

**SUBJECT: Euthanasia**

**POLICY:**

Euthanasia is reserved only for situations involving animals that cannot be safely handled – either because of aggression or contagious disease, or in situations where the animal is suffering and a reasonable level of treatment would not be effective at providing a good quality of life.

Prior to a euthanasia decision being made, all other options are explored including: return to owner (if an owner can be identified), adoption, transfer to a rescue group or shelter capable of providing better care and/or rehabilitation, and treatment.

**Identification of Animals to be Euthanized**

All animals that become the property of the Public Shelter (after legally required hold times) will be considered adoptable until they have been determined otherwise through a medical and/or behavioral evaluation as per the policies and procedures in effect.

**Medical Conditions**

The medical staff (Veterinarian, Veterinary Technician, and/or trained staff) will evaluate each animal for any medical problems and determine if an animal is medically adoptable. The medical exam will be done based on a physical exam checklist which will be included in the animal's record. This exam will include body score and pain assessment.

The medical evaluation will be done as soon as the medical staff is available. In the event that a supervisor is unavailable and an emergency occurs where an animal is suffering greatly, the Euthanasia Request Form can be completed by three available staff and photo documentation may be attached to the form.

Any medical problems noted by the medical staff will then be assessed to note if this is a resolvable medical problem based on severity and resources available. Irresolvable medical problems may put the animal in the non-adoptable category, and the availability of transfer agencies and rescue groups will be considered before the final euthanasia decision is made. If resources do not permit, and there are no transfer/rescue options available, a Euthanasia Request form will be filled out, and upon signature of at least three people including the medical staff and kennel or cattery supervisor, the animal will be euthanized.

**Behavior Conditions**

The SAFER® behavioral assessment will be performed on dogs that are presented to the Public Shelter as soon as they become the property of the Public Shelter. This behavioral assessment will be ongoing. No behavioral euthanasias will be done in less than 4 days from intake.

Animals that receive only 1's and 2's on the SAFER® Behavior Assessment will be considered adoptable. Those animals who receive 3's and higher will be further evaluated by a trained evaluator to determine if this animal can, with adequate resources, be put into an adoptable category. The Canine Behavior Protocol will be followed. If, because of documented behavioral issues, a particular animal cannot be put into an adoptable category, options for transfer, rescue or euthanasia will be considered.

### **Other Considerations**

Dogs that are mandated by the courts to be held by the Public Shelter because they are classified as dangerous will be held in an isolated area of the kennel away from the public. These animals will receive the same medical and behavioral evaluation as the other animals held at the Public Shelter.

All medical records, behavioral records and requests for euthanasia will be maintained in the animal's record.

The Public Shelter will not accept animals from their owners for the purpose of euthanasia.

All animals are to be checked for a microchip and against lost pet lists by staff upon intake and again prior to the decision to euthanize.

### **Conducting Euthanasia**

Since euthanasia is defined as the act of inducing a painless death, it is the policy of Greenhill Humane Society that animals be handled with respect and sensitivity and protected from stress, fear, discomfort, and pain.

Euthanasia will only be conducted by staff who are properly trained and certified (veterinarians and Certified Euthanasia Technicians (CETs) according to Oregon state law). Certified staff can assist people applying for new certification at the shelter with further training. Training must be approved by a supervisor, and during training euthanasia may only be performed by, or in the presence of, a certified person. All Certified Euthanasia Technician certificates will be posted publicly.

Euthanasia will usually be performed by two staff persons, in a safe and humane manner, according to all Oregon state rules, regulations and guidelines for veterinarians and CETs.

Sodium pentobarbital is the euthanasia agent used in all cases. The preferred method of administration, when at all possible, is intravenously. Intraperitoneal injections are acceptable in any case where IV injection is not possible. Intracardiac injections must never be performed on conscious animals. An intracardiac injection may only be used if the animal is completely unconscious and an intravenous injection is not possible.

Domestic animals should be sedated routinely, unless there is a medical reason why sedation is unnecessary or would cause stress for the animal. Pre-euthanasia sedation is considered the most humane manner of performing the euthanasia procedure. Sedation agents are to be administered intramuscularly or subcutaneously. If the animal is muzzled, the muzzle should be removed as soon as it is safe to do so, in order to prevent vomiting and aspiration.

Live animals should not see another animal being euthanized nor should they see a deceased animal. Only under rare and extenuating circumstances may an exception be made and only if it will make the process easier on the animals.

### **Controlled Substances Controls**

All controlled substances, needles and syringes are to be kept securely locked and should never be accessible to the public or any unauthorized persons. Only staff members who have been adequately trained to use such supplies will have access to them. Only the supervisor and veterinarians will have access to the full supply, maintained in a safe according to Oregon Pharmacy laws, and will have access to the keys and lock combinations for that supply. All Certified Euthanasia Technicians will have access to the open supply. Drugs are kept under lock and key in the euthanasia room and only trained employees should have access to the key. The supervising veterinarian is responsible for termination and combination changes. The day use storage safe is never left unlocked or unattended, and all drugs must be secured and logged at the time they are used. No controlled substance is to be removed from the Shelter without the approval of the Supervising Veterinarian. All use, documentation, security, and supervision of controlled substances will follow the rules and guidelines set force by the Oregon Board of Pharmacy, and kept up to date as required by law.

### PROCEDURE:

#### RESPONSIBILITY

#### ACTION

Kennel or Cattery Staff

1. Before reaching the euthanasia decision, ensure that other options are not available including, a double-check against lost reports, scanning for a microchip, identifying qualified transfer agencies or rescues, and verifying PDD/DB classifications.

Certified Euthanasia Technician

2. If the certified euthanasia technician believes the animal would be adoptable then the supervising veterinarian will examine the animal, and consult with other staff as to the situation. Do not proceed with euthanasia. If the veterinarian is not available, the euthanasia will be rescheduled to a later date when the veterinarian is available.

3. Prepares for the euthanasia, according to the

Euthanasia Protocol and the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters.

4. Follows Public Shelter Euthanasia Solution use Protocol and guidelines for humane euthanasia as specified in the HSUS Euthanasia Training Manual and Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters.

**Inventory and Record Keeping:**

5. All patient information and controlled substances used are recorded in the appropriate logbooks according to the Euthanasia Protocol. This information must also be accurately documented under the animal's impound in the PetPoint database. Report any discrepancy in the drug balance immediately to a supervisor.

Under no circumstances should a page be removed from this book. If a mistake is made, a thin line should be drawn through the error with the necessary correction being made and initialed. All entries should be made in black or blue ink, and no entry should be erased or completely obliterated.

Certified Euthanasia Technician

6. Updates animal's impound record in PetPoint to record the date of and reason for euthanasia
7. Maintains controlled substance controls spreadsheet and computer inventory.

**REFERENCE:**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Physical Exam Checklist  
Euthanasia Request Form  
Euthanasia Procedure  
Euthanasia Solution Use Protocol

### Physical Exam Checklist

1) Attitude/Appearance <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	2) Oral Cavity/Teeth <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	3) Mucous Membranes <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	4) Eyes <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE
5) Ears <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	6) Cardiovascular <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	7) Respiratory <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	8) Gastrointestinal <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE
9) Musculoskeletal <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	10) Lymph Nodes <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	11) Urogenital <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	12) Integumentary <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE
13) Nervous System <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> NE	14) Pain <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	T _____ P _____ R _____ Wt. _____	

N = Normal A = Abnormal NE = Not Examined

Diet \_\_\_\_\_ Indoor ← \_\_\_\_\_ → Outdoor

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PAIN ASSESSMENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

BODY SCORE

# Euthanasia Request

Animal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Intake Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Receiving # \_\_\_\_\_

Species: \_\_\_\_\_

FELV+

FIV+

Unmanageable Medical

Unmanageable Behavior

Reason for euthanasia:

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Check all that apply:

**Examined by:**

Shelter DVM \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Other DVM \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Shelter CVT \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Shelter staff \_\_\_\_\_  
name

**Consulted with:**

Shelter DVM \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Other DVM \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Behavior specialist/trainer \_\_\_\_\_  
name

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewed by Executive staff:**

yes

no

N/A

**Owner call requested:**

yes

no

N/A

If yes: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Results: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Results: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Results: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials

Owner comments:

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Euthanasia:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

# Euthanasia Procedure

1. Prior to any euthanasia, the euthanasia room should be checked to be sure the room is clean and tidy, the shades are drawn, the “Occupied” sign has been flipped over, and all needed supplies are available. Supplies needed include towels/blankets, alcohol bottle, syringes and needles, gloves, keys to open drug lock box, enough sedative and euthanasia solution as needed for the size of the animal, clippers, stethoscope, muzzles, pens, and anything else you feel you need to adequately perform this task.
2. Check that all paperwork has been provided, a tag has been provided for cremation if needed, and that the tag is the correct color for the cremation desired.
3. All animals will be sedated prior to euthanasia unless the veterinarian/technician feels there is a specific reason not to sedate the animal. Either KAT or Telazol may be used for sedation, according to the drug dose charts.
4. Use all necessary precautions to ensure that staff will not be harmed (bitten or scratched) during the procedure. Whenever possible, staff should hold the animal while injections are given.
5. Once the animal is well sedated, an IV injection of euthanasia solution should be given, according to the euthanasia dose chart.
6. Use stethoscope to confirm that the heart is stopped. A heart stick may be used instead.
7. Place the animal in one of the plastic bags provided in the euthanasia room, tie the bag tightly, and affix the cremation card to the bag if appropriate. Animals should be placed in the freezer. Always use TWO people to lift a dog up or down onto the cart and into the freezer. A large towel or blanket should be placed underneath a heavy animal (like a stretcher) to assist with lifting.
8. Complete the euthanasia paperwork as follows:
  - a. Fill out the controlled substance log book for euthanasia solution used.
  - b. If sedation was used, fill out the controlled substance log book with the appropriate information.
  - c. Fill out the disposal log book.
  - d. Stamp the kennel card paperwork and fill out the appropriate info for the euthanasia stamp.
9. Clean the room (including table, clippers, and mop floor if needed), put away any supplies used, and check if any items need to be restocked. Make sure that lock box is closed and staff’s keys are not left in the room. Turn out the lights and flip the “Occupied” sign back over to the blank side.

## Euthanasia Solution Use Protocol

1. Cats
  - a. IV: Use 1 ml per 10 lbs of body weight.
    - i. Volume should be rounded up to the nearest ml.
    - ii. Examples:
      1. cats under 10 lbs- give 1.0 ml
      2. cats 10-20 lbs – give 2.0 ml
  - b. IP:
    - i. Less than 3 lbs - Use 1.0 ml
    - ii. 3-10 lbs – Use 3.0 ml
    - iii. Over 10 lbs – Use 3.0 ml per 10 lbs of body weight
2. Dogs
  - a. IV: Use 1 ml per 10 lbs of body weight.
    - i. Volume should be rounded up to the nearest ml.
  - b. IP: **\*Should ONLY be used on dogs UNDER 5 weeks old\***
    - i. Less than 3 lbs - Use 1.0 ml
    - ii. 3-10 lbs – Use 3.0 ml
    - iii. Over 10 lbs – Use 3.0 ml per 10 lbs of body weight
  - c. All dogs will be weighed prior to euthanasia.
    - i. Exceptions will be made when weighing would cause stress, pain or danger to the animal, staff or owner
3. All other small species (rabbits, birds, rats, etc)
  - a. Less than 3 lbs- Use 1.0 ml IP
  - b. 3-10 lbs – Use 3.0 ml IP

**\*\*Additional euthanasia solution may always be used when the amounts listed above do not, for whatever reason, provide a humane euthanasia. If additional solution is needed, a second entry should be made in the log book for the amount used. The second logbook entry must be completed in full (same as the original entry), and in addition, a brief notation as to the reason additional solution was needed, should be made.\*\***