

**DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

EUTHANASIA OF ANIMALS

BACKGROUND

The word “euthanasia” means the intentional causing of a painless and merciful death. Animal sheltering agencies have a mandate to provide a humane death for those animals whose lives must be ended. These include animals that are fractious to people or animals, or animals that are suffering from or afflicted with a medical condition that cannot be remedied with reasonable efforts, and animals whose owners request euthanasia.

The Department is committed to using its best efforts to avoid euthanasia of healthy and reasonably well-adjusted animals, as well as those animals where reasonable medical treatment or behavior modification will enable them to become healthy, and socialized or behaviorally manageable pets.

No impounded animal may be euthanized until after the expiration of the applicable holding period, unless the law provides an express exception.

DEFINITIONS

Defining what we mean is an essential part of creating an effective work plan. To be meaningful, definitions must be objective and based solely on an animal’s health and behavior, and not other criteria such as age, color, and length of stay at the shelter, number of similar animals at the shelter or housing space.

By properly documenting the assessment of each animal and accurately categorizing those that are euthanized, the Department can provide the public with more complete and accurate information on the disposition of impounded animals, and report euthanasia statistics in context. If an animal must be euthanized it is important to enter accurate data by selecting the most appropriate “Outcome Subtype” for each euthanized impounded animal, and no attempt should be made to skew data or manipulate statistics. (Also see Appendix Five.)

The following “Outcome Subtypes” are used in cases where an animal is euthanized:

Adoptable

Behavior - Not treatable

Behavior - Treatable

Feral

Medical – Not treatable

Medical – Treatable, by Treatment Level 1, 2, 3, or 4

Neonatal - Medical Treatable

Neonatal - Not treatable

Owner requested euthanasia of adoptable animal

Owner requested euthanasia of animal with a behavior defect

Owner requested euthanasia of animal with a medical condition

Quarantine

Regulated

Animals are assessed for adoption based on the following criteria:

Adoptable animals are those animals eight (8) weeks of age or older (or, for the purposes of this policy, weaned and eating on their own) at, or subsequent to, the time the animal is taken into possession, have manifested no signs of a behavioral, or temperamental defect that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, congenital or hereditary condition that affects the health of the animal, or that is likely to affect the animal's health in the future. (Also see Civil Code sec. 1834.4, Food and Agricultural Code sec. 17005, and Penal Code sec. 599d).

“Adoptable” animals may be defined as healthy and well socialized; they need no medical attention or behavioral assistance. They are not dangerous and do not pose a risk of harm to people or animals. Animals that may be old, deaf, blind, scarred, or disabled, but are not in any pain, do not require medical treatment or behavior modification, and are healthy, friendly pets, are adoptable.

Treatable animals shall include any animal that is not deemed adoptable but could become adoptable with “reasonable efforts.” (Civil Code sec. 1834.4, Food and Agricultural Code sec. 17005, and Penal Code sec. 599d). “Treatable” animals have a manageable behavioral defect and/or medical condition that is typically responsive to reasonable behavior modification or medical treatment that would enable them to become healthy, socialized pets.

To be considered “treatable,” an animal need not be fully rehabilitated within the applicable holding period. It is the reasonableness of the behavior management or medical treatment and the likelihood of remediation, rather than the cost or availability of such resources in the shelter environment that is determinative. Reasonable procedures are generally considered the accepted, prevailing, usual and customary remedial measure for the particular condition among veterinarians or Behavior Specialists (as distinguished from unconventional, untried, or experimental procedures).

While cost and availability may be relevant in deciding whether or not an animal should be treated or euthanized, they are not material factors in determining whether an animal is defined as treatable or non-rehabilitatable. Although saving treatable animals will be limited by budget constraints, such financial considerations do not affect the definition of “treatable.” The decision as to whether an animal is “treatable” depends primarily on the condition of the animal rather than other criteria unrelated to the animal's needs.

Treatable is not synonymous with savable. An animal with a remote chance for recovery, or whose condition would require experimental procedures with uncertain outcomes may be savable, but it is not reasonably “treatable.”

Behavior-Treatable are animals with some manageable behavioral defect that is typically responsive to reasonable behavior intervention efforts that would enable them to become behaviorally manageable pets. In general, behaviorally manageable animals should not be euthanized except when the shelter animal population exceeds available housing capacity or the ability to provide adequate sanitation, shelter or humane conditions for the animal. Exceptions may be made in cases where the needs of the animal are not readily available or affordable, and the animal’s condition or quality of life has deteriorated to an unacceptable level.

Animals that exhibit severe distress in the shelter environment may be candidates for euthanasia. This may take the form of not eating, self mutilation such as lick granulomas, constant vocalization, pacing, or cage spinning, elimination problems, depression, etc. Efforts to minimize stresses to provide relief should be attempted and documented. If we cannot find a way to make the animal more at ease, euthanasia may be the only option to avoid lessening the animal’s quality of life.

“Safety” factors focus on the risk of injury to the animal, other animals, staff members/volunteers, a prospective adopter or family, and members of the general public. Assessment is based primarily on the animal’s performance in a behavior test, the degree of potential harm, and the likelihood of eventual placement in a responsible, knowledgeable home. The overriding consideration is whether this animal poses an unreasonable risk of harm to people or animals even if housed and cared for in a responsible manner. (See Behavior-Non-treatable).

Behavior-Non-Treatable are animals (other than feral animals) observed to be dangerous or fractious to people or other animals. Animals that at any time subsequent to impoundment have exhibited signs of aggression towards a person or another animal, or at any time have inflicted injury to a person or another animal through biting or severe scratching may be candidates for euthanasia. Each incident should be promptly reviewed and assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Lieutenant, Senior Animal Care Attendant, and Behavior Specialist.

Such animals whose behavior is considered an isolated incident (protecting its litter, response to threatening behavior initiated by another animal, uncertain reaction by young animal to frightening situation, inadvertent contact during play, puppy bites, etc.) may be made or remain available for adoption with supervisory concurrence immediately following any required quarantine period.

NOTE: Aggressive behavior displayed by a dog or cat while in its enclosure, towards another animal (inside or outside of the enclosure) may not be a fair indication of its behavior or suitability for adoption. Since the same animal may (or may not) interact

satisfactorily with other animals when out of its enclosure, an animal's behavior should be assessed after it is removed from its enclosure.

Feral animals are animals without owner identification of any kind whose usual and consistent temperament is extreme fear and resistance to contact with people. A feral animal is totally unsocialized to people.

Medical-Treatable animals have some manageable medical condition that is typically responsive to reasonable medical treatment that would enable them to become healthy pets. These animals should generally not be euthanized except when the shelter's animal population exceeds available housing capacity or the ability to provide adequate sanitation, shelter or humane conditions. Exceptions are made if the treatment is not readily available through reasonable effort or has become ineffective, and the animal's condition or quality of life has deteriorated to an unacceptable level. (See Medical-Non-treatable).

Medical-Treatable animals may be classified into one of four medical intervention/treatment levels. To help visualize these levels, consider a pyramid divided in four sections or groups. The base or first level is the largest category of treatable animals and represents uncomplicated, basic medical treatments. As treatments (or interventions) become more complicated, intense, or chronic, there is an elevation in the intervention level and a narrower, smaller group of animals are represented.

The veterinarian will use the guidelines listed below in determining the appropriate treatment/intervention level for animals with a treatable medical condition. Treatment parameters are described by type, intensity, number and/or duration of treatments, as well as route of administration, number, frequency, and duration of medications. (See further discussion of treatable medical conditions in Appendix One of this policy.)

Medical-Non-treatable are animals that are irremediably suffering from a serious illness or severe injuries, animal with a poor prognosis or protracted painful recovery, or animals that are suffering from or afflicted with some medical condition that is not likely to be remedied with reasonable efforts. Animals that are irremediably suffering from a serious illness or severe injury may be euthanized to alleviate unnecessary suffering without being held for owner redemption or adoption. As a general rule, an RVT or veterinarian should recommend euthanasia for medical reasons.

In cases involving medical emergencies and/or the need to alleviate severe suffering, a Department veterinarian, if available, or Lieutenant should be contacted (by telephone or through dispatch, if necessary) to determine if the animal should be transported for off-site treatment or euthanized.

Examples of conditions that may necessitate euthanasia include: fading/collapsing kittens, organ failure, feline immunodeficiency, chronic debilitation, certain congenital abnormalities or defects, or any serious, chronic illness with a poor prognosis or not reasonably responsive to treatment. A condition that may not necessitate euthanasia on

its own, when present in combination with other factors may lead to the decision to euthanize. Quality of life and risk to the health of other animals or people will be considered in the decision.

Neonatal animals are newborns unable to survive without maternal care. These animals may be euthanized without being held for owner redemption or adoption if no maternal, foster or rescue care can be given. Attempts to obtain foster or rescue care will be documented and the unweaned animal(s) held as long as they are not under distress or their stability compromised. (An Outcome Subtype of “Adoptable” [rather than “neonatal”] should be entered for healthy weaned kittens and puppies under 8 weeks of age that must be euthanized.)

In general, healthy and social weaned kittens and puppies are considered “Adoptable”, and unweaned kittens and puppies that are healthy or that have some manageable medical condition typically responsive to reasonable medical treatment are considered “Medically Treatable” (NEONATE - MT). Unweaned animals that are euthanized due to irremediable suffering from a serious illness or severe injury should be classified as “NEONATE - NT.”

Owner Request Owners may sign a written request for a “fee for service” euthanasia of their animal(s) and, in general, such animals that have a medical condition or behavioral defect may be immediately euthanized. Adoptable animals will normally be held and made available for adoption as relinquished animals. Such requests that involve questionable circumstances, an inadequate reason, or an adoptable animal, should be brought to the attention of a supervisor for review.

Quarantine Where euthanasia for a laboratory (pathological) examination for rabies is appropriate (i.e., for stray, unidentified biter animals held through the required holding period, or where the Quarantine period is not expired, and the laboratory examination is approved by a Lieutenant). Keep in mind that an animal whose biting incident is considered an isolated incident (protecting its litter, response to threatening behavior initiated by another animal, uncertain reaction by young animal to frightening situation, inadvertent contact during play, puppy bites, etc.) may be made available for adoption with supervisory concurrence immediately following any required quarantine period.

Reasonable efforts are documented attempts by the Department throughout an animals’ stay in treating or placing an adoptable or treatable animal. These efforts include documentation of contacting rescue groups. If all efforts fail the animal is euthanized as treatable.

Regulated animals are prohibited or disqualified for adoption by law, regulation, or policy. To promote animal and public health and safety, dogs that have been declared “Dangerous” by the Department, or that are subject to “Dangerous Dog” proceedings, are not made available for adoption. Animals that have been declared a “public nuisance”, or that are subject to public nuisance proceedings, should not be made available for adoption without a file review and concurrence of a Lieutenant and Regional Director.

POLICIES

It is the policy of the state that no adoptable or treatable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home.

Our commitment to responsible sheltering practices requires that we use and document reasonable efforts to place adoptable or treatable animals in an adoptive home or with an adoption organization.

All applicable Department staff members involved in the euthanasia process are expected to perform this responsibility in a humane and respectful manner with compassion toward the animals.

PROCEDURES

The procedure for determining the need for euthanasia is a four-step process. If consensus is not reached, a fifth step is available for mediation.

1. Hold Review
2. Inventory Board
3. Availability List
4. Consensus/Concurrence
5. Mediation

Each animal admitted to the shelter will have a medical examination by a RVT or veterinarian upon entry or at the earliest convenience. Staff is expected to document any notable behavior or medical condition and treatment of each animal while at the shelter. Behavior tests may be conducted on or after an animal's Hold Date, or after 48 hours of holding at the facility by a behavior specialist, or other staff member trained to perform an evaluation.

Step One - Hold Review

Lieutenants are assigned to review the "Hold List" report on a daily basis. This list includes the Intake and Hold Dates of impounded animals. At the end of the holding period the animals become available for disposition. The impoundment records of the listed animals are reviewed for accurate hold dates, memo entries that may affect the final disposition of the animal, verification of proper owner identification research and notification, and review of special holds such as DDTF, Quarantine, Public Holds and Investigations. After careful review, the Kennel Status of applicable animals may be updated as "County Property". Hold Dates are reviewed on all animals one day prior to their eligibility for "County Property" status.

Animals that are irremediably suffering or newborns requiring maternal care may be euthanized without being held for owner redemption or adoption (Food & Agricultural Code sec. 17006), and feral cats may be euthanized after 72 hours with proper

observation documentation (Food & Agricultural Code sec. 31752.5; also refer to Feral Cat Observation Log). Such animals may be euthanized with the approval of the veterinarian or RVT, if available, or Lieutenant.

To avoid overcrowding and the potential consequence of unnecessary euthanasia of adoptable and/or treatable animals, Lieutenants are expected to complete the Hold List report list each day. As a part of this process, Lieutenants should also review (three times a week) the records of animals that have a special Status Hold and an expired Hold Date to determine if the Hold is still needed. To help limit overcrowding, ACA's are generally expected to euthanize any applicable non-rehabilitatable animals each day, including holidays.

Step Two - Inventory Board

This board is a visual accounting of all the animals currently housed at the shelter. Animal Care staff will conduct a daily kennel space assessment to determine kennel capacity. The kennel space available will dictate the number of animals that can be safely and humanely housed at the shelter. To determine daily available space only those kennels used to house adoptable, behaviorally treatable and incoming animals are counted.

Each of the three County shelters varies in size and configuration; therefore each will determine its own daily maximum capacity for available kennel space. Space assessment will be done after adopted or owner redemption (SNIP) animals scheduled for sterilization surgery through the Department's Outsourcing program have been removed from the kennels. Non-designated areas with the exception of the medical kennels may be used at the discretion of the Senior ACA.

When determining space availability consideration must be given for maintaining safe, humane and sanitary conditions for the animals in our care. For public safety, some kennels must be specifically designated for quarantine and "Dangerous Dogs" or public nuisance animals and cannot be calculated in the available kennel space assessment. To minimize exposure to disease, a certain portion of the kennels must be designated for medical animals. These kennels cannot be used for healthy animals.

Kennel space must be reserved for daily incoming animals and emergencies. The Senior ACA will determine the kennel space that must be reserved from the overall number of kennels available (after a review of average daily intake figures from the same period during the previous fiscal year.)

Generally, any animal exhibiting a vicious or fractious disposition shall be housed individually. If more than one animal is housed per kennel, the weight and gender of the animal will serve as a guide to determine how many animals may be held in one kennel.

Small animals are considered to be 30 pounds or less.

Medium, 31 to 60 pounds

Large, 61 pounds and above

Individual kennels can generally accommodate up to three small or two medium compatible dogs, or one large dog.

Puppies and kittens shall not be housed in the same enclosure with adult dogs or cats other than their dams/queens.

Step Three – Disposition/Available List

Completion of the Hold List report generates a daily list of all “County Property” animals available for disposition. The Senior Animal Care Attendant or designee reviews the memos for each animal on County Property status and the profiles on Owner Relinquishments. Memos are reviewed for any entries that may affect the available status of the animal.

A designated ACA and Senior ACA or Lieutenant will walk together through the kennels with the “Disposition/Available List.” If space is an issue, the current inventory of available animals, and available kennel space should be noted on the list. The status of each available animal is reviewed to determine if there are any medical or behavior issues that may preclude an animal from being placed into or kept on available status. Animals housed over 30 days are reviewed weekly.

In cases where an available animal is found unsuited for adoption, an “E” for euthanasia and the reason (Refer to Subtypes), is placed next to the Animal ID number on the list, (or Preliminary Behavior Grading Report) and the Animal ID is highlighted. The initial “A” for adoption is placed next to the animal identification number for those designated for adoption.

Step Four – Consensus/Concurrence

The persons reviewing the Disposition/Available List must reach consensus for the final decision to euthanize.

Before considering euthanasia, reasonable efforts are required for all adoptable, behavior-treatable, and medical-treatable animals. Reasonable efforts and documentation should, at a minimum, include:

- Any medical condition, intervention level (if applicable), and any treatment, is documented on the Medical Treatment Screen.
- Contact with one or more (applicable/available) rescue groups is made and documented in an Animal Memo.
- Animal memos are reviewed and attempts to contact any person or organization with a “last resort” interest have been documented in an Animal Memo.
- Placement through relocating the animal to another County shelter is considered (refer to Movement of Adoptable/Treatable Animals Procedure).
- Space for adequate shelter housing is unavailable and such lack of space is documented in an Animal Memo.

Euthanasia of a treatable animal for medical reasons requires the recommendation or approval of a member of the medical staff documented in the Treatment Screen or Animal Memo. Euthanasia of an adoptable animal will require the approval of a Regional Director documented in an Animal Memo.

Step Five –Mediation

If consensus is not reached, all documentation is reviewed by and opinions are discussed with the shelter Lieutenant. If after careful re-evaluation, consensus is still not reached or all individuals cannot meet agreement on pursuing additional steps to avoid euthanasia, the documentation will be presented to and reviewed by the Regional Director. The Regional Director's decision is binding, and should be reflected in an Animal Memo. Each level of review should take place within a reasonable period of time and should be expedited if it is in the best interests of the animal or shelter animal population. Euthanasia deemed necessary should be conducted the same day before the shelter opens.

If, after completion of this four or five step process, one or more adoptable and/or treatable animals must be euthanized, see the factors to be considered in determining euthanasia priority in Appendix Two of this policy.

APPENDIX ONE

Treatable Medical Conditions: Intensity ranges from minor to extensive. Duration is length of treatment from days to weeks. Routes of administration are oral (PO), topical, ocular, and parenteral. Parenteral medications are those medications given by subcutaneous (SQ), intramuscular (IM), and intravenous (IV) route. Frequencies of medications are once daily (SID), twice daily (BID), three times daily (TID), and four times daily (QID). Combinations of more than one treatment may elevate the intervention/treatment level.

Examples of treatable medical conditions and levels of intervention include:

Level 1: Examples of medical conditions include upper respiratory infections, kennel cough, and flea allergies. Treatments: One to two oral or topical medications given SID to BID for less than 14 days. Parenteral medications given one to three times total over course of treatment. One to two ocular medications given SID to BID for less than seven days. Conditions that require cage rest or monitoring less than TID.

Level 2: Examples of medical conditions include mange, ringworm, or broken bones. Treatments: One to two oral or topical medications given TID to QID for less than 14 days. More than two oral or topical medications given SID to BID for 14 days to eight weeks. One to two parenteral medications given SID to BID for less than five days. One to two ocular medications given TID to QID for less than seven days. Administration of SQ fluids one time. Minor surgery or procedure with a healing time less than 14 days. One to two bandages/casting placed over less than five days.

Level 3: Examples of medical conditions include thyroid conditions, hernias, and internal injuries. Treatments: One to two oral or topical medications given SID to BID

for more than eight weeks. More than two oral or topical medications given TID to QID for 14 days to eight weeks. One to two parenteral medications given SID to BID for five days to 14 days. One to two parenteral medications given TID to QID for less than five days. One to two ocular medications given SID to BID for seven days to four weeks. More than two ocular medications given SID to BID for less than seven days. Administration of SQ fluids two to ten times. Moderate to extensive surgery or procedure with a healing time less than three weeks. Two to ten bandages/casting placed over less than 14 days. IV fluids for less than three days. Blood testing one to two times or biannually.

Level 4: Examples of medical conditions include degenerative joint disease, certain eye injuries, and parvovirus. Treatments: More than two oral or topical medications given more than BID for more than eight weeks. More than one parenteral medications given more than SID for longer than 14 days. More than two parenteral medications. More than one ocular medication given more than BID for longer than four weeks. More than two ocular medications given more than BID for longer than seven days. Administration of SQ fluids more than ten times or more than BID. Extensive surgery or procedure with a healing time longer than three weeks. More than ten bandages/casting placed over any period of time. IV fluids for longer than three days. Blood testing more than two times or more than biannually.

In general, after adoptable animals, we should attempt to focus our efforts on addressing the relatively uncomplicated medical conditions and adopting those animals that come within the first level of treatable cases, and eventually work our way to the more complicated cases one level at a time.

APPENDIX TWO

Euthanasia Priority Factors for Treatable Animals	
MEDICAL	BEHAVIOR
Medical Level 4 by earliest Intake Date	Behavior Level 3 by earliest Intake Date
Medical Level 3 by earliest Intake Date	Preliminary Behavior Grade C by earliest Intake Date
Medical Level 2 by earliest Intake Date	Preliminary Behavior Grade B by earliest Intake Date
Medical Level 1 by earliest Intake Date	

Euthanasia Priority Factors for Adoptable Animals
Level 2 dogs by earliest Intake Date
Preliminary Behavior Grade A dogs by earliest Intake Date
Level 1 as follows:
Dogs kept in isolation, by earliest Intake Date
Large dogs, by earliest Intake Date
Medium dogs, by earliest Intake Date
Small dogs, by earliest Intake Date
Puppies, by earliest Intake Date
Adult cats, by earliest Intake Date
Kittens, by earliest Intake Date

These factors will help make the best use of available shelter housing space and enable more animals to have adoption exposure. Isolation and large dogs require a single occupancy enclosure, two medium dogs may occupy a single enclosure, three small dogs may be housed together and, in some cases, an enclosure may house more than three puppies at a time. Adult cats require a single occupancy enclosure, while two or more kittens may be housed together. Consideration of Intake Dates also provides an equitable basis to allow more animals a chance at adoption.

APPENDIX THREE

Authority:

Penal Code sec. 597.1(e). Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any peace officer, humane society officer, or any animal control officer may, with the approval of his or her immediate superior, humanely destroy any stray or abandoned animal in the field in any case where the animal is too severely injured to move or where a veterinarian is not available and it would be more humane to dispose of the animal.

Food and Agricultural Code sec. 17006. Animals that are irremediably suffering from a serious illness or severe injury shall not be held for owner redemption or adoption. Newborn animal that need maternal care and have been impounded without their mothers may be euthanized without being held for owner redemption or adoption.

Food and Agricultural Code sec. 31105. The board of supervisors shall provide for....
 (b) The killing in some humane manner or other disposition of any dog which is impounded.

San Diego County Code sec. 62.631. The Department shall establish at the County Animal Shelters a humane procedure for euthanasia of animals....

(Also see Business & Professional Code section 4827 and provisions relating to euthanasia training: CCR section 2039, methods: Penal Code sections 597u, 597v, and 597w, and impounded animal holding periods: Food and Agricultural Code sections

31108 [dogs], 31752 & 31752.5 [cats], 31753 [specified animals], 31754 [relinquished animals], 31108.5 [relinquished dogs with a history of vicious or dangerous behavior], and Penal Code sec. 597.1(h), (i) [neglected animals].)

APPENDIX FOUR

Behavior Assessment for Adoption: Dogs will normally be evaluated for behavioral soundness once they become county property or after 48 hours of holding at the facility by a behavior specialist, or other staff member trained to perform an evaluation. Each dog will be assigned a level of adoptability as a result of the findings in the temperament test. Prior to a temperament test, dogs will be given a preliminary behavior assessment and grade. The preliminary behavior grades and assessment levels are as follows:

Preliminary behavior assessment: Reviewer will approach the front (public side) of kennel in a neutral position, making and maintaining direct, neutral eye contact with the dog. Reviewer will note the dog's placement in the kennel, and relevant body postures and activities, then place a knuckle at the front of the kennel, move it from place to place, and note dog's willingness to follow. In cases where the dog is hesitant to approach, allow time for the dog to do so, either outside the front or inside the kennel. Dogs should be subsequently temperament tested in order of their assigned grade, i.e., A, B, or C.

GRADE A: Dog is friendly or somewhat timid.

Dog is at front of kennel or approaches as reviewer approaches. Dog wags tail in a friendly way, with little direct eye contact; eyes are soft. Dog follows knuckle of reviewer at least 5 times, seems very interested in reviewer and may push against the kennel front for attention. -OR- Dog does not approach the front of the kennel as reviewer approaches, but gets up and comes forward. Dog may appear fearful and submissive with no signs of aggression (i.e., direct hard eye contact, confident body posture, etc.). Its body may be trembling with no direct eye contact. Reviewer may observe lip licking or stress yawn. If there is no approach, and reviewer feels that lack of approach is due to extreme fear, the reviewer can enter the kennel and, while approaching the dog (if this can be done safely) note its reaction. **GRADE A dogs are considered "adoptable".**

GRADE B: Dog is fearful or ambivalent.

Dog is initially neutral or in back of kennel when reviewer approaches the front of the kennel. Dog displays mild offensive or defensive postures. Dog may show no approach when reviewer squats down at the kennel front (reviewer remains neutral in all other aspects)-OR- Dog may begin to approach reviewer then retreat and may remain undecided about the situation, with body stance back and low. **GRADE B dogs are considered "behavior - treatable".**

GRADE C: Dog is confident.

Dog is at front of kennel or approaches as reviewer approaches, and may appear aroused, wagging its tail, jumping, barking, looking past (instead of appearing to want) tester, or may appear confident with no signs of friendliness. Eye contact may be direct and hard.

Dog does NOT follow knuckle at least 5 times. **GRADE C dogs are considered “behavior - treatable”.**

GRADE D: Dog is aggressive.

Dog does not approach the front of the kennel as reviewer approaches, and displays signs of aggression such as hard, direct eye contact, growling, piloerection, stiff body posture, forward body stance, etc. These dogs will not be tested, as they are LEVEL 4 or 5 dogs.

GRADE D dogs are considered “behavior non-treatable”.

Temperament testing levels:

Level 1 – Those dogs that display no behavioral defect at the time of assessment. They must initiate a friendly exchange with the handler promptly and spend at least 50% of the time in the test soliciting attention/affection from the handler in a gentle, calm manner. They readily accept handling such as a hug or teeth exam without struggle. They willingly relinquish food, treats and toys to people without any signs of possessiveness. Their play style is appropriately gentle for interaction with all ages of people, and all other animals. They will have shown no threatening behavior towards people or other animals at the facility or in previous circumstances of which the Department is aware, and can be placed in a home with inexperienced owners with no restrictions regarding living arrangements. **Level 1 dogs are considered “adoptable”.**

Level 2 – Those dogs that display manageable behavioral defects at the time of assessment. They must initiate a friendly exchange with the handler within 3 minutes, and spend at least 20% of the time in the test soliciting attention/affection from the handler. They must accept handling such as a hug or teeth exam without struggle (completion of level 1 or 2 teeth exam), but then may immediately move away after release by the handler. These dogs may be slightly fearful with immediate recovery or may be very eager but gentle in their play and interaction. They will find toys and treats valuable and may move them away from the handler, but cannot be pressed to display any extreme signs of possessiveness above a freeze or hard eye. They are quick to engage in play, but are aware of their boundaries (no teeth on skin or rough body contact) and recover quickly when play is ended. These dogs will show interest in cats, but are easily distracted from them, and show no willingness to harm another animal. Results of the test may require restrictions regarding an appropriate home. At the time of adoption, new owners should be presented with information regarding the management of these dogs. **Level 2 dogs are considered “adoptable”.**

Level 3 - Those dogs that display manageable behavioral defects at the time of assessment that will require an experienced owner to control. They have not initiated interaction with the handler within 3 minutes, and have not spent any time in the test soliciting attention/affection from the handler. They are unresponsive when the handler initiates affection, and remain unsocial out of fear or anxiety, or they may become overly aroused with any touch but are able to calm. They struggle when hugged or during a teeth exam (completion of level 2 or 3 teeth exam), and move away from the handler whenever possible with little or no recall. These dogs may be very eager and forceful in their play and interaction with people and other animals. They are quick to engage in play, but are

aware of their boundaries (no teeth on skin or rough body contact) and recover quickly when play is ended. They will find toys and treats valuable and may move them away from the handler, but cannot be pressed to display any extreme signs of possessiveness above a freeze or hard eye. These dogs will show interest in cats, are difficult to distract from them, and may be willing to harm them. They have good dog skills and do not seem to be willing to harm another dog. Results of the test will require restrictions regarding an appropriate home. At the time of adoption, new owners should be presented with information regarding the management of these dogs. **Level 3 dogs are considered “behavior – treatable”.**

Level 4 – Those dogs that display unmanageable behavioral defects at the time of assessment. They have not initiated interaction with the handler within 3 minutes, and have not spent any time in the test soliciting attention/affection from the handler. They are unresponsive when the handler initiates affection, and remain unsocial out of fear or anxiety, or they may become overly aroused with any touch, and remain aroused throughout the test. They struggle fiercely when hugged or during a teeth exam (unable to complete level 3 teeth exam), and move away from the handler whenever possible with no recall. They display signs of possessiveness over food, treats or toys by freezing, snarling, growling, snapping, lunging, or biting. These dogs will show interest in cats, are difficult to distract from them, and appear to be willing to harm them. They have poor dog skills and appear to be willing to harm another dog. Their style of play is rough with no recovery, resulting in possible injury to people or other animals, or they may not engage in play at all. **Level 4 dogs are considered “behavior – non-treatable”.**

Level 5 – Those dogs that display dangerous behavior in the kennel and cannot be safely handled for evaluation purposes. These dogs are either offensively or defensively aggressive in the kennel, or exhibit extreme fearfulness with little or no recovery. **Level 5 dogs are considered “behavior – non-treatable”.**

APPENDIX FIVE

Animal Category Definitions

ADOPTABLE

A healthy, friendly animal that does not require any medical treatment or behavioral intervention.

Example: A 12 year old, blind dog that requires no treatment and is social and well adjusted. **Age, breed** and **time** at the shelter do not affect the definition of “**adoptable**.”

TREATABLE

An animal that does not meet the definition of “**adoptable**” but could meet those criteria with reasonable efforts. A “**treatable**” animal may have a rehabilitative medical and/or behavioral condition.

Example: **(medical)** Animals with fractures, viruses, ear infections, skin conditions, or any condition that requires medical intervention, which could make the animal “**adoptable**”. Whether or not there are resources available to provide the treatment does not affect the **definition** of “**treatable**”.

Example: **(behavior)** Animals with **minor** behavior problems, such as shyness, which can be treated with behavior modification. An animal that has been in the shelter too long and is deteriorating physically and/or mentally would be **defined** as “**treatable**”.

All animals categorized as “adoptable” or “treatable” are available for adoption.

NON-REHABILITATABLE

These are animals that are irremediably suffering from a serious illness or severe injuries, animals with a poor prognosis or protracted painful recovery, or animals that are suffering from or afflicted with some medical condition that is not likely to be remedied with reasonable efforts. These could also be animals with no medical condition but are feral animals, or asocial animals determined to be dangerous or fractious to people or other animals or whose behavior presents an unreasonable risk of future harm based on their history and/or behavior evaluation.

Example: **(medical)** A cat with feline infectious peritonitis, a puppy in the **advanced** stages of parvo, a spinal fracture, cancer etc.

Example: **(behavior)** An animal with a history of biting or attacking people or other animals, or an animal that demonstrates aggressiveness during a temperament test, (i.e. extreme resource guarding, fear biting or extreme dominant behavior to the point of being dangerous.)

Animals categorized as “non-rehabilitatable” are not available for adoption.