

# Valley River Humane Society

## Euthanasia Criteria

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**Euthanasia Scope** - The euthanasia of animals has been acknowledged by the Valley River Humane Society as an appropriate and humane means of ending the suffering of an animal in physical distress. It is also used to end the lives of animals that have severe behavioral problems and cannot be adopted into an appropriate new home because they pose a threat to the health and safety of people or other animals.

The use of euthanasia to end the lives of healthy, adoptable animals will be considered only as a last resort (with Board of Directors approval) given inadequate resource levels necessary to support the general population. The VRHS advocates the use of a wide range of tools—including training and education of the pet-keeping public to reduce the frequency of animal relinquishment, public and private spay and neuter programs to slow the birth rate for animals, active promotion of adoptions of shelter animals with the goal to create a social environment where the number of people seeking to adopt animals is roughly equivalent to the number of homeless animals.

The VRHS is committed using only those methods that cause a rapid loss of consciousness and that cause minimal pain, distress, and suffering in the animal. We oppose any euthanasia methods or techniques that do not meet these humane principles.

**Overview** – Selecting animals for euthanasia is considered one of the most stressful tasks animal shelters employees face. Animal shelter staff, board members, volunteers and members of the public should never be allowed to question, berate or harass employee's selection animals for euthanasia about the choices they make. If someone believes that the person choosing animals for euthanasia has violated agency policy (or trust), the matter should be addressed with management. Staff who is responsible for selection animals for euthanasia should be compassionate and caring and should have a thorough understanding of euthanasia application, methods and procedures.

To avoid placing the burden of this task on one individual – the VRHS will utilize a committee of experts "PEC" (typically Shelter Manager (a CET), a second CET and President of Board when necessary) to make the euthanasia selection decisions. The PEC must always include a confirmation of two individuals: the two CET or a CET and the President of the Board of Directors or a veterinarian. A veterinarian or behaviorist will be consulted in some cases where necessary.

**Euthanasia Categories and Guidelines** – Choosing which animals will be euthanized should encompass the following guidelines (category / status / recommended action) on the following page:

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Category	Status	Euthanasia ....
Adoptable Animal	Animals who, given the space, time, staff, money or availability of an appropriate home could live well in a new home.	...is performed as a last resort. Most often due to lack of resources or available space at the shelter <b>with board of directors' approval only.</b>
Behavior Problems Self-traumatizing	Animals with behavior problems (chewing, inappropriate urination, anxiety, lack of socialization, un-socialized)	...is performed as a last resort. It is our philosophy to rehabilitate (enrichment) when possible given the available resources and only performed <b>with board of directors approval</b>
Medical Treatable	Animals in good physical condition with treatable, non-contagious medical conditions such as skin problems, fleas, mites, or problems that could be fixed with treatment and or time.	...is most often a result of lack of resources, space or time to treat the animal <b>with board of directors' approval only.</b>
Medical Contagious	Animals in good physical condition with a medical condition such as an upper respiratory infection, kennel cough, ringworm, or a less severe case of mange that may be very treatable but highly contagious.	...is most often not only because of the symptoms of the illness, but also to prevent contamination of others. It is our philosophy to treat medical contagious animals given the available resources and concurrence from the "PEC" committee.
Physical Condition	Animals in general poor overall condition, broken bones, and or health (i.e. old, weak, failing, FTT, body conditions 1-2)	...is often the eventual result as these animals are generally poor candidates for adoption placement due to extensive medical rehabilitation necessary. It is our philosophy to rehabilitate and or treat when possible given the available resources and concurrence from the "PEC" committee.
Unweaned-Too Young	Animals those are too young to survive on their own or in a shelter setting, needing extensive care and socialization.	...is often the result due to labor-intensive nature of care and lack of foster homes. It is our philosophy to rehabilitate and or treat when possible given the available resources and concurrence from the "PEC" committee.
Behavior Problems Potential traumatizing to others	Animals with behavior problems unpredictable temperament, aggressiveness, <b>feral</b> , history of biting humans.	...is generally appropriate for humane, safety, ethical and liability reasons. It is our philosophy to rehabilitate (enrichment) when possible given the available resources and concurrence from the "PEC" committee.
Inappropriate for Adoption	Animals with a serious condition that is not rehabilitation (i.e. feline leukemia)	...is appropriate even if resources are available with concurrence from the "PEC" committee.
Medical Untreatable	Animals with terminal illness or injuries, severe chronic illness, or other serious medical condition.	...is appropriate to eliminate ongoing suffering for the animal with concurrence from the "PEC" committee. .
Court Order	Animals who have been ordered for euthanasia at the direction of a judge, hearing officer, or other public official with such authority.	...is performed to comply with the ruling.