrier which has a hiding box and a perch is used.

**Cats deserve care:** clean cages, access to food, water and a litter box at all times, and medical attention including timely vaccinations and consistent health monitoring.

**Cats deserve comfort:** towels (a soft place to sleep), quiet time, a place to hide and perch (cat boxes), and feliway spray.

**Cats deserve safety:** safety from seeing dogs, safety from loud noises, a place to hide and perch (cat boxes).\*

#### **Specific Cleaning Protocol for Cats:**

- 1) DIRTY – Put on a clean pair of gloves.
- 2) If the cat has a “cat box” or other housing inside the cage, encourage the cat to enter the box and close the door.
  - a) If the cat has a towel or other comfort material in the “cat box” those items should not be removed unless very dirty.
  - b) If the cat has toys, place the toys in the cat box. Remove toys if very dirty or damaged.
  - c) If the cat does not have a “cat box” or other housing inside the cage, remove the cat and place in a temporary carrier.

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\* That is why, among other BARC practices, it is important that the Stray Cat ward not be used as a pass through by staff.

- 3) The “cat box” preferably will remain in the cage. If the cat box must be removed for cleaning it may be placed on a clean surface nearby.
  - a) Cats in “cat boxes” or temporary cages may NEVER be set on the floor.
- 4) Remove all newspapers, bowls and other items from the cage.
- 5) Using a paper towel, wipe out all loose debris from the cage. Discard the paper towel after use.
  - a) Use caution not to allow debris to fall into cages below.
  - b) Do not use brooms or brushes; they will just spread germs and disease.
- 6) Apply solution to a clean paper towel.
- 7) Wipe out the interior of the cage using the solution, concentrating particularly on areas that are visibly dirty.
- 8) REPEAT from step FIVE and clean the bars and the front of the cage.
- 9) CLEAN – Remove dirty gloves. Put on a clean pair of gloves.
- 10) Line the bottom of the cage with clean newspaper.
- 11) Replace food using fresh food and a disposable tray.
- 12) Replace water using clean bowl and fresh water.
- 13) Replace litter using fresh litter and a disposable tray.
- 14) Remove door from cat box and store between the box and the wall of the cage.
  - a) Replace a cat who is held in a temporary cage and thoroughly clean and disinfect the temporary cage before using with another cat.

For end of stay –cage cleaning between cats

- 1) Follow all instructions above except:
  - a) Spray solution to cover all surfaces within cage.
  - b) Utilize a scrub brush, a bucket of warm water and solution to thoroughly clean all surfaces including the bars, hinges and door closures.
  - c) Ensure solution has a minimum of ten minutes of contact time before wiping off with a clean paper towel.
- 2) Remove towels, toys or other comfort items from the cat box and thoroughly clean and disinfect the cat box.
  - a) Prepare cat box for a new cat.

Important points to remember

- Do not use paper towels on more than one cage.
- When cleaning, handle cats as little as possible.
- Change gloves often.



## Recommendations:

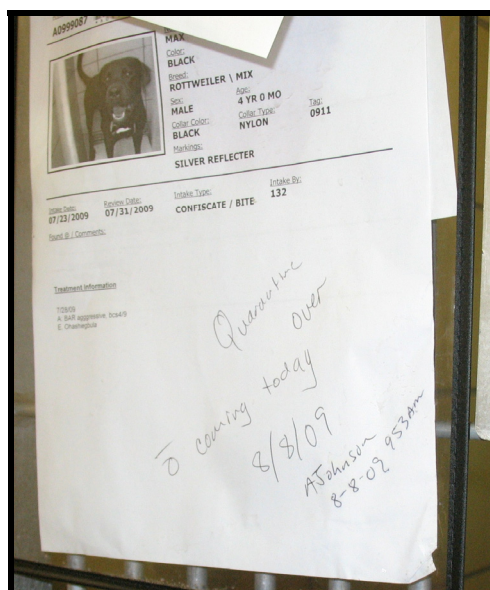
- There should be a daily written list that indicates who is responsible for each room in the shelter, as well as for all trucks/vans where animals are transported (cleaning should also include sweeping and mopping of floors).
- Immediately cease using the old litter buckets for “washing” and “rinsing” cat bowls in the South Ward. There is a sink outside the dog wards. Wash, disinfect, and thoroughly rinse bowls there. Use disposable food bowls.
- Crates or cages used for cats while cleaning their cages were routinely reused without washing and disinfection. This should not occur for the reasons outlined above.
- All items in the cages/kennels should be cleaned and disinfected daily to stop the spread of disease.
- Clean the kennels and cages from floor to ceiling, and scrub cage doors and similar surfaces manually. If any one section of the cage or kennel is left unsanitized, disease can be easily transmitted.
- To minimize disease vectors, scoopers and scrapers should be kept in disinfection solution between uses, which should be changed at least once per day. They should also be thoroughly cleaned at the end of the shift.
- Bleach solution should be freshly mixed daily.
- Eliminate the use of plastic litterboxes, opting for paper based disposable litter trays. Eliminate stainless steel cat food bowls and use disposable paper ones as well.
- Clean all areas used by the staff and public. Because bacteria can accumulate and lead to disease and odor problems, be sure to regularly clean and disinfect, including the aisles and walls and door knobs.
- Every cat should be given a clean litterbox (preferably disposable), and fresh food and water daily.
- All dogs should be provided with enrichment items such as Kong toys, rawhides, tennis balls, ropes tied in knots and other chew toys daily.
- All cats should be provided something soft to lie on.
- All cats should be assigned a cardboard carrier, ideally a modern one with hiding and perch capabilities.
- Volunteers should give cats and dogs “people” time including walks and play time in the enclosed areas.
- Bathe and groom dogs who come to the shelter dirty and matted.

- Consider contracting laundry to an offsite company.

#### 4.1 ANIMAL MOVEMENT

In order to save more lives, BARC must ensure that animals move through the system as quickly and efficiently as possible. The integrity of BARC's commitment to give every animal a fighting chance for life depends on keeping animals moving through the system. Some studies have indicated that every day a cat sits in a kennel increases the cat's susceptibility to disease by 5%. The longer a dog sits in a kennel, the greater the risk of both disease and anti-social barrier behaviors. Despite claims by BARC that veterinarians do daily rounds and make decisions on animals, it is apparent that there is no *daily* and *comprehensive* monitoring of animals which is necessary for animals to move through the system efficiently.

There were simply too many animals in North Ward who should have been moved, but were not. In some cases, I was told there was nowhere to move them to, but even after adoptions and with open cages, this was not done. One cat was identified as "TNR and release" on a day prior to my arrival. There were three dogs with nursing puppies with no plan of any kind for moving them out of the shelter. There was a dog in the bite ward (A0999087) who bit someone on July 21. His quarantine ended on July 31<sup>st</sup>. There was a note indicating that his owner would pick him up on August 8, but he never came. The dog was still sitting in the kennel on August 15, with no follow-up identified either on his cage card or in the Chameleon system.



*A dog is held for an extended period in the North Ward's substandard kennels with no follow up plan of any kind when his owner fails to appear on August 8. The dog and sign were still there on August 15. No follow up was documented in the Chameleon database.*

This is a dog who was clearly and severely aggressive, was not an adoption candidate, and put staff at risk.

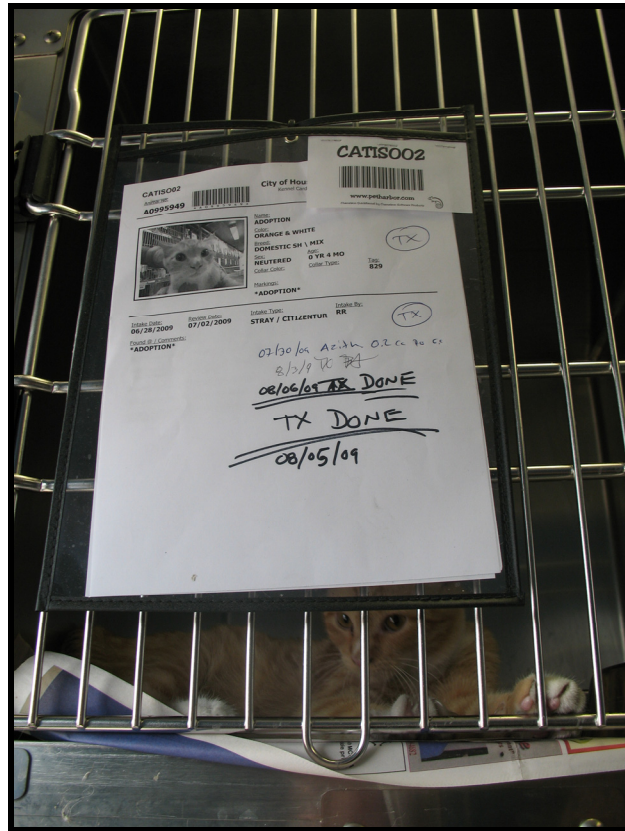


*A dog, truly aggressive and not an adoption candidate, sits in the bite wards long past his quarantine with no plan or follow-up. This is both dangerous and cruel.*

Another dog (DD 42) had been at BARC on a dangerous dog hold since June 12. The case had been resolved. A note in Chameleon indicates that the owner was called on August 4<sup>th</sup> to pick up his dog, but there was no working number, no information to get hold of the owner, and the dog was not an adoption candidate. There was no follow-up in the Chameleon system. The dog continued to be on a hold, as of August 15, when I brought it to the attention of staff.

The bite ward had yet another dog who was on his third bite hold and a note that the owner would not be coming for him. Since he was vicious and not a candidate for either

rescue or adoption, he should have been killed, rather than held ten days only to be killed then. As it stood, he was past the quarantine time limit, still sitting in a kennel for no reason, while other dogs were being killed “for space.”



*An adult cat sits in the “Kitten Isolation” room long after completing his treatment.*

By way of another example, a cat (A0995949) was in the Kitten Isolation room, with a notation that treatment was done on August 5. The cat was still in isolation when I left. Even if the cat was not moved to adoptions because of “lack of space,” the cat could have been put in the lobby during the Wags to Whiskers adoption event, the cat could have been taken to an offsite adoption event, the shelter could have simply added a temporary cat cage to the adoption room, at least on the weekend when most BARC adoptions occur.



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Name: 3/5  
Color: BROWN  
Breed: GERM SHEPHERD \ MIX  
Sex: FEMALE Age: 0 YR 4 MO  
Collar Color: Collar Type: Tag: 27717  
Markings:

Date: 5/2009 Review Date: 07/25/2009 Intake Type: OWNER SUR / OTC Intake By: JM

@ / Comments: ER SURRENDER-TOO MANY

ment Information

11/09  
sneezing, serous nasal discharge, soft stool, BCS 4/9  
RI, stress, other  
move to H, medicate, fecal exam  
amoxicillin 125mg (2.5 ml) BID for 10 days  
Lem, DVM

24/09 Recombitek DA2PPi  
24/09 A2P-Bordetella  
29/09 3cc Ivermectin/Pyrantel (1:9) AAA  
29/09 Rabies Vaccine AAA

TX DONE  
08/10/09

*A young puppy sits away from public view long after completing his treatment.*

In addition, there were a number of kittens in the facility who were in need of foster care, and some of the cage cards were in fact marked "need(s) foster." When I inquired of the personnel in charge of the foster care program what they did with this information, I was informed that nothing is generally done. Rounds for foster or rescue are done primarily for dogs, not for cats. In other words, there is no plan of follow-up. As a result, the kittens will sit there unless a rescue group comes to the shelter and decides to take them or a volunteer takes it upon themselves to foster them, a very haphazard and ad hoc approach to high volume sheltering. (This occurred with the volunteer I recruited to help me feed the kittens in the Kitten Isolation room. I subsequently received an e-mail from the volunteer telling me that he decided to take them home.)



*The animals who need the quietest, least disturbed space in the shelter (nursing mothers and feral cats) are housed in the most crowded, loudest, and busiest location in the facility.*

And finally, because stress is the leading indicator for susceptibility to disease, the most vulnerable animals should have the quietest and least disturbed rooms and kennels in the shelter. BARC does the exact opposite. Nursing mothers were next to sick animals; dogs with puppies were held in open cages next to the Bay Doors where officers do all the unloading; and feral cats were placed in the noisiest parts of the shelter.



*Three nursing mothers with puppies are in open, exposed cages in the loudest part of the shelter.*

A supervisor should walk through the rooms first thing every morning and identify to cleaning staff which animals need to be moved—either to adoption or into rescue or a foster home. They should then dovetail with the Placement Team and South Ward management to ensure that this occurs without delay.

Recommendations:

- Supervisors should do a daily walkthrough at least two times per day to ensure that animals and supplies are moving through the system.
- Staff who does not perform the duties in a thorough manner and managers who do not ensure that they are done on a daily basis should be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

#### **4.2 VETERINARY & HEALTH ISSUES**

The responsibility of caring for the City of Houston’s stray and abandoned animals is a serious one and carries the responsibility to individually assess the health status of every animal, and to provide care for those needs throughout the animal’s stay at the shelter—even for those animals scheduled to be killed.

Good, quality care and consistent application of sound vaccination, cleaning, and handling protocols will help reduce the incidence of disease, which impairs a shelter’s ability to save all the lives at risk. When animals get sick, the efficient flow of animals into new homes or rescue grinds to a halt. As such, it is imperative that sick animals be treated and rehabilitated back to health at the earliest possible time.

As discussed above, vaccinations for cats are spotty,\* intake examinations inconsistent, and cleaning and handling below acceptable levels. In addition, animals must be housed appropriately (no contagious dogs housed next to healthy puppies, no sick kittens housed next to adult cats) and that they be kept moving through the system as expeditiously as possible.

A newly recruited veterinarian has taken on the initiative of creating job descriptions for veterinarians in order to rationalize some of these processes. Like many of the new team members, they were not given a formal job description or requested that they create systems. Instead, it was assumed they would simply do whatever job was needed of them. Hiring good people is the first step to success. But hiring people without

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\* Although field services is beyond the scope of the assessment, it is imperative that accountability provisions be implemented, and periodic quality control assurance audits be made, to verify that field staff are indeed vaccinating all dogs on intake in the field. It is also imperative that truck bays be cleaned and disinfected between each animal.

expectations, mentoring, assistance, feedback, and systems building is a recipe for either false starts, or burnout and departure.

Thankfully, some of these new hires have taken on the initiative of creating the systems themselves (though the danger is that since inter-department communication is low, that they will create systems that operate at cross purposes with the needs of other departments.) The veterinarians, for example, have self-created a description of duties which include some staff training, rounds, care for clinic clients, and examination of intake animals. They have also begun implementing changes to the “sign off” required for killing animals to prevent the erroneous killing of animals, such as owned animals and animals held for rescue as has been reported.

However, the veterinarians have more work than time, including duties which should be outside their scope. While veterinarians are signing off on the killing of sick or injured animals as they should (though this should be further reviewed by shelter managers), they do not want to sign off on animals who are killed “for space,” a sentiment I agree with. As a result, however, other employees are making those decisions without the same safeguards that the veterinarian team is implementing for animals within their purview. Second, they are responsible for assessing the temperament (i.e., aggression) of the animal for purposes of adoption, but they neither have the training nor the ability to do a true evaluation. Instead, they are making decisions based on the ad hoc observations of kennel staff and their own casual observations during rounds.\*

First, because of how busy the veterinarians are, they do not always get to their rounds and the rounds are not always rigorous when they do. Second, casual observation of dog behavior is fraught with uncertainty. During my visit, a dog in the South Ward adoption kennels was being looked at by a potential adopter who brought her own dog to meet the new dog. The BARC dog attacked the owned dog, nearly severing the leg. BARC took the initiative of doing emergency surgery at the clinic for the dog, but this could have potentially been avoided if dedicated *animal handlers* had assessed the dog and noted that the dog should go to a home with no other dogs. Instead, the dog’s fitness for adoption was based on a veterinarian determination that the dog was “adoptable” without handling the dog or formally testing him. This is even more tragic in light of the fact that friendly, healthy dogs who get along with all other dogs are still being killed at BARC.

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\* BARC indicated to me that “Other members of BARC’s management team will participate in evaluations after completing the necessary training.”



City of Houston  
Kennel Card

**BARC**

Name: UNKNOWN  
Color: BROWN  
Breed: GERM SHEPHERD / MIX  
Sex: FEMALE  
Age: 0 YR 4 MO  
Collar Color: Collar Type: Tag: 41433

Intake Type: STRAY / FIELD  
Intake By: 208

8/11/09 Cefazolin PO q8h  
08/14/09 Cefazolin PO q8h  
08/15/09 Cefazolin PO q8h

*Treatment records show BARC veterinary technicians are not medicating animals daily according to their needs. Here, a dog gets treatment on August 11, and then not again until August 14 and 15.*

Finally, when animals do get sick and BARC makes the decision to treat them, they are not always getting the care they need in a timely or consistent fashion. To medicate animals, veterinary technicians print out a daily inventory “to do” list which shows which animals need treatment and where in the shelters the animals are located. Often, one veterinary technician is responsible for all treatments, which averages over 10 pages (roughly eight animals to a page), but can be almost two times that.

City of Houston  
Kennel Card

**CATIS006**

Name: 3/3  
Color: ORANGE  
Breed: DOMESTIC SH  
Sex: FEMALE  
Age: 0 YR 4 MO  
Collar Color: Collar Type: Tag: 356

Intake Type: STRAY / OTC  
Intake By: AD

08/09/09 Azith. 0.5cc PO q8h  
08/12/09 Azith. 0.5cc PO q8h  
08/13/09 Azith. 0.5cc PO q8h  
08/14/09 Azith. 0.5cc PO q8h

Trim DONE  
08/13/09

*Treatment records show BARC veterinary technicians are not medicating animals daily according to their needs. Here, a cat does not get treated on August 8, 12, or 13. Although it says that treatment is done August 13, a dose is given on August 14.*

This is compounded by the fact that the animals are not always in the cages or kennels they are supposed to be in, which slows the process down. As a result, animals are not always given two treatments as needed, and they only get one. In order to prevent this, BARC favors stronger antibiotics which only have to be given once per day in cases when it is an acceptable alternative, which is not always the case. But even this is fraught with problems as sometimes animals get no treatments at all.



*Treatment records show BARC veterinary technicians are not medicating animals daily according to their needs. Here, puppies do not receive their treatment on August 13.*

A random review of cage cards and then subsequent Chameleon records showed that animals were missing their treatments. In fact, the puppies in the hospital ward did not receive medications on August 13 and many of the cats had various days of skipped treatments.

Name: UNKNOWN  
 Color: BROWN  
 Breed: CHIHUAHUA SH  
 Sex: FEMALE  
 Age: 0 YR 3 MO  
 Collar Color:   
 Collar Type:   
 Tag: 077  
 Markings:   
 FEED TWICE DAILY

Intake Date: 08/20/2009  
 Intake Type: STRAY / FIELD  
 Intake By: JH

\*\*FEED TWICE DAILY\*\*  
 08/07/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/09/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/10/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/11/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/12/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/14/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4  
 08/15/09 Cefadroxil 1a to 4

*Treatment records show BARC veterinary technicians are not medicating animals daily according to their needs. Here, a puppy does not get treated August 8 or August 13.*

#### Recommendations:

- Routine physical examinations of animals at intake must be conducted including the evaluation of appearance, heart/lungs, cleaning ears, and nasal and eye discharge. In addition, medical staff should do comprehensive daily rounds of all the animals in the shelter.
- BARC must also develop and enforce a protocol for pain, medical evaluation forms, daily medication logs, a formal mechanism for flagging animals that need veterinary care, and a consistent flea preventative policy. Some of these currently exist, but are not consistently implemented.
- All staff should be educated on the concerns about infectious diseases and the general way in which specific disease is transmitted, including the possibility that the staff themselves can transmit diseases from animal to animal by contact.
- Employ a “barrier” policy for the infirmaries so that staff cannot walk freely in and out of these into the main holding areas, without hand washing, bleach foot baths, and wearing designated protective clothing.
- Evaluate all animals shortly after they come in to the shelter and during their stay, noting any signs of the following for veterinary response: eyes are watery, appear swollen, or show discharge; ears appear red or inflamed, show discharge, or have a foul odor; nose shows discharge (mucous, blood, or pus), or is crusty, congested, or blocked; gums are swollen or inflamed, teeth are loose or brown,



- or mouth has a foul odor; animal is sneezing, coughing, or wheezing; animal has fleas or ticks, skin shows swelling or lesions; animal limps; animal is thin or obese; animal has wounds or abscesses; body temperature is abnormal.
- Require staff who administers morning medications to provide fresh food, free water, and pick up feces so that animals are comfortable, until kennel staff can clean the area more thoroughly after they finish cleaning kennels/cages housing healthy animals.
  - Beyond onsite care and treatment through staff veterinarians and veterinary technicians, partner with local veterinary colleges, local veterinary technician schools, and private practice veterinarians.

#### 4.3 FEEDING PROTOCOLS

According to BARC, animals are fed science diet once per day, with sick or young animals fed canned food or according to the specifications of veterinarians. In addition to the problems noted above with kittens, the food is stored in Rubbermaid containers which are not airtight.



*Food is stored in Rubbermaid containers which are neither clean nor airtight.*



Inside the bins, the food was stored in open bags, and though BARC goes through a fair amount of food very quickly, open storage leads to stale food, which animals are less likely to eat. In addition, it is subject to contamination (including cockroaches). In one container, I found a dog leash in the food.



*Bags of food are left open leading to staleness. On the right, the food contains a dog leash.*

In addition to the problems associated with lack of thorough washing and more importantly, thorough rinsing of the cat bowls in the South Ward, bowls are stored by the sink in the North Ward stray cat ward. I watched as kennel attendants piled dirty bowls on top of the clean ones. This leads to cross contamination.



*Dirty bowls are placed in a pile of clean bowls, leading to cross contamination.*

#### Recommendations:

- All animals, except those with special needs, should be fed nutritionally adequate dry fresh food. Establishing a system of proper feeding is extremely important, and staff should be trained to monitor the diets of the animals.
- Feed appropriate amounts to the dogs consistent with the recommendations of the food manufacturers.
- Cover food in airtight containers to prevent it from becoming stale or contaminated.
- Feed dogs two times per day to ensure that they eat, first thing in the morning and again at closing. If the dog does not eat in the morning due to stress or other reasons, he will be fed again. Leave the food in the kennel overnight, but replace with fresh food in the morning.
- Provide dogs and cats a small meal on intake.
- For older animals, feed canned food mixed with dry food.
- Nursing mothers and young kittens should be free fed both dry and canned food.

#### 4.4 SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES

In a high intake environment like Houston, spay/neuter is one of the cornerstones of a successful lifesaving effort. High volume spay/neuter leads to fewer animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives. Homelessness, abandonment, and increases in feral cat and dog populations are all by-products of insufficient spay/neuter, and BARC could do more in this regard.

In the 1970s, the City of Los Angeles was the first to provide municipally funded spaying and neutering for low-income pet owners in the United States. A city study found that for every dollar it was investing in the program, Los Angeles taxpayers were saving \$10 in animal control costs due to reductions in animal intakes and fewer field calls. Indeed, Los Angeles shelters were taking in half the number of animals after just the first decade of the program and killing rates in the city dropped to the lowest third per capita in the United States. This result is consistent with experiences in San Francisco, San Diego and elsewhere.

Although BARC is sterilizing adopted animals, has begun implementing a TNR program, and has a relationship by contract with SNAP valued at \$50,000, one of the primary limitations to success in BARC' future is the lack of adequate funding for truly *high-volume* spaying and neutering. A \$50,000 allocation for the fourth largest city in the United States is insufficient. Research shows that investment in such programs not only provide immediate public health and public relations benefits but also long-term

financial savings to a jurisdiction. According to the International City County Management Association,

An effective animal control program not only saves cities and counties on present costs—by protecting citizens from dangerous dogs, for example—but also helps reduce the costs of animal control in the future. A city that impounds and euthanizes 4,000 animals in 2001... but does not promote spaying and neutering will probably still euthanize at least 4,000 animals a year in 2010. A city that... [institutes a subsidized spay/neuter program] will likely euthanize significantly fewer animals in 2010 and save on a host of other animal-related costs as well.

Given the City's lack of adequate funding for BARC, effort in this regard must be highly targeted and strategic to make the appropriate intake. For example, the highest intake zip codes for animals entering BARC are 77087, 77033, and 77016. Yet, simply focusing on these zip codes, while important, is not enough. These zip codes were primarily responsible for dog intakes. Other zip codes, such as 77006 and 77030, which were lower overall intake areas, nonetheless, had higher cat and kitten intakes. Different areas may need to be targeted differently.

In addition, attention must be paid to whether these are kittens and puppies, as opposed to animals impounded for other reasons, and whether field officer work ethics, workloads, and bias is impacting how many and what kinds of animals are coming from particular jurisdictions. How is it that one area can be a source of a large number of dogs and puppies, but very few cats and kittens? How is it that another area can be responsible for so many cats and kittens, but not a single dog or puppy? The data seem to indicate this to be the case, and so causal mechanisms must be identified.

#### Recommendations:

- Increase funding for spay/neuter, targeting specific neighborhoods based on intake rates.
- All juvenile animals who are sterilized should be tattooed with an "S" for spay. As these animals get older, juvenile spay scars are not likely to be visible and may cause unnecessary procedures in future years.
- As much as possible, spay/neuter animals before they are adopted so they can go home right away.
- Develop a multi-year funding strategy to provide both low and no-cost spay/neuter for qualified low-income pet owners, feral cats, and challenging dog populations. To truly impact the impound rate, increase funding until the City reaches a benchmark of about 30 cents per capita in funding allocations.

## 5.0 Adoptions

Many factors impact the quantity and quality of adoptions. These include:

- **Adoption Hours:** Convenient shelter hours mean more chances for adoptions. To avoid increased costs, shelters can open later in the day and stay open later giving working people and families with children, the two most important demographics, a chance to adopt.
- **Offsite Adoptions:** Not everyone can come to the shelter, so bring the shelter to them through mobile adoption centers in locations around the city. On-site staff and volunteer adoption counselors make sure each match is a good one. Some shelters even have permanent adoption storefronts in local malls. Adoption outreach isn't just good for the animals—animals attract people, and that's good for businesses who host adoption events.
- **Special Events:** Neighborhood fairs, church picnics, and other community based events are terrific opportunities to show available pets to the public.
- **Cost:** Often, shelters must compete with pet stores and other commercial services, and backyard breeders. If it costs \$25 to buy a kitten from a pet shop, does it make sense for a shelter to charge \$55? Other benefits of adopting from the shelter can include: a free veterinary visit, discounts at pet supply stores, discounts on dog training classes, grooming discounts, free behavior advice, and a free handbook on understanding their new pet.
- **Advertising:** TV and radio stations are often delighted to promote a "Pet of the Week." Photos of adoptable animals on a shelter website can give people a chance to take a look before they come to the shelter. And many newspapers sponsor adoption advertisements for shelters.
- **Foster Program:** Not only does a foster program provide in-home loving care for underage or recovering animals, it is also a great network for adoptions!
- **Rescue Groups:** Breed-specific and other rescue groups are ready, willing, and able to take animals out of the local shelter, care for them, and adopt the animals out.

While BARC does all of these things, there is much room for improvement.



## 5.1 ADOPTION PROCESS & POLICIES

Adoptions are the cornerstone of shelter operational success. Every person who adopts an animal, and experiences good results, walks away with a new family member and a positive experience with BARC. Increasing adoptions not only saves lives, therefore, but itself leads to further success by increasing word-of-mouth community satisfaction with the job BARC is doing. Adopters open up scarce kennel space, provide revenue to BARC, encourage friends and family to adopt, can be solicited for private support in the future and provide living ambassadors to BARC success for years to come.

Unfortunately, the adoption program at BARC is often at cross purposes with, and works to undermine, BARC' lifesaving goals. At its most basic, adoption hours demonstrate do not favor high volume adoptions. In an environment where intakes are welcome earlier in the day and later in the evening, and adoption hours start later and end earlier, there should be no surprise that intakes are many and adoptions are few. Reorganizing the adoption program, therefore, should be one of the primary and immediate BARC goals moving forward.

In addition, processes like long lines during peak periods and having to do an exit veterinary check while the clinic is operating make the process time consuming and often frustrating for the adopter.

Furthermore, fees for adoption were too high, making it difficult for BARC—already at a competitive disadvantage by virtue of its location, bureaucratic procedures, inefficient staff, and poor hours—to effectively compete with pet stores, backyard breeders, and other sources of pets. Adoption fees are not and should not be intended as revenue sources for a municipality uninterested in fully funding its animal care and control program. They should be used as a “loss leader,” a commodity offered at or below cost in order to attract clients and increase volume.

It is important to keep in mind that animal control departments which rely on fines and user fees (usually in the form of a high adoption or impound rate structure) can become self-defeating. Such reliance pits the various functions of an animal care and control agency against one another (for example, increases in licensing and adoption fees reduces compliance and adoptions, thereby taking BARC further, rather than closer to its goals). Moreover, public funding of animal control agencies complements the broad public purpose whereby both pet owners and the general public benefits in terms of public health and safety, lifesaving, pet protection, and community satisfaction with local government.

Furthermore, while reducing (and in some cases, waiving) the adoption fee reduces per animal revenue, it also reduces length of stay, reduces killing, increases adoption volume, and can be followed-up with targeted fundraising.

Further limiting BARC adoption success are procedures which make it difficult to match animals with adopters based on lifestyle or other relevant factors. First, surrender staff often failed to get good information useful for the adoption process and place this information into the Chameleon database where it was accessible to potential adopters. Second, comprehensive behavior evaluations on dogs are not being done. Third, there were no staff member available in the adoption wards to assist potential adopters, and had to be sought out. When they were available, they provided little in the way of useful information about the animal.

In addition, because the dogs do not get daily out-of-the-kennel socialization, when they do get out, they are so excited that they spend their time exploring their surroundings rather than bonding with potential adopters. The area where potential adopters are encouraged to socialize with the animals was not clean, which is bad for the adopter and (health wise) potentially bad for the dogs (Giardia and other diseases are transmitted via fecal matter), but also very distracting for the dogs in terms of all the smells.



*Exercise areas where potential adopters interact with dogs are dirty. In addition to piles of dog waste, the pool has dirty standing water. Diseases like heartworms are transmitted between dogs by mosquitoes which are drawn to standing water.*

In addition, as den animals, dogs do not want to defecate or urinate where they live. That is why they are generally so easy to train. When shelters give dogs daily out of the kennel socialization, they find that most dogs keep their kennels clean and either retain or learn housetraining. At BARC, dogs do their best to hold it but often fail because of

the extended amount of time they spend in the kennel. During tie out for cleaning, a majority of dogs will simply defecate where they stand.



*Dogs are tied up for cleaning. Many dogs defecate where they stand because they do not want to eliminate in their kennels but do not get daily outside socialization.*

Finally, the goal of an adoption program is not just the adoption itself, but ensuring that the adoption is successful. This requires providing adopters with good information about the pet, good information about how to care for the pet, and a contact telephone number to call if there are adjustment or other issues once the pet comes into the home including training, behavior, and medical issues.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT ADOPTION SCREENING:**

BARC claimed it has criteria in which staff members can refuse an adoption. These include if the person was under investigation of animal cruelty, has a history of animal hoarding, is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and more. Some of the criteria are impossible for BARC to assess, but none of them are really in force. BARC basically does “open adoptions,” meaning there is virtually no screening of any kind.

Successful high volume adoption shelters have proved that the notion that one needs to reduce quality of homes in order to increase quantity is one of the anachronisms of old-guard, “catch and kill” shelters who needed a way to justify a paradigm of high impounds, high kill rates and low adoptions. In fact, some of the most successful industries in the United States have excelled in a consumer market demanding high

volume coupled with increasing consumer awareness, information and requirement for quality. These agencies are able to meet demand for both quality and quantity. Quality and quantity are not, and have never been, mutually exclusive. During the early 1990s, the progressive North Shore Animal League (“NSAL”) was adopting out tens of thousands of animals each and every year, even while rejecting poor applications.

According to NSAL,

The best adoption programs are designed to ensure that each animal is placed with a responsible person, one prepared to make a lifelong commitment, and to avoid the kinds of problems that may have caused the animal to be brought to the shelter. An important part of the process is to match the life-style and needs of the adopter with the individual dog or cat. After selecting a pet, each potential adopter is thoroughly screened, including identity verification and reference checks. Because placing our pets in proper homes is so important to us, only two out of three applicants are ultimately approved. But for the more than 800,000 new pet owners who have met our high standards, the joy of providing a good home for a loving pet is well worth the extra trouble.

At BARC, by contrast, screening is perfunctory, there is no real counseling, good matches are not considered as kennel attendants spend no time with the potential adopter or the animal, customer service representatives have limited information in which to match animal with lifestyle, and the cost is not inexpensive in an era of pet shops, “free to good home” ads, backyard breeders, and BARC’s poor location, facility, and bureaucratic procedures.

This is an area where volunteers have repeatedly suggested some form of screening to make sure animals are not just going into homes, but “good” homes. This suggestion has some appeal. And while it should ultimately be BARC’s goal, in the larger cost-benefit analysis, I think it would be a mistake to do so at this time.

While BARC should work with the SPCA , which is responsible for cruelty investigations and enforcement, to get a daily or weekly list of individuals to make sure potential adopters do not have a history of cruelty, BARC is not capable of adoption screening and the end result will mean the needless loss of animal life.

At this point in BARC’s history, the goal must be to get animals out of BARC where they and others are continually under the threat of a death sentence. And given the problems with procedure implementation at BARC, my fear is that the process will become arbitrary depending on who is in charge of adoptions. There is simply too much at stake for the types of staff I observed to hold even more power over life and death.



In addition, several high volume, high kill shelters have realized that denying people for criteria other than cruelty, would lead them to get animals (likely unsterilized and unvaccinated) from other sources, with no information or guidance on providing proper care, which BARC can still provide.

When BARC has high quality staff, is consistent in applying sound policies and procedures, and has achieved a higher save rate—when BARC animals do not have a daily choice between life and death—it can revisit the issue of thoughtful screening to provide homes more suitable for particular BARC animals.

#### Recommendations:

- Customer service representatives should be knowledgeable about the animals to help produce better matches.
- Both adoption staff and volunteers should assist potential adopters with “meet and greet” of shelter animals.
- Have binders with information about animals in the shelter, including animals in foster care, at every offsite adoption event, at Petco and PetSmart, and in the lobby of the shelter.
- People who bring in their own dogs to meet a shelter dog should never be left unattended.
- Create Public Service Announcements in the area of adoptions and spay/neuter for BARC to be played on local radio stations which will promote a positive image of BARC while helping to increase adoptions and lower intakes.
- Have volunteers available to help the public during adoption hours as greeters in the lobby and to answer questions about available animals.
- Reduce adoption fees to \$25 for dogs and cats.
- Adoption staff should be given a daily available animal inventory and be required to perform a walkthrough of available wards at the start of every shift.
- Create a “Do Not Adopt” list for people who have a history of neglect or cruelty. Require staff to check this list before approving adoptions.
- Allow volunteers to do adoptions including at offsite adoption facilities to expand the number and move people expeditiously through.
- Eliminate the post-adoption veterinary exit exam.
- Develop a form attached to kennels so volunteers can write their observations about animals’ traits and behaviors, especially for dogs.
- Utilizing the responses in the surrender questionnaire as part of the adoption file to help match with the new home.

- Work with volunteers to groom animals at the shelter.
- Place toys in cages with the animals—it provides enrichment for the animals, looks “homey,” and adds color to the animals’ surroundings.
- Just as people are more likely to enter a store where others are already shopping, the same holds true for shelter animals. Have staff and dog/cat socializing volunteers working with the animals during peak visitation hours. People are drawn to an animal who is interacting with a person. Simply having a volunteer petting an older cat or sitting in the lobby with a long-term dog can make all the difference.

## 5.2 ADOPTION PROGRAMS & INDUCEMENTS

New members of BARC’s recently created Placement Team have begun a series of offsite adoptions to take animals to where people live, work, and play. This includes libraries, the Galleria, churches, and Petco. And while BARC underutilizes Petfinder, a casual review for BARC showed a far less number of “Photo not available” listings than it did when I reviewed it several months ago. Friends of BARC is posting animals online for BARC. BARC has a newly created Facebook page. And the August schedule I was provided while onsite, showed multiple offsite adoption events every weekend, all Tuesdays, and a couple on other days; with the numbers expected to grow.

In addition, in concert with Friends of BARC, BARC does a bimonthly adoption even called “From Wags to Whiskers” where adoption fees are cut in half, mature pets are free to mature people, and there is free food for all potential adopters.



*The bimonthly “From Wags to Whiskers” event is a busy adoption day for BARC.*



These tend to be BARC's busiest days, resulting in dozens of adoptions. They also provide the dogs (less so the cats) with much needed socialization, as they are attended by lots of volunteers.



*Dogs get much needed socialization and exercise during the Wags to Whiskers event.*

During these events, BARC also places cats and puppies in the lobby for adoption as well.





*Animals are placed in the lobby for adoption during Wags to Whiskers.*

And it resulted, at least while I was there, in a high number of visitors.



*Long, slow moving lines because of poor customer service were common during Wags to Whiskers.*

These are all good starts. But besides a once or twice a year “two for one” cat adoptions incentive which BARC claims to do, more can, and should be done. There are many opportunities for adoption promotions including all holidays, and many more. The bottom line is that there are plenty of homes out there, and it is up to BARC to effectively promote its pets so that they find their way into those homes—from offsite



adoptions and other community venues, effective use of the Internet, increasing partnerships with the media, enlisting the support of volunteers and foster parents, and making the shelter more inviting.



#### Recommendations:

- Expand the scope and number of adoption inducements consistent with the sample material provided on the CD in Section VII.
- Despite the reduction in revenue from fees (adoption), the number of adoptions will increase, length of stay will be reduced, killing will be reduced, and adopters can be solicited for other support in the future.
- Utilize other social marketing websites in addition to Petfinder and Facebook, such as My Space, You Tube, Twitter, and Craig's List.
- Many photographs on cage cards do not show the animals in the best light. Have volunteers update with better photographs as animals get acclimated to the shelter and thus show better. This is also important for Petfinder adoptions and other promotions.

### **A NOTE ABOUT “PIT BULL”-TYPE DOGS:**

A recent study found that shelter workers mistakenly identified dogs as “Pit Bulls” (compared to DNA sampling which showed no traces) as much as 87% of the time. Staff should be very careful about designating dogs as “Pit Bulls” only because of the unfortunate and undeserved stigma of the association due to media bias.

To encourage the adoption of BARC’s many friendly Pit Bull-type dogs, these dogs should come with a month’s worth of free food, free microchip registration, a free dog license for the first year, and other incentives. These should be advertised on cage cards and websites.

To provide better kennel presentation for Pit Bulls, these dogs should be walked daily and be put outside in the exercise yards during kennel cleaning in the morning, rather than simply be tied out.

Recommendations:

- Implement a Pit Bull kennel presentation, walking/socialization regiment, and adoption incentive structure consistent with the discussion above.

### **5.3 POST-ADOPTION FOLLOW-UP**

BARC does not currently follow-up with adopters, and this is an area where a volunteer-based initiative, directed by BARC, can make a substantial impact. There are many reasons for a post-adoption follow-up protocol. First, many animals who enter a new home experience “adjustment” issues. These can be resolved with good, thoughtful advice. Without this, animals are at heightened risk for return, and for easily fixable and relatively minor behaviors to escalate to bigger problems. Dogs, for example, can quickly establish patterns and if these are not addressed early, may become harder to fix later, leading to abandonment or relinquishment. It is equally important that adopters have a dedicated telephone number to reach someone for good advice and/or referral to local resources. The post-adoption follow-up need not be a comprehensive process. Two questions need only be asked: 1. How are things going? 2. Can we help you with anything?

In Reno, for example, of 52 people who reported adjustment problems with their recently adopted animals to the animal help desk and were considering returning their animals, only 11 returned them in to the shelter after they were assisted, a potential resolution rate of 79%.

Second, a post-adoption program assesses the quality of the adopter. If they no longer have the pet or information is elicited to show the match was not good or problems exist (e.g., the dog is relegated to the backyard), the concern can be relayed to an animal control officer for follow-up and the person placed on a barred-list.

Third, the program allows the agency to show it cares and is responsive, which will be important for a second follow-up call in six months. After the six-month follow-up, all BARC adopters who still have their pet and report good results should be solicited for a donation, to foster, to volunteer, or to assist in other ways. As one agency has noted, “Successfully adopted animals are like alumni and their adopters can become part of a strong support and donor base.” In Tompkins City, this resulted in a 10% compliance rate, with an average first year gift of \$55 and second year gift of \$74. As a result of not doing this, BARC is losing thousands of dollars in annual revenue to supplement its programmatic efforts. At the very least, it can help raise funds for a dedicated spay/neuter fund, for a medical care fund, or for a group like Friends of BARC, which uses the money to assist BARC.

Recommendations:

- Set up a post-adoption callback program utilizing either staff or volunteers to call back at two weeks and six months. Forms should be filled out and provided to the appropriate person, such as animal control agents, behavior staff, and development for follow-up.

## **5.4 FOSTER CARE**

A volunteer foster program can be an ideal low-cost way to greatly increase the number of lives a shelter can save while at the same time providing an opportunity for community members to volunteer. Not only does a foster program maximize the number of animals rescued, it allows an organization to care for animals who would be more difficult to care for in a shelter environment—orphaned or feral kittens, sick or injured animals, or dogs needing one-on-one behavior rehabilitation. For animals who may need a break from the shelter environment, foster care provides a comfortable home setting that keeps animals happy and healthy.

BARC has a foster program, but it is not well developed and is largely ineffectual. Not only are very few animals “fostered” relative to intake, but BARC lists them as “outcome” final dispositions. Once in foster care, they are largely out of the system. In fact, one BARC foster parent has over 60 animals, but there has never been any follow up whatsoever. Are they still in the home? Are they breeding? Have they been adopted?

In addition to the lack of monitoring, very little recruiting is done and there is no exit strategy to get the animals out of a “foster” status and into a permanent home. The goals of the program should be three-fold:

1. A more thorough exit strategy so that animals, especially puppies and kittens, are adopted from foster;
2. Comprehensive veterinary care for animals in foster care; and,
3. Better tracking of animals in foster care.

#### Exit Strategy

To be successful, the shelter needs to ensure that these animals are being adopted from foster care as much as possible. This can be accomplished in many ways such as:

1. Having foster care animals on the website, with a direct link to the foster parent’s contact information including e-mail;
2. Binders showing pictures and descriptions of animals available for adoption in foster care placed in the shelter and elsewhere (offsite events, community events, pet supply stores) in the event someone does not find an animal he or she wants in the shelter;
3. Encouraging foster parents to market foster animals to friends, families and coworkers; and,
4. Increasing the number of offsite adoption venues where foster animals are shown.

As to the latter, these need not be large events, but can consist of mini-events, exclusively with foster care animals. In some cases, this may only consist of one or two foster parents with four or five cats and a couple of dogs. In other cases, it may be larger events.

#### Veterinary Care

In return for the help foster parents provide caring for shelter animals, the shelter must be responsive to the issues foster parents face. Nothing will frustrate foster parents more than the inability to get quick and quality veterinary care to sick foster animals.

#### Better Tracking

Send animals home with a set date for a follow-up visit at the shelter to booster vaccinations, check the health status, and/or monitor for progress of whatever condition the animal was sent into foster care to address.

Every day, a staff member should print out all “due date” foster animals for the following day and telephone reminders for follow-up. He or she should also print out all “due date” foster animals for that day’s appointments and be prepared for them. At the end, he or she can then ensure the follow-up is completed.



This will not only result in better tracking, but it will help make the process as fair, as thoughtful and as expeditious as possible so that foster animals do not pile outside the doorway of the veterinary clinic with foster parents having to stand around waiting for care. In addition, because this is not done, due dates are not followed up on and staff admitted that foster animals can get lost in the system.

Recommendations:

- Develop a foster care program using a threefold strategy: 1. An exit strategy so that animals are adopted from foster; 2. Comprehensive veterinary care for animals in foster care; and, 3. Better tracking of animals in foster care.

## **5.5 PET RETENTION**

While many of the reasons animals are surrendered to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented—but only if BARC is willing to work with people to help them solve their problems. And the more a community sees its shelter as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be. Shelters can maintain “libraries” of pet care and behavior fact sheets in the shelter and on a website. Articles in local papers, radio and television spots all provide opportunities to feature topics like solving litterbox avoidance and excessive barking. Other pet retention programs include free dog behavior problem-solving by volunteers, low-cost dog training, pet friendly rental programs, dog walker referrals, and pet behavior classes. But the most important resource is being provided with accurate information when people come to BARC or call on the telephone with problems.

BARC currently does not have a pet retention program to reduce impounds. If someone calls with an animal related problem, staff does not assist them in resolving those problems short of bringing the animal to BARC.

During my visit, I watched people surrender animals for very fixable issues or problems that could have been resolved short of relinquishment, but no offer of assistance was made. In addition, as previously discussed, three telephone calls to BARC turned out to be lost opportunities to resolve problems short of impounding the animal, and worked to the determinant of other BARC programs, such as TNR. Not once did the BARC employee ask: “Why do you want to surrender your pet?” and then follow-up with advice or guidance.

In addition, it is crucial that people be given full and complete disclosure over what is likely to happen to their animals at BARC. As previously discussed, one of the call center operators falsely told my associate that their dog would either be fostered or sent to rescue, and not killed. In another case, I watched a gentleman bring in his cat who he described as “not friendly.” Rather than tell him such a cat would not be an adoption

candidate and suggest TNR or something else, when he asked: “But you don’t euthanize anymore right?” The answer should have been “We still do, animals get sick and die here, and a cat that is not friendly to people will not be put up for adoption as many friendly cats are killed here already.” Instead, he was told “We try not to.” This is misleading, even if it is “technically” true.

Finally, the form used by BARC when owners are surrendering their animal states that that the pet may be killed “if an evaluation by a veterinary staff indicates my animal is not a suitable candidate for adoption.” This too is misleading. Animals are not only often killed without veterinary staff evaluation, they are killed even if they are friendly and healthy.

Given its recent run of bad press, BARC staff may fear the adverse public relations aspect of honesty, but misleading the public has its drawbacks, both in terms of public trust, and the ethical issues of potentially costing an animal his or her life. “Your pet will likely be killed” puts all parties on notice of what the most likely outcome for the animal will be—and may result in someone keeping their animal (and being helped to resolve any problems) or taking the time to find the animal a suitable home themselves.

Recommendations:

- Provide pet behavior advice through call center staff, in the shelter, on the website, and through other public relations channels.
- Develop a binder of materials for staff to use to provide sound pet behavior advice in the shelter, on the website, and through other public relations channels.
- Require staff to inquire and follow-up with reasons for surrendering when the public calls or shows up with their animals.
- Provide a dedicated telephone number for dog behavior and cat behavior advice.
- Hire Animal Handlers (dog and cat trainer, in-shelter socialization) who can respond to a dedicated dog and cat behavior help line.
- Develop programs such as pet friendly rental listings and other pet retention programs.

## **5.6 RESCUE GROUPS**

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing and disposal, and improves a community’s rate of lifesaving. Getting an animal out of the shelter in an appropriate placement is important and rescue groups, as a general rule, can screen adopters better than many shelters. In an environment of over 30,000 impounded animals annually,

there will rarely be a shortage of adoptable animals and if a rescue group is willing to take custody and care of the animal, rare is the circumstance in which they should be denied.

Recommendations:

- An e-mail list of all dogs and cats available for rescue placement should be developed and sent on day of impound, giving rescue a reasonable time to set up foster care or otherwise take the animals into their own programs.
- See procedures in the Companion Animal Protection Act for further recommendations.

## **5.7 FERAL CATS**

Like many agencies throughout the United States, I was pleased to see that BARC has embraced TNR to improve animal welfare, reduce the death rate, and meet obligations to public welfare and neighborhood tranquility demanded by governments.

According to the nation's leading TNR advocacy organization, TNR

is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are humanely trapped, then rabies vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their habitats. If possible, volunteers provide long-term care, including food, shelter, and health monitoring.

In community surveys throughout the United States, it was found that feral cats are a prominent subject of complaint calls from the public (although most callers did not want the cats "killed") and that agencies spend a significant percentage of their (tax-funded) annual budgets responding to feral cat complaints. These surveys also found that public health departments, together with animal control agencies, are seeking effective and *cost-effective* long-term solutions that respond to the public's increasing desire to see feral cats treated with humane, non-lethal methods. TNR proved to be the most effective solution to reducing complaints, improving public health and safety, lowering costs, and increasing lifesaving.

Recently, BARC modified its ordinance to allow TNR and it should continue to revisit it to make altering and releasing free roaming cats preferable to being killed at the shelter. Its efforts to do so should be expanded. It should also require all animal control officers to support and encourage the program in lieu of impoundment or citations (they were described as "hit or miss" in terms of their support).

#### Recommendations:

- Develop a policy citing TNR as the preferred the City of Houston policy for feral cats, addressing lifesaving, public health and cost savings, and in order to educate the community about BARC' No Kill goals and lifesaving mission.
- Train staff to offer TNR as an alternative to trapping and killing.
- Provide TNR literature in the lobby, on BARC's website, and in response to public calls or complaints.
- Place feral kittens into foster care for socializing, and subsequent adoption.
- Establish training workshops for individuals on humane trapping, feral cat medical issues, post-surgery recovery care, and other issues to increase the number of feral cat caretakers.
- Prohibit use of a control pole to handle feral cats.
- Relocate feral cats to quieter rooms in the shelter.
- Coordinate a TNR program to release feral cats back to their habitats, rather than kill them.
- Do not lend out traps for indiscriminate trapping or for the purpose of removing feral cats from their habitats to be killed.
- Utilize alternative release sites for feral cats who can no longer safely remain in their habitats.
- Offer no cost spay/neuter services for feral cats. (It is not only humane, but it is far cheaper to neuter a feral cat than to impound, hold, feed, kill and then dispose of the feral cat's body.)



## 6.0 PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Ending the killing of healthy and treatable animals means building, brick-by-brick, the programs, facilities, and community involvement necessary to lower birthrates, increase adoptions and keep animals with their loving, responsible caregivers. But most of all, it means believing in the community and trusting in the power of compassion. And while this begins with a decision by shelter leadership, it cannot succeed without community support. Getting that support is therefore a key focus for BARC leadership. Houston residents must see measurable improvement in the problems identified in this report or in the many exposes done by the media and volunteers.

Even BARC understands it has lost public credibility. According to its own needs assessment: “BARC has little or no public credibility.” This not only stems from the reason identified by BARC (its priorities are out of sync with the public’s values of less killing), but also because BARC has not been forthright about problems and has not been sufficiently responsive to the public’s demand that problems be fixed.

For example, the Public Information Officer told a Houston Chronicle columnist that over 90% of animals are being vaccinated, a policy she claimed began in January. Once the veracity of that claim was challenged, the story became that the vaccination policy did not start in January, but in June. The reality is that far too many animals are still going unvaccinated to this day.

In order to regain its credibility, the Public Information Officer should no longer be a spokesperson for the department. A dedicated BARC official who is aware of the problems, is aware of what is being done to correct them, can accurately give that information to the media, and who has a demonstrative commitment to truth, should be the media contact. He or she should be responsive and transparent. While this may be difficult in the short term (it would require admitting to problems), it will serve the agency over the long-term as conditions drastically improve. That person should also not sacrifice credibility for short-term purposes such as denying problems exist, exaggerating achievements, or simply claiming “We’re working on that” with little factual basis or knowledge as to what concrete steps are actually being done.

As evidenced by public comments, both in the survey I undertook, and the one conducted by *MCV Consulting*, people are growing weary of claims of progress. For example, the July 2009 MCV report lists the following pleas:

- PLEASE for the love of all that is good in the world FIX THIS PLACE!!
- How come it's taken so long for the City to respond to the years of pain and persistence by the volunteers?

- I have worked in and out of BARC for at least 8 years. Throughout this time, management and the city have made promise after promise all the while doing little to improve the lot of both animals and volunteers who try to help.

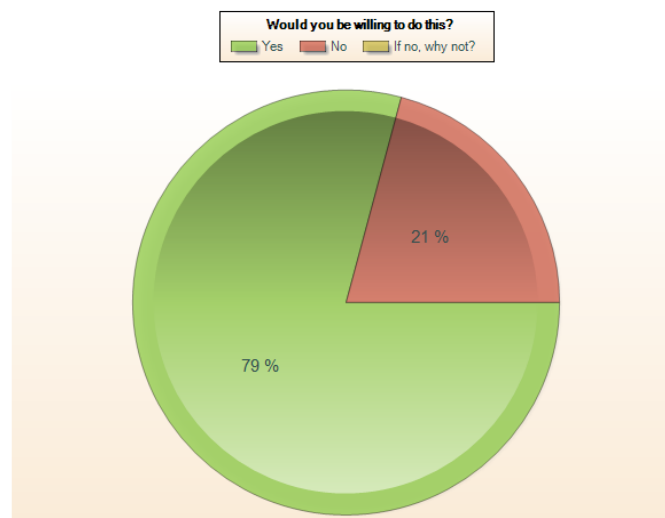
Groups which were initially cheerleaders for recent changes have begun to lose faith in city claims that they are working diligently to improve conditions at BARC. And during a public survey I conducted, of 192 submissions:

- Only 1 % said BARC had a good public image
- Only 2% said BARC did a good job caring for animals
- Only 4% said BARC had good customer service
- Only 3% said BARC has a good adoption program

In fact, across a wide range of programs, BARC scored in single digits in terms of public perception that it was doing a good job. Only three areas scored in the double digits, but for over 8 out of 10 respondents, the results were still generally negative:

- 10% said it had a good foster care program
- 11% said it had a good spay/neuter program
- 15% said it had a good volunteer program

The vast majority of respondents (as high as 91% in some categories) rated the agency as “poor” in every area of shelter operations. Nonetheless, the vast majority—almost eight out of ten respondents—also indicated that they would still be willing to help BARC improve.



*Although only 2% of respondents said BARC did a good job caring for animals, 79% said they would be willing to help if BARC committed to doing so.*

The public is ready, willing, and able to help. The public is ready to be cheerleaders for BARC. But BARC must show sustained and demonstrative change. And it must have a spokesperson who is transparent, forthright, and knowledgeable.

Recommendations:

- Designate a public liaison specifically for BARC who works there, is familiar with operations, and is committed to full, complete, and accurate disclosure.

## **6.1 PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The vast majority of times BARC is in the news, it is negative. Rebuilding a relationship with the community starts with redefining oneself as a “pet rescue” agency. The community must see improvement at BARC, and improvements in the area of lifesaving. Public contact with the agency must include good customer service, more adoptions, and tangible commitments to do the job humanely. Public contact, however, is not necessarily a face-to-face encounter. The public has contact with an agency by reading about it in the newspaper, seeing volunteers adopting animals at a local shopping mall or hearing the Bureau Chief promoting adoptions on the radio. It means public relations and community education.

Community education and public relations does not have to negatively impact the budget. It can be done without programmatic expenditures, and in many ways, it is revenue positive as it leads to increased adoptions and private support. There is also the often intangible, but very real benefit of improved community image. And an agency with a broad base of public support has a wedge against inevitable pitfalls along the way.

The importance of good public relations cannot be overstated. Good, consistent public relations are the key to getting more money, more volunteers, more adoptions, and more community good will. Indeed, if lifesaving is considered the destination, public relations are the vehicle which will get a shelter there. Without it, BARC will always be struggling with animals, finances, and community recognition.

For example, service oriented groups in communities, such as Rotary, Lions Club, Kiwanis and others rarely include the local shelter in their organization’s philanthropy. And while lawyers and doctors work with low-cost clinics, too many shelters work with too few private veterinarians to help in their lifesaving mission. Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to one thing: increasing the shelter’s exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of all a shelter’s activities and their success. To do all these things well, the shelter must be in the public eye.

Indeed, a survey of more than 200 animal control agencies, conducted by a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania College of Veterinary Medicine, found that “community engagement” was one of the key factors in those agencies who have managed to reduce killing and increase lifesaving. One agency noted that “Public buy-in is crucial for long-term improvements” placing primary importance on “the need to view community outreach and public engagement as integral to the agency’s overall purpose and programs rather than simply as an add-on accomplished with a few public service announcements...” With the growing integration of animals in people’s daily lives, the public’s expectations of what stewardship role BARC should play has changed. Management, staff, programs, services and image must change—and be marketed—accordingly.

Whether it is working with shelter animals, trying to keep pets in their homes, or modeling programs, BARC must become a true community resource. Through media campaigns and creative marketing strategies, BARC can raise public awareness of its services, the value of animal companionship, and what BARC is doing to encourage both.

#### Recommendations:

- All animals shall have kennel cards that describe their personality and tell their story.
- Work with local media on a consistent basis, trying to get regular columns in newspapers and specialty magazines pet of the week ads which are paid for by a third party or donated, weekly adoption forums on television, public service announcements on the radio, and consistent press releases:
  - **Press Releases.** Sending out press releases is a numbers game. Too many shelters and rescue groups put out too few press releases because they do not believe they have that much news to report or because they worry that the more press releases they put out, the less people will take the press releases seriously. Not true. The more press releases you put out, the more your name will appear in local media.
  - **Pet Care Advice.** Put out press releases offering everything from cold weather pet care tips, warm weather cautions about dogs in cars, holiday pet advice, and the importance of spaying and neutering right before kitten season. These stories already appear in your community because large national groups are putting out these press releases. But why should they get the name recognition? And, more importantly, donations from members in your community?
  - **Heartwarming Stories.** The public loves heartwarming animal stories and shelters are full of them. A litter of puppies found on the side of the road not only gets you the front page when they were found, but



weeks later when they are back in the shelter from foster care and ready for adoption, the cameras will be rolling too. While not every adoption should lead to a press release, every pet has a story. Find a good angle and send it out!

- **Events.** Every event should not only result in a press release, but a telephone call to the calendar section editor of your local newspaper. Radio and television stations and newspaper have to fill up blocks of time and space. If they have an empty spot and need to fill it, a stack of your press releases will be just the thing they reach for!
- **Public Service Announcements (“PSAs”).** FCC rules often mandate that local radio stations provide air time to traditionally disenfranchised groups who could not otherwise afford to pay for these spots. Few groups are more disenfranchised than homeless animals and the groups who help them! In addition, radio stations sell advertising in 30 second and 60 second blocks and must fill up a pre-determined level of “ad” spots, even if no one has paid for the advertisement. During this time, they plug in PSAs. Radio stations will record the PSAs for you at no cost, and run them at no cost, if you approach them and write the text. While driving along listening to the radio, people will hear a PSA from your group about the importance of spaying and neutering, adopting rather than buying a pet, information about your next event, or the need to allow dogs inside the house.
- **Public Access Television.** Cable companies generally sign 10-year monopoly contracts with municipalities to provide cable service and rate structures in a given community. As part of that contract, many municipalities require the cable company to provide a public/community-based channel similar to FCC rules mandating PSAs for community groups. Cable companies have studios with staff who can record television programs at no cost to community groups. These shows can highlight pets available for adoption or provide an opportunity to highlight the shelter. When the Tompkins City SPCA was building a new Pet Adoption Center, the local cable channel ran a 30 minute video about the need for such a shelter and where donations could be sent.
- **Speak to Community Groups.** A community is often filled with service and social clubs made up of people who can adopt, volunteer, or donate to the shelter. Groups like Rotary, Lions, Elks, Kiwanis, Seniors and others meet monthly for lunch or dinner and always have a guest speaker. Make contact with all these groups and offer to make a presentation. Networking helps animals too!

## 6.2 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a dedicated “army of compassion” and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers come in and make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

In San Francisco, a community of approximately 750,000 people, volunteers spend over 110,000 hours at the shelter each year. Assuming the prevailing hourly wage, payroll taxes and benefits, it would cost the San Francisco SPCA over \$1 million dollars to provide those services. (By contract, BARC appears to only have 35 active volunteers.)

Put simply, it is not possible for a shelter to be successful without volunteers. The success of the program demands that staff and volunteers work side-by-side in an arena of partnership and mutual respect.

As a national agency has noted,

Difficulties involving volunteers are rarely brought about solely by the volunteers themselves; they nearly always occur because a shelter lacks sufficient structure for the program or the resolve to manage volunteers effectively. More often than not, poorly organized programs leave shelters with dozens of ineffective, uncommitted volunteers who stop by only on rare occasions to walk a dog or two.

The purpose of a volunteer program is to help a shelter help the animals. It is crucial to have procedures and goals in mind as part of the program. In Tompkins City, for example, we required all dogs available for adoption to get out-of-kennel socialization four times per day and cats to receive out-of-cage socialization at least two times per day. This could not be accomplished by staff alone and therefore volunteers were recruited, trained and scheduled for specific shifts that would allow us to meet those goals. It became quickly apparent that having volunteers come in whenever they wanted did not serve those goals and so all volunteers were given instructions and a specific schedule.

However, this is not priority number one and it would be a mistake for BARC to begin modifying what volunteers can do without first cleaning up what *it* should be doing. Because of the lack of trust, BARC must establish a track record before modifying its volunteer program to utilize them more effectively. However, this is and increasingly will become a limiting factor to meeting lifesaving goals, but by the time BARC is ready to address it—after it has “cleaned house”—it will have gained a track record of accomplishment and trust. Otherwise, changes to the volunteer program will be seen in a nefarious light.

#### Recommendations:

- Seek volunteers for the following positions: dog walker, cat socializer, groomer, kennel assistant, greeter, adoption support, photography and website update, offsite adoption, clerical, transportation, foster parent and surrender counselor.
- Eventually, modify the volunteer application to require a specific shift and time commitment. Treat volunteers like unpaid staff. If they do not show up for shifts, are late and fail to meet commitments, go through progressive discipline up to and including termination.
- Allow volunteers to assist with adoptions, including handling payment.

### 6.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE

It is true that animal shelters are under siege all over the country. With the public blaming shelter staff for the high rates of killing, and shelter staff blaming the public for high impounds, it is not surprising that an adversarial relationship between staff and public has become the national norm. But ultimately, a shelter belongs to residents, is supported by their taxes and private donations, and should be responsive to demands for good service.

Like many agencies across the country, BARC has a monumental task taking care of the thousands of animals abandoned, abused, or neglected by an irresponsible public. Yet, that is only one aspect of the whole picture. During my visit, staff displayed poor work habits and were inconsiderate of the public's time. Much of this is the result of lax oversight and lack of processes to ensure accountability from staff.

Unfortunately, while customer service is susceptible to training in the short term, lasting change can only come about by holding staff accountable and improving BARC operations. Staff morale and customer service improve over the long-term in a sustainable way when bad employees are fired, good ones are retained, and the agency kills fewer animals.

But customer service is more than the staff with public contact. Good customer service involves all staff members and begins with good work ethics. A dog sitting in a filthy kennel undermines a smile and "hello" at the door. Good customer service does not only mean being courteous and friendly and responsive to the public, it means working hard and keeping the shelter clean.

It also means retaining a more "retail oriented" approach to running the shelter. During the morning hours between 8 am and 11:30 am before the shelter opens for adoptions, there were as many as three people staffing the front counter. While they were doing data entry, they were also spending an inordinate amount of time socializing. This time

could be better utilized helping keep the shelter clean, such as cleaning the free roaming cat rooms, cleaning cats and puppies which should be housed in cages in the lobby, feeding kittens and puppies, and other needed duties (e.g., socializing dogs and cats).

In addition, when members of the public do come in, they should be attentive and responsive. Instead, the public had to wait while they finished personal conversations. As mentioned earlier:

[A] a couple brought in a very sick—dying puppy—and were held up at the security counter. They then were admitted to speak to the staff at the front desk. But the two staff members were having a conversation and ignored them, even though I could clearly see that the woman had been crying and the puppy appeared to be very sick. A supervisor came in and told the staff to please assist the clients. It appeared they were going to finish their conversation before assisting them.

Animal services is not only as complex a municipal department as any other, it deals with matters involving life and death. It should not be a place where people who score the lowest on a city proficiency exam are placed, where people who think it is acceptable to take 2.5 hours to clean four dog cages work, or where people who are anxious to get off the telephone rather than assist in resolving problems short of impound work. It should be a place where staff is proud to work, where they work hard, and where they are passionate about the mission.

Except for supervisors, I never once saw a staff member go out of their way to assist a member of the public. Just as often, staff is nowhere to be found. In one case, a gentleman came in looking for his lost cat and was told to “go back and ask someone for help.” But there was no one to ask and he began randomly opening doors. (I retrieved a volunteer to help him.)

In addition, despite the fact that Wags to Whiskers resulted in a large number of visitors, customer service was not what it should have been. People who are willing to drive to BARC have done so despite easier options such as buying from a pet store, responding to a “free to good home” advertisement in the newspaper, or visiting another facility in a more convenient location. This effort should be rewarded with a positive, friendly program that allows people to meet and greet animals without time waiting in line in front of a security guard before being allowed to do so. They should also not have to stand in a line that is moving slowly because customer service representatives are taking their lunch hours during peak periods. Lunch hours should be given when it is convenient for the public and consistent with the needs of the organization, not when staff wants to take it. Nor should adopters have to then wait at the veterinary clinic for an “exit exam,” then wait at the customer service area. The process is time consuming, cumbersome, and needlessly bureaucratic.



There was no contingency to move lines along, no thought to setting up tables and chairs and having other staff or even volunteers\* assisting with adoptions. During the busiest period, only one customer service representative knew what she was doing. The two fill-ins had no familiarity with Chameleon, kept staring at the same screen, and had to ask the one person for help. As a result, she had to help customers and then the other two staff who were helping customers.

BARC informed me that there were three trained customer service representatives: one went to an offsite for an event which could have been handled either by a member of the Placement Team or a volunteer, the other had her day off on the busiest adoption day of the month for BARC, and the third was at lunch.

#### Recommendations:

- Train staff on customer service skills.
- Allow volunteers to assist in all operations of the shelter including adoptions.
- Stagger vacations, days off, and lunch breaks so they do not impact the needs and goals of the organization.
- Hold staff accountable for poor customer service up to and including termination.
- Make all staff reapply for their positions and only hire committed animal lovers who not only have the skills and integrity to do the job, but are passionate about the agency's mission.

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\* There is nothing inappropriate about allowing trained volunteers to handle cash. If rules prohibit it, the rules must be changed so that volunteers can assist with adoptions, especially during peak periods and as requiring staff to handle all cash transactions limits the number of offsite adoption venues that BARC can participate in.

## 7.0 SHELTER DEATHS

Webster's dictionary defines euthanasia as "the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy." Unfortunately, in most shelter environments, animals are not solely being killed because they are hopelessly sick or injured, but rather as "population control." In this environment, shelter killing—particularly of healthy and treatable animals—raises a host of ethical questions and dilemmas, many of which are being raised by the public in communities across the country, including the City of Houston. It is, in fact, a perception by many in the rescue community that BARC is killing an unacceptable number of animals that has led, in part, to this assessment.

In an arena of killing, it is crucial, at a minimum, that the agency meet the second prong of the analysis which requires killing to be done in "a relatively painless way." As one agency has noted,

The euthanasia process must result in a painless, rapid unconsciousness followed by respiratory arrest, cardiac arrest and ultimate death. For euthanasia to be truly euthanasia, the animal should be as free from stress and anxiety as possible.

Unfortunately, the use of sodium pentobarbital, even if properly administered, does not in and of itself ensure a "humane" death. While method is one of the most important factors, nonetheless simply requiring lethal injection does not guarantee that the process is either humane or compassionate.

Shelters who kill, particularly those which kill large numbers of animals, are obligated to ensure that employees are technically proficient, competent, skilled, compassionate, properly trained, and doing everything in their power to make sure the animals are as free from stress and anxiety as possible. A "relatively painless" death can only occur in an environment where sensitivity, compassion, skill and environment all combine with efforts to "minimize distress and anxiety," as required by the American Veterinary Medical Association's (2000) Panel on Euthanasia.

A manager in one of the nation's largest animal control departments stated that,

Whether it's an unwanted or injured animal, euthanizing requires an enormous amount of compassion, kindness and emotional strength. During euthanasia I witnessed little care toward the animals. Considering this was to be the last contact the animal would have with the real world I found this rather disappointing.

Sadly, this held true at BARC. While the animals I witnessed being killed were done in a technically proficient manner, the process leading up to the deaths was not acceptable.



*The room where animals are killed was very dirty.*

The area outside the room where animals are killed was not clean, and there was a dead skunk left out where other animals could see and smell the body, something animals should never be allowed to do.



*Animals should not see other animals dead or being killed in the "euthanasia area."  
Here, a dead skunk is left unattended in full view of other animals.*

Despite the heat and humidity, moreover, animals were left for extended periods of time waiting to be killed outside, in dirty cages, often in their own waste.



*Animals are forced to wait for extended periods of time in dirty cages and lying in their own waste.*

An irremediably suffering puppy who could not even keep her head up was placed in a dirty cage, was not given something soft to lie on, and was not given water by the attendant. The “euthanasia technician” did see the puppy and brought a bowl of water, but did nothing about the fact that the puppy had urinated all over herself.

She subsequently defecated (liquid, bloody) all over herself. Once the veterinarian “signed off” on the dog, the euthanasia technician could not find someone to assist him in restraining the dog. He entered the shelter more than once, but could find no one. Finally, rather than allowing the puppy to continue suffering and slowly die, I informed him that I would assist.





*A puppy has urinated on herself (see front paws) and eventually defecates bloody diarrhea on herself. She can barely hold her head up and is dying. There is nothing soft to lie on.*

In another case, a three week old kitten (A099903) was listed as “missing” in Chameleon on August 13. She was found in the Stray Cat room near death by a volunteer on August 14. She was placed in a filthy carrier and placed in the room to be killed. She should have been killed right away, instead of made to wait. She was ultimately killed (again, in a technically proficient manner) as she lay near death.



*A kitten listed as “missing” in the Chameleon database on August 13 is found by a volunteer near death a day later. She was placed in an extremely dirty kennel before being killed.*

Because killing an animal is the ultimate and most serious act, shelters must always be prepared to operate at capacity, and in some cases, double housing animals as appropriate. They must have fully functioning adoption, pet retention, lost and found, and foster care programs. They must keep animals moving through the system. Animal care and treatment must be rigorous, consistent, and comprehensive. In addition, animals should be selected for killing only by a few individuals trained in behavior, adoptability and with knowledge of the animals. Time spent in shelter is not the most relevant criteria. In the end, BARC leadership must authorize all shelter killing.

Finally, the room where animals are killed should be clean, calm and quiet in order to reduce their stress as well as providing the staff with a safe working area. It was quiet, but it was also filthy. In fact, it was one of the dirtiest rooms in the facility.

#### Recommendations:

- All finders or owners who put in a CBK should be contacted before the animal they surrendered or found is killed.

- Two people should be involved in the process: a “lead” and a “shooter.” The lead reviews the notes and confirms the right animal is in the room. For example, the lead says loudly, “I have a neutered black lab 2 years old” The “shooter” says yes or no. Lead: “He has a short smooth coat.” Shooter: “yes” or “no.” He has dropped ears, black legs, black and white feet, a black collar with studs, no chip, etc. which continues that way back and forth until everyone is positive that the right animal is in the room. Until the shooter hears “Good to go” by the lead, no action should ever be taken. Confirmation and concentration are the keys to error free shelter killing. (Criteria: Species, breed, sex, spay/neuter status, prime color, markings, ears, coat, tail, public remarks, sign off, scan for microchip, prior to “Good to go.”)
- Provide a sedative to all animals who are stressed, or where the e-tech cannot give intra-venal injection.
- Do not allow dogs or cats to watch other animals being killed.
- Rotate staff out of e-room to give them a break from killing.
- Provide certified training for more euthanasia technicians.
- Discipline up to and including termination any staff who takes shortcuts in this critical area.
- Animals should be selected by a few individuals trained in behavior, adoptability and with knowledge of the animals. Time spent in shelter is not the most relevant criteria.
- Keep the room clean, odor-free, and quiet.

## 8.0 GOVERNANCE

Historically, animal control departments were established in cities and towns throughout the United States to protect public health, respond to merchant concerns about the effects of stray dogs on their businesses, and to protect and reimburse farmers from loss of “livestock” allegedly caused by dogs. In short, animal control was established to protect *people* from *animals*.

At the time, animals were considered mere commodities who pulled our wagons, provided the products for our farms, herded our sheep, and kept our barns free of mice. In post-World War II America, however, social and demographic changes in society at large produced changes in the status of animals as well. Many animals—dogs and cats in particular—are now companions instead of servants or “nuisances.” With the change in the public’s views, the United States has also seen the growth of animal protection organizations. These agencies tend to focus on programs to encourage lifetime commitments, to advocate for improvements in animal industries, and to promote adoptions. In short, animal care or welfare groups were established to protect *animals* from *people*.

Since the advent of the No Kill movement, citizens are rejecting the claim that animal control is “forced” to kill most animals, or to accept animal control agencies as low priorities for municipalities seeking to reduce costs and services to a bare minimum. In fact, it is in this context that BARC has found itself out-of-step with prevailing community norms.

In order to achieve success, BARC must find a balance between competing “care” and “control” functions, balancing traditional public health and safety roles (such as rabies quarantines) with an emphasis on adoption, pet retention and other community-based programs and services.

In many large cities and counties, animal control agencies are typically autonomous and independent, and are better suited to do so. When animal control agencies are placed under the auspices of other departments, by contrast, they tend to “adopt” the mission of those parent departments. For example:

1. Agencies placed under the rubric of health departments tend to focus primarily, if not exclusively, on “public health.”
2. Agencies placed under the rubric of police departments tend to focus primarily, if not exclusively, on “public safety.”
3. Some agencies are placed under the rubric of sanitation departments. What does this say about the government’s commitment and view of animal sheltering? In fact, the perception is that the county considers strays to be akin to “trash” that needs to be “picked up” and taken “away.”



As part of long-term strategic planning, government officials should consider whether BARC's goals will be best served if it is established either as a standalone department or combined with complimentary neighborhood-oriented services in a new department.

While this may or may not be necessary—Health Department officials indicated that they are committed to improving the department consistent with the lifesaving values of community stakeholders—it is clear that BARC must shift its focus toward animal care if it is to improve service delivery and meet public expectations. Right now, the motto among the staff seems to be “good enough for government work.” To save lives, to truly reflect the values of the community, “good enough for government work” is—to put it mildly—simply not “good enough.”

Having no experience with other city departments, I cannot say whether this reflects the standard of city government departments or services overall. If it does, city leaders can and should consider privatizing the services by contract. But several notes of caution are in order.

First, this is not always an ideal scenario and private shelters can be as poorly run as municipally run shelters. I have heard too many complaints about lack of transparency, animal care deficits, and unnecessary killing at private shelters to see this as a panacea. Nor does this simply transfer the focus of criticism from government to a private organization, since the ultimate obligation still resides with government.

Second, the trend in sheltering today is toward separating the two functions. Many private shelters are actually relinquishing their municipal contracts and returning those obligations back to the cities in which they reside.

Having said that, just as there are some effective municipal shelters, there are also effective private organizations running animal control in communities throughout the United States. And this should be considered if changes in BARC are not fully and comprehensively forthcoming.

But to ensure that it does, regardless of whether the function stays with the health department, is transferred to another city agency, or is contracted out to a private entity, city leaders should pass comprehensive shelter reform legislation (See Part VI, below) to ensure that whoever runs the department is forced to run it in an efficient, effective, and ultimately humane manner. We are a nation of laws, and animals in shelters, as well as the people who care about them, deserve the full force of their protection.

## **PART II: PROGRAM AREAS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0 IMPROVE BARC SHELTER OPERATIONS

3.0 LEGISLATION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Two decades ago, the concept of a No Kill community was little more than a dream. Today, it is a reality in many cities and counties nationwide and the numbers continue to grow. And the first step is a decision, a commitment to reject kill-oriented ways of doing business. No Kill starts as an act of will. The next step involves putting in place the infrastructure to save lives.

Following a commitment to No Kill is the need for accountability. Accountability means having clear definitions, a lifesaving plan, and protocols and procedures oriented toward preserving life. But accountability also allows, indeed requires, flexibility. Too many shelters lose sight of this principle, staying rigid with shelter protocols, believing these are engraved in stone. They are not. Protocols are important because they ensure accountability from staff. But protocols without flexibility can have the opposite effect: stifling innovation, causing lives to be needlessly lost, and allowing shelter employees who fail to save lives to hide behind a paper trail.

The decision to end an animal's life is an extremely serious one, and should always be treated as such. No matter how many animals a shelter kills, each and every animal is an individual, and each deserves individual consideration.

And finally, to meet the challenge that No Kill entails, shelter leadership needs to get the community excited, to energize people for the task at hand. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform a community.

The mandatory programs and services include:

### I. Feral Cat TNR Program

Many communities throughout the United States are embracing Trap-Neuter-Release programs (TNR) to improve animal welfare, reduce death rates, and meet obligations to public welfare.

### II. High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter

Low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter will quickly lead to fewer animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.

### III. Rescue Groups

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing, and improves a community's rate of lifesaving. In an environment of millions of dogs and cats killed in shelters annually, rare is the circumstance in which a rescue group should be denied an animal.

#### IV. Foster Care

Volunteer foster care is crucial to No Kill. Without it, saving lives is compromised. It is a low cost, and often no cost, way of increasing a shelter's capacity, improving public relations, increasing a shelter's public image, rehabilitating sick and injured or behaviorally challenged animals, and saving lives.

#### V. Comprehensive Adoption Programs

Adoptions are vital to an agency's lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management's hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and practice. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to the needs of the community, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing, they could increase the number of homes available and replace killing with adoptions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters can adopt their way out of killing.

#### VI. Pet Retention

While some of the reasons animals are surrendered to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented—but only if shelters are willing to work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving animals requires communities to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelters as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.

#### VII. Medical and Behavior Programs

In order to meet its commitment to a lifesaving guarantee for all savable animals, shelters need to keep animals happy and healthy and keep animals moving through the system. To do this, shelters must put in place comprehensive vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialization, and care policies before animals get sick and rehabilitative efforts for those who come in sick, injured, unweaned, or traumatized.

#### VIII. Public Relations/Community Involvement

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to one thing: increasing the shelter's public exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of all a shelter's activities and their success. To do all these things well, the shelter must be in the public eye.

#### IX. Volunteers

Volunteers are a dedicated "army of compassion" and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.



## **X. Proactive Redemptions**

One of the most overlooked areas for reducing killing in animal control shelters are lost animal reclaims. Primarily shifting from passive to a more proactive approach—has proven to have a significant impact on lifesaving and allow shelters to return a large percentage of lost animals to their families.

## **XI. A Compassionate Director**

The final element of the No Kill Equation is the most important of all, without which all other elements are thwarted—a hard working, compassionate animal control or shelter director not content to continue killing.

## **Comprehensive Implementation**

To fully succeed, however, shelters should not implement the programs piecemeal or in a limited manner. If they are sincere in their desire to stop the killing, animal shelters will implement and expand programs to the point that they replace killing entirely. Combining rigorous, comprehensive implementation of the No Kill Equation with best practices and accountability of staff in cleaning, handling, and care of animals, must be the standard.

In 2004, for example, the Pennsylvania SPCA conducted fewer than 200 free spay/neuter surgeries for the pets of the community's low-income population. Shelter leaders can boast of a low-cost and free spay/neuter program, but 200 surgeries in a city of nearly 1.5 million people, with one in four of them below the federal poverty line, will not impact the numbers of animals entering Philadelphia shelters. By contrast, the San Francisco SPCA, in a city with roughly half the population of Philadelphia, performed approximately 9,000 surgeries a year throughout the 1990s, roughly 84 percent of those were free.

Similarly, animal control in Austin, Texas allows only employees to participate in its foster care program. The shelter can say it is implementing the programs and services of the No Kill Equation, but it is excluding thousands of animal lovers from participating in the lifesaving effort, seriously limiting how many lives they save.

A shelter committed to No Kill does not send neonatal orphaned kittens into foster care “sometimes,” but rather every time. A shelter committed to No Kill does not merely allow rescue groups access to animals “some of the time,” but every time a legitimate rescue group is willing to take over care and custody of the animal. Indeed, a No Kill shelter actively seeks these groups out and contacts a particular rescue organization whenever an animal meets its criteria.

Shelters must also put forth more effort to reunite lost animals with their families. Traditional shelters do little more than have people fill out lost pet reports. As a result, in a typical shelter, less than two percent of cats and roughly 20 percent of dogs are

reclaimed by their families. This is unfortunate because being more proactive and comprehensive would have a significant impact on lifesaving.

Those rare communities who have systematized their approach and become more proactive have more than doubled this rate of redemption. Washoe County Animal Services in Reno, Nevada, for example, returned seven percent of lost cats and 60 percent of lost dogs to their homes in 2007. Given the high per capita intake of animals (which some suggest would evidence high rates of “public irresponsibility”) one would expect the agency to have a very low redemption rate. Instead, it is very near the top in the nation. Why? The shelter is proactive in finding the people whose companion animals have become lost.

Before impounding stray dogs, Washoe County animal control officers check for identification, scan for microchips, knock on doors in the neighborhood where the animal was found, and talk to area residents. They also carry mobile telephones so that they can immediately call the missing animal’s family and facilitate a quick reunion. While this may seem an obvious course of action, it is, unfortunately, uncommon in American shelters—often with tragic outcomes. The more traditional approach is simply to impound any animals found wandering the streets and to transport them immediately to the pound. Once there they can get lost in the system, compete for kennel space with other animals, and are often put to death.

In Washoe County, impound is a last resort. But if animals are impounded, shelter staff is equally as proactive as field officers are in facilitating redemptions. They immediately post on the shelter’s website photographs, identifying information, and the location of where the animal was found. People can search for the animals from their computers at home or at work.

These efforts in Washoe County, combined with an over 50 percent increase in the adoption rate in the community thanks to the Nevada Humane Society, has resulted in a 93 percent communitywide rate of shelter lifesaving for dogs and almost 90 percent for cats year-to-date in 2009. The difference between the average community and Washoe County is striking, but even more so because this latter community is still only scratching the surface of what can be accomplished in terms of redemption rates. Some communities in the United States have achieved a nearly 65 percent reclaim rate for stray dogs; even higher rates have been achieved in other countries. The reclaim rate for cats can—and should—match these, rather than remain at deplorably low national averages.

This not only shows how the achievement of a No Kill community is well within our reach, it demonstrates how modernization of shelter practices by bringing them in line with the No Kill Equation can yield dramatic declines in killing virtually overnight.

In short, shelters must take killing off the table for savable animals, and utilize the programs and services of the No Kill Equation not sometimes, not merely when it is convenient or politically expedient to do so, but for every single animal, every single time. A half-hearted effort isn't enough. It is primarily the shift from a reactive to proactive orientation and from a casual, ad-hoc, limited implementation to a comprehensive one, which will lead to the greatest declines in killing, and fix our broken animal shelter system.

## **2.0 IMPROVE BARC SHELTER OPERATIONS**

See BARC Summary Assessment (and recommendations) in Part I.

## **3.0 LEGISLATION**

Legislation is often thought of as a quick solution to high rates of shelter killing. "If only we had a law," the argument goes, "all the bad, irresponsible people would have to take care of their pets properly, and shelters wouldn't have to kill so many animals." If this were true, given the proliferation of punitive mandates nationwide, there should be many No Kill communities. That there are not, is because experience has proven that legislation is far from a cure-all. In fact, it often has the opposite effect. Communities that have passed such laws are not only far from No Kill, many are moving in the opposite direction.

Studies show the primary reasons people do not sterilize their pets are cost and lack of access to spay/neuter services. The same is true for licensing. The higher the cost, the lower the rate of compliance. As a result, lower-income households with animals, those who are unaware of these laws, and truly irresponsible people will not comply in significant numbers. Punitive legislation will only discourage people from caring for homeless pets or drive disadvantaged people "underground," making them even harder to reach and help. If a person is feeding homeless cats, they will be loathe to turn to the shelter for low-cost spay/neuter help or other support because doing so risks putting the cats in jeopardy for some technical violation of a community's pet limit, licensing, or leash law. Compounding the problem is the fact that enforcement of ordinances, such as mandatory spay/neuter is often selective and complaint-based, leaving people who care for animals vulnerable to retaliation from neighbors and others, even when the animals are healthy and well cared for.

Furthermore, legislation may be worded so that the result of non-compliance is the impoundment and death of the animal. Alternatively, the laws contain significant fines which are likely to lead to abandonment, relinquishment to shelters, or people refusing to offer care to homeless strays. That is why many jurisdictions have seen their impound and death rates increase following passage of laws which give agencies carte blanche to round up and kill outdoor animals. If a shelter has high rates of shelter killing, it makes

no sense to support the passing of laws that give them greater power and more reasons to impound—and subsequently kill—even more animals.

Finally, in most jurisdictions, licensing revenues go into a city or county's general fund, not directly back to the animal control agency. As a result, even where licensing rates increase, it has no direct impact on shelter finances. In the end, the shelter is diverting money from needed programs to hire more officers to write more citations, only to raise money for the city or county, at the expense of its own needs.

Not all legislative solutions are misinformed, however. Laws aimed at shelters—the very agencies doing the killing—are ones that the humane community should support.

Examples of these are the 1998 Animal Shelter Law and 1998 Shelter Spay/Neuter Law that were passed by the California State Legislature requiring, among other things, that shelters in California: spay/neuter their animals before adoption; make sure that cats are not being killed as “feral” when they are just scared and shy; provide animals to rescue groups instead of killing them; and encourage shelters to have either evening or weekend hours so that working people and families with children can reclaim lost pets or visit the shelter.

Therefore, legislation requiring shelters to alter all their animals before adoption, to provide medical treatment to the animals in their care, to work with rescue groups, and to improve holding periods, can go a long way towards saving the lives of companion animals. Indeed, it is in laws aimed at shelters that the greatest hope for lifesaving through legislation can be achieved.

Moreover, in order to maximize lifesaving, we must move past a system where the lives of animals are subject to the discretion of individuals. Currently, No Kill initiatives are succeeding in those communities with individual shelter leaders who are committed to achieving it and to running shelters consistent with the programs and services which make it possible. Unfortunately, such leaders are still few and far between. Traditional sheltering, by contrast, is institutionalized. In a shelter reliant on killing, directors can come and go and the shelter keeps killing, local government keeps ignoring that failure, and the public keeps believing “there is no other way.” By contrast, the success of an organization's No Kill policies depends on the commitment and vision of its leader. When that leader leaves the organization, the vision can quickly be doomed. It is why an agency can be progressive one day, and moving in the opposite direction the next.

For No Kill success to be widespread and long lasting, we must move past the personalities and focus on institutionalizing No Kill by giving shelter animals the rights and protections afforded by law. Every successful social movement results in legal protections that codify expected conduct and provide protection against future conduct



that violates normative values. We need to regulate shelters in the same way we regulate hospitals and other agencies which hold the power over life and death.

The answer lies in passing and enforcing shelter reform legislation which mandates how a shelter must operate. The ideal animal law would ban the killing of dogs and cats, and would prohibit the impounding of feral cats except for purposes of spay/neuter and release. Given that local governments may not pass such sweeping laws at this time in history, the Companion Animal Protection Act (CAPA) was written as “model” legislation to provide animals with maximum opportunities for lifesaving. No law can anticipate every contingency and CAPA is no exception. It is not intended to be complete or eliminate the need for other animal protection laws. Nor is it intended to reduce stronger protections that animals may have in a particular jurisdiction. The legislation can and should be modified in such circumstances. As such, it is considered a work in progress.

But because too many shelters are not voluntarily implementing the programs and services and culture of lifesaving that makes No Kill possible, animals are being needlessly killed. To combat this, CAPA mandates the programs and services which have proven so successful at lifesaving in shelters which have implemented them; follows the only model that has actually created a No Kill community; and, focuses its effort on the very shelters that are doing the killing. In this way, shelter leadership is forced to embrace No Kill and operate their shelters in a progressive, life-affirming way, removing the discretion which has for too long allowed shelter leaders to ignore what is in the best interests of the animals and kill them needlessly.

CAPA highlights:

- Establishes one of the shelter’s primary role as saving the lives of animals
- Declares that saving lives and protecting public safety are compatible
- Establishes a definition of No Kill that includes all savable animals including feral cats
- Makes it illegal for a shelter to kill an animal if a rescue group or No Kill shelter is willing to save that animal
- Requires shelters to have fully functioning adoption programs including offsite adoptions, use of the internet to promote their animals, and further mandates that animal control be open seven days per week for adoption
- Prohibits shelters from killing animals based on arbitrary criteria such as breed bans or when alternatives to killing exist
- Requires animal control to allow volunteers to help with fostering, socializing, and assisting with adoptions
- Requires shelters to be truthful about how many animals they kill and adopt

A copy of the full CAPA text is enclosed.

## **PART III: SUMMARIES OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.0 GENERAL SHELTER OPERATIONS**

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#### **5.5 RESCUE GROUPS**

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#### **5.9 OWNER REQUESTED "EUTHANASIA"**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Policies are not engraved in stone. They must be reviewed by BARC leadership for approval, rejection or modification within the agency's overall philosophy and goals.

The success, however, of a comprehensive lifesaving initiative depends on BARC focusing on a proactive strategy of implementing a series of programs and services designed to lower birthrates, keep pets with their responsible caretakers, and increase adoptions. Failure to implement these practices, and the policies and procedures that go with them, will result in delays or failure to meet lifesaving goals.

These programs are identified in Part II of this report and include:

- High-volume, low and no-cost spay/neuter services;
- A foster care network for underaged, traumatized, sick, injured, or other animals;
- Comprehensive adoption programs that operate during weekend and evening hours and include offsite adoption venues;
- Medical and behavioral programs;
- Pet retention programs to solve medical, environmental, or behavioral problems and keep animals with their caring and responsible caregivers;
- Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs;
- Rescue group access to shelter animals;
- Proactive redemptions; and,
- Volunteer programs to socialize animals, promote adoptions, and help in the operations of the shelter.

Once policies are approved, they should be memorialized into a BARC operations manual. But most importantly, they must be consistently and comprehensively implemented and enforced.

## **2.0 GENERAL SHELTER OPERATIONS**

### **2.1 HOURS OF OPERATIONS**

The shelter shall be open to the public for adoptions and surrenders from XX am to 6 pm every day during the months of October through February and from XX am to 7 pm every day during the months of March through September.

Some shelters limit adoption hours by requiring applications for adoptions to be turned in thirty minutes before closing. To save the maximum number of lives and to be responsive to the public, so long as a shelter is open to accept animals, it should also be open to adopt animals. Otherwise, potential adopters may be discouraged from coming back. In addition, the theory behind opening after 5:30 pm (i.e., traditional business hours) is to provide public access to families with children and to working people (the two most important adopter demographics a shelter should be seeking). By limiting

adoptions after traditional “business” or “working” hours, the fact of staying open after 5:30 pm loses its impact. In short, adoptions shall occur during the entirety of open hours until closing.

## 2.2 VISITORS

Community support is the cornerstone of shelter operations. Every person who has a positive association with the agency helps to further BARC’ success by increasing word-of-mouth community satisfaction with the job the agency is doing. Satisfied community members who adopt, volunteer, foster, keep their pet because of helpful advice, donate, or otherwise support the agency open up scarce kennel space, provide revenue to the shelter, encourage friends and family to adopt, can be solicited for private support in the future and provide living ambassadors to BARC’ success for years to come.

Because of this, BARC shall welcome visitors to all public areas of the shelter during normal business hours, without the need to sign in with a security guard. BARC should especially welcome the public to interact with the animals even for the sole purpose of “window shopping.” These individuals not only provide needed socialization for the animals, they also represent an opportunity to gain potential future adoptions, word of mouth publicity of available animals, volunteers and donors.

However, this policy is not to be used in lieu of a volunteer program and the formal training it provides which are required for both the safety of the public and the consistent care and training of the animals. Moreover, all children under the age of 18 should be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times while in the shelter, and may not walk dogs.

In addition, in order to maintain staff safety, and to protect the health and safety of the animals, non-public areas should remain “off limits.” However, nothing in this policy precludes the shelter from allowing pre-scheduled, formalized tours that includes the above mentioned areas. Nor does this policy preclude the shelter manager from making exceptions from time-to-time or for qualified volunteers, public officials or others as deemed appropriate.

## 2.3 ANIMAL RECORDS

A uniform and complete animal record is crucial for BARC to provide the best care, make the best match in adoptions, determine the best course of action for a particular animal and meet its lifesaving goals. To do that, all decisions must be carefully weighed with all the evidence and information at the staff’s disposal.

As a result, all care and treatment, except routine feeding and cleaning, shall be entered into the shelter management database at or around the time such care and treatment



has been administered. Staff shall not take shortcuts or skip field entry into the database.

Every morning, the manager on duty shall print a kennel inventory report to conduct a daily morning census. This shall be done by physically checking each animal and making sure each animal is in the correct enclosure. The kennel inventory must include all relevant event dates such as:

- The date the animal should be moved out of non-available holding areas (e.g., quarantine, holding, clinic, etc.);
- The date the animal is to be evaluated for temperament; and,
- Such others as deemed necessary.

This helps ensure that animals move through the system expeditiously in order to save the maximum number of lives.

#### 2.4 SHELTER STATISTICS

BARC' success depends on a host of factors including lifesaving, the quality of care, the level of community involvement and community perception. The following information, therefore, will be made public based on reasonable request:

1. Statistics showing the numbers of animals impounded, adopted, redeemed, transferred, on hand, fostered, and/or killed.
2. Disposition data for individual animals subject to the limitations noted below.

Moreover, to keep the shelter accountable to the public it serves, the following information will be made public once a month with a comparison for the same month in the previous fiscal or calendar year, as well as year-to-date totals and comparisons:

1. Number of dogs impounded.
2. Number of cats impounded.
3. Number of miscellaneous domestic animals impounded.
4. Number of miscellaneous farm animals impounded.
5. Number of miscellaneous wild animals impounded.
6. Number of dogs adopted.
7. Number of cats adopted.
8. Number of miscellaneous domestic animals adopted.
9. Number of miscellaneous farm animals adopted.
10. Number of dogs redeemed by owners.
11. Number of cats redeemed by owners.
12. Number of miscellaneous domestic animals redeemed by owners.
13. Number of miscellaneous farm animals redeemed by owners.
14. Number of dogs transferred to rescue groups.

15. Number of cats transferred to rescue groups.
16. Number of miscellaneous domestic animals transferred to rescue groups.
17. Number of miscellaneous farm animals transferred to rescue groups.
18. Number of miscellaneous wild animals transferred to rescue groups.
19. Number of dogs killed according to the following: total, healthy, sick/injured but treatable, sick/injured non rehabilitatable, irremediably suffering, court order, feral, behavior, rabies, vicious.
20. Number of cats killed according to the following: total, healthy, sick/injured but treatable, sick/injured non rehabilitatable, irremediably suffering, court order, feral, behavior, vicious.
21. Number of miscellaneous domestic animals killed according to the following: total, healthy, sick/injured but treatable, sick/injured non rehabilitatable, irremediably suffering, court order, feral, behavior, vicious.
22. Number of miscellaneous farm animals killed.
23. Number of wild animals killed.
24. Number of active volunteers.
25. Number of volunteer hours.
26. Number of active foster homes.
27. Number of dogs in foster care.
28. Number of cats in foster care.

Notwithstanding the above, the shelter also performs certain law enforcement functions and offers services to individuals who have privacy rights. In order to maintain the integrity of those processes, BARC must maintain some information as confidential.

## **2.5 HOLDING PERIODS**

There is no arbitrarily set policy requiring animals to be killed based on how long they are at BARC. Before an animal who is not vicious, irremediably suffering, or non-rehabilitatable is killed, all of the following conditions must be met:

1. there are no empty cages, kennels, or other living environments in the shelter;
2. the animal cannot share a cage or kennel with another animal;
3. a foster home is not available;
4. an appeal has been made to rescue groups who are not willing to accept the animal;
5. the animal is not a feral cat subject to sterilization and release;
6. the director of the agency certifies he or she has no other alternative.

## **3.0 INTAKE PROCEDURES**

### **3.1 INTAKE IDENTIFICATION**

All impounded animals shall be placed in the receiving area, and their information entered into the shelter management software by intaking staff (if field impound, by the

animal control officer; if the animal came in over the counter, by office support staff) to create an impoundment sheet ("cage card"). Animals shall be signed over by the owner or finder. Owners shall be asked to fill out a pet history form to help in assessing and placing the animal with a new owner, including whether the animal has bitten anyone in the last fourteen days.

The cage card will be kept on the animal's cage and follows the animal throughout his/her shelter stay. The pet history form will be placed in a file for review by potential adopters and for help in assessing the animal by animal handlers and veterinary technician staff. All animals will be given their own cage cards. Litters of kittens or puppies shall not share intake numbers or cage cards.

Information to be placed into the computer at time of intake includes:

1. Owner's name, address, zip code and telephone number.
2. Species of animal.
3. Name of animal.
4. Age of animal.
5. Sex of the animal, including spay/neuter status.
6. General physical description.
7. Length of the animal's coat (short, medium or long).
8. Physical markings.
9. Special care requirements.
10. If the owner reports the animal to be housetrained.
11. Reason for surrender.
12. Whether the animal is friendly.
13. Whether the animal has bitten anyone in the last fourteen days.
14. The owner's signature of surrender.

After completing all of the required data entry and processing of the animal, and accepting any required fees, the office support staff will print out a "cage card" and page an animal caretaker to place the animal and accompanying cage card in the intake cages/kennels.

Impounding an animal requires multiple tasks that include making an impound card, putting a band (identification collar) with the impound number on it around the animal's neck, giving the animal a physical exam, vaccinating and testing, putting the animal in the appropriate kennel area, and giving the animal fresh water and food. Impounding staff is responsible for the following:

- Systematize the intake examination process to include a check list to avoid missing conditions such as ear mites, especially during peak periods.
- Creating an impound card for each animal brought into the shelter;

- Physical observation of the animal before making out the impound card to ensure that the information on the impound card is accurate;
- Looking carefully for any identification on the animal, such as a tag, tattoo, information written on the collar or in a barrel attached to the collar, or band;
- Placing the impound card on the animal's holding cage/run;
- Placing the correct color band with the correct impound number written on it around the animal's neck or, if the animal is too aggressive, feral, or fearful to be banded or has a neck injury, hanging the band on the holding cage/run with the impound card;
- Maintaining the impounding desk and immediate area clean and neat, and cleaning the intake and carport holding cages/runs/areas as needed before placing an animal in it;
- Updating the computer to show the animal's location in the kennels;
- Scanning for a microchip;
- Giving the animal fresh food and water;
- Immediately notifying appropriate personnel for special needs (e.g., the veterinary technician if the animal appears sick or injured).

### 3.2 LOST & FOUND

Lost/Found searches should be conducted on intake by the impounding staff member (field officer if pick up/office support staff if over-the-counter), if an animal fails an evaluation, and before final disposition by staff tasked with ending the animal's life.

The general public has poor capabilities when it comes to the proper identification of a found dog or cat by breed or even by color. Staff should not place reliance on such information to match lost reports with found reports or against impounded animals. The initial cross check should be general, (e.g., species and zip code) and then proceeding through multiple searches to more specific criteria. If the initial cross check produces possible matches, other factors should be used.

1. Species.
2. Zip Code.
3. Gender.
4. Color.
5. Markings.
6. Collars or other identifying information.
7. Breed.

See, Missing Animal Response, in Section VII for additional policy directives.

### 3.3 OWNER RELINQUISHMENTS

BARC only accepts owned animals who come from the City of Houston. From time to time, we may as a courtesy accept owned animals from out of the City if space allows.

However, our primary obligation is to provide a lifesaving environment for the residents and animals of the City of Houston.

If an owner wishes to surrender an animal, staff must verify through picture identification that they do, in fact, reside in the City. Anybody surrendering their pet will be required to sign that the animal is indeed their own.

Regardless of whether they telephone or appear at the shelter with their animal, they will first be asked why they wish to surrender their animal. Depending on the response, owners will be asked if the shelter can assist in preventing the surrender through its pet retention programs and staff. For example, owners may be referred to apartments who allow pets, or to low cost dog training classes in the area, the animal handlers may recommend protocols, or they may be provided fact sheets on “resolving litterbox problems” or other information as appropriate.

They will also be asked if they would be willing to find the animal a home themselves, including having the animal’s photograph and contact information placed on the shelter’s website with a notation that this is an animal in a private home.

Moreover, when space is at a premium or if the animal is a breed rescue candidate, they may be offered the opportunity to find their pet a home themselves through information, be referred to breed rescue groups, or asked if they would consider holding the animal and placed on a list until space opens up at the shelter. If they agree to do so, they will be given information to resolve problems, find the pet a home or other as appropriate.

The relinquishing owner must provide picture identification and sign a statement that she/he is aware that the animal they surrender may be killed as the shelter does not guarantee adoption as to any individual animal.

### 3.4 PET RETENTION

In order to responsibly reduce the numbers of domestic animals entering the shelter, staff shall first attempt to assist owners who are seeking to relinquish their animals with advice and support to help them overcome medical, behavioral or environmental conditions which are the perceived cause of their decision. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, and will grow over time as the community programs coordinator puts information and programs in place such as:

1. A listing of pet-friendly rental units in the City of Houston;
2. Behavior and training advice;
3. Spay/neuter assistance;
4. Information on finding the animal a new home or how to contact rescue groups directly;



5. Asking the person to voluntarily hold onto the animals until space exists or, in the case of underaged animals, until they are old enough to be adopted.

It shall also be the job of office support staff to make sure the shelter lobby literature display with information on these and other services is full and organized at all times.

### 3.5 MEDICAL EVALUATION

After the animal has been placed in the intake area, veterinary technician staff will perform a physical examination, collar animals, vaccinate animals, apply a flea/tick preventative, scan for a microchip, photograph animals for the shelter management database and online adoption networks, correct erroneous information on the cage card including breed, spay/neuter status and other information, and then move the animal into holding areas as appropriate (e.g., sick animals will be placed in the infirmary). If necessary, foster families will be sought with the aid of the community programs coordinator or other staff.

If staff suspects abuse, cruelty or neglect, multiple photographs of all aspects of the animal will be taken with a 35 mm film camera prior to and as part of the overall intake examination and the case referred to the SPCA or other agency in charge of cruelty investigations. (Digital photographs will not be acceptable as these may not be allowed as evidence should a case be filed and proceed to court).

The physical exam will include:

1. General information including species, breed, age, weight, gender, spay/neuter status, and any behavior concerns;
2. Coat, skin and lymph nodes including check for external parasites;
3. Eyes;
4. Ears;
5. Gums and teeth;
6. Musculoskeletal system;
7. Heart;
8. Respiratory system;
9. Abdomen and digestive tract;
10. Urogenital system;
11. Nervous system;
12. Cats will be tested for Feline Leukemia; and,
13. If necessary, animals are to be groomed by the animal handlers at this time.

Results of the physical examination, microchip scan, vaccinations administered, flea/tick preventative, etc. are to be logged into the shelter management software database at the time they are given.

A date for temperament evaluation for dogs shall be logged for the third day (not including the day of impoundment) for attention by the dog handlers. A date for boosters shall also be logged into the shelter management software database, if necessary.

Irremediably suffering animals may be killed. However, motherless neonatal kittens and puppies shall be bottle fed in the shelter, placed into foster care for supportive care, or placed with a lactating mother in the shelter before destruction is considered.

### 3.6 VACCINATION

Vaccinations are an important prong in the strategy to keep animals from getting sick and thus reducing deaths in kennel or the “need” to resort to lethal injection due to illness. The University of California at Davis shelter medicine program recommends that,

In almost all cases, shelter animals should be vaccinated immediately upon intake. A delay of even a day or two will significantly compromise the vaccine’s ability to provide protection... (In some cases, the chance of the vaccine preventing disease may be 90% or better if given the day before exposure, but will drop to less than 1% if given the day after exposure.)

Vaccinations should be administered as follows:

*Kittens 2 - 4 weeks of age:* Intranasal vaccine for calicivirus and herpes virus only. Since these kittens are so small, one drop of vaccine in each nostril and each eye is sufficient. For these little tiny kittens (only), splitting the one dose for more than one kitten is all right, so long as the vaccine is used immediately.

Kittens receiving their first vaccine at less than 4 weeks should be boosted with the trivalent intranasal vaccine (for calicivirus, herpes virus and panleukopenia) 3 to 4 weeks later. (Same vaccine given to kittens who come in 4 – 12 weeks of age.)

*Kittens and cats 4 – 12 weeks of age:* Vaccinate with an intranasal product for calicivirus, herpes virus and panleukopenia. Note: intranasal products are modified live vaccines. Use your judgment about splitting the vaccine for the small kittens. If most of it runs down their face, then it is probably acceptable to split the vaccine between two kittens. By the time they are 6-8 weeks they should be getting the full dose.

A note of caution: Kittens vaccinated with an intranasal product may produce a few clinical signs, such as sneezing and nasal discharge. The discharge is clear in color. It is important that staff be trained not to confuse this with an actual

upper respiratory infection, and that “euthanasia” authority not be given to any staff member who cannot make the distinction. In the case of kittens, requiring the staff veterinarian to give a physical before “signing off” on lethal injection would provide protection.

*Cats over 12 weeks of age:* Vaccinate with an injectable modified live vaccine for calicivirus, herpes virus and panleukopenia (and rabies).

*Puppies 6 – 12 weeks of age:* Vaccination with DHLPP and Bordatella. DHLPP boosted after 2 to 4 weeks.

*Dogs over 12 weeks of age:* Vaccinate against DHLPP and Bordatella (and rabies).

Exceptions to the vaccination requirement are as follows:

1. Dogs or cats who are under quarantine and should not be legally vaccinated;
2. Dogs or cats who are traumatized or feral and may pose a hazard to staff attempting to vaccinate;
3. Pregnant dogs or cats;
4. Nursing puppies or kittens except as noted above;
5. Dogs or cats irremediably suffering;
6. Already vaccinated dogs or cats if known; or,
7. A veterinarian has instructed the dog or cat not to be vaccinated.

## **4.0 ANIMAL CARE**

### **4.1 GENERAL POLICIES**

The director of operations or manager on duty in his/her absence (“shelter manager”) shall prepare detailed kennel duties for each shift. Each and every day:

- The shelter manager shall inspect the entire kennel area at the beginning of his/her shift, prior to the kennel area being opened to the public, and prior to the end of their shift.
- A kennel inventory shall be printed and the shelter manager, in coordination with animal handlers, veterinary technicians, and other staff, shall review animals in the shelter and assure they are moving through the system as expeditiously as possible to ensure the maximum possible save rate.
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting of each kennel building and cage is the very basis of providing a healthful environment for the animals housed at the shelter. Therefore, each kennel, cage, or area shall be thoroughly cleaned using the current approved methods.
- Prior to opening the kennels to the public, lobbies and hallways shall be swept and damp mopped using diluted bleach or other approved disinfectant.

- Whenever bleach is used, it shall be diluted (a mix of 30 parts of water to one part of bleach) to a strength that does not present a hazard to employees or animals.
- All water hoses shall be returned to the hose rack after use for safety purposes.
- During the day, the kennels should be spot cleaned as needed to maintain a clean and sanitary building.
- Under no circumstances are animals to be wet down or left in a wet cage or kennel.
- Cages shall be cleaned and disinfected as often as necessary, but no less than once per day. The tops of the cages shall be cleaned and free of newspapers, gloves, rags or any other litter.
- The veterinary clinic and surrounding rooms shall be cleaned and disinfected daily, including metal cabinets, sinks, tables, floors, all trash disposed of and the room placed in order. The floor shall be cleaned daily.
- All animals in the shelter shall have fresh, clean drinkable water available at all times.
- The outside exercise yards shall be maintained in a sanitary manner. All droppings shall be picked up regularly.
- Wild/exotic animal housing areas shall be maintained in a clean sanitary manner. All food and water containers shall be cleaned and disinfected as often as necessary, but no less than once a day.
- Carry cages shall be kept clean and repaired.
- All lights that are not needed shall be turned off.
- The heating/cooling system shall be checked to see that it is functioning properly.
- Brooms, mops, squeegees and all other cleaning equipment shall be properly stored when not being used.
- Any repairs or maintenance needed shall be reported to the shelter manager as soon as they are detected.
- Employees shall approach and assist the public at any time the public is in the area regardless of their assigned duties, except in cases of emergency.

#### 4.2 CLEANING

See Section I for basic policy. However, as germs are tracked by human and animal traffic throughout the shelter—by hands, on doorknobs, clothing, carriers, examination tables, vehicles and so on—the following areas must be cleaned every day:

1. Main lobbies and hallways.
2. Dog runs, including central walkways, walls, gates, etc.
3. Cat rooms, including floors, doorknobs, etc. as well as cages.
4. Infirmary areas.
5. Intake areas.
6. Medical areas.
7. Other indoor animal areas including grooming, e-room, and visiting (get acquainted room).
8. Exercise yards.

9. Vehicles.
10. Carriers and transport cages.
11. Bedding.
12. Dishes.
13. Toys.
14. Tools such as poop scoops, etc.
15. Storage facilities.

Once a week, the following areas will also be cleaned:

1. Offices.
2. Employee break areas.

Cleaning Order:

1. Available kittens/puppies.
2. Available adult animals.
3. Public areas.
4. Not available animals.
5. Intake.
6. Infirmary.

All kennel attendants are responsible for keeping the laundry going all day, as well as ensuring that dishes get clean and carts are restocked at the end of the day.

Once a week, prior to disinfection, kennels should be cleaned and scrubbed with a degreaser.

Exercise yards: manually scoop feces and other debris, remove and clean toys. Once a week, exercise areas should be hosed down.

Kennel staff must use cautionary (e.g., “wet floor”) signs as needed at all times.

#### 4.3 FEEDING

BARC believes that establishing a system of proper feeding is extremely important, and staff should be trained to monitor the diets of the animals. As a result, only the approved brand of food shall be used to give shelter animals a consistent diet made up of high quality, nutritionally appropriate food.

All animals housed at the shelter, except those with special needs, are fed nutritionally adequate dry fresh food. Those with special needs have supplemental feeding arrangements prepared for them by veterinary technician staff. All food is to be rotated



so the food is not poured over older food in bins when it gets low. In addition, all food bins are to remain securely covered so that the food is fresh.

Intake:

1. All animals are to be fed a small meal (dry kibble for adults, canned food for young animals and nursing mothers) on intake.

Adult Dogs:

1. Dogs are to be fed dry food only two times per day. Once in the morning before cleaning, and at the end of the day. The same bowl used to feed in the p.m. is to be used to feed in the a.m. Food is to be left in bowls at the end of the day. All food left in the food bowls from the previous day is thrown away in the morning. After feeding in the morning, all bowls are to be removed, cleaned and disinfected. Feed dogs according to the recommendations of the pet food manufacturer.
2. Check for special feeding requirements for old, sick or emaciated dogs.
3. Unless contra-indicated by veterinary staff, the staff, animal handlers, volunteers, and public can feed treats throughout the day.

Puppies:

1. Puppies are to be fed dry food three times per day. Once in the morning before cleaning, once in the afternoon, and at the end of the day. Food is to be left in bowls at the end of the day. All food left in the food bowls from the previous day is thrown away in the morning. Feed dogs according to the recommendations of the pet food manufacturer.
2. Check for special feeding requirements for young, sick or emaciated puppies.
3. Unless contra-indicated by veterinary staff, the staff, animal handlers, volunteers, and public can feed treats throughout the day.

Adult Cats:

1. Adult cats are to be free fed dry food.
2. Food is to be left in bowls at the end of the day. All food left in the food bowls from the previous day is thrown away in the morning.
3. Check for special feeding requirements for old, sick or emaciated cats.
4. Unless contra-indicated by veterinary staff, the staff, animal handlers, volunteers, and public can feed treats throughout the day.

Kittens and Nursing Mothers:

1. Kittens and nursing mothers are to be free fed dry food. Food is to be left in bowls at the end of the day. All food left in the food bowls from the previous day is thrown away in the morning.
2. Kittens and nursing mothers are to be fed canned food three times per day.

3. Check for special feeding requirements for young or emaciated kittens and nursing mothers.

#### 4.4 ANIMAL MOVEMENT

In order to save more lives, staff must ensure that animals move through the system as quickly, humanely, and efficiently as possible. Animals who are held in non-adoption areas, or who are not adopted out when available to the first approved application not only tie up scarce kennel resources, but they risk losing out on a home.

Because of this reason, BARC does not “hold” animals for adoption. In other words, an animal will be adopted to the first approved application regardless of who else has expressed interest in the animal. The only exceptions to the hold policies are legal holds such as quarantines, and animals who will be placed through rescue but would not otherwise be placed through the shelter.

Animal caretakers who clean non-available areas must move animals into public adoption kennel and cage space at the first available date. Animal handlers evaluating dogs for adoption must do so on the first available date and as space permits. Veterinary technicians who do intake examinations must do so at the first available opportunity.

The number of cats in the free roaming cat rooms will be limited by performance standards with the size of the space being only one element. So long as the cats are free of stress, in good health, more cats may be introduced.

To prevent disease, cats will be housed separately from kittens, and puppies will be housed separately from adult dogs. However, kittens and puppies will be group housed whenever possible. Adult dogs and cats will also be pair housed when doing so would improve their disposition and reduce stress. Nursing mothers will be housed with their litters in the kitten or puppy wards.

Intake → Holding → Adoption

Intake → Infirmary → Adoption/Euthanasia

Intake → Quarantine → Infirmary/Adoption/Euthanasia

All group housed animals must either be of the same gender or preferably spayed/neutered, and checked for compatibility. Animal handlers should use caution before housing two unrelated, non-bonded unneutered male dogs together.

#### 4.5 ANIMAL HANDLING

BARC believes that an animal handler's most important tool cannot be found in any catalog. By far, the greatest asset to animal handling staff is knowledge. Personnel trained in animal behavior and humane handling can ensure that they are handling animals—and employing equipment—in the safest, most humane manner possible.

Because of this, all staff receives formal training in handling, restraint and transport of animals, including “fractious,” feral and aggressive animals, and recognition between them. Once taught, staff will be held accountable to those standards. This allows staff to better assess the temperament of the animals and apply the most appropriate type of restraint as necessary for each situation.

In addition, the agency has purchased humane feral cat restraint systems, capture gloves, crates, transport cages, nets, leashes, muzzles, stretchers, and push carts, as well as towels and blankets for transport and handling.

Control poles are designed as a defensive or protective safety tool for guiding “fractious” animals. They are not intended, and should not be used, as a matter of routine, convenience, speed, and for employees who “fear” the animals with no objective basis for doing so. The repeated use of control poles cannot be a substitute for professional animal handling, restraint and transport skills. Although staff safety is a priority, so is the humane handling of animals, neither of which is exclusive of the other. Finally, animals are not to be dragged under any circumstances, and control poles should never be used on cats.

#### 4.6 VETERINARY & HEALTH ISSUES

The responsibility of caring for the City of Houston's abandoned animals is a serious one and carries the responsibility to individually assess the health status of each and every animal, and to provide care for those needs throughout the animal's stay at the shelter—even for those animals scheduled to be killed.

This includes:

- proper training of staff;
- employing a “barrier” policy for the Infirmary so that staff cannot walk freely in and out of the infirmary/isolation area into the main holding areas, without a properly diluted bleach foot bath, hand washing, and the wearing designated protective clothing;
- vaccination and health evaluation on intake; and,
- staff observation which includes notifying veterinary technician staff or the shelter manager if any of the following symptoms are observed in non-infirmary animals:
  - eyes are watery, appear swollen, or show discharge;

- ears appear red or inflamed, show discharge, or have a foul odor;
- nose shows discharge (mucous, blood, or pus), or is crusty, congested, or blocked;
- gums are swollen or inflamed, teeth are loose or brown, or mouth has a foul odor;
- animal is sneezing, coughing, or wheezing;
- animal has fleas or ticks, skin shows swelling or lesions;
- animal limps;
- animal is thin or obese;
- animal has wounds or abscesses;
- body temperature is abnormal.

Every sick, injured or behavior animal undergoing observation, treatment or rehabilitation shall have such recorded in the shelter management software system on a daily basis including diagnosis, symptoms, types and frequency of medication, and observations.

#### 4.7 SOCIALIZATION

Implementing a fairly simple in-house behavior program will quickly allow an animal shelter to save more lives. Socializing dogs and cats will improve disposition, calm frightened animals, and improve their adoptability. By contrast, animals who sit in their kennels and cages for extended periods of time tend to develop anti-social barrier behaviors.

Following are some simple techniques for providing socialization and improving shelter animal behavior:

- Give dogs a daily walk on a leash, daily play in a fenced area, and daily socialization including brushing, petting, and “people” time.
- Cats should be allowed to roam free in a room for some period of time every day. They should also receive daily brushing, petting, and “people” time.
- As volunteers and staff work with dogs, have them record observations in a computer or handwritten log. Note things like activity level, ability to follow simple commands, favorite games or toys, interaction with other dogs, and any progress made or problems noticed. This information comes in handy for the next socializer, and is particularly helpful when matching the dog with a new adopter.
- Use meal time to stimulate mental and physical activity: some dogs can benefit from having some of their food delivered via a Kong toy. This helps them focus on something besides their kennel situation, and provides a mental challenge.
- Foster homes can give a dog or cat a break from the shelter. (Note: they will still be promoted as available for adoption on the website, adoption referral

websites such as Petfinder, offsite adoption venues, and a binder of available foster animals with photographs at the shelter.)

- Shy or fearful dogs and cats can also benefit from time in a foster home where they can get comfortable with different people or situations. But shelters can also help shy and fearful dogs and cats in the shelter. The most common types of fears are social shyness, situational fears, and fears of certain noises. Generally, the best way to handle these cases is to begin with a very mild exposure combined with a fun or positive association. Over time, the exposure can be increased until the animal is comfortable.
- Preventing conflicts over behavior issues through good matchmaking techniques. Matching potential adopters with dogs by focusing on lifestyle. With information gathered from the daily socialization logs, introducing active-lifestyle adopters with active pets, people in quiet households to sedate pets, etc.
- Basic dog obedience or rehabilitation, including clicker training.

#### Optimum Mental Health Requirements for Shelter Dogs

- A comfortable bed or den.
- At least three daily opportunities to use a dog toilet area (outside of their kennel) and be rewarded for using it.
- Sufficient entertainment (environmental enrichment) and stuffed chew toys such as Kong toys.
- Some hand feeding.
- Interaction with new people each day.
- Daily education (basic manners training) and mental stimulation (walks).
- Quiet kennel "down time" each day, allowing for a scheduled break from the public.
- At least 20 minutes out of their kennel run each day, used either for training, socialization, playtime, exercise or "down time" in somebody's office.
- Canine companionship—either housing with other dogs, or daily 20 minute play/training sessions.
- Puppies under four months must be housed together in a self-training, long-term confinement area, with constant access to a puppy toilet area. Puppies require daily handling, grooming, and manners training by multiple people. Puppies should be fostered whenever possible.

#### Optimum Mental Health Requirements for Shelter Cats

- A warm clean environment with access to a comfortable hiding place.
- A separate litter box area.
- A litter box that is cleaned regularly (feces removed immediately when noticed).
- A convenient scratching post with suspended toys.
- Interaction with unfamiliar people daily.



- Daily handling and grooming.
- Feline companionship for social cats (group housing).
- Kittens under four months should be housed together in a self-training, long-term confinement area, with constant access to a scratching surface with suspended toys and to a separate litter box area. Kittens require daily handling and grooming by multiple people.

#### 4.8 FERAL CATS

BARC believes that feral cats are (protected) healthy wildlife and should not enter shelters in the first place. BARC also believes that shelters should not lend traps or assistance to people who want to trap feral cats for purposes of removing them from their habitat and subsequent destruction.

This philosophy is part of a growing consensus in the humane community. The U.S. No Kill Declaration calls for:

An end to the policy of accepting trapped feral cats to be destroyed as unadoptable, and implementation of TNR as the accepted method of feral cat control by educating the public about TNR and offering TNR program services.

It further calls for:

Abolishment of trapping, lending traps to the public to capture animals, and support of trapping by shelters, governments, and pest control companies for the purposes of removing animals to be killed.

Because they are unsocialized to people, feral cats are not adoption candidates. As such, unwanted feral cats are routinely killed in many shelters throughout the nation. Since feral cats are accepted by the City of Houston Animal Services, BARC must create educational and non-lethal sterilization programs that utilize citizen support and volunteers. A TNR program is the solution to reaching the goal of greatly reducing citizen calls and complaints about outdoor cats, as well as reducing unnecessary feral cat intake and subsequent death rates in municipal shelters.\*

Many animal control agencies in communities throughout the United States are embracing TNR to improve animal welfare, reduce the death rate, and meet obligations to public welfare and neighborhood tranquility demanded by governments. According to the nation's leading TNR advocacy organization, TNR "is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are

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\* BARC believes that long term consensus will lead to laws that make it illegal for people to trap and shelters to kill healthy feral cats, the same way such laws in many states currently protect healthy wildlife. BARC encourages and supports such laws.

humanely trapped, then rabies vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their habitats.”

In community surveys throughout the United States, it was found that the majority of callers to animal control (81%) regarding feral cats did not want them killed. Those same studies also found that public health departments, together with animal control agencies, are seeking effective and *cost-effective* long-term solutions that respond to the public’s increasing desire to see feral cats treated with humane, non-lethal methods. TNR proved to be the most effective solution to reducing complaints, improving public health and safety, lowering costs, and increasing lifesaving.

In order to reduce the number of feral cats who enter the shelter and—once there—who are killed, BARC makes information about humane care of feral cats such as TNR available on its website, over the telephone, in the shelter, and as public relations opportunities dictate and allow. An important aspect of the program is to educate citizens to view feral cats in the same vein as urban wildlife.

In addition, staff who have contact with the public must do the following when someone calls about feral cats or when the City of Houston residents attempt to bring in feral cats:

1. Staff—including field officers—will be trained to respond to public calls about outdoor cats by informing them about the benefits of TNR including BARC’ sterilization services.
2. Staff—including field officers—must explain that the cat will be killed if left at the shelter. The public is not to be presented with anything less than an honest assessment of what is likely to happen or be provided a false hope or assurance that the cat will be relocated or rehomed.
3. Staff—including field officers—must then explain BARC’ feral cat program, which includes spay/neuter assistance. Information on TNR is to be made available to the person at this time. Staff is then to politely encourage the person to use the TNR program as an alternative.
4. If the person agrees, an appointment is made to bring in the cat for surgery, or alternatively a voucher is sent to the person, or if the cat is already in the trap, the person is to bring in the cat and surgery is done as soon as possible. The person signs the TNR form and is told when to return for the cat.
5. All feral cats entering the TNR program are to be spayed or neutered and given a rabies vaccination. They are also to have their right ear tipped for visual identification by staff and field officers as having participated in the program. Microchipping may be offered for a nominal fee if the caretaker elects to do this.

6. If the person does not agree to the program, the call is referred to the community programs coordinator. This immediate intervention prevents cats from entering the shelter where they do not belong and allows for TNR to be implemented for the colony after a visit to the field and information gathered.
7. The community programs coordinator will collect and process this data in order for areas of cats to be pinpointed and mapped.
8. Staff will utilize existing tools (e.g., door-hangers, how-to fact sheets and educational videos) to organize and educate citizens in order for TNR to be a proactive component of BARC' No Kill initiative.
9. If a citizen brings cat into the shelter, information is to be recorded with the exact address where trapped, the person who relinquished, why trapping was done. The community programs coordinator will initiate communication with the neighbors from this location to return the cat if it is a lost/stolen pet. The cat may be held and evaluated. If the cat is not feral, the cat can be placed into the adoption program. If the cat exhibits behavior consistent with being feral, the cat may immediately become a part of the feral cat program after caregivers are identified and join the program.
10. As an alternative, the animal handler will contact local feral cat groups, seek an alternative release site for the cat, and contact rescue groups if the cat does not enter the feral cat program and is not returned to colony site.
11. If no group is found, the cat will be sterilized and returned to the location of trapping.

BARC acknowledges that the killing of healthy feral cats is a profound failure at all levels—the public's irresponsibility and intolerance toward feral cats, the law's failure to distinguish between feral cats and stray pet cats, and society's view of the disposable nature of animals.

Finally, to provide them a sense of security and therefore reduce their stress, all feral cats are to be provided with hiding boxes in their kennels and are to be handled only as necessary with a humane feral cat restraint system. The use of control poles is not allowed.

#### 4.9 DIED IN KENNEL

Staff must report all animals who die in kennel immediately to the veterinary technician, the shelter manager or their immediate supervisor. The veterinary technician, in consult with a veterinarian as needed, will determine the likely cause of death and recommend cleaning and handling procedures to prevent contagion.

At all times, the body is to be handled with respect and care. Moreover, if the shelter is open to the public, the dead animal is covered with a towel or blanket before the body is moved.

#### 4.01 RABIES QUARANTINES

Rabies prevention regulations do not distinguish between truly vicious animals, and those who do not pose the same risk of contagion. These latter animals can include:

- A kitten who accidentally or in the course of normal playing scratches or bites someone;
- A puppy who is normally mouthy and accidentally breaks skin; or,
- An animal who is not otherwise vicious and does not pose a significant and immediate threat to public safety.

Nonetheless, these circumstances fall within rabies prevention regulations as they may have inadvertently otherwise exposed a person to Texas State law. Under these and similar circumstances, the animals shall not be automatically classified as “unadoptable” and killed. These incidents may occur from time-to-time and shelter staff is obligated to evaluate each animal on a case-by-case basis.

BARC recognizes that rabies regulations may be overly inclusive in their attempts to prevent rabies. If a cat accidentally scratches someone in the course of playing, rabies regulations may nonetheless come into play even though the cat is fully vaccinated against rabies.

Therefore, where state law and regulations allow for either ten day observation or decapitation and testing for animals who scratch or bite, unless the animal is determined to be vicious and not otherwise an adoption candidate, the animal will be held for ten days. If law allows the animals to be quarantined in the owner’s home, that will be the preferred method of choice. However, if animals are truly vicious and will not be saved, the animals will not be held for ten days only to hold up kennel space causing other animals to be killed and then killed themselves.

Animals (especially those who had received a rabies vaccination prior to the alleged exposure) may still be viewed by the public for adoption, and adopted, during the observation period. However, the animal will not go into the new home until after the observation period.

Every morning at the beginning of his/her shift, the on-duty veterinary technician or veterinarian will check all quarantined animals to ensure that they are not exhibiting behavior or symptoms consistent with rabies. Every evening, prior to the end of his/her shift, the veterinary technician or veterinarian will recheck if any quarantined animal is exhibiting behavior or symptoms consistent with rabies.

Nothing in this section should be interpreted to mean that agency protocol will contravene state law or regulations, local laws or ordinances, or otherwise expose the public to the threat of rabies.

All human victims of bites should be instructed to:

1. wash and clean the wound with soap and warm water;
2. contact their physician or go to an urgent care clinic immediately for treatment of the wound and for advice concerning rabies; and,
3. contact BARC to report the incident.

#### 4.02 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

There will never be enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers come in and make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

As the program develops and expands, volunteer services will be needed for many important shelter tasks broken down into two types: “in shelter” and “out of shelter.”

##### *In-shelter Volunteering*

These volunteer positions support day-to-day operations. These positions mainly have contact with the animals and with visitors. Options for volunteering in the shelter include, but are not limited to, the following positions:

##### **Kennel Cleaner**

Primarily responsible for helping the staff clean and feed the animals in the morning and helping to keep the animals clean and comfortable throughout the day. Volunteers are trained in the handling of animals and cleaning.

##### **Adoption Desk Support**

Volunteers provide clerical support for the staff at the front desk. This includes answering the telephones, completing adoption paperwork, and providing general animal care information to the public. Computer knowledge is helpful, and good customer service skills are a must.

##### **Cat Socialization**

Volunteers spend quality time with the cats, socializing them and helping to keep their cages clean. Most volunteers provide 2-1/2 to 5 hours per week playing with and grooming the cats.



### **Dog Socialization**

Dog walking and general handling, elementary obedience training focusing on good manners. Most volunteers provide 2-1/2 to 5 hours per week walking, playing with and grooming the dogs.

### ***Out of Shelter Volunteering***

Out-of-shelter volunteering opportunities do not necessarily require a shift or time commitment. Options for volunteering outside the shelter include the following positions:

### **Foster Care**

The agency needs families or individuals who are willing to offer their home on a temporary basis to animals in need. Foster care is most frequently needed for animals who are too young to be adopted.

### **Event Support**

Raising the many thousands of dollars necessary to supplement general fund contributions requires dedicated volunteers. The agency needs volunteers who are willing to help plan, organize and participate in special events and fund raisers in the community. Other jobs may include hanging posters, stuffing envelopes, and other short-term projects as needed.

### **Adoption Follow-up Calls**

Volunteers help call past adopters about how their how the adopted animal is adjusting to his or her new home and about their adoption experience at the shelter. These telephone calls can be made during shelter hours, but are most useful evenings and weekends.

### **Off-Site Adoptions**

Periodically, shelter and foster animals are taken to various locations around the City where they are made available for adoption. These events are organized and staffed by volunteers who help setup/take down the tables and cages and assist potential adopters.

### ***Qualifications for a Volunteer Position***

All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Reliable transportation to the shelter is a must. A car is highly recommended. The agency requires a minimum of 2.5-3 hours per week (depending upon volunteer position). There is some flexibility in scheduling, but volunteers should plan on at least 10 hours per month, at a minimum, for one year. All volunteers are expected to support and promote the mission of BARC and abide by all volunteer rules and regulations.

A special note for foster program volunteers: A volunteer foster program can be an ideal low-cost way to greatly increase the number of lives a shelter can save while at the same time providing an opportunity for community members to volunteer. Not only does a foster program maximize the number of animals rescued, it allows an organization to care for animals who would be difficult to care for in a shelter environment—orphaned or feral kittens, sick or injured animals, or dogs needing one-on-one behavior rehabilitation. For animals who may need a break from the shelter environment, foster care provides a comfortable home setting that keeps animals happy and healthy. Foster parents will be required to attend an orientation, sign a waiver, and abide by staff requests for follow-up visits, and date for return of the animal. Home visits may also be required.

## **5.0 DISPOSITION**

### **5.1 RETURN TO OWNERS**

When a person claims ownership of an impounded animal, the person must show proof of identification with picture (driver license, government issued picture identification card, or passport) and some evidence of ownership (veterinary records, picture or other proof).

However, no dog shall be released without a current dog license and rabies vaccination. All cats must be vaccinated against rabies. The owner is obligated to provide proof in the form of a license tag, rabies vaccination certificate and/or veterinary contact which confirms vaccination status.

There are certain circumstances in which it is advantageous for the agency to relinquish possession of an animal to its rightful owner or responsible party for care and custody before or after a normal workday. Therefore, animal(s) may be reclaimed after hours under certain circumstances. After-hours reclaims are allowed in the following situations:

- An animal is sick, injured, or old.
- An animal is on medication prescribed by a veterinarian that is necessary to treat a sickness or injury or to maintain his/her good health, such as antibiotics, steroids, insulin, thyroid hormone, arthritis medication, etc.
- An animal belongs to a person who is traveling through the City of Houston or who is leaving town for business or vacation purposes before the shelter opens.
- An animal whose general well being depends on returning to his/her home environment, such as a fearful or nervous animal that will not eat during confinement in the shelter.

Requests by the public for after-hours reclaims that do not fall within the above guidelines will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the shelter manager.

## 5.2 ADOPTION PROCESS & POLICIES

[Please note, consistent with comments in Part I, while the following is the ideal, it is not recommended for BARC at this time until its rate of lifesaving improves.]

The best adoption programs are designed to ensure that each animal is placed with a responsible person, one prepared to make a lifelong commitment, and to avoid the kinds of problems that may have caused the animal to be brought to the shelter. An important part of the process is to match the life-style and needs of the adopter with the individual dog or cat.

BARC believes that quantity and quality of adoption can go hand-in-hand. The agency wants its animals to go into responsible and loving homes, which can be accomplished with thoughtful, but not overly bureaucratic, screening. Most adoptions can occur in about 20 minutes, but some will take longer depending on the circumstances. Staff responsible for adoptions should use the answers on an adoption application as the starting point for dialog, not as “black and white” rules that lead to failed adoptions. However, if at any time, staff is uncomfortable with an adoption, they should seek the shelter manager or, if unavailable, can delay the adoption of an animal for up to 24 hours.

The notion that one needs to reduce quality of homes in order to increase quantity is contrary to good business practice. In fact, some of the most successful industries in the United States have excelled in a consumer market demanding high volume coupled with increasing consumer awareness, information and requirement for quality. These agencies are able to meet demand for both quality and quantity. Quality and quantity are not, and have never been, mutually exclusive.

From time-to-time and especially during peak periods, the shelter may also offer animals for adoption at a discounted rate. Older animals or animals with special impediments to adoptions may find it more difficult to find a home, especially during “kitten” or “puppy” seasons. The shelter may also offer two-for-one adult cats or kittens, or a special on dogs. At the discretion of management, fees may be waived or reduced.

General adoption policies are as follows:

1. Potential adopters must interact with the animals in the facility prior to adoption. In the case of dogs, out of kennel interaction is mandatory.
2. BARC does not limit homes based on arbitrarily defined criteria (e.g., no puppies or kittens or energetic dogs in homes with young children).
3. Adoption applications must be accompanied by a government issued picture identification such as a driver license, state identification card or passport.

4. Adopters must be at least 18 years of age.
5. Adopters must have a permanent address and telephone number.
6. Adopters must demonstrate income sufficient to care for an animal such as identifying a place of employment. If adopters indicate “unemployed” or “none,” further discussion is warranted.
7. Adopters must not have surrendered an animal to this or other shelter within the past year.
8. All dogs must be allowed in the house. Dogs are not to be adopted out as “backyard” or “outside” dogs.
9. All cats must be allowed in the house (unless the cat is feral or semi-social).
10. Animals should only be adopted as family pets, not as “guard” dogs or “mousers” (unless the cat is feral or semi-social).
11. Renters must have permission from the property owner.
12. Animals already residing in the home must be altered unless they are elderly, infirm, or “show” dogs.
13. Applicants must not be on a “do not adopt” list.
14. Staff may delay an adoption for 24 hours or more until they can discuss with the director or shelter manager, if for any reason they do not feel initially comfortable with the adoption.
15. The agency does not put animals on “hold” for people.

Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the shelter manager.

Consistent with BARC policy, dogs and cats are only adopted out after they have been sterilized and have received a rabies vaccination. Once the application is complete and fees are paid, if the animal is not already altered, a spay/neuter appointment is made.

As part of the adoption process, all adopters are asked if they would like to make a \$5 voluntary donation to the agency’s spay/neuter fund and an additional \$5 voluntary donation to the agency’s medical care fund for sick or injured shelter animals needing potentially lifesaving care.

### 5.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

Temperament testing is a series of exercises designed to evaluate whether an animal is aggressive. Because dog behavior is highly specific to context, it is unfortunately not enough to say that a dog is friendly and of reasonably good temperament if she comes into a shelter with her tail wagging. The flip side is also true. Because the shelter is a highly stressful, unnatural, and frightening environment for a dog who has just been abandoned by a family, the fact that a dog is scared and growls at staff on intake is not enough to make a determination that the dog is unfriendly and vicious. So it is not only fair, but a good idea, for shelters to evaluate dogs to make sure they can safely be placed into new homes.

In order to be fair, a temperament test must do two things:

1. screen out aggression; and,
2. ensure that friendly, scared, shy, sick, or injured dogs do not get wrongly executed.

The decision to end an animal's life is an extremely serious one, and should always be treated as such. No matter how many animals a shelter kills, each and every one is an individual and deserves individual consideration. A strict and fair policy helps ensure that the decision is reached correctly. A dog may appear aggressive, but in reality he may simply be frightened by his new surroundings and by being away from the only family he has ever known. Being able to determine whether a dog is truly aggressive or merely frightened can mean the difference between life and death, as well as the difference between a happy adoption and disappointment.

The process of evaluating a dog for aggression is as follows:

1. Allow the dog to acclimate to the shelter environment. Only animal handlers and staff are to interact with these dogs. They are to be treated kindly, given treats, and taken for short leash walks. Some time in the fenced backyard before public hours are also encouraged.
2. After three days, the dog is put through a standardized protocol.
3. Dogs who fail the protocol are to be given a full medical work-up to rule out a medical origin for the behavior.
4. The animal handlers, together with a behaviorist from the University of Nevada, Reno or other expert, will re-evaluate the dog to determine: 1. whether the dog is aggressive; 2. what the prognosis is for rehabilitation; 3. development of a desensitization protocol if appropriate, or destruction where the prognosis is poor.
5. Review the determination with the executive director who will determine ultimate disposition.

#### 5.4 POST ADOPTION FOLLOW-UP

There are many reasons for a post-adoption follow-up protocol. First, many animals who enter a home experience "adjustment" issues. These can be resolved with good, thoughtful advice. Without this, animals are at heightened risk for return, and for easily fixable and relatively minor behaviors to escalate to bigger problems. Dogs, for example, can quickly establish patterns and if these are not addressed early, may become harder to remedy later, leading to abandonment or relinquishment. It is vital that the agency contact all adopters within the first two weeks of adoption in order to make sure things are going smoothly. It is equally important that adopters have the ability to reach someone for good advice and/or referral to local resources.



The post-adoption follow-up need not be a comprehensive process. Two questions need only be asked: 1. how are things going? 2. Can we help you with anything? When applicable, remind the adopter that spay/neuter must be done by a certain date, using the opportunity to set the appointment or reminding them of a previously set appointment.

Second, a post-adoption program assesses the quality of the adopter. If they no longer have the pet or information is elicited to show the match was not good or problems exist (e.g., the dog is relegated to the backyard, etc.), the concern can be relayed to the field officers for follow-up and the person placed on a barred-list.

Third, the program allows the agency to show it cares and is responsive, which will be important for a second follow-up call in six months. After the six-month follow-up, all adopters who still have their pet and report good results should be solicited for a donation. As one agency has noted, "Successfully adopted animals are like alumni and their adopters can become part of a strong support and donor base."

The responsibility for follow-up calls is the job of office support staff, with support of volunteers, as well as the veterinary technicians for medical follow-up and animal handlers for behavior advice as warranted.

#### 5.5 RESCUE GROUPS

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing and disposal, and improves a community's rate of lifesaving. Getting an animal out of the shelter in an appropriate placement is important and rescue groups, as a general rule, can screen adopters better than many shelters. In an environment of over 30000 impounded animals annually, there will rarely be a shortage of adoptable animals and if a rescue group is willing to take custody and care of the animal, rare is the circumstance in which they should be denied.

BARC policy dictates that rescue groups are not to be charged a fee. It is the responsibility of animal handlers to flag animals who may be candidates for rescue and notify the appropriate rescue groups. This will be accomplished on a case-by-case basis initially, until such time as the community programs coordinator can establish a daily e-mail list alert of available animals for rescue groups.

#### 5.6 FOSTER CARE

It is the policy of BARC to place animals in foster care who would otherwise face killing, such as because of their age, health, or other conditions, including lack of space. Periodically, the shelter will receive animals who, due to various reasons, cannot immediately be made available for adoption. Instead of killing animals with special

needs, a foster program can provide daily care until the opportunity for adoption becomes available.

The procedure for fostering animals is as follows:

1. When an animal is brought into the shelter and immediate adoptability is in question (e.g., kittens or puppies who are too young to be adopted out), intaking staff should notify the shelter manager.
2. The shelter manager, animal handler or veterinary technician reviews the animal(s) and decides if the animal(s) can be kept in the shelter or should be placed in a foster home.
3. The community outreach coordinator will then attempt to find the foster home.
4. When a foster home is found, the responsible person reviews and signs the foster agreement and is given a date for a follow-up examination, vaccination booster, spay/neuter date or date to return the animal.
5. The animal(s) are taken home.
6. The foster parent tracks all hours that are donated to the animal(s) welfare and reports this to the community programs coordinator or animal handler.
7. A fostering party may form a bond with the animal. Therefore, foster parents will be afforded the first opportunity to adopt an animal once the fostering period ends. They must complete the formal adoption process and must be a qualified adopter.

#### 5.7 SELECTION FOR “EUTHANASIA”

Because killing an animal is the ultimate and most serious act, animals will be selected only by a few individuals trained in behavior, adoptability and with knowledge of the animals. Time spent in shelter is not the most relevant criteria. The executive director must authorize all shelter killing. If, however, an animal is irremediably suffering and the director is not available, the decision to end an animal’s life will be made by the shelter manager in consultation with a veterinarian and reviewed with the director at the earliest possible time after the animal has been killed.

The following sub-outcomes are to be used when an animal is killed and logged into the shelter management database:

1. Healthy.
2. Medical-Treatable.
3. Medical-Non-Rehabilitatable.
4. Irremediably Suffering.
5. Neonatal.
6. Court Order.
7. Feral.

8. Behavior.
9. Vicious.
10. Rabies.

*Healthy* animals are those who are not aggressive, sick or injured.

*Medical-Treatable* animals are those who are sick or injured, but whose prognosis for rehabilitation is excellent, good, fair or guarded.

*Medical-Non-Rehabilitatable* animals are those who are sick or injured with a poor or grave prognosis.

*Irremediably Suffering* animals are Non-Rehabilitatable animals in severe pain.

*Neonatal* animals are motherless animals (ages one day to approximately 3 weeks) who require bottle feeding because they are unable to eat on their own and are unable to survive without supplemental bottle feeding.

*Court order* are animals determined to be vicious by a hearing officer or court of law after a dangerous animal hearing.

*Feral* animals are those dogs and cats totally unsocialized to people.

*Behavior* animals are those animals who manifest a behavior condition such as resource guarding in dogs but who either do not pose the type of direct and immediate public safety risk that a truly vicious dog does, or whose prognosis for rehabilitation is guarded or better.

*Vicious* animals are those who are aggressive with a prognosis for rehabilitation which is poor and who pose a direct and immediate public safety risk.

*Rabies* animals are those required to be killed under state or local rabies prevention regulations. A dog or cat is not a “rabies” outcome if a ten day holding period is a legally acceptable alternative. If such an animal is killed, they should be logged under the other relevant criteria, including *Healthy*.

#### Preference for Lifesaving

It is the policy of BARC that savable animals not be killed. That commitment requires that the agency expend all legal and reasonable alternatives before an animal is scheduled to be killed.

To meet that obligation, killing of an animal will not occur unless and until the director has certified that all efforts to save the animal have been considered, including,

- medical and behavioral rehabilitation;
- foster care;
- rescue groups;
- neuter and release; and,
- adoption.

Furthermore, the director shall determine that such effort will either:

- not alter a poor or grave prognosis;
- the dog is vicious and poses a direct and immediate threat to public safety;
- the cat is feral and all steps in the Feral Cat section have been exhausted;
- the likelihood of success in any of the steps appear poor in the reasonably foreseeable future such that continued holding of the animal would not alter this prognosis; and/or,
- the animal has been determined to be vicious and ordered destroyed by a court or hearing officer under law, and all appeals have been exhausted.

#### 5.8 METHOD OF "EUTHANASIA"

All animals impounded by a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group shall be killed, only when necessary and consistent with the requirements of this Act, by lethal intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital, except as follows:

(1) intraperitoneal injections may be used only under the direction of a licensed veterinarian, and only when intravenous injection is not possible for infant animals, companion animals other than cats and dogs, feral cats, or in comatose animals with depressed vascular function.

(2) intracardiac injections may be used only when intravenous injection is not possible for animals who are completely unconscious or comatose, and then only under the direction of a veterinarian.

(b) No animal shall be allowed to witness any other animal being killed or being tranquilized/sedated for the purpose of being killed.

(c) Animals shall be sedated/tranquilized as necessary to minimize their stress or discomfort, or in the case of vicious animals, to ensure staff safety, except as follows: (1) neuromuscular blocking agents shall not be used.

(d) Following their injection, animals shall be lowered to the surface on which they are being held and shall not be permitted to drop or otherwise collapse without support.

(e) An animal may not be left unattended between the time procedures to kill the animal are commenced and the time death occurs, nor may the body be disposed of until death is verified.

(f) Verification of death shall be confirmed for each animal in all of the following ways:

- (1) by lack of heartbeat, verified by a stethoscope;
- (2) by lack of respiration, verified by observation;
- (3) by pale, bluish gums and tongue, verified by observation; and
- (4) by lack of eye response, verified if lid does not blink when eye is touched and pupil remains dilated when a light is shined on it.

(g) The room in which animals are killed shall be cleaned and regularly disinfected as necessary, but no less than once per day on days the room is used, except as follows: (1) The area where the procedure is performed shall be cleaned and disinfected between each procedure.

(h) The room in which animals are killed shall have adequate ventilation that prevents the accumulation of odors.

(i) A veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state or a euthanasia technician certified by the state euthanasia certification program shall perform these procedures, except as follows: (1) If a state certification program does not exist, the procedure may be performed by a trained euthanasia technician working under the direction of a veterinarian.

Two people should be involved in the process: a “lead” and a “shooter.” The lead reviews the notes and confirms the right animal is in the room. For example, the lead says loudly, “I have a neutered black lab 2 years old” The “shooter” says yes or no. Lead: “He has a short smooth coat.” Shooter: “yes” or “no.” He has dropped ears, black legs, black and white feet, a black collar with studs, no chip, etc. which continues that way back and forth until both are certain that the right animal is in the room. Until the shooter hears that it is safe to proceed by the lead, no action should ever be taken. Confirmation and concentration are the keys to error free shelter killing.

Process (If there is doubt as to the status of an animal, the process should not continue until verification with a supervisor):

1. Sedate aggressive or fractious animals before handling.
2. Check paperwork along with the animal being transferred to ensure a proper match. Criteria reviewed are:
  - Animal identification number.
  - Species.
  - Breed.



- Gender.
  - Spay/neuter status.
  - Prime color.
  - Markings.
  - Attempted contact of owner has been made,
  - Verification of sign off by a supervisor (and medical staff if the animal is sick or injured).
3. Electronically scan each animal for microchip implants even if the animal has already been scanned by other staff during the course of the shelter stay. Scan the back, the neck, the legs, and the underbelly as microchips may travel.
  4. Check the “Lost” animal database and rule out any possible matches.
  5. Inject animal with the prescribed dose of sedation as warranted before injection of pentobarbital.
  6. Two employees are to be present when pentobarbital is administered to any animal.
  7. One (1) cc of pentobarbital is administered per 10 pounds of body weight through intravenous injection. (If sedation is not possible such as a feral cat in severe pain, intrahepatic/intraperitoneal may be considered.)
  8. When the animal is dead, employees administering the pentobarbital will complete the disposition portion of the animal’s record.
  9. Enter amounts of pentobarbital and sedation used in the Controlled Substance Log along with the data regarding each animal killed and the initials of both employees.

Before refrigerating dead animals, check each animal carefully to verify that they are dead to insure that no live, but unconscious animal is disposed of inhumanely.

Verification must be done as follows:

1. Lack of heartbeat, verified by a stethoscope.
2. Lack of respiration, verified by observation.
3. Pale, bluish gums and tongue, verified by observation.
4. Lack of eye response, verified if lid does not blink when eye is touched and pupil remains dilated when a light is shined.

All four methods of verification must be done for each and every animal. Once verified, the animal’s body is placed in the refrigerated morgue for ultimate disposition.

#### 5.9 OWNER REQUESTED “EUTHANASIA”

If an owner attempts to surrender an animal “for euthanasia,” shelter staff will recommend that the owner take the animal to a private veterinarian. If the person indicated he cannot afford a veterinarian, he or she shall be permitted to surrender the animal, but the animal will not be killed without a legitimate reason for doing so.

All animals will be held for adoption, regardless of owner desires, consistent with the mission of the agency unless one of the following criteria is met:

1. The animal is irremediably suffering from a serious illness or injury.
2. The animal is motherless and unweaned and all attempts to foster, bottle feed, or otherwise care for the animal have failed.
3. The dog is severely aggressive and poses a significant threat to staff, independently verified by an animal handler (keeping in mind rabies regulations if the dog has bitten someone within the past fourteen days.)

Owners cannot be present during the process and no timetable can be given to the owner as to when such determination shall be made.

## PART IV: SAMPLE OVERSIGHT CHECKLISTS

These sample checklists need to be modified so that they make sense in light of BARC's physical facility and governing structure. Staff should be required to initial each entry and sign the sheet daily. Before leaving for lunch and at the end of a shift, a supervisor should review and sign the sheet as well, physically checking the room to ensure that all tasks are done and done thoroughly. This should also be done before opening to the public and include periodic spot checks throughout the day. In addition, in order to encourage efficient work, there should be a set and enforced expectation of how long each process should take and what time rooms should be completed. This is the basis of shelter accountability.

### ➤ Checklist for Great Customer Service

- ✓ Greet visitor with "Welcome to BARC, how may I help you?"
- ✓ Greet caller with "Bureau of Animal Regulation & Care, how may I help you?"
- ✓ Smile. Be friendly and welcoming.
- ✓ Make eye contact.
- ✓ Acknowledge waiting people with a friendly smile; "Sorry for the wait, we'll be with you soon."
- ✓ Listen carefully. Ask questions if needed. Be sure you understand before responding.
- ✓ Determine if you are the right person to help, if so, be thorough and accurate.
  - ✓ If question is inside your department but outside your knowledge,
    - personally get them in touch with the appropriate person or
    - take a message with name, number and subject, following up to be sure the appropriate person gets the message
  - ✓ If question is outside your department,
    - personally get them in touch with the appropriate person or
    - take a message with name, number and subject, following up to be sure the appropriate person gets the message
- ✓ If situation gets emotional or you are not sure what to do, excuse yourself and get a manager.
- ✓ Close with "Thank you very much for \_\_\_\_\_!"
- ✓ Celebrate pet adoptions. Make people feel good about what they are doing. Comment on the wonderful pet they have selected, congratulate them on the adoption, or tell them what a difference they are making for the animals.

➤ **Checklist for Cats**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Feed all kittens and mothers with nursing kittens canned food first thing in the morning. Replenish dry food.\*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feed all kittens and mothers with nursing kittens at noon. Replenish dry food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feed all kittens and mothers with nursing kittens before going home for the day. Replenish dry food.

*\* Make sure all kittens and nursing mothers have dry food available at all times.*

**AM – Clean Cages** (initial indicating task completed for each cage in the room)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove and dispose of litter pans and food trays.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note in writing the health of each cat, appetite, litter box use, other observations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove the water bowl, rinse thoroughly or replace if soiled.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove and replace bedding and toys, if soiled. (Never move items between cages.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manually remove spilled litter, fecal matter, urine, dust, other debris with a damp paper towel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Throw the damp paper towel away after use. (Never reuse the paper towel in a second cage).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down the bars of the cage with a damp paper towel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dry the surfaces, ensuring that any clear/glass surfaces are free of streaks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reassemble the cage contents, replacing soiled bedding, toys and providing fresh litter, food and water.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wash, sanitize hands, or change gloves between cats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow final cleaning protocol whenever a cat is adopted. Cage must be cleaned VERY thoroughly including removing the door for cleaning.

**AM – Disinfect Cat Dens/Carriers: Must be done after each cat**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray with disinfectant, including door
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe out any organic matter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray again and allow it to sit for 10 minutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe dry, including door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visually inspect for cleanliness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean each carrier before storing it.

**AM – Clean Cat Cage Window Exterior or Plastic Barriers**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Check each window from outside the room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray window cleaner onto clean paper towel and wipe the window.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow to dry and recheck.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If marks or residue are on inside, wipe the inside with window cleaner on a paper towel. (Do not spray cleaner into a cage with a cat in it.)

#### AM – Mop Floors

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sweep the floor to remove any debris or fur.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use clean mop head and bucket filled with Fulsan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty and clean mop bucket.

#### AM – Do Laundry and Dishes

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take bedding to the laundry room, start washing machine, clean and fold bedding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take water bowls to dishwasher.

#### AM – Clean Counters and Cat trees

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray and wipe down cat trees, remove any fur.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray counters with disinfectant and wipe with a paper towel to remove all debris or residue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray counters with disinfectant, set timer, allow to sit for 10 minutes, then wipe dry with clean paper towel. (Never use towel in more than one cat cage.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean sink thoroughly

#### AM – Empty Trash (after AM cleaning)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove and dispose of trash in dumpster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean trash can inside and out with disinfectant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put clean trash bag into trash can.

#### AM – Clean Bleach Mats

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take mats to laundry room, spray to remove all hair and debris, wash with Fulsan in mop sink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Return mat to front of cat room door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pour Fulsan on mat. (Should be level with top of mat bristles, but not to top of the rim.)

#### AM – Clean Plastic Barriers Between Cages (if free-standing cages)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean plastic barriers between cages or notify supervisor if a barrier is not present between cat cages. cage.



#### AM – Check cage cards

- \_\_\_\_\_ Replace torn or chewed cards both inside and outside of the room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean soiled plastic sleeves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check cards for accurate information and note in comment section below.

#### PM – Check Room and Perform Tasks as Required

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that each cat has water, food, clean bedding, and clean litter box.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note in the log book health of each cat, appetite, litter box use, other observations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty the trash and replace trash bag.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restock the room with supplies (see inventory listing).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that the glass is clean inside and out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that each carrier is clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down any step ladders and other tools.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean each scraper and scooper; launder scrubbies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Replace disinfectant fluid in scraper soaking solution bucket.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mop floor with clean mop head and water.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill disinfecting mats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty mop bucket and clean it out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down counter tops.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill disinfectant solution spray bottles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill waterless hand-wash dispensers and soap dispensers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down door knobs and sink.

#### ➤ Checklist for Cats (Colony Rooms)

##### AM – Cleaning (initial if task completed)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove litter pans and food trays. Change bedding and toys if soiled.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note in the log book observations for individual cats and the room in general (appetite, litter box use, vomiting, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manually remove spilled litter, fecal matter, urine, other debris with a paper towel from the floor, walls, chairs, cat trees, and all other surfaces.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray and scrub walls, window, chairs, and other surfaces to ensure that they are clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray down each cat tree and wipe each surface thoroughly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soak cleaning tools and scrubbies in disinfectant between use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe surfaces dry with a clean paper towel

- \_\_\_\_\_ When dry, place clean bedding, new litter box, toys, new water bowls and new food tray.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wash, sanitize hands, or change gloves between rooms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Look the room over: Does it look neat and uncluttered? Is it easy to walk through the room, or is there too much stuff?

#### AM – Mop Floors

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sweep the floor to remove any debris or fur.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use clean mop head and bucket filled with Fulsan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty and clean mop bucket.

#### AM – Clean Counters

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray counters with disinfectant and wipe with a paper towel to remove all debris or residue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray counters with disinfectant, set timer, allow to sit for 10 minutes, then wipe dry with clean paper towel. (Never use towel in more than one cat cage.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean sink thoroughly

#### AM – Clean Windows Exterior

- \_\_\_\_\_ Check each window from outside the room as well as inside.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray window cleaner onto windows (take care not to get it on cats) and wipe with a paper towel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow to dry and recheck. Repeat until clean.

#### AM – Do Laundry and Dishes

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take bedding to the laundry room, start washing machine, clean and fold bedding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take water bowls to dishwasher.

#### AM – Empty Trash (after AM cleaning)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove and dispose of trash in dumpster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean trash can inside and out with disinfectant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put clean trash bag into trash can.

#### AM – Clean Bleach Mats

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take mats to laundry room, spray to remove all hair and debris, wash with Fulsan in mop sink.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Return mat to front of cat room door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pour Fulsan on mat. (Should be level with top of mat bristles, but not to top of the rim.)

#### AM – Check cage cards

- \_\_\_\_\_ Verify that there is a card for each cat in the room. Remove any cats for adopted cats. Replace torn or missing cards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check cards for inaccurate information and note in comment section below.

#### AM – Disinfect Granite Carriers: Must be done after each cat

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray with disinfectant,
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe out any organic matter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spray again and allow it to sit for 10 minutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe dry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean each carrier before storing it.

#### PM – Check Room and Perform Tasks as Required

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that there is adequate water, food, clean bedding, and that litter boxes are clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty the trash and replace trash bag.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restock the room with supplies (see inventory listing).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that the glass is clean inside and out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that each carrier is clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down any step ladders and other tools.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down cat trees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean each scraper and scooper; launder scrubbies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Replace disinfectant fluid in scraper soaking solution bucket.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mop floor with clean mop head and water.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill disinfecting mats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty mop bucket and clean it out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down counter tops.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill disinfectant solution spray bottles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refill waterless hand-wash dispensers and soap dispensers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wipe down door knobs and sink.

## ➤ Dog Kennel Cleaning

### Morning Protocol

It should take no longer than four hours to complete morning cleaning completely.

1. Feed the dogs and allow time to eat. For puppies:

Feed all puppies and mothers with nursing puppies canned food first thing in the morning. Replenish dry food.\* Feed all puppies and mothers with nursing puppies kittens at noon. Replenish dry food. Feed all puppies and mothers with nursing puppies before going home for the day. Replenish dry food. (*\* Make sure all puppies and mothers with nursing puppies have dry food available at all times.*)

2. Remove the dog from the enclosure.
3. Strip the kennels, removing all bedding, bowls, toys, etc. This also means that all plastic beds are to be picked up and cleaned with the kennel. All dogs that are under 6 months, over 6 years old, emaciated, dogs less than 25 lbs and otherwise noted on kennel card by dog lead or dog manager MUST have dry, clean bedding. Dump water bowls! Toys will be placed outside the kennel to be returned to the same dog after the area and toys are clean.
3. Scoop up all solid waste and food into trash cans . Remove any torn blanket or toy fragments, and any large clumps of fur or food.
4. Diarrhea and stepped on fecal must be sprayed off kennels before kennel can be disinfected. If necessary, use a scrub brush to loosen them. ONLY USE WATER TO RINSE FECAL BEFORE SPRAYING CHEMICAL. Again, all organic matter – feces, slobber, urine, food, and fur – must be removed before spraying chemical.
5. Spray chemical on all surfaces: starting at the top of walls and working down to the floor. Chemical will only fully disinfect if there is mild amounts of fecal and organisms in the kennel. Disinfectant cannot clean through organic matter so it is very important to remove it before this stage of the cleaning. Only spray enough chemical to cover all surfaces. Too much chemical can be harmful to you and the dogs.
6. Allow the disinfectant to sit on the surface for 10 minutes.
7. Rinse the cage thoroughly, starting at the very top of the kennel, working down to the bottom of the wall and the floor. Be sure to include the gate. This is a good time to refill water bowls with fresh, cold water. ALL DOGS MUST HAVE FRESH, COLD WATER DAILY.
8. Use a squeegee to remove any excess water from the walls and floor. No puddles should be on the ground ANYWHERE in your section. Free-standing water is a health risk and safety hazard! Never squeegee any water in the landscape or rock area in the courtyard. All water is to be squeegeed into a drain.

9. Remove any food, hair or debris from the drain covers. You can use a glove or a paper towel to accomplish this.
10. Flush drains (the silver buttons on walls all over the shelter). THIS WILL BE DONE DAILY AFTER EACH SIDE IS CLEANED.
11. Put bedding, toys, etc. into the kennel when needed. The toys must be large enough not to go down the drain. Bedding will be re-used if it is NOT wet, dirty or soiled. If the bedding is wet, dirty or soiled it must be replaced with fresh, clean bedding.
12. Bring dogs to the clean side of the kennel and close the guillotine.
13. Clean the other side of the kennel (usually the inside) following same protocol as above.
14. Flush Drains for second time.
15. Dispose of any food in garbage cans, wash food bowls, remove leashes on fences or on the ground, clean out of the sinks. Remove any trash accumulated on the window sills.
16. Bring used bedding to the laundry area and put in a load of laundry.
17. All trash will be taken out to the dumpster at the conclusion of morning cleaning.
18. Complete the dog inventory, making any corrections. Please be sure that each kennel card matches the dog in the kennel. If there are any corrections needed on the kennel card, let a lead or manager know. If a card is missing from either side, please be sure that a new card is printed. Throw out any old cards when an animal is adopted..
19. Turn your inventory into your supervisor.
20. Pick up your dog walk lists from the kennel manager office.
21. Help a coworker finish their section; the entire dog team finishes morning cleaning at the same time.
22. Remember that all courtyards are to be fully disinfected and cleaned just like a normal kennel during morning cleaning.
23. Wash your food bowls, this must be done before you go to lunch.

#### Afternoon Protocol

Follow dog walk/courtyard lists and record when a dog is walked on the sheet. Spend time with your dogs providing yard play, grooming, or walks as appropriate. Walk lists are provided daily by your manager.

Make sure courtyard runs in the Pods are clean throughout the day.

Check and insure that the back yard is clean and trash is taken out.



Circulate periodically though your area to pick up any feces, spilled food, and ensure that the dogs have water. This should be done every 15 minutes.

Clean any windows that appear to be dirty or water spotted.

Wash down hallway floors with a clean bucket of water and cleaning solution.

Clean and refill disinfecting mats (PUP NURS, CLINIC HOLDING AND INFIRMARIES).

Do laundry.

Respond to adoption calls.

Clean visitation rooms.

Drains are to be snaked every Sunday.

All kennels must have drain covers.

All kennels must have clean water in them even if not occupied.

#### Afternoon Re-feeding

Afternoon feeding is to be done between 2pm – 3pm. This helps insure that the dog's kennels are as clean as possible overnight for the dogs. All dogs are fed twice-a-day.

Insure that all dogs have adequate, fresh water while you are re-feeding.

Insure that all dogs that are under 6 months, over 6 years old, emaciated, dogs less than 25 lbs and otherwise noted on kennel card by dog lead or dog manager have dry, clean bedding. All dogs are to have grey, dog beds and a toy.

#### Closing

Circulate periodically though the entire dog area to pick up any feces, spilled food, and ensure that the dogs have water. This should be done every 15 minutes until you clock out.

Do laundry.

Clean visitation rooms.

## ➤ Management Checklist

### Outside

- \_\_\_\_\_ Landscaping areas are free of feces and trash
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trash cans have been emptied
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doorway and parking lot are free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Windows and doors are clean

### Foyer

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Windows and doors are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved and current (remove outdated signs)

### Public Admissions

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Room is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Desktop is clean and neat
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Admissions room cages, doors, floor and walls are clean

### Small Animal Room

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor, windows and cabinets are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Room is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animals have water, food, clean bedding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Admissions room cages, doors, floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved

### Adoption Desk/Area

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floors, tables, countertops, chairs are clean,
- \_\_\_\_\_ Countertops and tables are free of clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animals have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages that are adjacent to another has a clean, neatly folded, double-layer, white sheet draped between

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer bottles are available near cat cages (not empty) along with explanatory sign
- \_\_\_\_\_ Frames on any signs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris, including donation bin area
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ plastic picture frames are clean and not broken
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visiting Rooms floors and walls are clean and free of fur and debris

#### Admissions behind the scenes (Intake Room)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and cabinets are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Room is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Countertops and exam table is clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris and clutter

#### Cat Colony Rooms 1 & 2

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Glass on Cat Colony rooms and entry doors are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vestibule area, including floor, glass and doors are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disinfecting mats are clean and full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chairs are clean including legs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cat has a cage card, in a plastic sleeve on the wall (Check by counting cats and cards)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cage cards are free of hand written notations and are not crumpled
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and cage cards are affixed to the wall. are not crooked, are in clean plastic sleeves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cats have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes Bedding is not tattered or worn
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are free of clutter and excessive bedding (it looks neat and
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat trees, climbing ladders/shelves, cubby holes are clean and free of fur and debris indoors and out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizers are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Kitchen trash is empty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Kitchen counter tops and floors are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Rooms are odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any posters and signage is current and approved

### Main Adoption Hallway

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Glass on Cat Colony rooms and entry doors are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage has a cage card, free of hand written notations and are not crumpled, in plastic sleeve
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages that are adjacent to another has a clean, neatly folded, double-layer, white sheet draped between
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cats have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer bottles are available near cat cages (not empty) along with explanatory sign
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plastic picture frames are clean and not broken
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Rooms 1, 2, 3 & 4 glass is clean and free of dust and debris inside and out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cats in Cat Rooms have clean Animals have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cage Cards are on each cage inside and out, in plastic sleeves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interior Cat Rooms have clean counter tops and floors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizers on walls are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cage bars are clean and free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every cat carrier/den is clean and free of hair and debris (no cardboard carriers)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Rooms are odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Room trash has been taken out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Rooms, including counter tops, are free of clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fans are off at PM
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cat trees in show cases and in Cat Rooms are clean and free of cat fur
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dog pens and show rooms are clean and odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dogs have food, clean water, bedding and toys
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each dog has a cage card that is not folder and free of handwritten notes
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and cage cards are straight and not crooked, cage card plastic sleeves are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any posters and signage is current and approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visitation rooms are free of fur, floors and benches are clean, doors and windows are clean

### Clinic Hallway

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris, equipment, supplies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disinfecting mats are clean and full

### Surgical Holding, Rec 1 & 2, Rescue area

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean in each room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Window and door glass is clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disinfecting mats are clean and full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean, bars are clean and free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage/kennel has a cage card free of folds and hand written notations, not crumpled, in plastic sleeve
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cats have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Kennels are clean and odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dogs have food, clean water, bedding, and toys (Dogs awaiting or recovering from surgery should not have food or water)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each dog has a cage card that is not folded and free of handwritten notes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer bottles are available OR wall dispensers are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are free of debris and clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counter tops are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every cat carrier/den is clean and free of hair and debris (no cardboard carriers)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trash has been taken out
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and cage cards are straight and not crooked, cage card plastic sleeves are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any posters and signage is current and approved

### Dog Yards

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yard is free of feces, trash, debris, equipment

### Dog Adoption Hallways and Courtyards

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Area is free of debris, equipment, supplies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Window and door glass is clean and free of streaks or water stains
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hallway is odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Kennels are clean, bars are clean and free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Courtyards are clean , free of fur, feces and any trash or debris



- \_\_\_\_\_ Trash cans are empty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage has a cage card in a plastic sleeve, free of hand written notations, not crumpled
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each dog has water, food, and clean bedding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer dispensers are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Areas are free of debris and clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any posters and signage is current and approved

#### Dog Kennels

- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage has a cage card in a plastic sleeve, cage cards are free of folds and hand written notations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each dog has water, food, and clean bedding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer dispensers are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Areas are free of debris and clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved

#### Cat Holding and Reptile Rooms

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor and walls are clean in each room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms look neat, clean and organized from the window
- \_\_\_\_\_ Window and door glass is clean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disinfecting mats are clean and full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cages are clean, bars are clean and free of debris
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage has a cage card in a plastic sleeve, cage cards are free of folds and hand written notations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cats and reptiles have water, food, clean bedding and litter boxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand sanitizer bottles are available OR wall dispensers are full
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are free of debris and clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and literature are approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tables are clean and free of clutter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each cage that is adjacent to another has a clean, neatly folded solid color sheet draped over it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every cat carrier/den is clean and free of hair and debris (no cardboard carriers)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every feral cat has a cat den or box to hide in
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms are odor free
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trash has been taken out in each room
- \_\_\_\_\_ All signs and cage cards are straight and not crooked, cage card plastic sleeves are clean

\_\_\_\_\_ Any posters and signage is current and approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Fans are off at PM

Do the same for all over rooms/areas of the facility including Storage Room, Cat Infirmaries, Med Room, Dog Holding, Dog Infirmaries, Laundry, Kitchen Area, Offices, Behavior Room, Grooming Room, Break Room, Outdoor Break Area, Restrooms, Administrative Office and Conference Rooms.

➤ **Mandatory Animal Handling Training Module for Staff**

Should include the items below, along with explanations of *why* these things are important and why they work.

How to:

- ✓ Understand dog body language
- ✓ How to handle a dog
  - Enter a kennel
  - Greet a dog and take him out of the kennel
  - Break up a dog fight (and prevent one)
  - What to do if a dog gets loose
  - Find out if a dog is good with other dogs, good with cats (notes in Chameleon, only Marc or Denise to do cat test w a dog)
  - Do a dog-meet-dog introduction (why we do them, only trained employees to do them)
  - Advise adopters to introduce a dog to other dogs or to cats
  - How to put a shelter collar on a dog
  - Select an appropriate collar and fit it on a dog (to help volunteers with dog walking) No slip leads outside.
  - Identifying illness.
  - Breed characteristics and finding an appropriate match
  - Behavior notes.
- ✓ Understand feline body language
- ✓ Handle a cat:
  - Take the path of least resistance
  - What to do if a cat gets loose and is difficult to catch
  - How to pick up a cat
  - Take a cat out of a cage
  - Put a cat into a carrier/cat den. Cardboard carrier usage.
  - How to move a cat through the shelter
  - Advise adopters to introduce a cat to dogs or other cats
  - Declawing alternatives: sticky paws, trim nails (how to), providing a variety of scratching surfaces, soft paws, adopt an already declawed cat
  - Determine if a cat is declawed (declaw stickers)
  - Why we do not use slip leads on cats, and safe alternatives
  - Put a shelter collar on a cat
  - “Mean Cat”
  - Containment issues
  - Cat behavior can be highly circumstantial
  - Kitty colds, stress, impact on health
  - Identifying illness

- Cats must eat
- Feral cats: handling them
- Barn cats – we DO have them available, what to do if someone wants barn cats, relocation guidelines.

Learn:

- ✓ Names of animals, how they affect adoptability, no arbitrary name changes. If you spot an inappropriate name, who to notify.
- ✓ Why cleanliness is so important (infection control).
- ✓ About volunteer policies, how to talk to volunteers when they are doing something that you think is inappropriate, who to contact about problems with volunteers.
- ✓ What we feed animals, why, and what the public should feed their new pet.
- ✓ Putting appropriate notes in Chameleon.
- ✓ When to get help, what to do when you are not sure what is best.
- ✓ About the Animal Help Desk.
- ✓ Treatment for adopted animals that become ill

## PART V: SAMPLE JOB DUTIES & DESCRIPTIONS

### For Supervisors:

- ✓ To maintain healthy, safe, sanitary, pleasant, and clean facilities for the animals at all times and to ensure that they are adopted into good homes in a timely manner.
- ✓ To plan, implement, facilitate, monitor, and evaluate all animal care issues at the shelter including, but not limited to, intake, vaccination, feeding, grooming, health related issues and sanitation, adoptions, medical and behavior rehabilitation, transfers, foster care, spay/neuter, and euthanasia.
- ✓ To monitor the conditions of animals in the shelter, rapidly identify problems or animal conditions (medical and behavioral), and ensure prompt staff response. These include veterinary, behavior, cleaning, grooming, and special feeding needs.
- ✓ To budget, plan and coordinate staffing, equipment, and facility needs, including a preventative maintenance program to ensure the timely repair and/or replacement of shelter equipment.
- ✓ To maintain all records in the daily operation of the shelter.
- ✓ To cultivate and monitor community-based efforts including working with rescue groups, shelters, government agencies, private businesses, not-for-profits and the veterinary college/community.
- ✓ To oversee the organization's presence on Petfinder and other adoption and other outreach programs.
- ✓ To plan, implement, facilitate, monitor and evaluate safety programs and associated work rules to comply with all appropriate and applicable safety standards.
- ✓ To assist staff and volunteers whenever necessary to assure smooth, courteous handling of the public and their pets.
- ✓ To maintain an appropriate inventory of food and other supplies.
- ✓ To perform multiple walk-throughs of the shelter daily to ensure proper sanitation, care, feeding and disposition of the animals and to ensure that animals are moving through the system and are made available for adoption on a timely basis.
- ✓ To provide guidance and training as necessary to staff in order to ensure proper animal care and handling, and that all established procedures and policies of the organization are followed.
- ✓ To follow all local, state, and federal laws with regards to animal housing, care, intake, disposition, and employee work related matters.
- ✓ To plan, schedule, assign, appraise, direct and supervise employees including clerical, adoption, kennel, field services and medical staff, including non-paid volunteers and foster parents, as well as interview, hire, train and discipline employees consistent with the organization's mission and law.



- ✓ To fill in as needed in the shelter with all aspects of animal care and customer service.
- ✓ To perform related work as required or other duties as assigned.

#### For Community Programs:

- ✓ To manage, plan and coordinate all aspects of special and community based events and programs including adoptions, foster care, volunteer, rescue placements, veterinary and spay/neuter clinics.
- ✓ To keep the rescue community and other shelters apprised of available animals, and put into place procedures for transferring these animals into their care.
- ✓ To promote and expand the shelter's offsite and community adoption programs, including but not limited to Petsmart, Petco, Home for the Holidays and other community and public adoption campaigns.
- ✓ To promote and expand public awareness of available the shelter programs and services including spay/neuter, and to promote and expand public awareness of available animals both within and outside the shelter.
- ✓ To implement, oversee and manage the foster care program including selection of animals through ultimate disposition.
- ✓ To implement and oversee, in conjunction with the development staff, a post-adoption adopter follow-up program to ensure a lasting match, identify adjustment issues early and help resolve them, and to encourage a positive the shelter image.
- ✓ To keep the animals well groomed, clean, neat, and safe.
- ✓ To implement and oversee a pre-surrender counseling program and helpline.
- ✓ To prepare and drive animals to and from their offsite events, medical appointments, offsite adoption locations and other shelters.
- ✓ To ensure that dogs under the care of the shelter are socialized including walking, off-leash play, facilitating dog-dog interaction, training, and behavior rehabilitation.
- ✓ To ensure that cats under the care of the shelter are socialized including playing and behavior rehabilitation.
- ✓ To assist in the vaccination and examination of animals, performing medical treatments and/or assist in euthanasia as needed.
- ✓ To work courteously and cooperatively with staff and volunteers to ensure that all established procedures and policies of the shelter are followed.

- ✓ To maintain healthy, safe, sanitary, pleasant and clean facilities for the animals.
- ✓ To rapidly identify problems or patient conditions (medical and behavioral) that needs to be brought to the attention of the immediate supervisor or the veterinary staff.
- ✓ To answer telephone calls, process mail and e-mail relating to duties, record keeping and data entry.
- ✓ To perform duties in a manner which encourages attainment of goals, contributions and business for the shelter and its programs.
- ✓ To always treat people and animals with respect; to contribute to effective teamwork; and, to foster public relations beneficial to the shelter and its programs.
- ✓ To always promote a humane and caring attitude toward all animals and to treat all animals humanely, properly and with compassion at all times, regardless of circumstances including those that are sick, injured, feral or aggressive.
- ✓ To work courteously and cooperatively with staff and volunteers to ensure that all established procedures and policies of the shelter are followed.
- ✓ To perform related work as required or other duties as assigned.

#### For All Other Staff:

To promote a team environment and to create an environment where staff are cross-trained and assist in other areas of shelter operations as needed to meet goals and save lives, all staff members should have the following qualities and abilities, regardless of position.

- ✓ Affection for animals, concern for their welfare and a willingness to accommodate animals in the work place.
- ✓ Ability and initiative, ability to work with minimal supervision and direction.
- ✓ Ability to communicate skillfully and effectively with a culturally diverse staff, volunteers and community in a professional, pleasant, respectful, courteous and tactful manner at all times. Maturity, good judgment and a professional personal appearance.
- ✓ Ability to lift and move objects and animals weighing up to 50 pounds for short distances and to humanely restrain an animal when necessary.
- ✓ Comfort and ability to work with animals of unknown disposition and those who may exhibit medical and other problems, as well as aggressive tendencies.
- ✓ Allergic conditions, which would be aggravated when handling or working with animals, are a disqualification.
- ✓ To perform related work as required or other duties as assigned.

## PART VI: COMPANION ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT

The ideal animal control law would ban the killing of savable dogs and cats, and would prohibit the impounding of feral cats except for purposes of spay/neuter and release. Given that local governments are not likely to enact such laws, the *Companion Animal Protection Act* was written to provide animals with maximum opportunities for lifesaving. No law can anticipate every contingency and the Companion Animal Protection Act is no exception. It is not intended to be complete or eliminate the need for other animal protection laws. Nor is it intended to reduce stronger protections that animals may have in a particular jurisdiction. The legislation can and should be modified in these circumstances. As such, it is considered a work in progress.

### Part 1. Purpose and Intent.

SECTION 1(a) It is the intent of the City Council to end the killing of savable animals in the city. In order to accomplish this, the City Council finds and declares:

- (1) protecting animals is a legitimate and compelling public interest;
- (2) the killing of savable animals in city shelters is a needless tragedy that must be brought to an end;
- (3) no animal should be killed if the animal can be placed in a suitable home, if a private sheltering agency or rescue group is willing to take care and custody of the animal for purposes of adoption, or, in the case of feral cats, if they can be sterilized and released to their habitats;
- (4) animals held in shelters deserve proper care and humane treatment including prompt veterinary care, adequate nutrition, shelter, exercise, environmental enrichment, and water;
- (5) shelters have a duty to make all savable animals available for adoption for a reasonable period of time;
- (6) owners of lost animals should have a reasonable period of time within which to redeem their animals;
- (7) shelters should not kill savable animals at the request of their owners;
- (8) all efforts should be made to encourage the voluntary spaying and neutering of animals;
- (9) government is obligated to taxpayers and community members to spend tax monies on programs and services whose purpose is to save and enhance the lives of animals;
- (10) when animals are killed, it should be done as humanely and compassionately as possible;
- (11) taxpayers and community members deserve full and complete disclosure about how animal shelters operate;
- (12) citizens have a right to ensure that agencies follow the law;
- (13) saving the lives of animals, identifying and eliminating animal neglect and abuse, and protecting public safety are compatible interests; and,



(14) policies that undermine the public's trust in animal shelters should be eliminated.

(b) The City Council further finds and declares that all public and private sheltering agencies that operate within the city shall:

- (1) commit themselves to ending the killing of savable animals in their care and custody;
- (2) work with other animal adoption organizations to the fullest extent to promote the adoption of animals and to reduce the rate of killing;
- (3) provide every animal in their custody with individual consideration and care, regardless of how many animals they take in, or whether such animals are healthy, unweaned, elderly, sick, injured, traumatized, feral, aggressive, or of a particular breed;
- (4) not ban, bar, limit or otherwise obstruct the adoption of any animal based on arbitrary criteria, such as breed, age, color, or other criteria except as to the individual animal's medical condition or aggression, or the adopter's fitness to adopt.

(c) The City Council further finds and declares that all public sheltering agencies that operate within the city shall:

- (1) be open to the public for adoption seven days per week;
- (2) implement programs to save lives, including free and low-cost spay/neuter services for animals, including feral cats; a foster-care network for animals needing special care, including unweaned, traumatized, sick and injured animals; comprehensive adoption programs that operate during weekend and evening hours and include adoption venues other than the shelter; medical and behavioral rehabilitation programs; pet-retention programs to solve medical, environmental, and behavioral problems and keep animals with their caring and responsible owners; and, volunteer programs to help socialize animals, promote adoptions, and assist in the operations of the shelter.

(d) The City Council further finds and declares that ending the killing of savable animals will occur when all public and private sheltering agencies and rescue groups work together to achieve this goal, and therefore expects private sheltering agencies and rescue groups to:

- (1) be open to the public during hours that permit working people to adopt animals during non-working hours;
- (2) implement programs to save lives, including free and low-cost spay/neuter services for animals, including feral cats; a foster-care network for animals needing special care, including unweaned, traumatized, sick and injured animals; comprehensive adoption programs that operate during weekend and evening hours and include adoption venues other than the shelter; medical and behavioral rehabilitation programs; pet-retention programs to solve medical, environmental, and behavioral problems and keep animals with their caring and responsible owners; and, volunteer programs to help socialize animals, promote adoptions, and assist in the operations of the shelter.

## Part II. Definitions.

SEC. 2 (a) For purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) a *Public Sheltering Agency* is a public animal control shelter or private shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, humane society, or animal adoption group that receives city funding and/or has a contract with the city under which it accepts stray or owner-relinquished animals.

(2) a *Private Sheltering Agency* is a shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, humane society, or animal adoption group, which is designated as a non-profit under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and: (a) which does not receive city funding or have a contract with the city under which it accepts stray or owner-relinquished animals; (b) accepts animals into a physical facility other than a private residence; and, (c) places into new homes stray and/or owner-relinquished animals and/or animals who have been removed from a public or private sheltering agency.

(3) a *Rescue Group* is a collaboration of individuals not operated for a profit, whose primary stated purpose is animal protection, which places into new homes stray and/or owner-relinquished animals and/or animals who have been removed from a public or private sheltering agency. Individual rescuers who keep animals in their own homes but are not part of a larger collaboration are not a rescue group for purposes of this Act.

(4) an *Animal* is any domestic non-human living creature normally kept as a pet, or a feral cat.

(5) an *Impounded* animal is any animal who enters a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group regardless of whether the animal is a stray, owner-relinquished, seized, taken into protective custody, transferred from another private or public sheltering agency, or is an animal whose owner requests that the animal be killed, except for any animal presented to a medical clinic associated with such agencies for purposes of preventative or rehabilitative medical care, or sterilization.

(6) a *Stray* animal is any animal who is impounded without a known owner present at impound who is voluntarily relinquishing custody.

(7) a *Savable* animal is any animal who is either healthy or treatable, and is not a vicious or dangerous dog.

(8) a *Healthy* animal is any animal who is not sick or injured.

(9) a *Treatable* animal is any animal who is sick or injured, whose prognosis for rehabilitation of that illness and/or injury is excellent, good, fair, or guarded as determined by a veterinarian licensed to practice in this state.

(10) a *Non-rehabilitatable* animal is any animal with severe illness or injury whose prognosis for rehabilitation is either poor or grave as determined by a veterinarian licensed to practice in this state.

(11) an *Irremediably Suffering* animal is any animal with a medical condition who has a poor or grave prognosis for being able to live without severe, unremitting pain, as determined by a veterinarian licensed to practice in this state.

(12) a *Feral Cat* is a cat who is free-roaming, unsocialized to humans, and unowned.

(13) a *Feral Cat Caregiver* is someone who cares for feral cats and has an interest in protecting the cats, but is not the owner of those cats.

(14) an *Unweaned* animal is any neonatal animal who, in the absence of his/her mother, requires supplemental bottle feeding by humans in order to survive. In the case of

puppies and kittens, unweaned animals are animals who fit the above description and are from 0 to 4 weeks of age.

(15) a *Litter* of animals includes two or more animals who are under twelve weeks of age as determined by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state, or by a veterinary technician or veterinary assistant working under the direction of a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state.

(16) a *Vicious Dog* is a dog who exhibits aggression to people even when the dog is not hungry, in pain, or frightened, and whose prognosis for rehabilitation of that aggression is poor or grave as determined by a trained behaviorist who is an expert on canine behavior.

(17) a *Dangerous Dog* is a dog adjudicated to be vicious by a court of competent jurisdiction and where all appeals of that judicial determination have been unsuccessful.

### Part III. Sterilization Requirements.

SEC. 3(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, no public or private sheltering agency or rescue group shall sell, adopt, or give away to a new owner any dog, cat, rabbit, or other animal who has not been spayed or neutered, except as follows:

(1) This section shall not apply to reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, and small animals such as mice and hamsters, where the anesthesia or sterilization procedure is likely to result in the animal's death.

(b) If a veterinarian licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this state certifies that an animal is too sick or injured to be spayed or neutered, or that it would otherwise be detrimental to the health of the animal to be spayed or neutered, the adopter or purchaser shall pay the public or private sheltering agency or rescue group a deposit of not less than fifty dollars (\$50), and not more than one hundred dollars (\$100). This deposit shall be returned if the adopter or purchaser presents the entity from which the animal was obtained with proof that the animal has been spayed or neutered within 60 days of receiving the animal, or presents a signed letter from a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state, certifying that the animal has died, including a description of the animal and most likely cause of death. This deposit shall also be returned upon the expiration the 60-day period if the adopter or purchaser presents a signed letter from a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state, certifying that upon the expiration of the 60-day period, the animal remains too sick or injured, or that it would otherwise be detrimental to the health of the animal, to be spayed or neutered.

(c) The adopter or purchaser of an animal must spay or neuter that animal within 60 days of adoption, purchase, or receipt from a public or private sheltering agency, or rescue group, except as follows:

(1) If a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state certifies that an animal is too sick or injured or that it would otherwise be detrimental to the health of the animal to be spayed or neutered within the time period, such animal shall be spayed or

neutered within 30 days of the veterinarian certifying that the animal may safely be spayed or neutered.

(d) Notwithstanding subsection (b), if a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state certifies that an animal is too sick or injured to be spayed or neutered, or that it would otherwise be detrimental to the health of the animal to be spayed or neutered, and that the animal is not likely to ever be healthy enough to be spayed or neutered, no deposit shall be required.

(e) For purposes of this section, a determination that a dog or cat is too sick or injured to be spayed or neutered, or that it would otherwise be detrimental to his or her health, may not be made based solely on the youth of the dog or cat, so long as the dog or cat is at least eight weeks of age.

(f) Notwithstanding the other requirements of this section, animals may be transferred to organizations listed on the registry required under Section 9 before they have been spayed or neutered and without a spay/neuter deposit, as long as the receiving organization represents that it will spay or neuter all animals before placing them into homes.

(g) Any funds from unclaimed deposits made pursuant to this section shall be expended only for programs to spay or neuter animals.

(h) A licensed veterinarian shall perform spay/neuter operations under this Act.

SEC. 4(a) A person is subject to civil penalties of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200) or more than five hundred dollars (\$500) if that person does any of the following:

- (1) falsifies any proof of spaying or neutering submitted for the purpose of compliance with this Act;
- (2) intentionally issues a check for insufficient funds for any spaying or neutering deposit required under this Act;
- (3) falsifies a signed letter from a veterinarian submitted for the purpose of compliance with this Act, certifying that an animal is too sick or injured to be spayed or neutered;
- (4) fails to sterilize the animal as required.

(b) An action for a penalty proposed under this section may be commenced in a court of competent jurisdiction by the administrator of the public or private animal sheltering agency or rescue group from which the recipient obtained the animal who is the subject of the violation.

(c) All penalties collected under this section shall be retained by the agency bringing the action under subsection (b) to be used solely for programs to spay or neuter animals.

#### Part IV. Feral Cats.

SEC. 5(a) Caretakers of feral cats shall be exempted from any provision of law proscribing the feeding of stray animals, requiring permits for the feeding of animals, requiring the confinement of cats, or limiting the number of animals a person can own, harbor, or have custody of, except as follows:

(1) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the enforcement of a statute having as its effect the prevention or punishment of animal neglect or cruelty, so long as such enforcement is based on the conditions of animals, and not based on the mere fact that a person is feeding feral cats in a public or private location.

(b) In order to encourage spay/neuter of feral cats and to protect cats, public or private sheltering agencies or rescue groups shall not lend, rent, or otherwise provide traps to the public to capture cats, except to a person for the purpose of catching and reclaiming that person's wayward cat(s), to capture injured or sick cats or cats otherwise in danger, to capture feral kittens for purposes of taming and adoption, or, in the case of feral cats, for purposes of spay/neuter and subsequent re-release;

(1) For purposes of this subsection, the location of the cats, without more, does not constitute "otherwise in danger";

(2) A person is subject to civil penalties of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200) or more than five hundred dollars (\$500) if that person uses a trap from a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group for purposes other than those enumerated above.

(c) An action for a penalty proposed under this section may be commenced in a court of competent jurisdiction by the administrator of the public or private animal sheltering agency or rescue group from which the recipient obtained the trap that is the subject of the violation.

(d) All penalties collected under this section shall be retained by the agency bringing the action under subsection (c) to be used solely for programs to spay or neuter animals.

#### Part V. Holding Periods.

SEC. 6(a) The required holding period for a stray animal impounded by any public or private sheltering agency shall be five business days, not including the day of impoundment, unless otherwise provided in this section:

(1) Stray animals without any form of identification and without a known owner shall be held for owner redemption during the first two days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption, transfer, and adoption for the remainder of the holding period;

(2) Stray animals may be adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue group or private sheltering agency for the purpose of adoption after the first two days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, except as provided in subsections (a)(3) to (9);

- (3) If a stray animal is impounded with a license tag, microchip, or other form of identification, or belongs to a known owner, the animal shall be held for owner redemption during the first three days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption, transfer, and adoption for the remainder of the holding period;
- (4) Litters of animals or individual members of a litter of animals, including the nursing mother, and unweaned animals may be transferred to a private sheltering agency or rescue group for the purpose of adoption immediately after impound;
- (5) Individual members of litters of animals who are at least six weeks of age, including the mother, may be adopted immediately upon impound;
- (6) A feral cat caregiver has the same right of redemption for feral cats as an owner of a pet cat, without conferring ownership of the cat(s) on the caregiver;
- (7) Irremediably suffering animals shall be euthanized without delay, upon a determination made in writing and signed by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state. That certification shall be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years;
- (8) Symptomatic dogs with confirmed cases of parvovirus or cats with confirmed cases of panleukopenia may be euthanized without delay, upon a certification made in writing and signed by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state that the prognosis is poor even with supportive care. That certification shall be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years;
- (9) Unweaned animals impounded without their mother may be killed so long as the shelter has exhausted all efforts to place the animals in foster care, made an emergency appeal under the requirements of Section 9, and certified that it is unable to provide the needed care and feeding in its facility. That certification shall also state in clear and definitive terms why the agency is unable to place the animals in foster care, which private sheltering agencies and rescue groups it made an appeal to, and what would be required in the future in order to provide the needed care and feeding in foster care or its facility, and what steps are being taken to do so. This certification shall be made in writing, signed by the director of the agency or by a veterinarian, and be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years.

SEC. 7(a) The required holding period for an owner relinquished animal impounded by public or private sheltering agencies shall be the same as that for stray animals and applies to all owner relinquished animals, except as follows:

- (1) Any owner-relinquished animal that is impounded shall be held for adoption or for transfer to a private sheltering agency or rescue group for the purpose of adoption for the entirety of the holding period;
- (2) Owner-relinquished animals may be adopted into new homes or transferred to a private sheltering agency or rescue group for the purpose of adoption at any time after impoundment.



(b) When an animal is surrendered or brought to a shelter to be killed at the owner's request, the animal shall be subject to the same holding periods and the same requirements of all owner relinquished animals notwithstanding the request.

(c) An animal seized by an officer of a public or private sheltering agency under the provisions of a state statute having as its effect the prevention or punishment of animal neglect or cruelty, or seized under the provision of state dangerous dog laws or under state quarantine or disease control regulations, shall be impounded and held as consistent with the requirements of those laws, except as follows:

(1) Where any statute under the provisions of those laws permits a holding period, care, or disposition which affords an animal less protection than the mandates of this Act, this Act shall supersede those specific provisions regarding holding, care, and disposition.

#### Part VI. Animal Care Standards.

SEC. 8(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, public and private sheltering agencies shall provide all animals during the entirety of their shelter stay with fresh food; fresh water; environmental enrichment to promote their psychological well-being such as socialization, toys and treats; and exercise as needed; however, never less than once daily, except as follows:

(1) dogs who are vicious to people or dangerous dogs may but are not required to be exercised during the holding period.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), public and private sheltering agencies shall work with a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state to develop and follow a care protocol, which is consistent with the goals of this Act as defined in Part I, for animals with special needs such as, but not limited to, nursing mothers, unweaned animals, sick or injured animals, geriatric animals, or animals needing therapeutic exercise. This care protocol shall specify any deviation from the standard requirements of subsection (a) and the reasons for the deviation(s).

(c) During the entirety of their shelter stay, animals shall be provided prompt and necessary cleaning of their cages, kennels, or other living environments no less than two times per day, to ensure environments that are welcoming to the public, hygienic for both the public and animals, and to prevent disease. This cleaning shall be conducted in accordance with a protocol developed in coordination with a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state, provided as follows:

(1) animals shall be temporarily removed from their cages, kennels, or other living environments during the process of cleaning, to prevent them from being exposed to water from hoses or sprays, cleaning solutions, detergents, solvents, and/or chemicals.

(d) During the entirety of their shelter stay, all animals shall be provided with prompt and necessary veterinary care, including but not limited to preventative vaccinations, cage rest, fluid therapy, pain management, and/or antibiotics, sufficient to alleviate any

pain caused by disease or injury, to prevent a condition from worsening, and to allow them to leave the shelter in reasonable condition, even if the animals are not candidates for redemption, transfer, or adoption.

(e) Public and private sheltering agencies shall work with a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state to develop and follow a protocol to prevent the spread of disease, including, but not limited to, appropriate evaluation and testing of newly impounded animals, administration of vaccines, proper isolation and handling of sick animals, and measures to protect those animals most vulnerable to infection.

#### Part VII. Additional Programs and Duties.

SEC. 9(a) All public and private sheltering agencies that kill animals shall maintain a registry of organizations willing to accept animals for the purposes of adoption, as follows:

(1) All public or private sheltering agencies, and rescue groups designated as non-profits by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, shall be immediately placed on this registry upon their request, regardless of the organizations' geographical location or any other factor except as described under subsection (a)(5);

(2) The public or private sheltering agency may, but is not required to, include on the registry any rescue groups that are not designated as non-profits under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;

(3) The registry shall include the following information as provided by the registered organization: organization name, mailing address, and telephone number; website and e-mail address, if any; emergency contact information for the organization; the types of animals about whom the organization wishes to be contacted, including species-type and breed; and whether or not the organization is willing and able to care for unweaned animals, sick or injured animals, and/or feral or aggressive animals;

(4) All public and private sheltering agencies shall seek organizations to include on the registry;

(5) A public or private sheltering agency may refuse to include an organization on the registry, or delete it from the registry, until such time as this is no longer the case, if any of the organization's current directors and/or officers have been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of a crime consisting of cruelty to animals or neglect of animals; or if such charges are pending against any of the organization's current directors or officers; or if that organization or its current directors or officers are constrained by a court order or legally binding agreement that prevents the organization from taking in or keeping animals. An agency may require an organization to disclose any or all convictions, charges, and legal impediments described in this subsection;

(6) A public or private sheltering agency may require that registered organizations provide the following summary information on no more than a monthly basis: the total number of animals the organization has taken from the agency who have been adopted, died, were transferred, were killed, and are still under the organization's care. This information may be provided in an informal format, such as via electronic mail;

(7) A public or private sheltering agency shall not demand additional information, other than that described in this section, as a prerequisite for including an organization on the registry or for continuing to maintain that organization on the registry.

(b) No public or private sheltering agency may kill an animal unless and until the agency has notified, or made a reasonable attempt to notify, all organizations on the registry described in subsection (a) that have indicated a willingness to take an animal of that type.

(1) Such notification must take place at least two business days prior to the killing of the animal;

(2) At a minimum, such notification shall include calling the organization's regular and emergency contact numbers, and sending an email to its email address, if any.

Notification is considered complete as to each individual group when this has been accomplished;

(3) No animal may be killed if an organization on the registry is willing and able to take the animal within two business days after being notified;

(4) No fee may be assessed for animals released to organizations listed on the registry.

(c) No public or private sheltering agency may kill an animal unless and until the agency has notified, or made a reasonable attempt to notify, individual rescuers, rescue groups who are not designated as a non-profit under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service, and the public at large so that they may consider adopting or rescuing the animal consistent with the agency's normal adoption or transfer protocols.

(1) Such notification must take place at least two business days prior to the killing of the animal;

(2) Such notification can be accomplished in any manner reasonably likely to lead to lifesaving, but must, at a minimum, include posting a notice in the shelter on the particular animal's cage or kennel, and on the agency's website that states: "This animal is to be killed on [date] and [time]."

(d) The following exceptions shall apply to the requirements of subsections (b) and (c):

(1) All irremediably suffering animals shall be euthanized without delay. The determination that an animal is irremediably suffering shall be made in writing, signed by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state, and made available for free public inspection for no less than three years;

(2) Symptomatic dogs with confirmed cases of parvovirus or cats with confirmed cases of panleukopenia may be euthanized without delay, upon a certification made in writing and signed by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state that the prognosis is poor even with supportive care. Such certification shall be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years;

(3) Dangerous dogs may, but are not required to be, released to organizations listed on the registry;

(4) Upon the impoundment of unweaned animals without their mother, all public and private sheltering agencies which have not placed the animals into foster care or are not able to provide supplemental feeding shall immediately make an emergency appeal to organizations on the registry that have indicated that they are willing and able to care for unweaned animals, and give such organizations a reasonable amount of time to respond to the appeal. Unweaned animals impounded without their mother may then be killed before the expiration of the two business days notification period if the requirements of Section 6(a)(9) are met.

(e) All public and private sheltering agencies shall require organizations taking animals under this section to sign a contract providing:

(1) That the animals are being taken for the purposes of adoption;

(2) That all animals taken from the agency will be spayed or neutered before adoption, unless a licensed veterinarian certifies that an animal is too sick to be spayed or neutered or that it would otherwise be detrimental to the health of the animal to be spayed or neutered as required under Section 3 of this Act.

SEC. 10(a) All public and private sheltering agencies shall take appropriate action to ensure that all animals are checked for all currently acceptable methods of identification, including microchips, identification tags, and licenses. All public and private sheltering agencies shall maintain continuously updated lists of animals reported lost, and match these lost reports with animals reported found and animals in the shelter, and shall also post all stray animals on the Internet with sufficient detail to allow them to be recognized and claimed by their owners. If a possible owner is identified, the agencies shall undertake reasonable efforts to notify the owner or caretaker of the whereabouts of the animal and any procedures available for the lawful recovery of the animal. These efforts shall include, but are not limited to, notifying the possible owner by telephone, mail, and personal service to the last known address. Upon the owner's or caretaker's initiation of recovery procedures, the agencies shall retain custody of the animal for a reasonable period of time to allow for completion of the recovery process. Efforts to locate or contact an owner or caretaker, and communications with persons claiming to be owners or caretakers, shall be recorded and be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years.

SEC. 11(a) Every public or private sheltering agency shall have adoption programs which include adoption programs to place animals into homes and to transfer animals to other private sheltering agencies or rescue groups for adoption; promotion of animals to the community through means such as the local media and the Internet; evening and weekend adoption hours; and, community-based adoption events or venues at locations other than the shelter.

(1) In addition to the requirements of subsection (a), all public sheltering agencies shall be open for public adoption seven days per week for a minimum of six hours per day,

except on the following federally recognized holidays, when the shelter may, but is not required to, be open for adoptions: Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

SEC. 12(a) No public or private sheltering agency shall ban, bar, limit or otherwise obstruct the adoption of any animal based on arbitrary criteria, such as breed, age, color, or any other criteria except as to the individual animal's medical condition and aggression, or the adopter's fitness to adopt.

SEC. 13(a) Every public sheltering agency shall provide the following public services:

- (1) low-cost spay/neuter services for animals;
- (2) volunteer opportunities for people to assist the shelter, including fostering animals, socializing animals, assisting with adoptions, and otherwise helping in the operations of the shelter;
- (3) programs to assist people in overcoming situations that may cause them to relinquish or abandon their animals, including, but not limited to, programs that address animal behavior problems, medical conditions, and environmental conditions.

(b) Nothing in this section shall prohibit an agency from enacting reasonable rules to facilitate the orderly operation of these programs, so long as the rules are designed to meet the goals of this Act, as defined in Part I.

SEC. 14(a) No person shall procure or use any living animal from a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group for medical or biological teaching, research or study. No hospital, educational or commercial institution, laboratory, or animal dealer, whether or not such dealer is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture, shall purchase or accept any living animal from a public or private sheltering agency, rescue group, commercial kennel, kennel, peace officer, or animal control officer.

(b) No public or private sheltering agency, rescue group, commercial kennel, kennel, peace officer, or animal control officer shall sell, adopt, transfer, or give away any living animal to a person, hospital, educational or commercial institution, laboratory, or dealer in animals, whether or not such dealer is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture, for purposes of medical or biological teaching, research or study.

SEC. 15(a) No savable animal in a public or private sheltering agency shall be killed simply because the holding period has expired. Before an animal is killed, all of the following conditions must be met:

- (1) there are no empty cages, kennels, or other living environments in the shelter;
- (2) the animal cannot share a cage or kennel with another animal;
- (3) a foster home is not available;
- (4) organizations listed on the registry described in Section 9 are not willing to accept the animal;
- (5) the animal is not a feral cat subject to sterilization and release;

- (6) all mandates, programs and services of the Act have been met; and
- (7) the director of the agency certifies he or she has no other alternative.

(b) The determination that all conditions of subsection (a) have been met shall be made in writing, signed by the director of the agency, and be made available for free public inspection for no less than three years.

SEC. 16(a) All animals impounded by a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group shall be killed, only when necessary and consistent with the requirements of this Act, by lethal intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital, except as follows:

(1) intraperitoneal injections may be used only under the direction of a licensed veterinarian, and only when intravenous injection is not possible for infant animals, companion animals other than cats and dogs, feral cats, or in comatose animals with depressed vascular function.

(2) intracardiac injections may be used only when intravenous injection is not possible for animals who are completely unconscious or comatose, and then only under the direction of a veterinarian.

(b) No animal shall be allowed to witness any other animal being killed or being tranquilized/sedated for the purpose of being killed or see the bodies of animals which have already been killed.

(c) Animals shall be sedated/tranquilized as necessary to minimize their stress or discomfort, or in the case of vicious animals, to ensure staff safety, except as follows:

(1) neuromuscular blocking agents shall not be used.

(d) Following their injection, animals shall be lowered to the surface on which they are being held and shall not be permitted to drop or otherwise collapse without support.

(e) An animal may not be left unattended between the time procedures to kill the animal are commenced and the time death occurs, nor may the body be disposed of until death is verified.

(f) Verification of death shall be confirmed for each animal in all of the following ways:

(1) by lack of heartbeat, verified by a stethoscope;

(2) by lack of respiration, verified by observation;

(3) by pale, bluish gums and tongue, verified by observation; and

(4) by lack of eye response, verified if lid does not blink when eye is touched and pupil remains dilated when a light is shined on it.

(g) The room in which animals are killed shall be cleaned and regularly disinfected as necessary, but no less than once per day on days the room is used, except as follows:



(1) The area where the procedure is performed shall be cleaned and disinfected between each procedure.

(h) The room in which animals are killed shall have adequate ventilation that prevents the accumulation of odors.

(i) A veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state or a euthanasia technician certified by the state euthanasia certification program shall perform these procedures, except as follows:

(1) If a state certification program does not exist, the procedure may be performed by a trained euthanasia technician working under the direction of a veterinarian.

#### Part VIII. Public Accountability.

SEC. 17(a) All public and private sheltering agencies must post, in a conspicuous place where animals are being relinquished by owners, a sign which is clearly visible and readable from any vantage point in the area, and at least 17 inches by 22 inches, which has all of the following information identified by species-type:

- (1) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year;
- (2) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year who were adopted;
- (3) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year who were transferred to other agencies for adoption;
- (4) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year who were reclaimed by their owners;
- (5) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year who died, were lost, and/or were stolen while under the direct or constructive care of the agency; and
- (6) the number of animals impounded for the prior calendar year who were killed by the agency, at the agency's direction, with the agency's permission, and/or by a representative of the agency.

(b) All public or private sheltering agencies must provide all owners who are relinquishing an animal with accurate information, in writing, about the likely disposition of their animal which includes, but is not limited to: (1) if the animal is the breed or type who is normally killed, (2) if the animal is likely to be killed because of some current, usual, or unusual circumstances, and (3) the information provided in Section 17(a)(1)-(6).

(c) Any owner surrendering an animal to a public or private sheltering agency must sign a statement on a form provided by the agency which includes the specific language: "I understand that the shelter may kill my pet." If such statements are provided on a form which has additional information, the owner must initial the statement where these words appear. If the person refuses to sign such statement, the shelter, or its agents, must recite the statement aloud to the owner and then write: "Refused to sign." Such

statements must be kept on file for a period of no less than three years.

(d) All public and private sheltering agencies must make available for free public inspection the care protocol required under Section 8(b), the cleaning protocol required under Section 8(c), and the disease-prevention protocol required under Section 8 (e).

(e) All public and private sheltering agencies shall include on their websites and post, in a conspicuous place near the entrance of the shelter, a list of organizations included on the registry described in Section 9, as well as an invitation for all public or private sheltering agencies and rescue groups to inquire about being listed on the registry, so that they may be notified before any animal is killed. Such lists shall not include any contact information the registered organizations do not wish to make public.

SEC. 18(a) All public or private sheltering agencies shall provide to the City Council and, upon request, for free public inspection, a monthly summary by the tenth day of the month that includes the following information by species-type:

- (1) the number of animals impounded during the previous month;
- (2) the number of impounded animals sterilized and/or sterilized by contract with participating outside private veterinarians during the previous month;
- (3) the number of animals who were killed by the agency, at the agency's direction, with the agency's permission, and/or by a representative of the agency during the previous month;
- (4) the number of animals who died, were lost, and/or were stolen while in the direct or constructive care of such agency during the previous month;
- (5) the number of animals who were returned to their owners during the previous month;
- (6) the number of animals who were adopted during the previous month;
- (7) the number of animals who were transferred to other organizations for adoption during the previous month; and
- (8) the number of animals impounded into the reporting agency from outside the city during the previous month.

(b) Every public or private sheltering agency shall provide an annual summary by January 31 to the City Council and, upon request, for free public inspection, which includes the following information by species-type:

- (1) the number of animals impounded during the previous calendar year;
- (2) the number of impounded animals sterilized and/or sterilized by contract with participating outside private veterinarians during the previous calendar year;
- (3) the number of animals who were killed by the agency, at the agency's direction, with the agency's permission, and/or by a representative of the agency during the previous calendar year;
- (4) the number of animals who died, were lost, and/or were stolen while in the direct or constructive care of such agency during the previous calendar year;

- (5) the number of animals who were returned to their owners during the previous calendar year;
- (6) the number of animals who were adopted during the previous calendar year;
- (7) the number of animals who were transferred to other organizations for adoption during the previous calendar year; and
- (8) the number of animals impounded into the reporting agency from outside the city during the previous calendar year.

SEC. 19(a) Revenues from dog licenses, as required under any existing state or local laws, shall be deposited into an account for use by the public animal control agency as follows:

- (1) 60 percent shall be used exclusively for free and low-cost spay/neuter of feral cats and owned animals under the provision of subsection (b);
- (2) 40 percent shall be used exclusively for free and low-cost medical assistance, including vaccinations, of feral cats and owned animals under the provision of subsection (b).

(b) These funds shall be used to provide low-cost spay/neuter and medical care for animals if the owner or feral cat caretaker meets income guidelines set by the shelter or city except as follows:

- (1) These funds shall be used to provide free spay/neuter for animals if the owner is on public assistance or is eligible for any type of city, county, state, or federal aid of the kind that is normally given to individuals based on lack of sufficient income;
- (2) These funds shall be used to provide low-cost medical care, including vaccinations, for animals if the owner is on public assistance or is eligible for any type of city, county, state, or federal aid of the kind that is normally given to individuals based on lack of sufficient income;
- (3) These funds shall be used to provide free spay/neuter and vaccinations against rabies for feral cats regardless of the feral cat caretaker's income.

(c) These services shall be performed under the direction of a licensed veterinarian.

(d) These funds shall not be deducted from the public animal control agency's overall city budget.

SEC. 20(a) Any resident of the City may compel a public or private sheltering agency or rescue group to follow the mandates of this Act through a lawsuit asking a court of competent jurisdiction to grant declaratory and injunctive relief including, but not limited to: restraining orders, preliminary injunctions, injunctions, writs of mandamus and prohibition, and other appropriate remedies at law which will compel compliance with this Act.

(b) Any public or private sheltering agency or rescue group may compel a public or private sheltering agency to follow the mandates of this Act through a lawsuit asking a court of competent jurisdiction to grant declaratory and injunctive relief including, but not limited to: restraining orders, preliminary injunctions, injunctions, writs of mandamus and prohibition, and other appropriate remedies at law which will compel compliance with this Act.

SEC. 21(a) Any law, ordinance, or policy which requires the licensing of cats, the confinement of cats, limits the number of animals a household can own or care for, prohibits or requires permits for the feeding of stray domestic animals, or prohibits the adoption of specific breeds of dogs is hereby repealed as contrary to the public interest except as follows:

(1) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the enforcement of a statute having as its effect the prevention or punishment of animal neglect or cruelty, so long as such enforcement is based on the conditions of animals or the environment, and not based on the mere fact that a household has a certain number of animals, a person is feeding stray domestic animals, and/or a dog is of a particular breed.

SEC. 22(a) If the provisions of any article, section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision or clause of this Act shall be adjudged invalid by a court or other tribunal of competent jurisdiction, such determination, order, or judgment shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of any article, section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision or clause of this Act. Any such invalidity shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, section or article thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such determination, order, or judgment shall have been rendered.

## PART VII: C.D. OF DOCUMENTS & POLICIES

[Sent under separate cover]

### Animal Care:

#### ➤ Cats

- Allergies
- Cats in Yard
- Kitten Care
- Litterbox Problems
- Outdoors
- Pet Lover's Guide to Your New Cat
- Raising Kittens
- Shelter Handling

#### ➤ Dogs

- 2009 AVMA
- Barking Dogs
- Breed Labeling
- Shock/Choke Collars
- Pet Lover's Guide to Your New Dog
- Dog Bites
- Dog Rights
- Housetraining
- Kong is King
- Off Leash Parks
- Pit Bull Placebo
- Puppy Development
- Rethinking Dangerous Dogs
- Saving Dogs in Shelters
- Separation Anxiety
- Shy Dogs
- Temperament Testing
- Top 10
- What Dogs Want

#### ➤ Small Critters

- Rabbit Care
- Small Pet Care

#### ➤ Wildlife

- Birds
- Mice
- Raccoons

- Wildlife
- Wildlife Accidents
- Woodchucks

### **Feral Cats:**

- ACA 2007
- ACA 2008
- Care and Feeding
- Cat Predation
- Feral Cat Issue (No Kill Advocate)
- Feral Cats
- Firing Line
- FIV Ferals
- Humane Trapping
- Medical Issues
- Neighbor Complaints
- Post-Surgery Recovery
- Public Safety
- Relocation
- Socialization
- Care and Feeding (Expanded)
- TNR: Animal Control Officer's Guide
- TNR
- TNR Reduces Killing
- Winter

### **Operations:**

- **Adoptions**
  - Sample Flyers
  - Turbocharging Pet Adoptions
- **Animal Help Desk**
  - Sample Documents
  - Animal Help Desk
- **Other Documents**
  - Big Dogs, Shy Cats
  - Cleaning Protocols
  - Disaster Prep
  - No Kill Equation
  - Rescue Policy
  - Feral Policy
  - Funding for Spay/Neuter



- Guide to Hiring a Director
- Harnessing Community Compassion
- How to Find a Pet a Home
- How We Did It
- King of Redemptions
- Liability
- Missing Animal Response
- Matrix
- Model Rescue Law
- Overcoming Obstacles to Success
- RX for Healthy Board
- Shelter Protocol Notes for Cats
- Socialization Protocols
- Starting a Foster Care Program
- Starting a Volunteer Program
- Super Adoption Events
- Working with Veterinarians
- Volunteers

#### **Reforming Animal Control:**

- Companion Animal Protection Act
- Fiscal Impact of BSL
- ACA Study of Neutering Rates
- Leadership Study
- Pet Limit Laws