

Prince George's County Animal Services Division
(PGASD)

Standards of Care

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Introduction

The Prince George's County Animal Services Division (PGASD) is a division of the Prince George's County Department of Environment, and serves the animals and citizens of Prince George's County, Maryland. As such, PGASD is committed to providing all animals at its shelter with the best care and welfare possible, given available resources. This *Standards of Care* document provides current practices and is intended to be read in its entirety so that information is not taken out of context and misunderstood.

This document will be reviewed and updated periodically by PGASD management and staff. PGASD staff and volunteers are expected to review the *Standards of Care* each time it is revised or updated.

The *Standards of Care* document establishes standards and does not provide details on how PGASD operates on a daily basis. PGASD strives to meet or exceed the standards outlined in this document whenever possible.

ABOUT US

The Prince George's County Animal Services Division provides high-quality sheltering and care to homeless, abused, and neglected animals in Prince George's County and ensures the safety and welfare of the county's citizens. We operate the Prince George's County Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center (ASF&AC) and provide field service operations.

PGASD's trained staff provide animals with daily care, mental and physical enrichment, health and wellness checks, and more. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, rabies vaccination clinics, education and outreach, PGASD serves as a critical community resource to promote and advocate for responsible pet care. With community support and through partnerships with other animal-welfare groups, our Foster, Rescue and Volunteer programs enhance and save the lives of even more homeless animals.

Animal Control Officers work seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints and are on-call to respond to animal-related emergencies 24 hours a day. These calls include animal abuse and neglect; law enforcement; calls regarding stray, injured, rabid, or aggressive animals and wildlife in living quarters.

MISSION AND VISION

We provide for the health and welfare of the County's animal population through enforcement of the Animal Control Ordinance, resolution of animal-related disputes and the promotion of adoptions, licensing, spay/neuter and humane education.

PGASD's vision is to become a model open-admission animal shelter and a valued resource for the people and animals of Prince George's County, Maryland. PGASD envisions a shelter where all healthy and treatable animals find new homes, where they are housed in a low-stress, comfortable environment, where County residents can turn in times of personal crisis for help with their pets, citizens are educated on the proper care of animals, and abused and neglected animals can receive the love and care they need to recover.

Working in close partnership with the County, other rescue organizations and shelters, local veterinarians, and the citizens of Prince George's County and beyond, PGASD is confident that it can and will achieve its goals.

PGASD is committed to providing the best welfare to animals possible and adheres to the Five Freedoms of animal welfare:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst by constant access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
2. Freedom from Discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and companionship.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS

Customer Service: Customer Service staff are committed to serving the public, making PGASD a positive, friendly environment, and providing customers the information they need to include services ranging from the adoption process to pet licensing to community resources. Customer Service staff direct visitors to the various animal housing areas and help potential adopters begin the adoption process. Customer Service also answers phone calls about lost and found pets, gives information about available animals, and answers questions about volunteering and community events.

Shelter Care: PGASD maintains and operates the only open-admission animal shelter in Prince George's County and provides a high standard of care for lost, abandoned, abused, and unwanted animals. Dogs and cats make up the largest populations at the shelter, but many other exotic and companion animals also come through the shelter's doors. Rabbits, guinea pigs, and mice are the most common, though it is not unusual to find turtles, lizards, snakes and birds. Exotic animals have also come through our doors, to include chinchillas, sugar gliders, cayman, alligators and wolf hybrids.

Dedicated Animal Care Attendants provide daily care and support for the animals housed at the shelter, ensuring

that each animal receives exceptional care.

Medical Care: PGASD's animals are given age-appropriate vaccinations, provided with flea treatment and dewormer, and are tested for various diseases, as needed. Animals adopted out will be spayed/neutered before going home. If a medical condition prohibits spay/neuter at the time of adoption, a contract will be signed to bring the pet back for spay/neuter surgery at a later date. PGASD works closely with external veterinary clinics and hospitals in the county who assist with specialized treatments and surgeries beyond the scope of services provided by the shelter's trained staff.

Adoptions Program: PGASD is committed to offering a streamlined, simple process to allow potential adopters to adopt a new pet with ease. Frequent adoption promotions are used to increase adoptions and help visitors notice typically overlooked animals for adoption.

Volunteer Program: The Volunteer program at PGASD provides a variety of opportunities including, but not limited to: Dog Handler, Cat Handler, Small Animal Helper, Customer Service Greeter, Animal Transporter, Tour Guide, Enrichment Assistant, and Kennel Helper. Volunteers regularly assist staff with many of the animals in the building, plus help with administrative tasks, facilitating adoptions, and with various other day-to-day operational functions. They regularly attend events on behalf of PGASD and help promote adoptable animals and the organization. Volunteers have taken on many roles and are an essential part of shelter operations.

Foster and Rescue Programs: Thriving foster and rescue programs are vital to a high-population shelter environment like PGASD, and dedicated Foster and Rescue Coordinators develop and maintain partnerships to facilitate the placement of animals in need. PGASD is an active partner with animal shelters throughout the Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia area, and beyond.

Foster homes may be utilized for animals with special behavioral or medical needs, those who become overly stressed in a kennel environment, or animals may be placed in foster homes to alleviate in-shelter space constraints. The majority of PGASD fosters help care for underage kittens who arrive at the shelter in vast numbers each year and need special care until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered and adopted.

Rescue organizations allow PGASD to manage populations and help overlooked animals find new homes. Rescue groups often take specific breeds or types of animals and seek out adopters through different channels and active marketing. Many animals that would otherwise be overlooked in PGASD due to behavioral issues, breed, medical issues or just the sheer number of choices often find homes quickly once they move to a rescue organization.

Outreach and Education Programs: Part of PGASD's role in the community is to provide education and outreach to citizens about animal welfare, compassion for animals, and proper care, and the outreach component of PGASD's services continues to grow. PGASD regularly gives tours, led by staff and volunteers, for a variety of community groups. Many of these are youth groups from schools or Scout Troops. Tour participants are given a chance to learn about the shelter and animal care in general.

PGASD also hosts and attends events in the area that aim to increase awareness of the shelter's location and services, providing information about relevant initiatives such as adoptions, spay/neuter campaigns, and free rabies clinics. PGASD Animal Control Officers visit local schools to talk to students about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare topics, and the roles and responsibilities of an officer. As part of a larger outreach initiative to reach out to the Spanish-speaking population in Prince George's County, PGASD has translated key materials into Spanish.

Pet Licensing and Rabies Clinics: PGASD is responsible for administering the County's Pet Licensing Program, ensuring that dogs, ferrets, and cats in Prince George's County are properly licensed and vaccinated for rabies. Licenses may be purchased at PGASD in person, by mail or online through the Division's website. PGASD hosts vaccination clinics, and provides information on other vaccination clinics throughout the area.

Field Services: Animal Control Officers are on duty seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints, enforce state and county animal laws, and will respond to animal emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to enforcement efforts, Animal Control Officers share humane education information on a variety of topics, to include animal ownership requirements under both state and local laws, reporting suspected violations, pet licensing and rabies vaccinations, feral cat mitigation, appropriate housing and restraint techniques, and livestock and poultry care standards.

Standards of Care

I. ANIMAL HOUSING

A. DOGS AND CATS

1. Cage Size, Design and Materials

Cage Size – Primary enclosures shall provide sufficient space to allow each animal, regardless of size, to make normal postural adjustments (e.g., turn freely and easily stand, sit, stretch, and move their head, without touching the top of the enclosure; lie in a resting position with limbs extended; be able to get away from defecation; and move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating). Food, water bowls and litter boxes (for cats) may not impede the animal's ability to stretch out. Dogs and cats should be able to hold their tails erect and their heads high when in a normal standing position.

Design – The primary enclosures must be structurally sound and maintained in safe working condition to properly confine animals, prevent injury, keep other animals out, and enable the animals to remain dry and clean. There must not be any sharp edges, gaps, or other defects that could cause injury or trap a limb or other body part. Secure latches or other closing devices must be present.

Materials – Only non-porous surfaces that can be easily disinfected and that are durable enough to withstand repeated cleaning are used in all animal areas.

In certain situations, the above requirements are not practical or appropriate. These situations include:

- Transport;
- Decreased space required for medical reasons;
- Temporary pre/post-surgical confinement (24-48 hours total);
- Intake processing; and
- Large intake of animals at one time due to impoundment from Animal Control, a public emergency/disaster, etc.

2. Ventilation and Air Quality

The standard acceptable level is 10-20 room air exchanges per hour with fresh air. To ensure proper function, air handler maintenance is performed in the spring and fall of each year and air filters are changed in accordance with established maintenance schedules.

3. Temperature and Humidity

Temperatures are maintained between 60- and 80-degrees Fahrenheit. Relative humidity ranges from 30% to 70%.

Adjustments in temperature and humidity due to individual breed, hair coat, medical condition, and age are made as needed. This is typically accomplished by relocating the animal, adjusting the thermostat, and providing fans, heat sources, or warmer bedding materials, as needed.

4. Drainage

Drains function properly to readily remove waste and water from dog kennels and from all other rooms of the shelter.

5. Lighting

Facilities should be designed to offer as much natural light as possible, but when artificial light is the only source it should approximate natural light in composition, duration, and intensity. Periods of darkness are equally important and should mimic as closely as possible the natural pattern of sleep. Lighting is provided in each animal room during the day and turned off at the end of the day to mimic natural light cycles.

6. Noise Control

Loud and sudden noises can cause stress to shelter animals and staff. The following steps to help reduce noise and are taken wherever possible:

- Housing dogs and cats in separate areas, ideally with no ability for either species to hear one another.
- Adjusting the public address system in each animal room to the lowest decibel level practical.
- Educating the staff and public about the need to speak softly around the animals.

- Reducing dog barking and anxiety by providing enrichment for the dogs.
- Maintaining all mechanical equipment in good working order to reduce noise and vibration.

7. Standard Enclosure Items

The following standard enclosure items are in every cage unless specified otherwise by staff:

- Appropriately sized clean water and food bowls;
- Clean bedding;
- Elevated resting place;
- Appropriately sized and clean litter boxes for cats; and
- Enrichment items.

8. Feeding and Watering

Cats are given constant access to dry food, with the amount received correlated to their weight. Canned food is provided to adult cats once a day. Kittens under 12 weeks of age are given constant access to dry food and are provided with canned food 2-3 times daily depending on age.

Adult dogs are fed a mixture of wet and dry food once daily, with the amount received correlated to their weight. Extra dry or canned food is provided to animals with special feeding requirements, including puppies (10 weeks and younger), nursing mothers, and other dogs as directed by a Kennel Manager, Animal Health Technician, or Veterinarian. Feeding schedules and special diets are prescribed by Veterinarians as needed. Clean water will always be available unless directed otherwise by a Veterinarian.

9. Enrichment

Enrichment items are defined as items or actions that stimulate normal behavior and reduce stress and boredom.

Enrichment items are provided to animals unless otherwise prescribed by a Veterinarian. All new

enrichment items must be approved by the Kennel Manager. Once approved, the item can be used, as needed, by Animal Care staff. New enrichment items should be provided regularly.

One-on-one time spent with staff or volunteers is the primary form of enrichment and training for shelter animals. Consistent and predictable interactions with people will help prepare the animal for meeting adopters as well as for long term success in a home. Animal enrichment can include things such as exercise, outdoor play time, various forms of human interaction, grooming, and even the type of bedding provided. Same-species interactions for both dogs and cats in the shelter are used as part of a comprehensive enrichment program to provide an outlet for energy and promote positive social interactions. The purpose of this program is to allow animals to express normal social behavior and for staff to observe the animals' interactions. Information gathered from these social experiences will be used to guide and promote foster, rescue, or adoption placement.

Animals selected to be housed or otherwise interact with members of the same species must be screened for health or behavior issues prior to selection.

B. EXOTICS

Animals brought to PGASD that are not livestock, dogs, or cats are hereafter referred to as exotics. This category includes, but is not limited to, birds, gerbils, hamsters, ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, lizards, snakes, opossums, turtles, raccoons, squirrels, and fish.

A Kennel Manager or Animal Care Attendant Supervisor(s) will determine all aspects of care for exotics, including cage size, temperature, humidity, feeding, and other care decisions. Staff maintain a contact list of experts for exotics.

II. CAGE INFORMATION

Every cage contains a cage card detailing basic information about each animal occupying the cage, including name, identification number, breed, age and gender. Some species may have cage cards kept in a binder in the animals' room if hanging the cage card on the cage proves unpractical.

Additional cage signs may be used to provide essential information regarding medical condition, behavioral concerns, handling notifications, or the animal's status, including availability for adoption, pending investigations, and any quarantine information. The information on these signs supersedes any other cage cards.

III. SANITATION

This document uses the word "sanitation" to mean a combination of cleaning and disinfection. PGASD maintains sanitary conditions to prevent the transfer of disease, which could result in an outbreak that potentially leads to the closure of a portion or all of the facility. Proper sanitation is the foundation of every preventative shelter veterinary medicine program.

A. DEFINITIONS

- 1. Cleaning** - The act of physically removing organic matter (feces, urine, food particles, etc.). An area that has been cleaned should appear physically and visibly free from debris. However, harmful pathogens may still be present after cleaning.
- 2. Disinfection** - The process of killing pathogens in a given area.
- 3. Sterilization** - The killing of all microbes; this is what is done for surgical instruments.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Shelter in General

All common area floors are swept and disinfected every morning and throughout the day as needed, using disinfectants approved by the Kennel Manager. Urination or defecation "accidents" on common area floors are cleaned up and disinfected immediately. Garbage, trash, and recycling are placed in appropriate bins and removed at the end of each day and throughout the day as

needed. Spot cleaning, when appropriate, is preferred over daily deep cleaning; industry-wide, regular spot cleaning is the accepted standard for care as it is less stressful for the animals than daily deep cleaning and disinfection.

2. Dog Cages

Dog cages are spot-cleaned daily and deep-cleaned and disinfected weekly, with the animal removed from the cage during deep cleaning. All enclosure items, with the exception of Kuranda beds, water pails and clean bedding are replaced daily. Kuranda beds are cleaned with the cage. After the initial cleaning, dog cages are spot cleaned throughout the day as needed. All cages and cage items are deep cleaned and disinfected between animals. Walkways in dog areas are disinfected each day.

Dog cages that house a seriously ill animal with an infectious disease are cleaned per specific guidelines set by the Kennel Manager; this often includes multiple disinfections.

3. Cat Cages

Cat cages are spot-cleaned daily and deep-cleaned once the cat leaves. Cat showcases are spot-cleaned daily and deep-cleaned monthly and between new animal populations. Cats are left in cages and showcases during cleaning when possible. New litter will be provided, and food and water bowls are cleaned and refilled. If the bedding is not soiled or wet, it is shaken out and reused. In some cases, additional cleaning of the cage may be necessary, and the cat may be removed during cleaning. After the initial cleaning, litter boxes and/or cages are spot-cleaned as necessary throughout the day. All cat cages are fully cleaned and disinfected prior to the placement of a new cat. Floors in cat areas are swept and disinfected each day and throughout the day as needed.

Cat cages that house animals with a known infectious disease are cleaned as prescribed by the Kennel Manager. This may require multiple disinfections and the assistance of the dog staff to minimize the possibility of disease transfer to other cats in the facility.

4. Surgical Areas

All surgical areas, including the prep area, surgical tables, and the recovery area are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. Floors are swept and disinfected throughout the day as needed. Surgical instruments are cleaned and then sterilized after each usage.

5. Intake Rooms

Intake rooms are cleared of any used carriers, boxes, and crates each evening. All counters and cat cages are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. The intake area for dogs is cleaned and disinfected between each dog. Floors are swept and disinfected each morning and throughout the day as needed. Intake equipment, including carriers and cages, are cleaned and disinfected after each usage.

6. Admissions and Adoptions Lobbies

All counters are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. Floors are swept and disinfected throughout the day as needed and at the end of each day. Any urine or feces on floors or counters is cleaned up and the area is disinfected immediately.

Donations brought in by the general public should be checked and properly stored until such time it can be relocated in the shelter. Donations not acceptable for use in the shelter housing areas will be returned to the donor or disposed of accordingly. Accepted donations for specific animals should be marked and stored in or near the housing area where the animal is being kept. The receiving area is cleared of any donations, used carriers, boxes, and crates each evening.

7. Laundry Room

Laundry is washed and dried, folded, and stored throughout the day.

8. Crates and Carriers

All carriers and feral boxes used for transporting animals to the shelter or moving them within the shelter are cleaned and disinfected between each animal, with the possible exception of newly arrived animals from the same litter or household.

9. Outdoor Areas

Feces is picked up immediately and placed in outside, lined trash cans. These cans are bagged daily and taken to the dumpster.

10. Personal Hygiene

Hand washing is the most effective method of preventing the transfer of germs that can cause illness in both people and animals. While hand disinfectants are useful, thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is the most effective means, other than proper disposable glove use, of preventing the transfer of germs to other people and to animals.

Staff arrives at work in clean clothes and has a change of clothing available as necessary. A uniform (scrubs) are provided to all kennel staff. Protective gear such as disposable gloves, masks, shoe covers, gowns, and eyewear are available for use as needed or as directed by the Kennel Manager.

C. PEST AND RODENT CONTROL

1. Exterminators

Regular extermination services are performed as needed.

2. Animal Food

Dog food in cages is picked up before the shelter closes each night, with the exception of food for puppies, kittens, nursing mothers and animals with special needs or requirements. Dishes and enrichment items

brought to the Food Prep Room for washing are emptied of all food and organic matter before being placed on counters. All food is stored in sealed containers, including dog and cat treats.

3. Garbage and Trash

All non-recyclable refuse is collected and put in trash bags each evening. All garbage and trash bags are removed from the building prior to closing.

IV. INTAKE PROCEDURES

All counters are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. Floors are swept and disinfected throughout the day as needed and at the end of each day. Any urine or feces on floors or counters is cleaned up and the area is disinfected immediately.

A. DOGS AND CATS

An animal's general physical condition is evaluated upon arrival and any emergency medical issues are addressed immediately. The animal is weighed, the age is estimated, and his/her nutritional needs are determined. Each animal is checked for identification, i.e., microchip, tattoo, tags, etc., and, if needed, is vaccinated and parasite controls are administered. The general behavior of the animal is also assessed. A record is established in the PGASD database for the animal and all information is entered immediately. Housing is assigned and entered into the PGASD database. A white fact sheet and a cage card specifically identifying that animal are printed, and the cage card is posted on the cage.

B. EXOTICS

An animal's general physical condition is first evaluated, and emergency medical issues are addressed immediately upon arrival. The physical and nutritional needs are assessed, and the animal is assigned appropriate housing. A record is established in the PGASD database for the animal and all information is entered immediately. Housing is assigned and entered into the PGASD database. A white fact sheet and a cage card specifically identifying that animal are printed, and the cage card is posted on the cage.

C. FERAL AND COMMUNITY CATS

When a cat with an ear tip is impounded at PGASD, the cat is immediately checked for a microchip. If a microchip is located, attempts are made to promptly contact the owner, rescue or community cat group to which the microchip is registered. If a microchip cannot be located, an email is generated to local community cat advocate groups immediately so that they may make plans to claim and return the cat.

If the cat is not ear-tipped, the cat is scheduled to be altered, vaccinated, dewormed, and ear-tipped for the next date that the spay/neuter clinic is open, held for recovery, and then transferred to a community cat advocate for release back to the area. When returning cats to the field, the involved community cat advocate will be given an exact address or the hundred block of the street where the cat was found.

When surrendering any stray cat to PGASD, finders will complete a stray cat intake form, which includes questions about the number of cats in the area and if a caregiver has been identified. The finder will be educated about TNR and solutions to reduce trespassing and other nuisance behaviors

from cats. Information gathered, including finders' contact information, may be provided to a community cat group for further assistance and advice regarding community cat colonies.

V. ANIMAL HANDLING

A. PROPER RESTRAINT

Proper handling protects animals and people from injury and minimizes stress for all. Animals are handled as humanely as possible by trained staff and volunteers. The type and amount of restraint used must be appropriate for the individual animal and the specific situation. In all cases, the minimal amount of physical restraint needed to accomplish the task without injury to people or animals is used. Thus, all animal handlers are trained in proper restraint with emphasis on how to use the minimum amount of restraint required.

B. EQUIPMENT

Examples of equipment used for animal restraint include but are not limited to: leashes (standard and slip-leads), collars, muzzles, catch poles (used for dogs only), towels, squeeze cages, traps, cat nets, pole syringes, snappy snares, and cat gloves.

C. EVENTS

Animal handlers at events are required to complete the appropriate animal training, i.e., dog handling, cat handling and/or small animal and exotics handling. Event organizers are made aware that PGASD will not participate at the expense of an animal's welfare, and that participation of PGASD animals is dependent upon availability of animals that are suitable for the event, as well as the availability of trained staff and/or volunteers to act as animal handlers.

D. DOG HANDLERS

Dog handlers are required to complete all associated training and be approved for independent dog walking and socialization.

E. CAT HANDLERS

Cat handlers are required to complete cat socialization training and be approved for independent cat handling and socialization.

F. PUBLIC INTERACTION

Persons handling animals and interacting with the public at the shelter are required to complete the appropriate animal training, i.e., dog walking or cat socialization training, as well as interaction training, and be approved to conduct interactions. All normal public interaction is done in a safe and humane manner and in a way that does not cause excessive stress or harm to the animal or the public. Low-stress handling techniques should be utilized at all times, the exception being when an animal presents a physical threat to the safety of others (person or another animal) and must be properly restrained/contained using other methods in order to prevent harm or cause additional harm.

G. FERAL CATS

Special consideration is given to the housing and handling of feral cats. Appropriate use of cage covers, feral dens, traps, squeeze cages, and sedatives can minimize stress and greatly reduce risk of injury to the animal or handler. Feral cats may be housed for stray hold while being prepared for TNR or placement through the Return-To-Field Program. Feral cats who cannot be released due to health, staff safety, or constraints on housing space may be euthanized.

H. BEHAVIOR

The assessment of each animal's behavior begins at the time of intake and continues until the final disposition. An animal's behavior will vary based on his/her prior experiences, the situation he/she was recently removed from, the adjustment period in a new environment, etc. PGASD staff and volunteers monitor each animal's behavior daily through all types of interactions.

I. DANGEROUS ANIMALS

PGASD goes to great lengths to ensure that the environment is safe for both humans and animals. Some animals present a higher risk of injury to people and other animals, including venomous snakes, reptiles, various types of wildlife or exotic animals, and animals that are anticipated to be aggressive. Special housing considerations are given to these animals and only trained staff members are allowed to handle them.

Every effort is made to transfer prohibited/restricted exotics and wildlife to facilities with appropriate permits/licensing and expertise in their handling and care, as quickly as possible.

Animals displaying threatening or dangerous behaviors at intake may be placed in special housing, or, at times, in the general population with special precautions and appropriate signage in order to give them time to settle in.

Dogs known to be highly aggressive are housed in such a way that they can be shifted from one cage to another using a guillotine door, thus preventing the possibility of the dog getting loose and minimizing danger to staff handling these animals. Only qualified staff handle these animals.

VI. VETERINARY CARE

A. PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE

Staff focus on the prevention of disease as well as rapid diagnosis and treatment of ill and potentially contagious animals. Preventative measures are accomplished through the use of appropriate vaccination protocols, internal and external parasite control, and nutritional support (proper nutrition for stage and state of the animal). All medical protocols are carried out by Animal Health Technicians under the direction of the Kennel Manager and Animal Care Attendant Supervisors. Contracted Veterinarians perform physical examinations and surgeries as needed, as well as prescribe medications and nutritional changes to diets. The Animal Health Technicians are trained and able to make initial assessments of animal conditions, convey this information to a Veterinarian or the Kennel Manager, and administer care as prescribed by the Veterinarian or Kennel Manager.

The state of health and nutritional status of individual animals is assessed, as well as that of the population as a whole. Individual animals, groups of animals, and whole rooms may be placed under quarantine. The decision to quarantine a room and the length of quarantine are made under the direct supervision of the Kennel Manager. The population is evaluated daily for contagious and infectious diseases and the decisions made are based on individual as well as population needs.

Emergencies are evaluated as quickly as possible. Animals may be treated at the shelter, humanely euthanized at the shelter, or sent to a local animal hospital.

Precautions taken to control the spread of disease include:

- Disposable gloves are worn by staff and volunteers when performing cleaning, and ideally when touching animals. Gloves should be discarded and changed after handling each animal, or after interaction with a group of animals housed together in the same cage/kennel. Outside of cleaning, when it is not practical to wear gloves, hands are washed after touching an animal and before touching another animal. Glove use is preferable to hand-washing. Glove use and handwashing decrease the risk of disease transmission from fomites, which are objects that are able to transmit infectious organisms, i.e., parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi from one animal to another; they may include toys, food and water bowls, hair, and clothing, to name a few. We cannot eliminate all risk (public interaction with animals on adoption floor without gloves), but we aim to minimize risk/exposure.
- Disposable protective gear such as gowns are worn prior to and during handling of an animal suspected of having a deadly, contagious disease (i.e., parvo or panleukopenia).
- Any animal with a confirmed or suspected contagious disease is isolated from the general population to minimize exposure whenever possible.
- When socializing or conducting an interaction for cats with infectious disease (such as upper respiratory tract infection), the encounter takes place in the cat's cage only.
- All articles in cages that are not disposable are disinfected as well as cleaned before being placed in a cage for re-use.
- Bins used in rooms, such as garbage cans, food bins, and litter cans, are disinfected regularly.
- Food and water bowls, as well as litter boxes, bedding and enrichment items are washed and disinfected after each use.

B. DISEASE OUTBREAKS

When a disease outbreak occurs in the shelter, the Kennel Manager may decide to quarantine a room. If the outbreak cannot be contained to one or two rooms, the Kennel Manager, in consultation with ASD and County Leadership, decides whether to close the shelter, at least to that species. Closing the shelter to a certain species means that Animal Control cannot bring any animal of that species to PGASD, except for the purpose of euthanasia, and that PGASD will not accept any surrenders or strays of that species. In this situation, PGASD attempts to work with other area shelters and rescues to enlist their help so owners that must surrender animals during this time period are able to do so. When a room is closed for quarantine, no one except the Managers, Animal Health Technicians and designated Animal Care Attendants will be allowed in that room. Protective outerwear is worn in these rooms. All items removed from a quarantined room, such as waste materials, are placed into a garbage bag which is sealed and immediately brought to the dumpster outside of the shelter. When available, quarantined rooms use only disposable materials (bowls, towels, etc.).

VII. SURGERY

In most cases, dogs and cats having surgery are fasted overnight prior to surgery. Exceptions may include emergency surgery; surgery performed on puppies, kittens and rabbits; and other situations deemed appropriate by a veterinarian. In preparation for surgery, a "Do Not Feed" sign is placed on a cat's or dog's cage prior to 8:00 p.m. the night before surgery. Food and water are removed from these animals' cages prior to 8:00 p.m. For rabbits, a sign is placed on their cage advising that they are scheduled for surgery the next day, not to remove their food, and to take some hay along with the animal to the spay/neuter clinic on the day of surgery. After surgery, any findings during the physical exam, doses of medications and the surgical procedure performed are recorded for each animal and entered into the PGASD database. Post-operative care instructions, along with any medications prescribed, are sent home with adopted animals and animals placed with a rescue group. Animals staying at PGASD receive a daily post-operative check for one week. Dogs and cats are spayed or neutered when they weigh two pounds or more. Animals that are pregnant, are in heat, have pyometra, or have a mild upper respiratory infection may still undergo anesthesia and surgery at the discretion of the surgeon.

VIII. HUMANE EUTHANASIA

A. POLICY

Humane euthanasia is a subject of deep sensitivity to animal shelters, and the topic must always be given the level of respect and serious consideration it deserves. While the term "no kill" is misleading and offensive to many, PGASD's commitment has been to diligently consider and pursue available options for each individual animal in our care, and to keep our euthanasia rate as low as possible. We remain committed to running a progressive, open-admission, County shelter and our staff work earnestly to avoid euthanizing healthy animals for space. Our goal remains to only euthanize animals that have severe, untreatable physical illnesses or mental states, and animals that, after thoughtful consideration and discussion, are deemed unsafe for the community or handling by animal care staff and/or are cases beyond the scope of our resources to successfully rehabilitate or find placement for as behaviorally or medical unhealthy animals.

B. PROCEDURES

The procedures for determining whether an animal is a candidate for humane euthanasia is intentionally multi-layered because, as stated above, it is PGASD's commitment to humanely euthanize only when necessary. Reviews are made by appropriate staff members and managers, and documented on the the fact sheet of each candidate, to ensure that no lost reports are on file matching that animal's description; that there are no potential adopters or rescue groups that have expressed an interest in the animal; and a check is made of all notes in PGASD's database to ensure that the legal, stray hold time on an animal (when applicable) has expired, no owner has come forward, and that all enforcement and court actions have been resolved prior to an animal being euthanized. When all necessary reviews have been made and documented on the animal's fact sheet, it will be signed by a Manager, who will indicate the reason for euthanasia on the fact sheet. The reason for euthanasia will also be noted in the animal's file in the PGASD database. After the Manager has signed off, the fact sheet will be given to an Animal Care Attendant Supervisor to arrange for humane euthanasia.

Humane Euthanasia Protocols: Only staff certified by a state-approved euthanasia training course and, who have also been approved to perform humane euthanasia by a certified Animal Care Attendant Supervisor or Kennel Manager, may perform humane euthanasia on an animal. During the practical training, staff performing euthanasia may only do so under the direct observation of an Animal Care Attendant Supervisor or Kennel Manager.

Emergency Euthanasia: In cases where an animal arrives at the shelter with catastrophic injuries or critical illness necessitating immediate euthanasia to end suffering, or an animal's well-being suddenly declines, the Kennel Manager or Animal Care Attendant Supervisor on duty may decide to humanely euthanize the animal immediately. If the animal is a stray, domestic animal, and, after consultation with a Veterinarian, the Kennel Manager or Animal Care Attendant Supervisor determines that the animal should be euthanized for humane reasons, the Kennel Manager or Animal Care Attendant Supervisor may promptly authorize euthanasia of the animal without regard to any time limitations established by this Division. Appropriate staff will ensure that no lost reports are on file matching that animal's description.

Owner Requested Euthanasia (ORE): PGASD offers a humane euthanasia service to the public for animals that are very ill and/or very aged, as well as those with irremediable behavior issues. This service will be provided primarily to assist owners (and their animals) who are unable to afford to have a private veterinarian euthanize their animal.

1. OREs will primarily be done by appointment; however, in urgent situations, if a euthanasia certified staff member is available, PGASD will attempt to accommodate unscheduled requests for euthanasia. If staff to perform humane euthanasia services are not available, the owner will be provided a list of local veterinarians that may be able to help.
2. There will be a fee of \$50.00 for ORE services.
3. PGASD offers owners the option of remaining with their animal throughout the sedation or euthanasia procedure.

IX. ADOPTION

All cats and dogs adopted from PGASD are eight weeks of age or older, current on age-appropriate vaccinations, parasite control, microchipped and altered, except in very rare cases where medical exceptions may be necessary. All cats are tested for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and dogs over 6 months of age are tested for heartworm disease. The goal of the PGASD adoption program is to place as many animals as possible into suitable homes and prepare adopters for the responsibilities of pet ownership.

This is accomplished by screening all potential adopters for past code enforcement violations, reviewing adopters' histories in the PGASD database, requiring identification and proof of address, and requiring adopters to be at least 18 years of age. Potential adopters complete an application which is used to determine eligibility for adoption and to provide information to help identify and select appropriate animals. Every potential adopter meets with an adoption counselor to discuss any known behavior and medical knowledge of the animal(s) they are interested in adopting, care of their new pet(s), acclimation into the new home, and to answer any questions prior to finalizing the adoption. The adoption counselor also goes over all medical history for the pet including vaccinations, medications, and follow-up care.

Animals are surgically altered prior to leaving the shelter unless determined unfit for surgery by a veterinarian. Educational handouts, medical history, and an adoption agreement are provided to the adopter.

PGASD utilizes adoption promotions throughout the year to increase public awareness and encourage responsible people to adopt. The adoption program is evaluated on a periodic basis to ensure the needs of the animals and the adopting community is met.

X. VISITORS

All visitors to PGASD are directed and/or supervised through the building by a staff member or trained volunteer to maximize safety of both people and animals. Visitors may be here for a variety of reasons, including facility repairs or contract work, group tours, adoptions, rescues, and redemptions. Staff and volunteers use this time with visitors as an educational opportunity, to convey information about PGASD and the adoption or redemption process, and to answer any questions visitors may have.

XI. FOSTER CARE

PGASD manages a foster care program in which certain animals are taken into homes temporarily rather than remaining in the shelter. In addition to saving the lives of animals, this program was designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Raise underage kittens and puppies to an age where they may become available for adoption, providing bottle feeding if necessary, socialization, and special attention.
2. Provide special care to injured and/or sick animals.

3. Provide additional training, behavior modification and/or observation of animals who are not thriving in the shelter environment and need additional behavioral resources.
4. Serve as an outlet for viewing and adoption of animals in order to conserve space at the shelter.

Animals available for fostering are identified by the Foster Coordinator or managerial staff. All foster parents are pre-screened and sign contracts with PGASD prior to housing any animals. Throughout the foster period, the foster parent must abide by all established policies, including maintaining contact with the shelter, bringing the animal(s) in for all scheduled vaccines and medical treatments, and communicating with shelter staff about any relevant information regarding the animal(s) in their care. Upon request by PGASD, foster parents must return foster animals to the shelter in a timely and reasonable fashion.

Animals placed in foster care are provided the same medical care as those housed at the shelter. PGASD is responsible for providing support to the foster parents, including training if requested, regularly scheduled medical appointments, medicines as needed, emergency medical services as available, and ongoing help with questions and issues that arise. PGASD is responsible for following up on all foster placements and maintaining the follow-up information in the PGASD database. A foster placement may be terminated at any time by PGASD, and foster animals that have been returned to the shelter are subject to the same euthanasia criteria as all other shelter animals.

XII. ANIMAL HOLDS

Animals arriving at the shelter are subject to various state and local requirements as to the length of time they must be held prior to being made available for adoption.

A. STRAY ANIMALS

Impounded stray animals are held for a minimum of three working days. The day the animal arrives at the shelter and days the shelter is closed to the public do not count for purposes of the holding period. After the legal hold time, the animal becomes property of the shelter and thus may be placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized.

B. OWNER-SURRENDERED ANIMALS

Owner-surrendered animals are not subject to a required state-mandated holding period. When an owner surrenders an animal, he or she immediately relinquishes all rights to the animal and the animal may be immediately placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized.

C. ANIMALS LEFT BEHIND AFTER EVICTIONS

Animals left behind when owners are evicted from their homes are considered abandoned. If an owner cannot be located, these animals are impounded by PGASD and held for five working days. 21

Individuals identifying themselves as the owner of an abandoned animal(s) and attempting to redeem these animals are subject to all the requirements as individuals redeeming stray dogs. Depending on the condition of the animal and the circumstances in which they were left, owners may be required to speak with an Animal Control Officer, or to meet other requirements, before the animal can be released.

D. INVESTIGATIONS

Some animals are held as evidence in investigations being performed by PGASD, or other animal control or police agency, for various reasons (suspicions of cruelty, abuse, neglect, etc.). The amount of time an animal is held varies as investigations are conducted and completed. PGASD cares for these animals during the investigation period, and the animals are released when they are no longer needed as evidence in a case, or as otherwise legally allowed.

E. BITE QUARANTINE AND DANGEROUS ANIMAL HEARINGS

PGASD follows state and county regulations for animals that have bitten a person or another animal and are suspected of being a potentially dangerous animal or rabies carrier. Animals that have bitten a person must be quarantined for 10 days at the shelter or at the owner's home as directed by an Animal Control Officer and/or the County Health Department. If an animal is believed to be potentially dangerous or dangerous by PGASD, the animal may be held by PGASD, at the owner's expense, until such time as a hearing is held by the Animal Control Commission and a determination regarding custody is made.

Only trained and approved staff are allowed access to quarantined animals; this includes bite cases as well as animals quarantined for rabies evaluation and/or infectious disease. Limited personnel access is mandatory to safeguard others from potential injury (bite, scratch, or infectious disease) as well as to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

F. EMERGENCY HOLD

PGASD does not offer regular boarding to the public due to space constraints at the shelter; however, during an emergency (natural disaster, fire, flooding, domestic violence situation, etc.), short-term holding in temporary cages may be provided on a case by case basis as determined by the Administrator of Animal Control. Owners are encouraged to utilize other resources and find immediate alternatives for housing.

G. CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Animals released to an owner may have a conditional release requirement. This means that PGASD may require the owner to seek some type of medical care follow-up with their regular veterinarian and provide proof of completion to PGASD, have the animal spayed/neutered after recovery from a medical issue, or may require certain standards of handling and care of the animal be met to prevent the animal from causing harm or nuisance to the public. If any of these requirements are not met, an Animal Control Officer may re-impound the animal.

XIII. PERSONAL HEALTH

A. STAFF VACCINATION

All staff handling animals at PGASD are encouraged to be vaccinated against rabies. It is recommended that all staff be current on tetanus and talk to their personal physicians for further recommendations on rabies

vaccinations. Rabies vaccinations may be administered by the Prince George's County Health Department. Follow-up titers and vaccinations may be provided based on current CDC and/or County Health Department guidelines. Tetanus vaccines must be given every ten years. Staff potentially exposed to rabies or tetanus must seek immediate medical attention and may require re-vaccination.

B. ZOONOSIS

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted by non-human animals to humans. There is the potential for the transmission of zoonotic diseases at any facility or situation where animals are present. Zoonotic diseases that are commonly of concern at shelters like PGASD are rabies, intestinal parasites, leptospirosis, Bartonella infection (cat scratch disease), ringworm, and sarcoptic mange, among others.

The most effective way to decrease the risk of zoonotic disease caused by bite or scratch wounds is to immediately recognize animals most likely to inflict bites or scratches. Only those staff and volunteers qualified to work with such animals may interact with them. Any animal can potentially bite, scratch, or otherwise injure a person or another animal, but animals who are stressed, fearful or injured may present a heightened risk. To minimize this risk of injury, all animal care staff and volunteers must be adequately trained in animal handling and behavior in accordance with the types of animals with which they will be working.

In preventing transmission of many zoonotic diseases, proper glove usage and thorough hand washing is extremely important. When not wearing disposable gloves, all staff, volunteers, and visitors should wash their hands thoroughly after touching any animal at the shelter. Whenever possible, staff and volunteers should wear disposable gloves when handling animals and their waste products, changing gloves between each animal handled.

The risk of disease outbreak at PGASD is minimized by providing animals with medications to eliminate internal and external parasites as well as vaccinations against specific diseases. These tools are vital to protect the health of shelter staff, volunteers, and visitors. Immuno-suppressed humans are at an increased risk for infection by zoonotic diseases. These individuals are strongly advised to discuss their working/volunteering at an animal shelter with their human medical care provider. In most cases, work can be found that is helpful for PGASD but safe for the individual.

D. NOISE PROTECTION

Ear plugs are available to staff and volunteers. Ear plugs are encouraged when working in areas of high noise.

E. REPORTING INJURIES

All injuries that occur at PGASD, or while working on behalf of PGASD, must be reported immediately to a supervisor. This includes any bite, scratch, or other injury that occurs. A First Report of Injury form will be filled out and the injured person will be advised to seek medical advice or treatment from either their personal physician or urgent care provider.

XIV. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a disaster/emergency at PGASD, every effort is made to protect all staff, volunteers, and animals. The Administrator of Animal Control, or his/her/their designee, implements the incident command emergency response structure when appropriate. When this occurs, the Director is responsible for all decisions regarding the emergency response and maintains contact with the Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management and other involved public safety and relief agencies, local weather advisory groups, staff and volunteers. In addition, the Director informs the public of the shelter closing as well as accessibility to shelter animals and/or housing of animals; this information will be conveyed through the Prince George's County 311 system, press releases and social media.

In the event of any emergency impacting shelter functions, PGASD will respond in accordance with the Facility Emergency Response Plan.