

SHELTER ANIMAL POLICY AND STANDARDS OF OPERATION

POLICY

Alberta Animal Services is committed to the well-being of the animals in our care and to the preservation of life. Euthanasia is not considered for adoptable animals at Alberta Animal Services. Factors contributing to the euthanasia of any animal in our care include quality of life, and risk to the health and safety of other animals, including people.

Alberta Animal Services does not consider euthanasia of animals for reasons such as length of stay or available space an acceptable practice. Euthanasia is considered only after a reasonable and appropriate pursuit of all other viable options. Some examples of alternative options to pursue include, but are not limited to: transfers to other placement facilities, foster placement, return to relinquishing owner or adoption with a medical and/or behaviour waiver.

Euthanasia is performed when it is the most humane offering for the animal in question or the only reasonable option to ensure staff or community safety. It is never a decision that is made without the utmost consideration for all of the factors, as we know them.

Alberta Animal Services accepts that euthanasia for shelter animals is considered necessary in the following situations:

- If Alberta Animal Services determines that an animal is suffering from medical conditions that are not able to be reasonably treated to maintain a comfortable and quality life. If the animal is treatable, Alberta Animal Services will attempt to do everything possible within our resources to properly treat the animal to manage his/her medical condition to live a comfortable and safe life.
- Behaviours that are beyond management that are deemed unsafe to other animals, people, and to itself.
- Quality of life evaluations are made for every animal entering the shelter and periodically during their stay to ensure they do not deteriorate in the shelter awaiting adoption and are not suffering during their stay.
- Animal owner authorized euthanasia. However, Alberta Animal Services staff has the right to decline this service if the staff determines that the animal still has quality life remaining and that the animal can live comfortably.

The staff and management of Alberta Animal Services recognize that the subject of euthanasia is emotionally charged and, at times, difficult for any reasonable person to reflect upon. We also recognize that the subject requires both reflection and open discussion in order to minimize its practice beyond just one facility and instead through our community. Alberta Animal Services believes that responsible ownership of companion animals, especially through training, spaying/neutering and proper identification reduces the necessity of euthanasia.

STANDARDS OF OPERATION

Each animal admitted into the animal center of Alberta Animal Services will be evaluated initially at intake. Animals placed in the organization's adoption program will continuously be evaluated for medical and behavioural considerations.

Evaluations are intended to identify:

- Animals who are suffering mentally, emotionally or physically.
- Animals with a poor prognosis, protracted painful recovery, incurable illness, and/or are non-responsive to treatment or who suffer from an affliction in which treatment is not reasonably available.
- Animals who are deemed to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, themselves or the public.
- Animals who have a condition that individually may not necessitate euthanasia, but that contribute to escalate other conditions that, in total, warrant euthanasia.

If the animal poses an immediate or serious danger to animals and/or people, alternative options will not be considered.

When the decision to euthanize an animal is made, Alberta Animal Services transports the animals to partnering veterinary clinics for humane euthanasia. We use every available method to minimize stress for the animal and maximize safety for staff. The euthanasia process is conducted in a manner that is humane and respectful to the animals. Euthanasia is performed by a licensed veterinarian using the most humane method according to the position of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

(<http://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/euthanasia>) and as outlined in The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters (<http://shelternet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Shelter-Standards-Oct2011-wForward.pdf>, page 34).