

**Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

<b>Subject:</b> Euthanasia		<b>Number:</b> S.O.P. 2.4
<b>Effective:</b> August 22, 2023		<b>Total Pages:</b> 2
<b>Amends/Supersedes:</b> S.O.P N/A	<b>Approved By:</b> Owners Committee	
<b>Executive Director:</b> Jon Hilbert	<b>Date:</b> August 22, 2023	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the lawful humane euthanasia of animals for the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center (SVASC).

II. POLICY

The decision-making required to euthanize companion animal is a necessary task of SVASC staff. It shall be routinely required that qualified personnel euthanize sick or injured, aggressive or dangerous animals or requirements ordered from the courts or Animal Control. It is the responsibility of all SVASC staff to ensure that euthanasia of animals is performed in a professional, safe, and humane manner according to applicable statues, policies, and regulations.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Euthanasia shall be performed in accordance with the Code of Virginia **3.2-6546** and the State Veterinarian Division Administrative Directive 79-1.

B. The Decision Makers

1. SVASC Euthanasia Committee consists of the Executive Director, Operations Manager, Lead Kennel Attendants, and Animal Control (based upon jurisdiction).
2. The Committee reviews and approves euthanasia decisions.
3. This shall be accomplished as follows:
  - a. Review and approval of euthanasia procedures;
  - b. Review of criteria for eligibility of euthanasia;
  - c. Consult with veterinarian, if necessary.

C. Euthanasia Schedule, Selection, and Procedures

1. Selection of animals for euthanasia

- a. Critically ill or injured animals and neonate animals may be euthanized prior to the expiration of any lawful holding period in order to prevent suffering under recommendation of a licensed veterinarian.
  - b. Other animals shall be selected based on criteria as follows, and after the expiration of any lawful holding period.
    - 1) Feral dogs or cats;
    - 2) Sick animals, if their continued presence in the shelter might jeopardize the health of other animals, or staff that is unable to provide the care necessary to maintain them humanely;
    - 3) Injured animals when there are not available resources to repair the injury and holding the animal would cause suffering or pain;
    - 4) Animals that display aggression to humans or other animals, or that have a documented history of such aggression;
    - 5) Elderly animals whose health or condition makes them poor candidates for adoption;
    - 6) When necessary in order to provide space for incoming animals or to maintain a population that can adequately and humanely be cared for with existing staff.
  - c. Any animal in violation of VA State Code 3.2-6540 (Dangerous Dog) or 3.2-6540.1 (Vicious Dog) whether adjudicated by the courts or owner surrendered to animal control/law enforcement officer and/or SVASC shall be euthanized.
  - d. The selection of animals for euthanasia shall always be reviewed for approval by the Executive Director and he/she can override any decision if deemed necessary.
- D. Staff and Volunteer expectations and confidentiality
1. It is critical for staff and volunteers who do not make euthanasia decisions to understand the pain and guilt associated with this role. The decision-makers face a difficult task, and their decisions must be respected, even if they are different from your own.
  2. Staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center's Social Media Policy and not discuss euthanasia online or with outside entities.