



Policy: Euthanasia	Date Created: March 21, 2023
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PURPOSE:

As both a public safety and animal welfare agency, Ingham County Animal Control and Shelter (ICACS) recognizes the need for euthanasia for animals that have a poor quality of life prognosis or present a danger to staff and citizens. This procedure designates who is authorized to perform euthanasia at ICACS and establishes general guidelines and processes for determining which animals will be euthanized.

ICACS STAFF AUTHORIZED TO APPROVE EUTHANASIA:

Euthanasia may be authorized by the following individuals:

- Director
- Deputy Director
- Veterinarian

ICACS STAFF AUTHORIZED TO PERFORM EUTHANASIA:

Any ICACS staff performing euthanasia (euthanasia technician) shall meet the euthanasia by injection (EBI) training standards set by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). Under no circumstances shall an ICACS staff member perform EBI prior to completing this training.

Staff that have completed EBI training, but have not yet performed a euthanasia procedure, will be required to perform euthanasia under the direct supervision of ICACS medical staff. Once practical EBI skills have been demonstrated, the medical division may authorize the staff member to perform an EBI procedure unsupervised.

The following staff members shall be sent to EBI training as part of their training:

- Director
- Deputy Director
- Veterinarian Assistants
- Animal Care Specialists
- Animal Control Officers
- Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator



GENERAL EUTHANASIA GUIDELINES:

- The euthanasia technician shall ensure that written authorization has been obtained prior to performing euthanasia.
- All euthanasia technicians shall, without compromising staff safety, make every effort to ensure that the animal is comfortable during the euthanasia process.
- Euthanasia shall be performed in a manner consistent with the EBI training program and shelter veterinarian guidelines.
- If a euthanasia technician is unsure about any steps in the euthanasia process, drug dosage or methods, they shall consult with the ICACS medical division prior to proceeding with the procedure.
- All animals shall be scanned for a microchip immediately prior to performing euthanasia. It is the responsibility of the euthanasia technician to perform a complete scan of the animal.
- The euthanasia technician shall ensure that if a microchip is found the number matches that contained in the shelter records management system (RMS). If the microchip number on the scanner does not match the information contained within the RMS, the euthanasia process shall be investigated.
- Lost animal reports shall be referenced prior to submitting euthanasia requests for authorization. If an animal is found within the reports reasonable efforts shall be made to investigate the matter before proceeding with the euthanasia process.
- All drugs used in the euthanasia process shall be documented in the shelter RMS by the euthanasia technician.
- All paper documents related to the euthanasia shall be scanned and electronically attached to the animal record in the shelter RMS.

BEHAVIORAL EUTHANASIA:

Part of the ICACS role in public safety is to manage animals that are a potential or known safety risk to residents and other animals within Ingham County. In addition, ICACS makes reasonable attempts to ensure that all animals being adopted from the Shelter are safe for potential adopters. Therefore, ICACS may euthanize animals that present a danger to the public, ICACS staff, or to other animals.

The Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator (behaviorist) is responsible for monitoring the behavioral health and temperament of all animals housed in the Shelter. The behaviorist shall be responsible for designing and implementing animal enrichment programs in an effort to promote and maintain the positive mental health and behavior of all animals housed at ICACS.

All animals that become the property of Ingham County through the process of surrender, abandonment or forfeiture, must undergo a formal behavior evaluation. The behavior evaluation shall consist of a formalized testing process established and conducted by the behaviorist.



As part of the overall behavior evaluation process, the behaviorist will also consider any known past behavioral issues presented by the animal, along with the behavior demonstrated to Animal Care Specialists and Animal Control Officers while in the custody of ICACS.

If the temperament of the animal is such that it may not be handled safely, and the testing process would present obvious danger or risk of injury to ICACS staff, it shall be deemed a failure of the temperament test and the animal shall be subject to behavioral euthanasia.

All behavioral test results shall be thoroughly documented within the shelter records management system by the behaviorist.

MEDICAL EUTHANASIA:

As an animal welfare agency, ICACS has a duty to ensure that animals maintain a positive quality of life. Animals with poor quality of life outlooks or a poor medical prognosis may be subject to medical euthanasia.

All medical euthanasia decisions for all animals that become the property of ICACS shall include a consultation with the shelter medical division prior to authorization. If a medical hospice placement is appropriate, a request may be made to the Rescue Coordinator in an effort to obtain a special needs placement as an alternative to euthanasia.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL EUTHANASIA:

Stray animals that are suffering from grave or painful injury or illness may come into the care and custody of ICACS. ICACS shall make every reasonable effort to immediately locate an owner of this animal. If an owner is located, ICACS will endeavor to return the animal to the owner immediately so that it can receive medical treatment.

If an owner cannot be immediately located and the animal is suffering through pain or illness which cannot be alleviated through medical treatment that is within the scope of care available through the shelter's medical division, euthanasia may be immediately authorized. In these cases, the body of the animal shall be held through the remainder of the stray hold period in an effort to reunite the remains with the owner if they are located.

OWNER REQUESTED EUTHANASIA:

ICACS performs owner requested euthanasia for the animals of Ingham County residents. Owner requested euthanasia may be performed for medical or behavioral reasons. A behavioral assessment form shall be completed by the owner for all animals surrendered to ICACS for euthanasia. All surrender paperwork shall be signed by the owner and documented in the RMS prior to performing euthanasia.



Except in instances where it has been demonstrated that the animal has caused serious injury, animals surrendered for euthanasia shall be subject to the same processes outlined in the medical and behavioral sections of this policy.

SPECIAL NEEDS ANIMALS:

ICACS maintains relationships with animal rescue groups that specialize in caring for animals with certain medical or behavioral issues. ICACS may attempt to place animals with certain medical or behavioral needs into a specialized rescue.

No animal that has been found to present a public safety risk shall be eligible for transfer to another rescue or shelter.

OVERCROWDING EUTHANASIA:

ICACS recognizes that the space to house animals within the shelter and the overall capacity for care is limited. When shelter housing capacity or capacity for care is exceeded, this contributes to the spread of disease and has a deteriorative effect on the shelter population, including an increase in adverse animal behavior. These circumstances can present a danger to ICACS staff, animals being housed by ICACS and are contrary to the ICACS mission of promoting animal welfare.

ICACS shall make all reasonable efforts to transfer or place into foster any animal that is a candidate for adoption or requires special needs placement prior to authorizing euthanasia to reduce shelter population. In the event that transfer the relocation of an animal is not possible and that ICACS exceeds its capacity limit or its capacity for care, ICACS administration may authorize euthanasia to reduce the shelter population.

EUTHANASIA OF BATS:

The euthanasia of bats is performed by ICACS as a function of the agency's role in the rabies testing process. As live bats may not be sent to the state of Michigan lab for testing, any live bats being brought to the shelter by members of the public as part of the Health Department testing protocol may be euthanized without receiving formal authorization.

DISPATCHING OF WILDLIFE:

The procedure for the euthanasia of wildlife is outlined in the Dispatching Wildlife by Firearm policy.