



# **Baldwin County Animal Shelter**

## Manual of Standard Operating Procedures

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are a key tool for the operation and management of The Baldwin County Animal Shelter (BCAS). They establish a base line for how all staff and volunteers perform routine shelter tasks. The consistency and predictability that SOPs can provide help make life less stressful for the animals in the shelter and for people working and volunteering.

All staff and volunteers will be held accountable for following the SOPs. The SOPs enable us to be consistent about expectations for every employee and volunteer and determine whether performance meets, exceeds, or falls short of expectations. All staff and volunteers should read the entire document and then review the sections that relate to his or her specific job.

This manual is a “living” document that will be updated as we identify better ways of doing our jobs and responding to the needs of the animals in our care and the community we serve. The formal procedures for suggestions and making changes to the manual are outlined below. The Animal Shelter Manager will have the master document, and everyone will receive a copy.

To avoid confusion and inconsistency, only the Animal Shelter Manager can make the actual written changes. If an employee has suggestions for changes, deletions, or additions, ask your supervisor to include SOPs on the agenda for department staff meetings.

- After discussion with the entire department, the department supervisor will advise the Animal Shelter Manager of his/her team’s suggestions or needed clarification.
- The Animal Shelter Manager will evaluate the requested change and, if necessary, discuss it with the County Administrator and/or Advisory Board.
- If the changes are authorized by the County Commission, that section of the master manual will be updated with the new wording and instructions.
- A memo then goes out to the entire staff with a summary of the update. Each staff person and volunteer also receives a printed copy of the new revised section for the staff member to update their own manual. The staff member and/or volunteer must sign a form indicating the revised SOP update has been received and return that form to their supervisor or assigned staff member.

This manual is the foundation for the continued excellent performance of our staff and volunteers at the BCAS. The manual will be used as a training document throughout the shelter. The supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff understand and follow the SOPs that apply to their roles in shelter.

## II. HOURS OF OPERATION

The hours of operations are designed to ensure that all domestic animals receive proper and humane care and that the public has adequate opportunity to conduct business at the Baldwin County Animal Shelter.

### A. Adoption Hours – Open to the Public

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Open 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (hours are subject to change).

Closed to the public Sundays and County Holidays (cleaning and feeding only).

### B. Operating Hours – Staff Cleaning/Feeding Hours and Municipality Drop Off

The shelter is open for all other animal-related services (cleaning, transports, and animal control officers on call).

Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (hours will vary for kennel techs and front desk). Open

Saturdays 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (hours vary for all personnel)

### C. Emergency Service Hours

The shelter promptly responds to animal emergencies 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Any situation is considered an emergency when a domestic animal is in danger or is creating a danger to the community or a Deputy of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Department. In the event of an emergency during non-business hours, the Baldwin County Sheriff's Department must be contacted to receive assistance.

### III. SAFETY RULES

#### A. Personal Safety

Following these common-sense rules will help prevent many accidents.

1. **Report all injuries**, no matter how slight, to your supervisor.
2. All personnel working with animals are required to purchase and wear skid- or slip- resistant shoes.
3. Do not attempt to lift/push objects or animals that are too heavy. Ask for help. Bend at the knees and hips and lift with your legs. Lift/Push animals in teams of 2 if the animal is over 50lbs.
4. Identify and remember the location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull boxes, and emergency exits. **NEVER** block these areas with materials or equipment. Keep floors and aisles free of debris at all times.
5. Use personal protective equipment as described below:
  - a. Goggles, safety glasses, and gloves must be worn when working with chemicals (quaternary ammonia, degreaser, etc.).
  - b. Staff will wear customary safety equipment when performing applicable tasks.
6. Horseplay is prohibited.
7. Seat belts are to be worn at all times when driving on business, whether in agency vehicles or personal automobiles. Per Baldwin County policies, the use of cell phones is prohibited while driving. Additionally, all animals are to ride in secured kennels in the back of the van or truck when being transported.
8. Tobacco use is prohibited in county vehicles.
9. When restraining animals over 60 lbs., seek assistance, if necessary. (See the Animal Handling SOP for detailed instructions.)
10. Any person known or observed to be under the apparent influence of drugs or alcohol will not be allowed to work and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
11. Any person willfully violating safety procedures and/or endangering the safety of other employees will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

#### B. Housekeeping and Cleaning

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

#### C. Hazards and Hazardous Substances

1. Report all hazards to a supervisor immediately.
2. Only properly trained employees are to undertake any repair work involving electrical equipment.
3. Do not overload outlets.
4. Know the safety precautions for each chemical BEFORE you use it. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) can be found in the Animal Shelter Manager's office.
5. Refer to the Hazard Communication Program SOP for more specific policies for dealing with workplace hazards.

## D. ANIMAL HANDLING SAFETY

This information is a general overview of safe animal handling practices. It is not intended to replace actual safe animal handling training conducted by the supervisory staff and/or the Animal Control Officers. When handling animals, be sure to do the following:

- Take your time,
- Don't over stimulate the animal, and do not use a catch pole on any animal unless absolutely necessary.
- Remember that the animal may *perceive* a threat, even though you do not intend to threaten.
- Two staff members shall always handle animals with behavior issues.

### 1. General Rules

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

### 2. Cats

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

### 3. Dogs

- a. When removing a dog from a kennel, distract the dog, and enter the kennel with your leash ready.
- b. Attempting to "noose" a dog through the gap in the gate can lead to an escape by the dog.
- c. Approach the dog from the side. Do not attempt to "noose" it over the top of its head, as this will only intimidate the dog. If the dog has a kennel mate, remove the kennel mate from the kennel if he or she is making it difficult to get the dog you need. Talk calmly to the dog to avoid over-stimulating him or her.
- d. When moving the dog, keep the dog away from other kennels, and break his or her line of vision. Use proper leash techniques, looping the handle of the leash over your thumb and across your palm (like a joystick). Keep the leash short, bend your arms and knees and use both hands for better control. DO NOT hold the animal in the air with the leash on its neck or the control pole. That can choke and harm the dog's neck.
- e. Only small dogs and puppies should be carried, and then, only as you carry a cat. Carrying a dog like a

baby is not permitted. If the dog won't move on the leash, coax the dog by moving in front and down low. Dragging a dog is never permitted.

- f. Watch for signs of stress/fear:
  - ears back,
  - hackles raised, tail down and not wagging.
  - lifted lip,
  - submissive posture,
  - growling, snarling, barking, or lunging.

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

- g. If a dog is fearful, approach the dog slowly and speak to the dog softly. Do not reach over the dog's head. Move slowly, it adds less stress. Do not rush the animal as it leads to unpredictable behavior, increasing the likelihood of injury.

#### 4. **Approaching Fearful Kenneled Animals**

- a. When approaching a fearful animal, you should make every effort to be as non-threatening as possible. Remember that a caged animal may not show you signs of fear until it feels cornered (i.e. when you close off the only visible exit path).
- b. Consider your purpose: Are you evaluating the animal, attempting socialization, or trying to catch the animal to move and/or treat it? Only approach an animal as close as is absolutely necessary.
- c. **Remember that the animal may PERCEIVE a threat**, even though you do not intend to threaten.
- d. **Move slowly and deliberately.** Quick, sudden, or tentative movements may produce more fearful reactions. Be sure that the animal sees you.
- e. While you obviously need to watch where you are going and what you are doing, direct eye contact is very intimidating and threatening to some animals. Look to the side, above the head, or toward the floor.
- f. **Approach at the animal's level.** Even if you are not a very large person, you are taller than the animal and may seem to loom over it. Crouch down (bending at the knees) or kneel. You should be stable in whatever position you choose. (When working with higher cages, try to bring your hand in from the bottom, rather than the top, of the cage.
- g. Do not reach over the animal's head if the animal is acting fearful. Reach out and touch under the chest or down the back of the animal rather than over the head. Allow the animal to sniff your fingers first if he wants to investigate you. (Cats will generally "tell" you where they prefer your finger to touch them; the jawbone is often selected!)
- h. **Rushing an animal increases stress for the animal and the situation. Increased stress means more unpredictable circumstances, which lead to dangerous situations.**

#### 5. **Restraint of Animals**

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

- a. All staff must have a slip leash with them at all times.
- b. Pick up and carry or place the animal in an appropriately sized carrier. No dragging, ever.
- c. If necessary, use a leash muzzle wrap when picking up an animal. Muzzles can be found in the Intake room or next to the tub in the Adoption area.
- d. Frightened dogs or cats that try to bite or are fearful can be safely and humanely moved by wrapping the animal in a heavy blanket or towel and carrying the animal to the run or cage.
- e. When lifting animals, work in teams of two. Both people lift the animal: one supports the animal's weight and the other controls the animal's head.
- f. Use control poles only when absolutely necessary and only by staff who are properly trained on their use.
- g. Transport all cats in transfer cages covered by a towel to minimize stress. Never hold cats in your arms to transport from room to room if dogs are in the area.

## 6. Limiting Transmission of Disease

### a. **Vaccination protocol is as follows:**

Puppies and kittens 6 weeks in age are dewormed and vaccinated upon intake (please note, animals must be 12 weeks of age to receive bordetella medication). If the animal is owned (micro-chipped) or possibly owned, no vaccines are to be given until a thorough search for an owner is completed (usually not longer than 2 days of searching).

- b. If an animal has skin issues, bath him/her with the appropriate shampoo. If the skin doesn't seem to be clearing up within 5 days, he/she may need to be seen by one of our contracted veterinarians.
- c. Disease can be transmitted in several ways, and we must work diligently to prevent transmission as much as possible. The 5 main modes of disease transmission are:
  - Direct contact (one animal to another, such as nose to nose)
  - Fomite (indirect) transmission (germ transmission on an inanimate object, such as a mop, hand, shirt)
  - Aerosol (in the air, such as via a fan)
  - Droplet (sneezing, coughing, less than 1-meter distance transmission)
  - Vector (via a flea, mouse, or tick)
- d. Common diseases seen in shelter environments include feline upper respiratory infection and canine infectious upper respiratory disease (kennel cough). These are spread mainly through aerosol, droplet transmission, and through fomite transmission, such as via the hands, feet, and even on clothing of staff and volunteers.

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

- e. Other diseases, such as parvovirus in dogs and panleukopenia (the cat form of parvo virus), are spread mainly through fomite transmission of bodily secretions, such as vomit and feces. These viruses are very environmentally hardy and can be difficult to eradicate from the shelter environment if proper sanitation procedures are not in place.
- f. Staff or volunteers who observe animals exhibiting any signs of illness (such as diarrhea, vomiting, sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge, etc.) should immediately notify their supervisor.

## 7. Every-day Practices that Help Prevent Spread of Disease

- a. Report any animal that appears sick to a supervisor and make notes on his/her cage card.
- b. Wash your hands between animals.
- c. Do not let animals housed apart interact or touch noses.
- d. Do not put animals together that did not come in together, especially dogs under one year old and kittens under six months.
- e. Immediately pick up all feces once a dog has defecated on the grounds.
- f. After picking up feces, wash and then disinfect any cement or solid surface.
- g. Any time you disinfect, rinse or wipe the area thoroughly.
- h. Wash the laundry and dishes according to the posted written protocol.
- i. Don't keep dirty dishes lying around – take them to the dirty dish bin quickly.
- j. Change trash liners on a regular basis; don't let the trash receptacles overflow.
- k. Sanitize equipment, such as coaxing sticks between cats and disinfect control poles and pooper scoopers between uses.

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

## IV. ANIMAL INTAKE PROCEDURE

### A. From the Public

BCAS does not accept owner surrenders or animals “at the counter.” The Public should not bring animals to BCAS. If citizens within the jurisdiction of BCAS need to report a stray dog, the citizen(s) should call BCAS to log a complaint. If citizens within the jurisdiction of BCAS need to report a stray cat that is sick or injured, the citizen(s) should call BCAS to log a complaint.

Please note, reporting a stray dog when the stray dog first arrives on the property is important. Feeding the stray dog without first reporting the animal can result in the citizen becoming the owner of the dog. Current protocols dictate that if a Sheriff's Deputy cannot determine ownership, BCAS may determine ownership based on the length of time the stray dog has been fed by the citizen.

Please note, at this time, BCAS is not sending out an Animal Control Officer on calls related to stray or feral cats, unless the cat is injured or sick (the Animal Control Officer will assess the health of the animal prior to pick-up).

### B. From Municipalities

#### 1. Rules regarding animals from municipalities:

- a. The Baldwin County Animal Shelter will continue to intake dogs, regardless of health, age, or breed and will charge the municipalities based on the fee schedule below.
- b. The Baldwin County Animal Shelter only accepts cats from municipalities that have been approved for the Municipality Cat Program.

#### 2. Procedures for municipalities dropping off animals:

- a. All municipal representatives must sign in at the front desk of the animal shelter facility and follow the instructions provided by the County employees.
- b. Municipal representatives should park near the front office, walk in to sign in and be assigned a shelter employee. They must complete the required intake forms provided to them by shelter staff. They then will be instructed to pull their vehicle around the back to unload any animals into the temporary housing area.
- c. Municipalities will be billed monthly for the number of animals brought to the shelter. Please note fees are charged per animal (not per drop off or per family of animals, i.e. a mother dog with 4 puppies will require a fee for five animals).

#### 3. Fee(s) for municipalities

The fee per animal will be \$100.00.

### C. Intake Process for Shelter Staff

1. After creating a record in the computer for the animal, take a photo of the animal and scan for a micro-chip (see below). If the animal is frightened or you cannot safely control the animal, do not try to take a picture or scan at this time. Print out the cage card and place the cage card and the original paperwork in the plastic sleeve on the cage into which the animal is placed. Note that intake pictures and scan were not done and need to be done after the animal is calm.
2. The animal/animals are placed in the stray hold area only.
3. When strays enter with collars, any ID, rabies tag, license information on the collar or the tags are entered into the computer, the front office staff shall start tracing the information to attempt to find the owners. Stray animal collars are removed and placed in a zip lock bag with the animal number noted on the outside of the bag with a Sharpie pen. Bagged collars are kept with the animal behind his/her cage card in the sleeve. If the animal is moved to adoption area, then the collar is thrown away.

## D. Photographs for Animal Records

1. A good photograph of each animal is necessary for matching animals in the shelter with owners looking for their lost pets.
2. To help ensure that the animal is readily identifiable in the photo, check to be sure that:
  - Animal is sideways and picture includes the feet and tail
  - Person holding animal does not block body of animal
  - Picture is properly lit and animal can easily be seen
  - Be sure to document any scar or tattoo
3. Please take time to be sure the picture is good. Check the printed cage card picture and, if necessary, re-take pictures. Look at the photo CRITICALLY, as though you are an outside critic of the agency reviewing the animals on our site.
4. If an animal came in on a control pole, or you muzzle the animal, or the animal is fractious at the time of intake, do not attempt to take the picture. You may be able to scan if the animal allows. Enter intake information for the animal in the computer and print out a cage card with a sticky note to take the picture of the animal after he/she calms down or is in the cage.

## E. Using Memos in the Animal Record

1. The way to communicate anything about an animal is to place a hold on that animal in the comment field of the computer record or intake form. It is imperative that you use this format to communicate. Before any decision is made about an animal, the Animal Shelter Manager, Animal Resource Supervisor or designee will review the computer record or intake form for that animal to be sure there are no holds for that particular animal.
2. If a citizen is interested in adopting a stray, they must show up at the shelter the day the animal/animals are released from stray hold. Stray hold is a mandatory 7 days. At this time, puppies and young adult dogs are held for 10 days instead of 7 days to aid in the control of disease(s) at the shelter. If a rescue group has been contacted for this animal, these communications must be on the intake form. A sign on the cage is not a guarantee as that paper could get lost or destroyed during the daily activity in the kennel. If an animal has been selected for transfer to a rescue group and there is a hold in the computer record, suspend the transfer until you address the hold. To be official, all holds must have the name of person who put the hold on the animal and the date of the hold along with description of the situation. A hold without a name or date will not be considered a formal hold.

## V. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

### A. Exam Process

1. **Finalizing the Exam**
  - a. For litters of kittens or puppies, place a secondary ID collar on each animal to indicate sex and name. Write the animal's ID number on the collar with a permanent marker.
  - b. Place the cat in its carrier or dog on a leash.
  - c. Record your examination findings. In addition, record vaccination and parasite treatments in the computer record and/or intake form. Record any abnormalities observed and action taken.
2. **Kenneling Cats after Exam**
  - a. Find a clean disinfected cage.
  - b. Fill the food dish with appropriate (kitten or adult) food and fill the water bowl.
  - c. Place the cat in the cage.
  - d. Place the cage card in the plastic sleeve on the front of the cage.
  - e. Ensure that the cage is properly closed but do not slam the door.
  - f. Place special needs notes on kennels of cats with special needs. Special needs include, but are not

limited to, feeding, medical treatment, or calm down needs.

- g. Remove all newspaper from cat carrier(s) and return carrier to the dirty crate area for disinfecting.

### 3. Kenneling Dogs after Exam

- a. Find a clean disinfected run.
- b. Place the dog in the run.
- c. Fill up the water bowl.
- d. Give dog an appropriate amount of food.
- e. Give an appropriate toy.
- f. If the dog is a small dog or frightened, place a towel inside ½ of a carrier so the dog can curl up and gain some confidence.
- g. If the dog is fractious or very fearful, take a blanket and use clamps to hang the blanket in front of the run to create a quiet, calmer environment. This helps the dog to relax.

## VI. MEDICAL PROTOCOL FOR INCOMING ANIMALS

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

### A. Healthy and Potentially Adoptable Dogs

1. Take the dog into intake/stray hold area unless other instructions are on cage card.
2. Perform a visual and hands-on physical examination (if possible) nose to tail and record directly into the computer system or the intake form.
3. Check for spay scar or for neuter. If observed, note in computer or intake form.
4. Scan for microchip and check for tattoo or other ID.
5. Apply external parasite treatments.
6. Administer vaccines as dictated in protocols.
7. Administer internal parasite treatments.

### B. Heartworm Protocol

1. Perform a blood smear test to check for the presence of heartworms (age determined by veterinarian). If the blood smear test is negative, perform a snap test.
2. If the dog tests negative for heartworms start prevention protocol (Advantage Multi or ivermectin 1/10th cc per 11 lbs.).
3. If the dog tests positive for heartworms start treatment protocol (dosages determined by veterinarian).

### C. Healthy and Potentially Adoptable Cats

1. Take the cat into the intake/stray hold area.
2. Perform a visual and hands-on physical examination, nose to tail and record directly into the computer system or the intake form. Note if ear is notched, which indicates that the cat belongs to a feral cat colony. (Flag this animal so we can call caregivers in the area to see if this is their cat.)
3. Note if declawed or polydactyl.
4. Check for spay scar or for neuter. If observed, note in computer or intake form.
5. Scan for microchip and check for tattoo or other ID.
6. Apply external parasite treatments.
7. Administer vaccines based on protocols.
8. Administer internal parasite treatments if needed by protocol.

### D. Fractious Animal Medical Protocol

1. A Supervisor or their designee will perform a visual health scan, with a hands-on examination if possible.
2. If possible, animals will be vaccinated and dewormed based on protocols.
3. Scan for microchip, if possible.

4. Animal Control Officers may take straight to a Veterinarian on BCAS list for evaluation if directed to do so by the shelter director.

Vaccination Timeline

Animal	Timeline
Animals 6 weeks and older	Vaccinations on intake (Bordetella is given to 12 weeks and older)
Please note, vaccination protocols are dictated by the Animal Control Advisory Board and best practices. The above timeline is used in conjunction with the protocols in this manual.	

## VII. HOUSING DECISIONS AFTER INTAKE

### A. Housing Areas

There are two building with different areas in the shelter for housing animals.

- B. Intake and stray hold area** – space for dogs or cats when these animals first arrive at the shelter. These are runs/cages for the animal to be held until he/she is given an exam and treatments, if needed. (We are limited on what treatments we can give at the shelter, and if the animal needs to be taken to one of our veterinarians, it will be transported by staff). Animals placed in these areas should not be handled by anyone except the staff and shall be treated as necessary. It is very important to strictly follow our protocols for preventing the spread of disease, because the animals housed here are on stray hold or in the sick ward. The public is not allowed in this area unless escorted by a staff member.
- C. Healthy Adoption area** – these are the areas where the animals that have been deemed adoptable and are healthy at the time they are moved into this area.
- D. Quarantine**— confiscated animals by law enforcement and aggressive animals. Animals in this area should not be handled by anyone except experienced staff. The public is not allowed in this area. A picture of the animal will be taken and shown to them for owner redemptions only, and if they are still not sure it is their animal, they can be walked in the area with a kennel tech to identify the dog.

### E. Decision Process

After the physical exam and preventive healthcare, all animals are housed in the Intake and stray hold area. After the animal is placed in the appropriate cage, the kennel tech who worked the animal updates the record of the animal. The kennel tech supervisor or designee decides during the daily walk through whether animals are to be moved to another area.

The person conducting the daily walk through will make sure the animal's record is up to date and make any notes necessary. During these walk-throughs, decisions will be made as to how animals are routed. Animals will be listed as:

- "Intake Hold"— Animal was recently brought in and needs to be evaluated or has a behavior issue.
- "Stray Hold"— being held for stray/sick hold.
- "Adoptable" Hold —Animal is available for adoption.

**Immediately notify the Animal Shelter Manager, Animal Resource Supervisor or Senior Animal Control Technician of any animal who shows any signs of illness so that the animal can be moved to the appropriate area. We cannot house sick animals in the healthy sections because this puts healthy animals at risk of disease.**

## VIII. PRELIMINARY BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

### A. Summary

Upon completion of an animal's stray hold, BCAS staff shall conduct a preliminary behavior assessment. The behavior assessment identifies animals with behavioral issues that need further evaluation. For the purpose of the preliminary behavior assessment, aggressiveness is defined as animals who are showing signs of aggression, have attacked another animal or a person, or have a history of aggression. It includes animals who have not and cannot be handled.

### B. The purpose of the preliminary assessment is to:

- Identify aggression or potentially challenging behaviors, such as growling, hysterical barking and lunging.
- Identify dogs who would benefit from behavior modification and "meets and greets" or who need placement in a home without other dogs and/or Rescue only dogs.

**Note:** Only the approach behavior is assessed. A dog who approaches with body held high and tail up within the first couple of seconds of approach is more likely to have dog aggression issues than dogs who do not display this behavior. Please note if you see those issues.

### C. To assess a dog (always have at least 3 people to assess):

1. Observe and note only the approach behavior for assessment. Interaction beyond the approach is not part of the 1st assessment. If possible, video the approach behavior.
2. Be sure to take your observational "snapshot" in the first few seconds of the approach. Dogs should not be allowed to interact during this 1st assessment.
3. The approach behavior assessment includes observing how the dog reacts to other dogs (no direct contact) and testing the dog with toys, food, and/or treats.
4. For the portion of the assessment that deals with how the dog being tested reacts to other dogs (no direct contact) it is important to select the appropriate helper dog:
  - A dog that has already been assessed and passed for good behavior
  - A dog who is the same gender as the dog being assessed and at least six months old
  - A dog whose size is within 20lbs of the dog being assessed
5. When using a helper dog, place the helper dog in the outside yard before bringing the dog being assessed. Let both dogs smell their surroundings and observe the assessed dog's reaction to seeing the helper dog (no direct contact).
6. If you identify a problem with handling, return the dog to the kennel and wait until the next day to reassess the dog. If you have more than one assessment team, another team should conduct the second assessment. If not, the original assessor and observer could repeat the assessment of this dog.
7. If the assessment process and dog handling were conducted appropriately, bring the dog's assessment to the attention of the Animal Shelter Manager or Animal Resource Supervisor to determine the next steps.

### D. A sample of the behavior assessment worksheet is below. Please note, the Baldwin County Animal Control Advisory Board will make adjustments as best practices and protocols evolve.

**Note:** Employees should take the utmost care to ensure that the handler is safe at all times during interaction with the dog being assessed. If the situation becomes dangerous at any time, the assessment should be stopped. This assessment is to be used as an initial screening process to determine if further assessments are necessary, due to aggressive issues or other behavior problems.

1. Kennel Approach: Approach kennel, wait, and observe. Talk to the dog in a calm, quiet voice. Open gate, if safe to open, and turn sideways and watch dog. Check all the responses that apply:
  - \_ Dog approaches in a friendly, relaxed manner
  - \_ Body language is "soft" and relaxed
  - \_ Dog is playful

- Excitable response to human presence.
  - Fearful regression without aggression.
  - Dog is cautious and tense.
  - Defensive reaction/lunging and regressing
  - Lunges to attack
  - Showing teeth in aggressive manner
  - Hackles up
  - Stiff posture
  - Hard stare
2. Touch/handling: Gently touch head and body. Touch back and underneath dog/front and back. Apply slight pressure to back and hips and shoulders. Stroke tail and hold for a brief moment. Rub ears and cover one eye. Approach dog from the rear. Check all of the responses that apply:
- Body softens with petting
  - Licks, nuzzles, seeks attention
  - Rolls onto back
  - Accepts additional contact
  - Over-stimulated, gets mouthy
  - Skittish/avoids contact
  - Avoids a certain area on the body. List: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Actively avoiding touch/extremely stiff
  - Aggressive/ no touching allowed.
3. Food: Offer the dog a treat and allow the dog to take it. Offer another treat and, as he begins to bite it, gently remove the treat or pull back. Drop a treat on the ground and cover with your foot after the dog sees the treat. When dog is eating treat, begin mild generalized handling and petting. Mark all of the responses that apply.
- Dog is indifferent or friendly
  - Body language remains relaxed/soft
  - Dog is confused and looks at you in non-aggressive manner
  - Dog is assertive and digs around for the treat, gets pushy, looks for treat
  - Growls
  - Hoards food/freezes
  - Refuses to give up treat
  - Body language becomes hard/stiff
  - Aggression
4. Overall behavior: General behavior observations. This is a general picture of your experience with the dog during your entire experience and interaction with him/her. Mark all of the responses that apply:
- Relaxed, friendly
  - Easy to handle

- \_ Playful
- \_ No signs of kennel stress (pacing, repetitive motions, excessive panting)
- \_ Not attention seeking
- \_ Cautious/slow to engage
- \_ Calm, quiet
- \_ Signs of kennel stress
- \_ Jumping excessively
- \_ Pacing
- \_ Jumps on handler
- \_ Mouthy
- \_ Shaking/hiding/avoiding interaction
- \_ Aggressive

Please note, if an animal is deemed to have a behavioral issue, final assessment(s) are conducted by an evaluation team assigned by the Baldwin County Animal Control Advisory Board. The team will determine the next steps after all assessments are completed.

## **IX. ANIMALS LEAVING THE SHELTER**

### **A. Counseling Citizen on Stray Hold Intakes**

When Animal Control brings in a stray and a citizen wants to adopt it after the seven-day stray hold period:

1. Explain the stray hold state law.
2. Potential adopters should come back to the shelter when the dog/cat is taken off stray hold.
3. After the adoption paper work is filled out properly, the dog/cat will be taken to one of the Veterinarian's on BCAS list as soon as possible if the animal is not yet spayed/neutered.
4. If the dog or cat is having any known issues, the adopter will be told about the situation to ensure the safety of the citizen and the animal.
5. After he/she is altered and microchipped, then the adopter will pick up from the local Veterinarian's office, unless they have been pre-spayed/neutered and microchipped, in which case they can go at the time of adoption.

**\*\* Please note, microchipping will begin upon Commission approval of this document and the revised Veterinary Contracts\*\***

### **B. Adoptions**

Information about the animals adopted from the Shelter must be recorded in the computer record. This includes the date of adoption, name, address, and telephone number of adopter. The following information related to the animal is also recorded: date he/she came in, address where he/she was picked up, gender, color, and breed (if known). Adopters are encouraged to microchip their pet(s) if not yet provided by the shelter.

**Fee for dog adoptions: \$60.00**

**Fee for cat adoptions: \$50.00**

### **C. Owner Redemptions for domesticated animals**

1. The owner's name, address, and telephone number should be noted in the computer along with the day the dog was returned and where he/she was picked up. Owner must show proof of current rabies vaccination.

Owner redemption fee: cost of boarding (\$10/night) and a redemption fee of \$35 are paid to the shelter, and if no rabies vaccination proof can be provided, the cost of a rabies vaccination must be paid (Currently, the required rabies vaccination price is \$12, but this price is governed by the approved pricing in the veterinary contract).

2. **If someone attempts to claim a domesticated animal after the seven-day stray hold, or there is lacking proof of ownership during the seven-day stray hold, the Baldwin County Animal Shelter can choose to adopt the animal or send the animal to approved rescue.**

D. Guidelines for adoption procedures and the handling of adoption applications are administered so that potential adopters are given an equal opportunity to adopt. Front office staff are responsible for adhering to adoption procedures and for handling adoption contracts and fees.

1. Adoption procedures. The following procedures are designed to help place an animal in a suitable home.
  - a. Adoption area. Currently adoptions are primarily handled in the Animal Placement Specialist's office or at the front desk area.
  - b. Survey/Contract. Staff will ask the potential adopter questions and then show the adopter available animals. Prior to adoption, the potential adopter will interact with the animal and complete the adoption contract and pay the required fees.
  - c. Family/household members. Because the decision to adopt a lifelong companion is a big step in one's life, it is recommended that family and household members participate in the selection with the pet if possible.
    - If possible, children under the age of 8 years should be observed interacting with the proposed animal.
    - We encourage potential adopters that already have a dog(s) to bring that dog(s) when adopting a new pet.
  - d. Consultation. Once an animal is selected, the computer record is reviewed for information about that animal and to inform the applicant of any current holds on the animal or medical issues.
    - If there are holds, explain them to the applicant and discuss what happens next.
    - Front office staff will work with the applicant and the animal and engage in a dialog with the applicant to determine if this is a suitable match.
  - e. Spay/Neuter. Animals must be spayed or neutered prior to adoption. In some cases, the animal in the Adoptable area may already be spayed/neutered, but there are other cases where the animal has not been sterilized yet. A note should be made in the animal's computer record and this animal be added to the spay and neuter list and transported to a Veterinarian on the shelter's list.
  - f. Back-up applicants. We will accept back up applicants on animals who will be eligible to adopt that animal, if the applicant ahead of them forfeits. Office staff should record these back-up applications in the animal's computer record. Back-up applications are kept in a folder as well.
  - g. Finalizing an adoption.

The final adoption process includes payment of the adoption fee(s), providing copies of medical information, and signing adoption related documents.

- Review the adoption application completely, including all the medical information at the bottom, and get a copy of the adopter's driver's license or other approved form of identification, adopter's initials where required and signature at the end.
  - Collect payment.
- h. Medical information. All medical information is kept current in the animal's record. This information is to be given to the adopter so their veterinarian knows what we have done for the animal.

- i. Documentation. The animal's record is updated to record the date of adoption and the name, address, and telephone number of the adopter. Pet behavior evaluations can be given to the new owner.
- j. Refunds. Adoption fees are nonrefundable. Managers can override this policy when a special circumstance arises.

## **E. Transfers to Rescues**

1. Depending on the condition of the animal, shelter staff should indicate disposition of the animal before it is released to any rescue or partners approved by the Baldwin County Animal Placement Specialist.
2. Preparing a list of animals for transfer to partner shelters or rescue
  - a. The Animal Placement Specialist or other designee can prepare a list of animals for transfer, export or offsite adoptions.
    - 1) Animals are selected for possible transfer during the daily walk through by the Senior Animal Control Technician or designee.
    - 2) Animals are selected based on their ability to be adopted by the receiving agency, time at the shelter, health, and how they are doing in this environment. We will also transfer animals that have behavior concerns that are workable in a different environment.
  - b. The following must be done by the person preparing the list.
    - 1) Access the computer record or intake form for each animal and check the memo field for holds or notes about that animal that would prevent the transfer or export.
    - 2) Check the lost reports again for each of the animals on the list for possible matches.
    - 3) Give the list to the Animal Placement Specialist or designee who will contact the partner shelters and our approved rescue list.
    - 4) Change the computer routing status for each animal to rescue. Enter a note in the memo field that the animal is being transferred to (enter the group name and contact information and the date) or being exported to (enter what agency), and your name and date.

## **X. GENERAL ANIMAL CARE**

### **A. General guideline for animal care (in order)**

1. Clock in, proceed to designated area, check for signs of illness.
2. For dogs, clean outside kennels, clean inside kennels and then feed dogs inside. For cats, clean kennels first, then feed.
3. Medicate animals after morning cleaning and feeding is completed.
4. Remove and clean bowls.
5. Exercise animals.
6. Restock food as needed. Restock other supplies as needed.
7. Spot clean throughout the remainder of the day.
8. All second round(s) of meds should be administered no later than 2pm each day.

### **B. Protocols for animals scheduled for spay/neuter surgery**

1. Adult animals scheduled for surgery are fasted from the night before, and their names are listed on the board in the front office.

2. Those animals between 6 and 12 weeks of age may be too young to spay/neuter through a contracted veterinarian. If that is the case, the adopter must purchase a voucher through the Baldwin County Humane Society.
3. If an animal is 2 lbs. or more and can be spayed/neutered through a contracted veterinarian, the animal should be fed a small meal the night before surgery. Water should not be withheld.
4. For pre-spay/neuter, the employee returning the animal to the cage/run must circle on the cage card that the animal is spayed or neutered.
5. The animal's computer record and/or intake form should be updated to indicate the animal is now spayed or neutered and if there are any meds to be given after surgery.

**C. On-going Duties**

1. Spot clean animals after morning clean-up and during the afternoon
2. Disinfect and set up dirty cages
3. Sweep/mop floors
4. Walk the dogs
5. Re-stock supplies based on schedule
6. Check water for all animals
7. Assist with intake of incoming animals
8. Clean toys from exercise yard
9. Bathe and groom animals as needed
10. Socialize those animals that are frightened or scared
11. Other duties as assigned

**D. Closing Duties**

1. Spot check dogs and cats one last time/ scoop kennels
2. Check water
3. Clean break room
4. Clean sick ward, wash room
5. Keep intake areas clean, organized and neat
6. Intake any animals that arrive; do not leave animals in temporary holding without food, water, and/or litter
7. Put away supplies in the appropriate place
8. Turn off the lights in the shelter
9. Lock the door as you exit
10. Make sure all water hoses are rolled up, turned off and not laying in the walk ways.

**E. Washing the Dishes**

**Note:** Do not leave water or disinfectant sitting overnight

1. For dogs, please mix up fresh cleaning solution first thing in the morning.
  - a. Fill the first wash tub with water and disinfectant.
  - b. Fill the second wash tub with plain water for rinsing (the rinse may also be performed under running water for affective cleanliness).
  - c. When finished with the dishes, drain all the tubs.
2. For cats, please mix up fresh cleaning solution first thing in the morning.
  - a. Fill the wash tub with water and disinfectant.
  - b. Rinse thoroughly.

**F. Disinfecting Dishes**

1. Clean any food particles from the dishes by wiping them out into the trash.
2. Place dishes in the detergent solution and scrub completely with a scrubby (no sponges) inside and place the bowl in a clear water rinse.
3. Place dishes in the solution and leave for a minimum of 10 minutes.

4. Place dishes in the rinse water and thoroughly rinsed under running water until there is no residue.
5. Stack dishes upside down so they can drain on the racks next to the dish area.
6. When dishes are dry, take them back to the proper area. Clean dish area for dogs and cats or the food prep area. Do this by the end of the day so there are clean dishes for the next day.

#### **G. Empty cage disinfecting (after animal leaves)**

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

1. Empty the entire cage, and take any dishes, blankets or toys to the washing area.
2. Scoop out any organic material.
3. Spray detergent on every surface of the run.
4. Scrub all areas with a stiff brush, removing the organic material.
5. Rinse run/cage.
6. Apply disinfectant or bleach solution to all surfaces of cage/run including the top, sides and gate.
7. Let it sit for 10 minutes, rinse, and wipe.
8. For cat cages, set the clean cage by lining it with newspaper and a full litter pan.
9. Remove the “Dirty Cage” sign and put back in its proper place.

#### **H. Treatment Protocol for sick/injured animals or animals breaking with virus/disease**

It is critical that we evaluate the animals in our care daily. This is done primarily by the kennel staff in their daily walk through, but also by other staff who bring problems to the attention of the animal control technicians/supervisor for their follow up. Best practices and treatment protocols are suggested and monitored by the Animal Control Advisory Board and BCAS contract veterinarians.

#### **I. Daily Walk-Through Process**

A supervisor walks through the shelter daily.

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

1. If an animal is sick or it is showing signs of an oncoming illness, the animal is moved to the appropriate area for that species, notations are made on an animal’s kennel card and in the computer record as to the type of illness and its severity.
2. If the animal is treatable with medication, the veterinarian will assess the animal and the cost of the treatment and discuss options with a shelter supervisor.
3. If an animal’s illness is contagious (i.e. it may infect the entire kennel or human health) or if the animal is suffering, the supervisor may recommend euthanasia. At that time, a 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor must concur and sign off, and then, a contracted veterinarian will be contacted to authorize and schedule the euthanasia. The animal will be transported to a contracted veterinarian for euthanasia.
4. Animals with clinical signs of Parvo are immediately taken to the vet, and a positive Parvo test requires that the animal be euthanized or immediately transferred to an approved rescue for treatment.

### **XI. DOG CARE**

#### **A. Working in the Food Prep Area**

##### General

1. Please keep this area clean and neat.
2. If supplies of treats run low, re-stock the area from main inventory supplies.
3. Keep the stock of canned dog food on the shelves complete, re-stocking as needed.
4. Immediately take all dirty dishes to the dish washing station for disinfection.
5. Please do not leave open bags of dog food lying around. All food should be in the rolling bin either labeled “dog food” or “puppy food.”

6. Use a bleach spray to keep the table clean; be sure to mix the bleach fresh each day.
7. Keep the tops tight on the food holders for adult and puppy food.
8. When these food holding containers are empty, roll them over to the supply corner and re-fill with appropriate food type.
9. Sweep up any spilled dog food after each feeding.

## B. Filling Water Pails

1. The water bowls at the shelter in the dog areas are mostly self-watering
2. For the cat areas and when needed in the dog areas, please try to use sturdy, flat bottomed bowls

## C. Feeding

1. Keep the area clean as you make the food. Discard the cans and can tops in the trash if canned dog food is being used.
2. Using cart(s), place food in appropriate containers and begin the process. Going down each row, start with Adoption, move to the other animal areas, and end with the animals in Isolation areas.
3. **IF THERE IS A "DO NOT FEED" SIGN ON AN ANIMAL'S CAGE, DO NOT FEED THAT ANIMAL! ANIMALS THAT ARE FED BEFORE SURGERY CANNOT BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED.**
4. Currently, the shelter is part of a food program partnership with Hill's Science Diet. All animals are fed Hill's Science Diet based on manufacturer suggestions and/or veterinarian instructions. Amounts per serving vary by food manufacturer/food type but a basic guideline is as follows:
  - a. X-Large dogs (90 lbs. and over) = 3 cups in the a.m., if all food is eaten feed  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup more in the p.m.
  - b. Large dogs (60 - 90 lbs.) = 2 cups in the a.m., if all food is eaten feed  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup more in the p.m.
  - c. Medium dogs (31 - 50 lbs.) = 1 cup in the morning and 1 in the afternoon
  - d. Small dogs (16 - 30 lbs.) =  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup twice a day
  - e. X-Small dogs (5-15 lbs.) =  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup twice a day
  - f. Puppies =  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of each of dry and canned food, with mostly canned food twice a day
  - g. All underweight, pregnant and or nursing animals should be fed extra as needed.
5. Weekly weigh-ins help determine food needs, and notes on the kennel/cage cards indicate if feeding guidelines need to be updated.
6. If there is any food left over in the Rubbermaid bins, go back and give more food to the skinny dogs or the large dogs.
7. Staff assigned to clean puppies are responsible for feeding the puppies and the nursing mothers. Use puppy chow and wet food. If there is a mother nursing, she gets puppy chow also. Puppies must be fed in a large flat bowl that allows all the puppies to eat easily. If necessary, use two bowls.
8. After feeding, take the Rubbermaid containers to the dish washing area and wash them.
9. The food dishes are to be collected during clean up and taken to the dish area for cleaning and disinfection.

## D. Kennel Care

1. Daily Process
  - a. Call all the dogs to the same side of the cage in one row. Close the guillotine door behind them.  
**DO NOT LET IT DROP.** A supervisor will direct staff which side to start on.
    - 1) Scoop up all the solid fecal material, hair, and/or toy parts with the scooper in each run all at once.
    - 2) Spray kennels with water to remove remaining debris.

- 3) Get hydrofoamer with kennel-sol, One Step or any other disinfectant approved on every surface of the run (walls, floors, etc). Disinfectant must sit for a minimum of 10 minutes or longer if needed per directions. Do an entire row with disinfectant then continue to the next step.
  - 4) Scrub with a stiff brush as needed to remove all organic material.
  - 5) Rinse runs/cages.
  - 6) Fill clean water bucket/pails.
  - 7) Squeegee each run and walkway.
  - 8) Replace beds if needed.
  - 9) Provide toy (please make sure to check cage card for notes regarding toys).
  - 10) Move all the dogs back to the clean side, close the guillotine door after them and repeat above process on the other side.
  - 11) When finished, open the guillotine door and let the dogs have access to both sides.
  - 12) Empty the poop pail into the dumpster.
  - 13) Soak the scoopers in the disinfectant bucket.
  - 14) Empty the trash for your area and replace with clean bags.
  - 15) Make sure water is turned off and hoses are wrapped up.
  - 16) Clean the yard areas immediately before the end of shift.
- b. When you remove a dog from his/her cage permanently, place a red "dirty cage" card on the cage to indicate that the cage needs to be disinfected.

## 2. Morning Duties

- a. The first staff on duty each morning are responsible for cleaning, feeding, and medicating. After the animal cages are cleaned and the animals are fed and medicated as necessary, go back and check all kennels again for any feces or over turned bowls that might need to be picked up. All staff are to follow the instructions on the assignment board at Information Central regarding what areas they are assigned. Staff cannot change these assignments. If you are not able to work in the area assigned, discuss the situation with your supervisor.
- b. The dog morning scrub begins right after the dogs are all fed. The morning scrub for all animals should be complete by noon each day.
- c. Work in teams of two based on the assignment board from the kennel supervisor or employee in charge:
  - One team of two people starts in the front with the healthy dogs.
  - The other team of two starts at the back of healthy hold.
  - When done, both teams clean intake/stray/sick hold areas.
  - Please note these assignments are adjusted as needed.
- d. Equipment needed:
  - 5-gallon bucket lined with a trash bag and secured with a bungee cord
  - Pooper scooper
  - Foamer with disinfectant
  - Long handled scrub brush
  - Squeegee

## 3. Afternoon Duties

- a. Kennel Inventory - The Kennel Supervisor will walk through the kennels and make decisions about what animals are to be moved. For instance, a dog or cat in intake/stray hold that is ready to be moved to adoption.
- b. The Supervisor will use post it notes or something similar to indicate to the shelter staff "move to adoption" or "move to sick ward." This way, the kennel staff can, during clean up, move the animal to the

new area and ensure the old kennel is thoroughly disinfected. The staff person moving the animal is responsible for making the change in the computer record by noon that same day.

#### 4. Dog Walking

- a. When removing a dog from the cage or run, always use a thick slip lead. Never use the clip end of a leash on the collar. Frightened animals may pull back when being walked, and they can easily slip out of the clip collar and run away.
- b. Leave an "I am being walked" notice on each kennel dog's cage to indicate that the dog will be back in kennels shortly.
- c. As you walk outside, keep the dog on a short leash and do not allow the dog to interact, sniff, touch noses, etc. with any other dog or person.
- d. Only staff are allowed to walk animals that have a purple "do not walk" card. Volunteers can walk dogs from the adoption area only that are healthy and non-aggressive.
- e. Dogs that are indicated by the staff as being housebroken should be walked at least twice a day. Please keep poop bags with you and pick up any feces in the kennels at the end of your shift.
- f. If a dog gets away from a staff person or volunteer, never chase the dog. Instead, alert the staff and encourage the dog to come back to you with soft voices and treats.
- g. Deposit the feces in the trash can.
- h. Walk dogs in the designated area. Follow the protocols posted on the gate of the dog exercise area.
- i. To reduce the spread or outbreak of infectious disease, the dog walking area will be sanitized every night following a posted protocol.

## XII. CAT CARE

### A. Feeding

1. Keep the area clean as you make the food. Discard the cans and can tops in the trash if canned cat food is being used.
2. Make sure adoption cats are done first, then stray, then isolation/sick.
3. **IF THERE IS A "DO NOT FEED" SIGN ON AN ANIMAL'S CAGE, DO NOT FEED THAT ANIMAL! ANIMALS THAT ARE FED BEFORE SURGERY CANNOT BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED.**
4. Amounts per serving vary by food manufacturer/food type but a basic guideline is as follows:
  - a. Adult cats ½ cup in a.m. and, if needed, ½ cup in p.m.
    - Nursing cats and or pregnant cats get additional food
  - b. Kittens = ¼ cup per kitten
5. The food dishes are collected during clean up and taken to the dish area for cleaning and disinfection.
6. Kennel staff mark on the animal's cage card if they want the animal to be fed twice a day.

### B. Kennel Care

#### 1. Morning Duties

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

### **XIII. LOST ANIMALS**

#### **A. Owners**

It is the goal of the Baldwin County Animal Shelter to return all strays entering the Shelter to their owners and to provide assistance to those who have lost pets or to individuals who have found animals. The BCAS defines reasonable attempts to contact the owner as:

- h. Checking lost reports
- i. Checking found reports
- j. Checking for microchip
- k. Listing the animal on the website and/or Facebook

If the owner is known, reasonable attempts include phone calls and internet messages. If the animal is claimed by an owner, fees will be charged to the owner before the dog can be redeemed.

#### **B. Holding Animals for Law Enforcement**

The BCAS occasionally is asked to hold animals while their owners are being detained by law enforcement. It is critical that we get the following information from the Deputy on scene or person delivering the animal:

- l. Name and badge number and phone number of the Deputy
- m. Name of owner
- n. Contact phone numbers of the owner and address of the owner
- o. Completed release form

#### **C. Holding Period for Stray Animals**

Office staff are to record the date each animal is available for release on the animal's record. The mandatory stray hold is seven days. Currently all puppies and kittens are held for 10 days before they are available for adoption.

#### **D. Sick or Injured Stray Animals**

The shelter staff and a veterinarian will determine the correct treatment for the pet.

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

## **E. Matching Animals**

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

## **F. Taking a Lost Pet Report**

1. Ask the person if they have previously filled out a lost report.
  - If they have, ask them when (we keep reports for 90 days from the date of the report).
  - If they filled out a report within the last 90 days, check to be sure the report is on file.
  - If the report is still active for that animal, escort the person through the shelter.
2. All reports must be reviewed by the client care staff or volunteer to ensure the information is clear, the description is clear and the contact information is complete.
3. Explain to the patron they should visit the shelter every 3-4 days to check. We do check daily, but there are many animals. Sometimes descriptions do not match.
4. Explain the stray hold period.
5. Explain that their lost report will be held in our system for 90 days from the day it was filed.
6. Encourage them to post flyers around their neighborhood and to ask the mailperson or paper delivery person to look for the lost pet too.
7. The staff or volunteer who took the report will at this time check the found animal reports to see if there are any matches.
8. When there is time, staff or trained volunteers should call people who have filed lost and found reports to see if they have found their animal or found the owner. Many times they forget to call us back.

## **G. Calls from Citizens Reporting Lost Animals**

Any time individuals call to report a lost animal, ask them to complete a lost/found pet report on the shelter website. The shelter does not accept lost reports over the phone, unless the person is handicapped or elderly and unable to come to the shelter.

## **H. Checking Lost Reports**

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

# **XIV. FOUND ANIMALS**

## **A. Animals with Traceable Identification**

1. The staff person who intakes the animal will enter all the information in the animal's record and create a memo and HOLD in the record that you have started tracing the identification.
2. That same person will start tracing the identification information to locate the owner (call the vet hospital to trace the tag even if it is long distance, call the owner listed on the ID tag, call the microchip company and find out the owner's information, if it is available).
3. Make notes in the animal's record that the attempts have been made and the result. i.e. contacted owner, current contact information, what the status is of being picked up, your name and date.

4. If able to contact the owner, explain the fees, the hours of operation and that the animal must leave the shelter in a carrier or on a collar and leash.
5. If there is no response from the owner or no owner is found, the animal will be held for 7 days (stray hold), and then, the animal will be evaluated to determine the next steps.

## **B. Stray Animals**

1. The employee handling the intake of a stray animal brought to the Shelter by municipalities or Animal Control Officers shall:
  - a. Check for microchip
  - b. Check lost reports on file and on Facebook
2. The animal computer record should reflect the date and time the animal was found, the initials of the employee, and the date lost reports were first checked.

## **C. Matching**

1. The description of stray animals that have been brought to the Shelter by citizens or through the animal control department should be immediately cross-checked with lost animal reports.
2. If a match is made, owners should be **promptly** called and notified of the process involved for the release of the animal. Should the owner be unreachable by telephone, email, or social media, personnel will post a notice at the door of the residence.
  - a. A Hold is put on the animal's record of a possible match and return to owner.
  - b. A note is put on the cage card of the animal with the date and name of the staff person writing the information.
  - c. The possible owner is provided the information or steps he/she must take to finalize the return to owner.
3. Office staff should educate citizens reporting lost animals about the benefits of spaying or neutering, the hazards of leaving animals outside unattended and the importance of identification.

## **D. Calls from Citizens Reporting Found Animals.**

1. Any time individuals call to report a found animal, ask them to complete a lost/found pet report on the shelter website. The shelter does not accept found animal reports over the phone, unless the person is handicapped or elderly and unable to come to the shelter.
2. If an individual brings a found animal to the shelter, office staff will complete the appropriate form and obtain as much detailed information as possible. The animals will not be taken over the counter but will be taken back to the property of the individual, and an animal control officer will try to help find the owner.
3. Lost animal reports should be promptly checked.
  - a. If a match is made, the person should be referred to the owner of the animal.
  - b. If no match is made, office staff should encourage the person to report the found animal to other local shelters, to post on Facebook, and to post signs in the area the animal was found.

## **E. Return to Owners: Proof of Ownership**

1. Our mission is to GET THE ANIMAL HOME. Therefore, the following guidelines have been put into place. Proof of ownership can be determined in many ways:
  - a. Microchip data
  - b. ID tag, rabies tags or license tags
  - c. Veterinary records

- d. Pictures
  - e. Registration papers
2. If the above are lacking, take into consideration:
- a. Where the animal was lost compared to where found
  - b. Description
  - c. Coordinating dates
  - d. How the animal reacts to the person
  - e. Calling the vet or the groomer
  - f. Notify your manager about all ownership disputes.

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

1. Persons claiming a stray animal as their own must provide proof of ownership (see above). Pictures will be accepted only if they can show time, i.e. several pictures taken over time. Furthermore, pet owners will have to pay certain fees to reclaim the animal. Please note, owner redemption fees apply to animals claimed during the stray hold. If animal is still at the shelter and claimed after the 7 days, once the owner has been confirmed, the owner must go through the adoption process to retrieve the animal.
2. The fee to spay or neuter maybe be fully or partially paid for by the shelter using a contracted veterinarian. We currently have a program for Owner/Redemption Adoption fee. The owner may choose to pay the adoption fee to have the animal spayed/neutered instead of paying the pickup fee and boarding fee. This program is subject to change without notice.
3. In cases where a stray animal is being returned to an owner and the animal entered the Shelter without identification, office staff should explain to the individual the importance of identification and encourage the person to purchase a tag or have their animal microchipped. In addition, owners should be cautioned about leaving animals outside unattended.
4. All redeemed dogs must leave the shelter on a collar and leash, and all redeemed cats must leave the shelter in carrier (or collar/leash).

**XV. EUTHANASIA DECISIONS**

- A.** Humane euthanasia of animals is a practice acknowledged by most animal protection organizations as an acceptable means for alleviating or preventing suffering. Euthanasia is not a decision we take lightly, but one we must make, nonetheless. We only consider euthanasia as an option for animals that are suffering mentally, emotionally, or physically and have poor prognosis; are experiencing unremitting pain or mental suffering that cannot be reasonably alleviated; or pose danger to other animals, themselves, or people. All euthanasia procedures are performed by a licensed veterinarian that is contracted with the county.
- B.** We sincerely wish that every animal that comes to us could be adopted to a caring, responsible home. Unfortunately, there aren't enough quality homes for placement. We evaluate the health and temperament of each animal on an individual basis. We use our experience and protocol to evaluate an animal's needs and balance those needs with the greater good of the animal population in our care. Since euthanasia is the final act of kindness that can be shown to an animal, it is the policy of the Baldwin County Animal Shelter that animals be handled with respect and sensitivity and protected from stress, fear, discomfort, and pain.
- C.** Each animal who comes to us is evaluated, taking into account both behavior and medical conditions. Euthanasia will be considered:
  1. Medical Issues:
    - After consulting with one of our contracted veterinarians and following his/her recommendations, we will consider euthanasia for an animal who has a poor prognosis, will have a long and painful rehabilitation process with little chance of meaningful recovery, has an incurable debilitating illness, or is not responding to the available treatment.

## 2. Behavioral Issues:

- If an animal has a history of unprovoked biting and/or is exhibiting aggressive behaviors while in the shelter that pose unacceptable risk to people, evaluation protocols will be used to determine if the animal is unable to be rehabilitated, and if it is determined that the animal will continue to pose an extreme danger to others, the animal will be euthanized for public safety reasons.

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

- temperament
- previous history (if known), age, breed, health
- ability to cope with kennel stress
- requirements ordered by the courts

Information from the behavior and health evaluations is included in the decision-making process. Staff members must bring questions about euthanasia decisions directly to the Animal Shelter Manager. Kennel staff clearly document the specific reasons for euthanasia decisions based on the language used in the guideline. All animals slated for euthanasia will be scanned for a microchip and checked for a tattoo. If the animal is a stray, a final search will be conducted in lost animal reports.

## E. Pre-euthanasia Checklist

1. This checklist is checked against lost reports on file.
2. Pull files for any animals who are on the checklist and clip these files to the checklist.
3. The checklist with any file attachments is given to the Animal Shelter Manager for final approval.
  - a. The responsible shelter staff member pulls up the computer record and checks the animal against lost reports, adoption applications, special holds, etc., to ensure the animal can be euthanized and no mistakes are being made.
  - b. The responsible shelter staff member then creates a memo that says "approved and scheduled for E and D".
  - c. The checklist is complete when it is approved, signed, and dated by the Animal Shelter Manager or their designee.

## F. Stray Animals

Strays are kept for a minimum of 7 days before we can make the decision to place the animal up for adoption or transfer. However, if the animal is suffering due to severe injury or illness, the animal may be euthanized before hold period ends with a veterinarian's approval. Records must be clearly noted with the medical reasons for euthanasia.

## G. Owner-surrendered Animals

BCAS does not accept owner surrenders at this time. Please call the shelter to discuss your specific situation, and we will try to assist you the best that we can.

## H. Animals in Adoption Area

Animals who have been in the adoption area who fall in one of these categories may need to be considered for euthanasia:

- Dogs whose behavior is becoming worse: i.e. leaping up, trying to escape, trying to bite, and charging the gate, trying to or have attacked other animals.
- Dogs that become ill and have a poor prognosis, will have a long and painful rehabilitation process with little chance of meaningful recovery, have an incurable debilitating illness, or are not responding to the available treatment.

## I. Aggressive Animals

1. Any animal regardless of its size, sex, or breed who is known to be aggressive or exhibits signs of aggression

towards people or other animals may be euthanized. Determination of aggression is made from past history, day-to-day interaction with the staff and volunteers, and through a series of behavior evaluations. Aggression includes, but is not limited to:

- a. defensive and threatening behaviors
  - b. actual attacks
  - c. lunging at humans
  - d. baring teeth
2. Generally, cats need more time to adjust to the surroundings and noises. They should be placed in a quiet cage, with the front covered with a towel, and then re-evaluated after they have been given time to relax.

## **J. Summary**

Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It is a decision no one wants to make or carry out. We hope there will be a day when animals are no longer euthanized. Our programs are attacking the problems at the source with aggressive spay/neuter, education, and adoption programs. BCAS has assumed the responsibility for the animals of Baldwin County and to its citizens of humanely euthanizing those animals that are injured, sick and/or aggressive with no other options available.

## **XVI. INVENTORY CONTROLS**

- A.** Needles and syringes are to be kept securely stored and shall never be accessible to the public or any unauthorized persons.
- B.** Only staff members who have been adequately trained to use such supplies will have access to them.
- C.** In the medical treatment room employees should have access to all the medicine and keep up with all medications given, and when they are getting low advise the Supervisor.
- D.** All medicine must be carefully inventoried.
- E.** The general supply of drugs is locked in the main supply drug cabinet, and only designated employees have access.
- F.** Each time a shipment of medicine is received, it should be immediately placed in the appropriate area and the appropriate paperwork completed, to include matching the invoice with the order slip. Any discrepancy should be immediately reported.
- G.** A complete inventory should be conducted quarterly and kept in the file.

## **XVII. MEDIA CONTACTS**

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