

Standards of Care Assessment Report: Chesterfield County Animal Services

August 19-20, 2020

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
About the Standards of Care Assessment	3
Positives	5
Concerns and Opportunities	6
1. Animal Housing & Sanitation	6
Examples of specific problems observed	6
Cat Housing	6
Dog Housing	7
Sanitation	8
Deep Cleaning	8
Spot Cleaning	9
2. Medical Care & Disease Control	9
Examples of specific problems observed	9
Disease Control	10
Biosecurity	10
The Disaster/Disease Cycle	14
3. Resource Utilization	17
Examples of specific problems observed	17
Medical Expenses	17
Recordkeeping	18
Personnel	18
Population Management	21
Stray animals	21
Long term residents	22
4. Leading Practices	22
No Kill South Carolina Strategies and Tactics	22
Lifesaving Strategies and Tactics	22
Humane Strategies and Tactics	23
Welcome Adopters (Lifesaving Strategy 1)	23
Remove Breed Restrictions (Lifesaving Strategy 1)	24
Implement a Community Cat Program (Lifesaving Strategy 3)	24
Increase Returns to Owner (Lifesaving Strategy 5)	25
Divert Shelter Intake (Humane Strategy 2)	25

Thanks and Future Collaboration	26
Appendix 1: Index of Recommendations	27
Appendix 2: List of Standards Met and Still to be Attained	28
Unacceptable-Level Standards	28
Summary	28
Standards Still to be Attained: Unacceptable Level	28
Standards Currently Met: Unacceptable Level	29
Must-Level Standards	31
Summary	31
Standards Still to be Attained: Must Level	31
Standards Currently Met: Must Level	39

Executive Summary

No Kill South Carolina, in collaboration with HSPCA South Carolina, assessed the daily operations of Chesterfield County Animal Services (CCAS) August 19-20, 2020. The assessment was initiated at the invitation of Chesterfield County's Administrator and Animal Services Committee, responding to community concerns about welfare of animals at the shelter. Assessors observed daily cleaning, medication, euthanasia, transport, and transfers-out, conducted interviews with various staff members, and reviewed records relating to purchasing, staffing, animal flow, and animal care.

Overall, Chesterfield County Animal Services is well funded and the facilities are in good repair. The lapses in animal welfare and overall shelter management observed during the assessment are concerning, but for the most part easily addressed with very little additional resource expenditures. The implementation of the recommendations in this document, investing in ongoing staff training, and holding staff accountable will quickly improve the quality of life for animals in Chesterfield County.

About the Standards of Care Assessment

No Kill South Carolina is an initiative of the Charleston Animal Society. We aim to save every healthy and treatable pet in South Carolina by building a network of animal shelter professionals and implementing research-based, data-driven leading practices. While lifesaving is at the core of our mission, it is only half of the equation; lifesaving cannot come at the expense of humane care.

No Kill South Carolina's Standards of Care Assessment exists to raise the level of care provided to sheltered animals in South Carolina. The assessment is based on the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, which is premised on the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare. The goal of the assessment is to examine all shelter operations from the perspective of the animal and to identify opportunities to enhance humane care. The assessment is not a judgment of Chesterfield County Animal Services' staff or operations. The sole purpose of the assessment is to identify opportunities to enhance the care the shelter provides.

The ASV Guidelines lists 554 standards in 12 chapters. Each standard is categorized into one of four levels, depending on how fundamental it is to humane care. The levels of care defined by the ASV Guidelines are:



Unacceptable: Is used to highlight practices that must be corrected as soon as possible to provide an acceptable level of care. No sheltering organization, regardless of its circumstances, should engage in any unacceptable practices.



Must: Indicates that without adherence to this recommendation, the delivery of a minimum level of acceptable humane care is not possible.



Should: A strong recommendation is implied for these standards.



Ideal: While these may not be possible in all circumstances, they would certainly enhance care for animals and are ideal for an agency to excel in the animal sheltering field; shelters should strive to meet all ideal practices wherever possible.

No Kill South Carolina's assessment of CCAS focuses on Unacceptable and Must level standards; those that are must met in order to provide humane care for animals at the shelter. This report will focus on specific strategies to raise the standard of care at Chesterfield County Animal Services to the Must level, in order to improve quality of care and decrease length of stay.

Specific recommendations are indicated with this symbol in the margin:



A summary of all recommendations can be found in Appendix 1, on page 28.

Positives

Chesterfield County Animal Services has a number of very positive aspects to highlight:

Resources

- ☆ Chesterfield County adequately funds the animal shelter and animal services.
- ☆ Staffing levels are sufficient to provide quality care and enrichment.

Live Release

- ☆ Live outcomes for dogs are very high (euthanasia rate in 2019 was only 4.1% for canines.)
- ☆ Staff work hard to transfer dogs to rescue (92% of live outcomes are transfers.)

Animal Care

- ☆ Compassionate staff want to do the right thing for the animals in their care.
- ☆ Staff member performing euthanasia was very compassionate and gentle with the animal during the procedure.

Facility

- ☆ Shelter building is in very good condition and is relatively well designed to allow for separation of canine populations.
- ☆ Overhead hoses in dog kennels reduce trip hazards and provide a neat appearance.
- ☆ Very large play/exercise yard is available for use.
- ☆ Repairs are made promptly when required.

Concerns and Opportunities

Opportunities to enhance animal care at the Chesterfield County Animal Services fall into four broad categories: 1. Animal Housing & Sanitation 2. Medical Care and Disease Control, 3. Resources Utilization and 4. Leading Practices. No overt cruelty was observed, but staff untrained in proper animal care leads to unintentional neglect and animal suffering.

1. Animal Housing & Sanitation

The shelter building is only a few years old and generally in very good repair. However, housing for felines is significantly subpar and kennel cleaning practices are not sufficient to provide an environment that promotes the physical or mental well-being of the animals.

Examples of specific problems observed

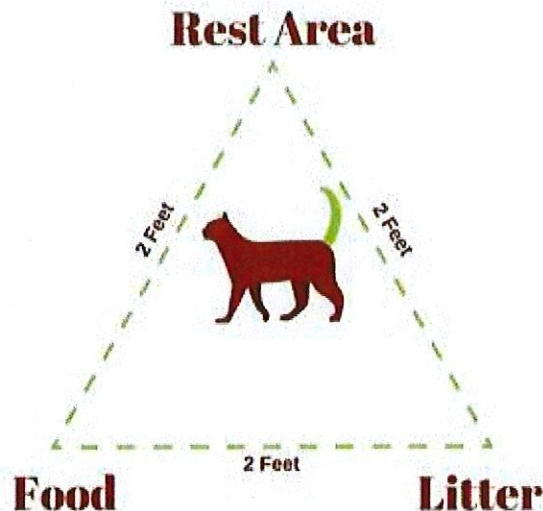
- Cats are exposed to the noise of barking dogs.
- No segregation between sick and healthy cats.
- Incorrect (thereby ineffective) use of disinfectant:
 - At least one foamer contains a tip for 1:50 dilution, almost half of the concentration required to kill Parvovirus with San-O (1:28).
 - Staff filled and used a spray bottle with undiluted San-O.
 - Clorox wipes intended for disinfecting are the "Bleach-free" variety.
- Feces are not picked up prior to spraying disinfectant.
- Cleaning occurs daily but dogs and cats still spend most of their time in dirty conditions.
- Hallways and kennel floors remain wet most of the time. Humidity level in dog kennels during cleaning is extremely high (95%).
- On weekends, only the inside portion of the dog kennels are cleaned.
- Kittens are not properly secured during cleaning. During cleaning, one kitten almost fell off the table because it was not secured. Assessor prevented the fall.
- Cats and rabbit roam free in the reception area.
- Fans are full of dust.

Cat Housing

Housing for felines is one of the most commonly inadequate areas in animal shelters. Some of the common commercially-available banks of kennels are not large enough to meet the space requirements for cats. At a minimum, cats must have sufficient space in their primary enclosure to make normal postural adjustments, e.g., to turn freely and easily stand, sit, stretch, move their head, without touching the top of the enclosure, lie in a comfortable position with limbs extended, move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating.

Additionally, the primary enclosure must allow the animal to sit, sleep and eat away from areas of their enclosure where they defecate and urinate. Allowing less than 2 ft of triangulated distance between these areas has been shown to adversely affect cats' willingness to eat.

Triangulated distance for cat cage areas



Other requirements for cat housing requires that cats are offered places to hide, and that they are offered a litterbox that is large enough to accommodate their entire body.

Most of the cats at CCAS are housed in pop-up metal cages. These types of cages *can* offer acceptable housing for single cats when set up correctly, not overcrowded, and not located in areas that expose the animals to stressors or disease. That is not the current situation at CCAS.



No Kill South Carolina recommends ensuring that individual enclosures are set up appropriately, and changing the shelter layout to add housing areas for cats (see proposed shelter layout under Biosecurity, page 10).

Dog Housing

The dog kennels at CCAS are in good condition and dogs in individual runs have both indoor and outdoor access when the guillotines are open. Drain covers are in good repair and when blockages occur they are quickly addressed by the county maintenance department.

There are a few places where the chain link has come unattached from the stabilizer bar at the bottom. Additionally, the chain link structure is not connected to the concrete behind it (see photo); staff report that dogs sometimes squeeze behind the bars and get stuck. In one kennel, the chain link is broken, with a broken bent wire creating a hazard for the dog housed inside.

Unsecured chain link structure



No Kill South Carolina recommends replacing the missing fence ties and bolting the chain link uprights to the concrete, for the safety and security of the dogs.

Sanitation

A well thought out, comprehensive plan for sanitation can reduce the dose of disease exposure to a level the animals' immune response can handle. In the best case scenario, shelter sanitation prevents illness in both animals and people and creates a pleasant, welcoming environment where the public is more likely to come and adopt an animal.

Deep Cleaning

Animal housing should always be fully disinfected between animals. Most disinfectants are inactivated when they come into contact with organic material. Therefore, protocols for deep cleaning must involve three separate steps, in a specific order:

1. Removing organic material (feces, toys, etc.)
2. Cleaning surfaces with detergent to remove grease and dirt.
3. Sanitizing clean surfaces with an effective compound applied...
 - a. for the appropriate amount of time...
 - b. at the correct concentration.

At CCAS, every animal cage is cleaned every day but current practices do not lead to sanitized kennels. In the dog kennel area, feces are not removed until after the disinfectant has been sprayed. Contact time is not measured. And the concentration of sanitizing solution is not correct: at least one sprayer is set to

create a 1:50 dilution when a 1:28 is required, and assessors observed one staff member fill a handheld spray bottle directly from the undiluted San-O barrel and then use it to spray a cat cage.

Spot Cleaning

Deep cleaning of every kennel is not necessary every single day. Spot cleaning is shown to significantly decrease kennel stress; animals become familiar with their own kennel and scent without having to re-acclimate to the smells of their environment every day. Spot-cleaning involves wiping up small messes and changing bedding if necessary, rather than full cleaning and disinfecting.



No Kill South Carolina recommends revising deep-cleaning procedures to reflect accepted practices, and implementing a potty and spot-cleaning protocol. Dogs that have not urinated or defecated in their kennels overnight should be taken out immediately in the morning just long enough to potty.

Dogs that come to the shelter already housetrained will not lose their reluctance to “go” where they sleep, and dogs that are not yet housetrained may become so, which is appealing to adopters. When dogs are given the chance to relieve themselves outside the kennel, cages stay cleaner and spot-cleaning becomes possible.

2. Medical Care & Disease Control

Examples of specific problems observed

- Staff smoking area is next to dog kennels.
- Sick cats not receiving treatment.
- Very ill kitten bathed and then was unable to maintain body temperature.
- Staff unable or unwilling to make a decision about a dying kitten, either to perform humane euthanasia or bring it to the veterinarian.
- Fundraising comes before treatment; part of decision paralysis for the kitten described above was the believed need to fundraise first.
- Staff carried sick kitten into and out of various cat holding areas while deciding what to do with it and arranging housing.
- Litter of apparently healthy kittens came in, no intake was done because according to several staff members, kitten vaccination at intake doesn't occur because they are likely to be euthanized anyway so it would be a waste of time and money. This litter was placed in a cage next to other cages with sick cats. Cleaning of this cage was done in between sick cat cages, even after the assessor mentioned it should be done first. Intake was performed and the cage was covered after assessor intervention.
- Litter of puppies suspected of having parvovirus was kept in the general population and was handled by staff member without protective garments. Staff member did not wash hands until assessor asked about it.
- Old bottles of chase buffer used for canine heartworm tests; new bottle should be opened with each box of 25 tests and expired chase buffer thrown away.
- Ophthalmic lubricant administered directly from the tube, touching multiple animals' eyes.
- Staff member handling syringe by the hub while administering a vaccination.

- Dewormer administered by drizzling on food, with no monitoring of whether it was eaten.
- Staff member did not wash hands between touching animals, and no soap was available if they had wanted to.

Disease Control

The Koret Shelter Medicine Program at UC Davis acknowledges that “As many animals enter shelters in poor health, malnourished, stressed, and with no history of vaccination, that disease control in shelters is a serious challenge. Some animals will already be shedding various harmful pathogens at intake, with or without showing any signs of disease. With all this disease around and so many opportunities for transmission, one might think that ubiquitous disease spread is nearly inevitable. However, even if infection control is less than perfect, it is possible to support animals’ own immune response through attentive vaccination practices, stress reduction, wholesome food and clean water and other measures to support well-being.”



No Kill South Carolina recommends contracting with a veterinarian to oversee the medical care of the sheltered animals, provide regular shelter services, and to develop and train staff on standard treatments for common diseases. (Details for this recommendation have been presented separately.)



No Kill South Carolina also recommends that CCAS develop a decision matrix for animal outcomes - approved by the shelter veterinarian - to help move animals through the system and ease the emotional burden on staff.

Biosecurity

“Biosecurity” is the set of steps taken to prevent the introduction of a disease agent into a population of animals. Diseases may be passed between animals directly through contact with body surfaces or bodily fluid, or indirectly through contact with airborne particles or passage through an intermediary. Biosecurity protocols should address all the possible ways in which disease may be spread.

There are no biosecurity pathways or fomite awareness during the daily operations at CCAS. Gloves are worn during intake procedures and the scale/exam table is disinfected after each use, however, no other preventative measures are taken.

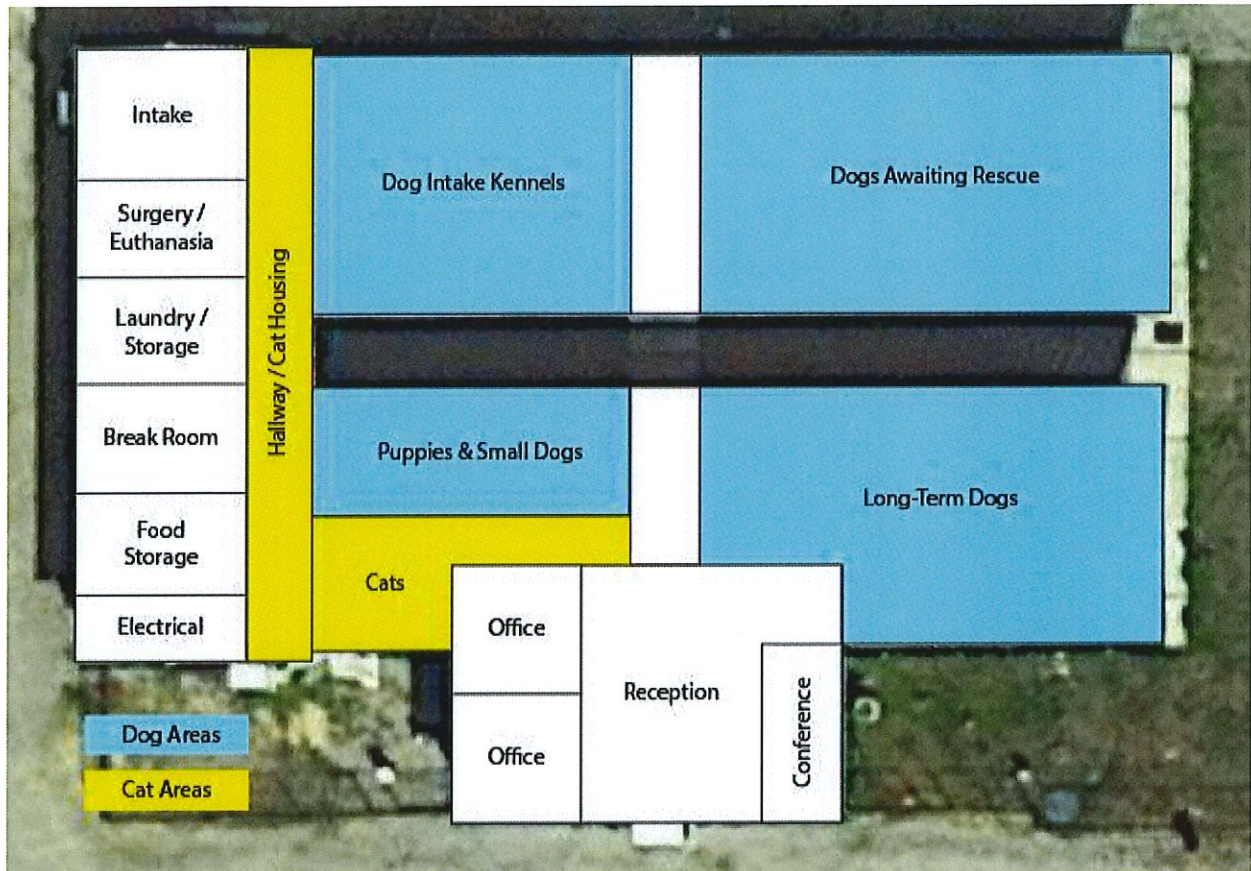
“When we think of sanitation protocols, often the focus is on cleaning cat cages and dog kennels. However, germs are tracked by human and animal traffic throughout any shelter. Additionally, germs are spread by fomites, such as hands, on doorknobs, clothing, carriers, exam tables, instruments, animal transport vehicles, and so on. Some of these are a much more likely source of disease transmission than the cages or kennels themselves; after all, a kennel will only contain the germs belonging to the animal housed there at the time (as long as it is well-sanitized between animals) but a visiting room or exam surface may be contacted by many animals throughout a day.” (Koret Shelter Medicine Program, <https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search%5Bslug%5D=sanitation-in-animal-shelters>).



No Kill South Carolina recommends the creation and implementation of biosecure pathways and protocols to minimize opportunities for disease transmission from animals to animals, humans to animals

and animals to humans. Fortunately, the current shelter building is generally in very good condition and has space available that can be assigned to animals in different stages of the sheltering pathway (refer to Prevention in the Disaster/Disease Cycle on page 14).

Current shelter layout



In the current shelter usage, cats are not offered acceptable housing, as they are relegated to pop-up cages in a hallway and a kennel with dogs (see diagram above). Some areas are underutilized: staff indicate that dog kennels are never full (which is great with such a high live release rate), and that breaks are taken in the conference room not the designated break area. The large office at the front of the shelter is used by the vet techs, who should be spending the majority of their time in the care of the animals, not sitting at a desk. Additionally, the staff smoking area is located precisely in the center of the dog kennels, allowing for maximum exposure to smoke.

By repurposing some existing spaces and making some modest physical changes, the problems with substandard cat housing, biosecurity issues, and wasted space can all be rectified.



No Kill South Carolina recommends the following changes:

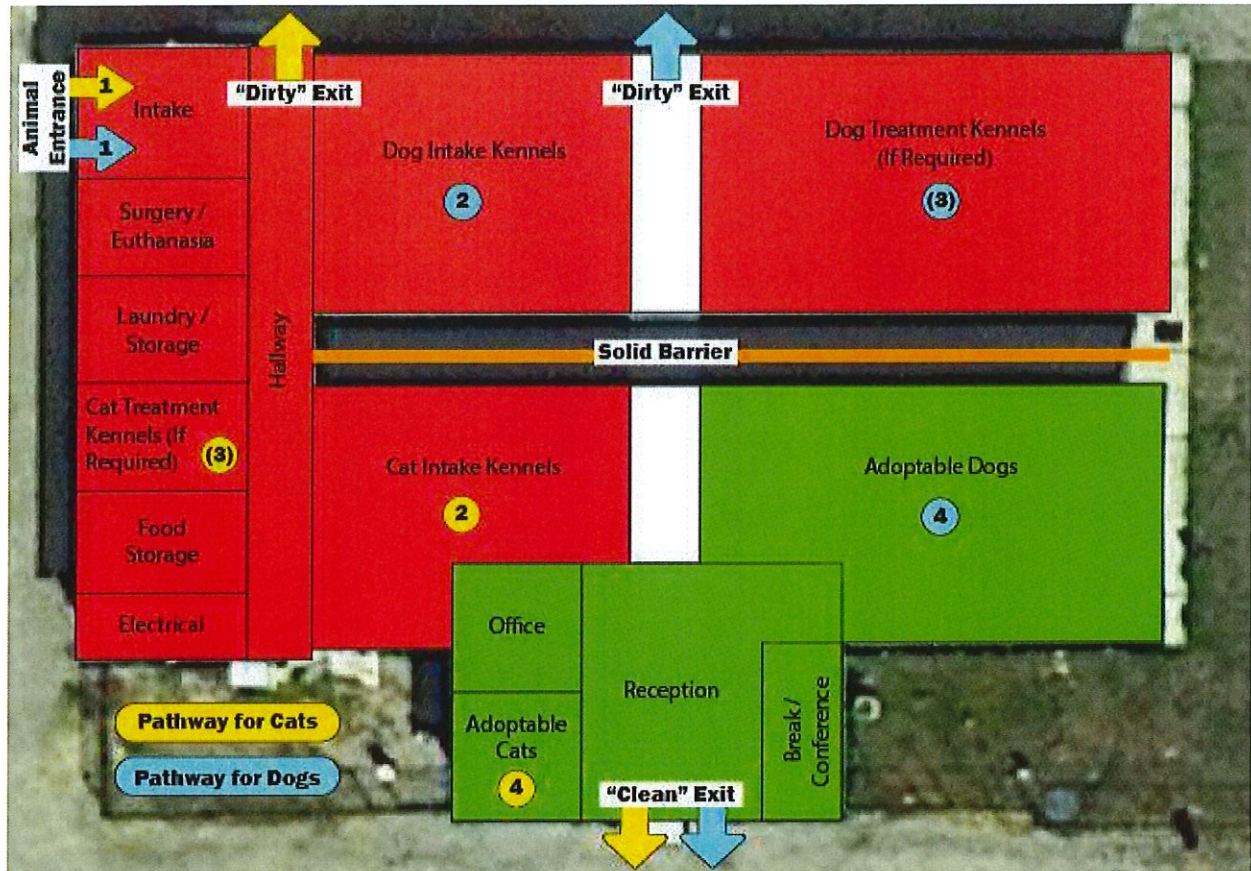
Create separate areas for incoming animals that have not yet been examined, vaccinated, or medically cleared ("Dirty," indicated in red on the diagram below) and adoptable animals that are known to be free of disease ("Clean," in green). Animals should only move from Dirty to Clean, not the other way around, unless the animal breaks with disease.

Members of the public should be allowed free access to "Clean" areas. "Dirty" areas may be accessed by the public only when escorted by a staff member. Trained volunteers may access "Dirty" areas as required while performing their duties.

Specific facility changes required:

- *Turn Employee Break Room into housing area to quarantine sick cats.*
 - *Remove furniture.*
 - *Install cat kennels/cages that meet the minimum housing requirements (11 ft² for single cats or 18ft² each for multiple cats, and 2 ft of triangulated distance between food, litter, and resting area.)*
 - *Prevent access for any reason that does not involve care for the animals within.*
- *Reassign dog kennels closest to Intake for dogs who are new arrivals and are on stray hold, bite quarantine, or awaiting evaluation or treatment for noncontagious medical issues.*
- *Reassign dog kennels in the far back right for quarantine of dogs in treatment for contagious disease. Access should be allowed only to provide care for the animals housed there.*
- *Install a solid barrier between the two main kennel runs. This reduces airborne cross-contamination, as well as provides a visual barrier between animals for stress reduction.*
- *Move small dogs and puppies out of the kennel area behind Reception and dedicate the entire space to cat housing. Ideally, this will involve remodeling the room. In the short term however, humane housing can be provided with minor changes to current structures:*
 - *Enclose the tops of the kennels with chain link. Ensure the kennels are securely attached to the walls with no gaps.*
 - *With the guillotines open, each current dog kennel can house 2 cats humanely (40ft² of horizontal space at 18ft² per cat). Additional horizontal space may be created with the addition of raised resting places such as shelving. Be mindful not to overcrowd!*
 - *One or two of the current kennels should be left open to give cats a place to explore in a secure, enriched setting, without creating cross-exposure with other animals. The play area must be disinfected between each animal.*
- *Establish "Clean" areas for dogs and cats that have been evaluated and are known to be free of disease:*
 - *Eliminate the office space reserved for vet techs and turn it into adoptable cat housing. Veterinary technicians should spend the majority of their time in the intake room and animal housing areas.*
 - *Dedicate the dog kennels closest to the Reception building for adoptable dogs.*
- *Move the smoking area to the left side of the shelter where no animals will be exposed to smoke, or eliminate the smoking area altogether.*

Proposed shelter layout



Animal flow through the shelter should go as follows. Numbering corresponds to the diagram above, where cat pathways are indicated in yellow and dog pathways are in blue.

1. Dogs and cats should enter the building through the intake door at the side of the building. Animal control can bring animals directly through the door. Members of the public should leave the animals outside while they stop in the reception area to verify that the animal can come in at that time and complete the necessary paperwork, then bring the animal to the side entrance door. Other South Carolina organizations including Colleton County Animal Services and Horry County Animal Care Center utilize this strategy to minimize exposure of healthy "Clean" animals and "Dirty" animals with unknown health statuses.

Veterinary technicians perform initial exams, vaccinations, deworming, and behavior observations for new animals in the Intake room.

2. After the intake exam, dogs are moved to the Dog Intake Kennels and cats are moved to the Cat Intake Kennels. There they await their stray hold period and/or treatment for noncontagious illness.
3. If a dog or cat is sick at intake or breaks with disease during its stay it should be immediately isolated in the appropriate treatment area. Treatment should begin immediately, as directed by the veterinarian.

4. *Once animals have been evaluated and are known to be physically and mentally healthy, they should be moved to the proper adoption housing area*

⇒ *Animals should exit the building using the most direct route.*

Adopted dogs and cats should exit through the front door so as not to cross back into "Dirty" areas.

Adoptable dogs being taken for a walk or to a play yard should use the front door as well. Eventually, a gate should be added to allow direct access from the "Clean" kennels to the play yard.

Animals exiting directly from the "Dirty" part of the shelter (such as Transfers to other facilities or Owner Reclaims) should exit from the back of the shelter, to prevent these spreading disease to "Clean" areas. Cats should never be walked through dog areas, so they may exit through the back door near Intake. Dogs should never be walked through cat areas, so they may exit from between the kennels in the back.

The Disaster/Disease Cycle

The Disaster Cycle describes the process of recovering from and preparing for a man-made or natural disaster. Biosecurity in a shelter can be thought of much the same way, where the "Event," rather than a hurricane or toxic waste spill, is an outbreak of disease. Steps can be taken to mitigate, prevent, and prepare for a disease, and to easily respond and recover when disease occurs, either in an individual animal or as a shelter-wide outbreak.

The Disaster-Disease Cycle



Mitigation activities are permanent measures undertaken to decrease the likelihood or impact of an event. For animal shelter biosecurity, mitigation activities may include:

- The creation of separate areas for the 4 main activities in a shelter.
 - Intake (check-in and exam.)
 - Quarantine/Intake Kennels (housing for new or unknown animals.)
 - Isolation (housing for animals in treatment.)
 - Adoption (housing for animals available for adoption and/or transfer.)
- Separate ventilation systems for separate shelter areas.
- Animal cages constructed of hard, nonporous surfaces that can be readily disinfected.

Prevention involves developing the capabilities needed to avoid, prevent, or stop the event. In the case of disease, these activities keep the disease from taking hold or spreading.

- Intake Protocols, to be conducted at or prior to intake:
 - Health exam.
 - Vaccinations.
 - Parasite prevention.
 - Testing for FIV, FeLV, heartworms, parvo, etc.
- Physical separation of animals – utilize those various shelter areas you identified in Mitigation!
 - Separate new and current animals.
 - Separate animals by species, age, and physical and behavioral health status.
 - Don't allow animals to enter other animals' kennels, don't allow nose to nose contact.
- Comprehensive Cleaning & Disinfection Protocols, tailored for each shelter area.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
 - Prevents the spread of disease between animals.
 - Protect the spread of disease between animals and the employee.

- Reduce stress and maintain mental and physical health of sheltered animals.

Preparedness activities ensure that if and when disease occurs, the shelter is ready to handle it.

- Training for staff to recognize symptoms of common diseases.
- Written Medical Protocols for common diseases, developed and reviewed by or with a veterinarian, preferably one experienced in shelter medicine.
 - Protocols may include treatment guidelines, quarantine needs, unusual disinfectant procedures and/or PPE, etc.
 - Ensure medications and equipment dictated by these protocols are available.
- Emergency protocols that include an on-call veterinarian.
- PPE, extra crates, disinfectants, emergency kit, and signage are all available if necessary.

Response – When the disease occurs, activate your plan.

- Implement the protocols developed in Preparedness.
- Assess animal(s) on an ongoing basis to ensure protocols are effective and implemented properly.

Recovery – In the recovery stage, the shelter returns to normal operations, reviews the response, and prepares for the next event.

- Review protocol with veterinarian for effectiveness, update if improvements are necessary and/or possible.
- Disinfect housing areas.
- Restock supplies, review expiration dates.
- Periodically perform a comprehensive review of shelter outbreaks to identify necessary protocol updates.

3. Resource Utilization

Resources at CCAS are not currently used to their fullest potential.

Examples of specific problems observed

- Expenses for medical care
 - Every animal is transported to a private veterinarian for every medical need.
 - Shelter pays full price for tasks that should be performed in house. Invoices show that one dog received nail trims at the veterinarian 3 separate times, at \$10 each time.
 - Vaccinations, medications, and tests purchased for in-house use can be obtained at lower prices
- Recordkeeping
 - Inaccurate tracking of shelter operations: Cats are not signed into the shelter (recorded on the spreadsheet in intake) unless they have a recordable outcome such as euthanasia or return to owner.
 - Status and location of animals is tracked on a white board in the director's office that can be mistakenly erased and rely on staff to remember animals' names, which are commonly changed.
 - Rescue Coordinator spends a significant amount of time compiling, making copies, filing, and recording animal records, and sometimes redoing the process multiple times.
- Personnel
 - On weekends, only one staff member is assigned to clean every animal in the shelter.
 - Multiple staff members gathered around while one person is on the phone.
 - Breaks are taken together, where all staff members are not working.
 - Staff members tend to gather instead of separating in order to perform tasks individually.
 - No staff are available to perform adoptions or transfers on weekends, when the public is typically available.
- Facility usage - refer to Biosecurity, page 10.
- Population management
 - All stray animals are held 5 days, when state law requires microchipped strays be held 14 days, and allows immediate live release for litters of puppies and kittens.
 - Some animals remain at the shelter for years at a time.

Medical Expenses

The health of sheltered animals at CCAS is not proportional to the amount of money spent on veterinary care. Animals are transported to a private veterinarian for almost every medical need. Many procedures can and should be performed in-house with SOPs approved by a shelter veterinarian. CCAS should contract or employ a shelter veterinarian that is onsite for most medical services and spay/neuter surgery (see page 10).

Yearly evaluation of medical/pharmaceutical pricing is considered a best practice. Many manufacturers offer shelter pricing on supplies used directly on shelter animals. In addition, distributors may be able to offer reduced pricing through them, streamlining ordering and shipping cost for the shelter.

No Kill South Carolina recommends that CCAS have a standard ordering list of medical and pharmaceuticals approved by the shelter's veterinarian. All supplies, except for some emergency medical



supplies, should be ordered and on hand in the shelter for shelter use. Only emergency medical supplies/services should be purchased at retail through outside veterinary services.

Recordkeeping

CCAS currently maintains animal intake & outcome records in three separate locations: a paper log in Intake, a Google spreadsheet developed from the intake log and outcome procedures, and the drug usage log for euthanized animals. A thorough comparison of the spreadsheet and euthanasia log for 2019 reveals that 22 cats and 3 dogs were listed on the euthanasia drug log on a date PRIOR to the date they were recorded on the intake log. An additional 2 dogs and 2 cats listed on the drug log had no corresponding intake record at all. These discrepancies suggest that current records cannot be relied upon to show the work performed at CCAS.

Widescale animal sheltering trends are tracked by combining shelter data from a particular region. Nationally, Shelter Animals Count (<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org>) tracks overall trends in animal sheltering. In South Carolina, statute requires nonprofit animal shelters to report their intake and outcome numbers to Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (LLR); a push is being made to extend this requirement to government-run animal shelters as well. Additionally, No Kill South Carolina tracks intakes and euthanasia from open-adoption shelters in SC. Currently CCAS does not have the ability to report records in this way.

Scarlett et. al. write in *Every Nose Counts: Using Metrics in Animal Shelters*, "We cannot overstate the value of quality data collection and analysis. Metrics can help your shelter address a variety of issues, including those related to goal-setting, program evaluation, enhanced communication with constituencies, grant writing, assessment of the effectiveness of protocols, enhancement of animal welfare, financial accountability, and the assessment of return on investment."



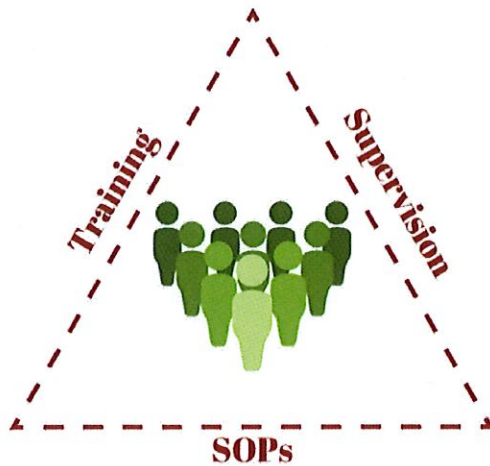
No Kill South Carolina recommends that CCAS implement a computerized animal management system to accurately track animals entering and exiting the shelter system, and to have the ability to analyze and report sheltering trends.

A variety of shelter management programs are available at low cost. Shelterluv in particular (<https://www.shelterluv.com>) appears to be an excellent option for CCAS, as it is very easy to use, includes a field services module at no additional charge, and based in the cloud so all staff would have access to up-to-date records at all times. Currently Shelterluv is available at a cost of \$1 per adoption, meaning that in 2019 CCAS' cost would have been just \$69 for the year.

Personnel

In order for tasks to be completed correctly on an ongoing basis, there must be clearly identified Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), adequate training on those procedures, and ongoing supervision of staff performing the procedures. All three sides of this "Task Triangle" are necessary to maintain the health and wellbeing of the animals in the shelter's care.

The Task Triangle



Standard Operating Procedures Manual

According to Dr. Miranda Spindel, developing a solid set of written protocols to be used from the moment animals enter a shelter until they leave is integral to maintaining shelter health and wellness. Standard operational procedures matter because they help prevent widespread problems, allow resource conservation, and can help shelter staff evaluate what is working and what may not be. They also provide a consistent, documented standard of care that is transparent both internally and to the public. (See <https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/medical-sops-lifesaving-step-step.>)



No Kill South Carolina recommends that current SOPs be revised to reflect modern sheltering practices, and is available to assist in their development. SOPs relating to medical care should be approved by CCAS' shelter veterinarian.

Training

According to the ASV's Guidelines for Standards of Care, adequate training on the SOPs is required to ensure humane animal care, as well as staff and public safety. This includes allocating time and resources for employees and volunteers to complete training prior to undertaking responsibility for tasks. The skills, knowledge and training to accomplish each task must be successfully demonstrated before proficiency is assumed. Training is most effective when it combines watching the activity, then performing it, and then demonstrating it to someone else.



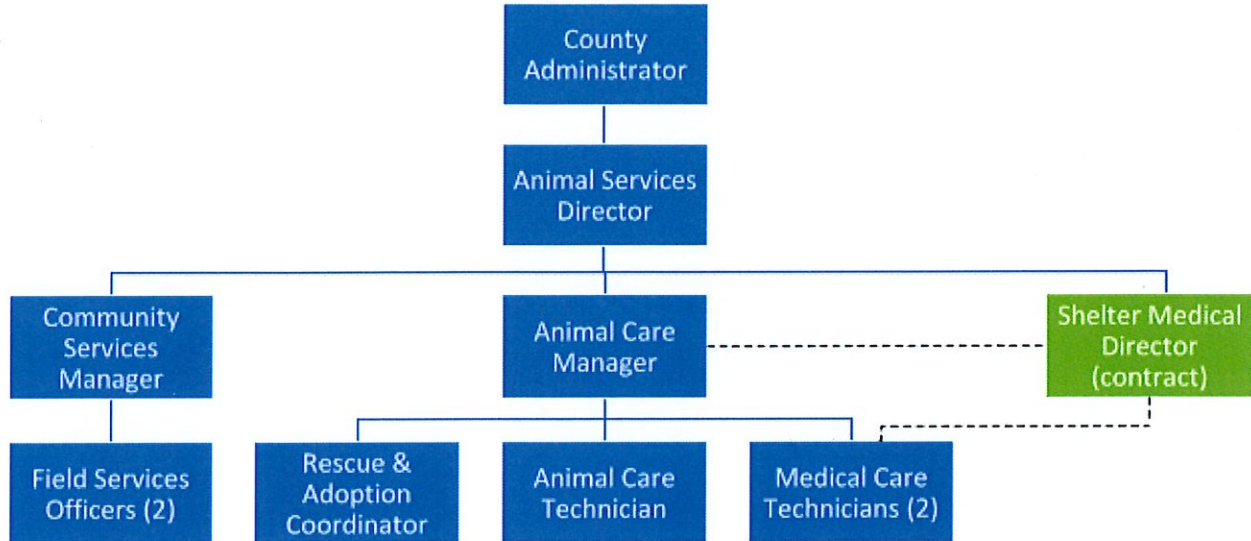
No Kill South Carolina recommends creation of a robust training program, based on developed SOPs.

Supervision

Proper supervision ensures that SOPs are carried out properly. A clearly defined structure that outlines accountability, responsibility, and authority for management within the organization is essential and must be communicated to all staff and volunteers. Lines of authority and responsibility must be given only to those who have the appropriate knowledge and training. Many decisions involve issues of resource allocation as well as population health and individual animal welfare; in these cases broad consideration must be given to all factors, and decisions may well be made by a group of qualified individuals. However, in cases where animal welfare could be compromised, a veterinarian's decision should not be overridden.



No Kill South Carolina recommends the following reorganization of shelter personnel to ensure accountability and division of labor.



General Duties for each position (for details see proposed job descriptions, presented separately)

Animal Services Director

- Responsible for overall humane care of the animals
- Responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining lifesaving strategies
- Budget management
- Policy/procedure development & implementation
- Staff training development & implementation
- Staff supervision and accountability
- Radio & media promotion of shelter
- Fundraising

Community Services Manager

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Intake management / intake diversion
- Reception/Dispatch
- Procurement
- Maintain an updated animal shelter management software and generate daily, weekly, monthly and annual reports

Field Services Officers

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Humane handling of animals
- Stray animal control
- RTO in field
- Intake diversion in field
- Code enforcement
- Litter control

- *Assist with animal intake exams*

Animal Care Manager

- *Ensure that animals are provided every opportunity to obtain or maintain physical and mental health*
- *Manage volunteer & foster programs*

Rescue & Adoption Coordinator

- *Secure & manage live outcomes for healthy and treatable animals*
- *Coordinate and process a robust Return to Owner program*
- *Coordinate and process non-judgemental adoptions*

Animal Care Technician

Create clean environment that promotes physical and mental health of animals in the shelter by:

- *Maintain clean kennels*
- *Provide food and water*
- *Provide exercise and mental enrichment*
- *Facilitate adopter introductions*

Medical Care Technicians

Ensure that animals have appropriate medical care by:

- *Perform intake processing*
- *Keep vaccinations and routine treatments up to date*
- *Administer medications per veterinarian instructions*
- *Manage spay/neuter and veterinary exams*
- *Perform euthanasia*

Shelter Medical Director (Veterinarian)

- *Perform examinations*
- *Perform surgeries*
- *Administer rabies vaccinations*
- *Develop/approve treatment plans for common diseases/conditions that medical care technicians can follow*
- *Create health certificates for interstate transport*

All staff should be expected to clean kennels at the start of each workday, with the possible exception of the Animal Services Director or Field Services Officers, depending on workload or emergent situations.

Population Management

Chesterfield County Animal Services is one of very few shelters in South Carolina that rarely has problems with overcrowding of dogs, and none of the dogs housed during the assessment seemed to display mental deterioration due to long term housing. However, an animal shelter is by definition a temporary housing location. The longer an animal stays in a shelter the more likely it is to break with disease or suffer mental decline. The goal should always be to move the animals through the shelter as rapidly as possible.

Stray animals

Stray animals are held at CCAS 5 days, regardless of circumstances. State law allows litters of kittens and puppies to be released immediately for live outcomes (§47-3-60). Moving these animals faster would prevent them from getting sick. Additionally, dogs and cats that enter South Carolina shelters with a

microchip or other form of identification must be held for 14 days to allow the owner to reclaim their pet (§47-3-540).

Long term residents

There are a number of animals that have been at CCAS a significant length of time - years, in some cases. Staff indicated that the two longest-term dogs were "being adopted," but they remain at the shelter until the adopter's living situation allows them to take the dog. These animals need to leave the shelter. The person interested in adopting needs to either do so, or allow the dog to be adopted or transferred-out as any other animal would be. Otherwise, the county ends up subsidizing the cost of care for an unofficially owned pet.

Additionally, there are a number of pets housed in the offices and allowed to roam, including a rabbit that is owned and a cat with aggressive behavior. Animals housed in the offices should be available for adoption and not create a hazard to public health or biosecurity.

(The terms "long-term" and "short-term" are used in this document. Since it is difficult to define how the length of stay will affect individual animals, all recommendations to ensure physical and behavioral health and well-being for long term care should be implemented as soon as possible, and especially whenever the stay exceeds 1 to 2 weeks.)



No Kill South Carolina recommends implementing daily shelter rounds with the animal care manager, community services manager, and a veterinary technician to expedite animal flow. Every day, every animal should be evaluated to answer the following questions:

- *Why are you here (in this kennel, at this stage, etc.)?*
- *What do you need in order to move on (veterinary exam, stray hold, adoption finalized, etc.)?*
- *Are you better off today than you were yesterday? If not, why, and how can we solve it (medical treatment, change of housing, moving to a foster home, etc.)? The quality of life for sheltered animals should always increase or stay the same, never decline. For animals that are suffering and whose quality of life cannot be improved, euthanasia is the most humane option.*

4. Leading Practices

No Kill South Carolina Strategies and Tactics

No Kill South Carolina utilizes and promotes the following strategies to increase lifesaving and promote humane care in communities. These strategies are based on leading practices in the animal sheltering industry and have proven success across South Carolina and nationwide.

Lifesaving Strategies and Tactics

1. Finding homes for sheltered canines and felines
...through an aggressive and nonjudgmental adoption program
2. Preventing births of unwanted canines and felines
...through a high-volume, high-quality spay & neuter program
3. Reducing the number of free-roaming felines
...through Trap-Vaccinate-Alter-Return (TVAR) and Return-to-Habitat
4. Fostering canines and felines
...until they are placed in permanent homes

5. Reuniting loved ones
...through an in-depth lost and found program
6. Saving the lives of healthy and treatable felines and canines
...through individually customized treatment regimens
7. Optimizing collective opportunities for the live release of canines & felines
...through transfers / placements with other humane / lifesaving organizations
8. Providing for humane care in shelters
...through adherence to the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* and the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

Humane Strategies and Tactics

1. Fighting animal cruelty wherever it exists
...through assisting law enforcement and advocating for stronger laws
2. Helping families keep their pets for life
...through a nonjudgmental pet-focused food bank and a network of support for underserved communities
3. Guiding children to grow into humanitarians
...through a comprehensive humane education initiative
4. Shaping public opinion about animal welfare
...through advocacy and adult education efforts

CCAS is already doing a great job of saving lives of canines via transfer-out (Lifesaving Strategy 7). Implementation of recommendations in this report will address humane shelter care (Lifesaving Strategy 8).

No Kill South Carolina recommends that Chesterfield County focus on Lifesaving Strategies 1, 3, and 5: increasing adoptions, implementing TVAR for felines, and increasing stray reunifications; and on humane strategy 2: offering community support. A summary of each strategy and additional resources are described below.



Welcome Adopters (Lifesaving Strategy 1)

Modern sheltering and lifesaving practices rely on nonjudgmental interactions with potential adopters and engaging adopters in conversation in order to make the best possible match with the adopter and pet.

Dr. Sara Pizano points out that "Adoption programs have been created with the best of intentions, with the ultimate goals of placing and protecting pets. However, overregulating this process has dwarfed the life-saving potential of many organizations as this perceived control has alienated many potential adoptions and resulted in long but preventable [length of stay] and euthansaia." (Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters)

Resources are available from a number of sources, including the Adopters Welcome program from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which "highlights an approach to adoptions that embraces community members, encourages them to adopt, and helps them and their pets succeed. The approach also acknowledges the connection among all local adoption agencies and the impact adoptions, or lack of adoptions, can have on all of the animals in a community." The Adopters Welcome Manual is available for free at <https://www.animalsheltering.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual>). The ASPCA also offers a webinar on Conversational Adoption Counseling, available at <https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20160615/conversational-adoption-counseling>.

Remove Breed Restrictions (Lifesaving Strategy 1)

In Chesterfield County, policy dictates that "pit bull" type dogs are not adopted. Since the majority of live outcomes for canines comes from transfers-out, this policy may not currently impact live outcomes, but it does affect the public who own or want to own this type of dog.

However, this policy is not enforceable and does not achieve the desired goal.

The term "pit bull" is not an actual breed, but usually refers to a stocky, short-coated dog with a block head (<https://animalfoundation.com/whats-going-on/blog/pitbull-breed>). Even if it was, research shows that shelter workers are terrible at guessing a dog's breed (<https://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/ineffective-policies/visual-breed-identification>). So any policy that addresses pit bulls cannot be enforced.

The reason for restricting adoptions of pit bull-type dogs is usually based on the incorrect notion that certain breeds of dogs are more likely to bite or injure than others (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/literature-reviews/dog-bite-risk-and-prevention-role-breed>).

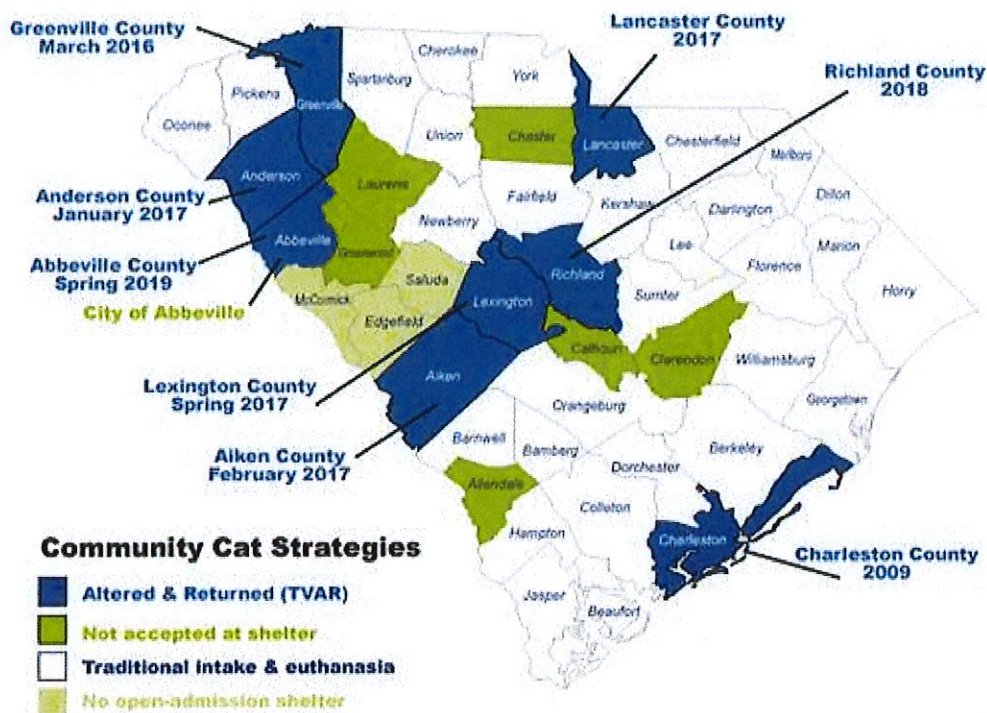
As the National Canine Research Council explains, "The goal of pet ownership laws and animal control ordinances should be to raise and maintain the standards of pet ownership from problematic to acceptable. Doing so protects the interests of people with pets, people without pets, and the entire community. Effective Policies clearly describe the standards of Responsible Pet Ownership practices expected by the community from all dog owners. They also outline the behaviors that the community will not tolerate from dog owners" (<https://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/public-policy>).

Implement a Community Cat Program (Lifesaving Strategy 3)

Many owners allow their cats access to the outside, while some cats prefer to live outside even if given the inside option. Most community cats are friendly, not in the feral category, and not part of colonies. Sterilizing community cats and returning them where they are already cared for reduces the population of free-roaming cats and increases the proportion of unvaccinated animals in the community. Communities implementing Trap-Vaccinate-Alter-Return (TVAR) programs for free-roaming cats report fewer cat-related complaints than before implementation.

In the past few years, community cat programs have exploded across South Carolina (see map below). There are many different strategies: in Charleston County, animal control picks up cats and the shelter alters and returns them where they were picked up. Greenville County's community cat program (launched with a \$275,000 grant from the Petco Foundation) skips the involvement of animal control and diverts cat intake from the shelter directly to the spay-neuter clinic.

Proliferation of community cat programs



Increase Returns to Owner (Lifesaving Strategy 5)

CCAS records indicate that 5% of dogs that entered the shelter as a stray in 2019 were returned to their owner. If this data is correct, it shows that Chesterfield County lags significantly behind other similar organizations; Shelter Animals Count shows an average Return to Owner rate of 22% for dogs entering other open-admission shelters in South Carolina.



No Kill South Carolina recommends that CCAS use and promote Finding Rover facial recognition technology (<https://findingrover.com/>) to boost Return to Owner rates. Finding Rover integrates automatically with most major animal sheltering software systems, including Shelterluv.

Additionally, stray holds must be extended for animals with microchips or other identification (see Population Management, page 21), and staff should spend time proactively searching for the owners of stray pets.

Divert Shelter Intake (Humane Strategy 2)

There are many ways to provide support for pet owners in the community in order to prevent pets from entering the shelter in the first place. Some examples:

- Look for ways to address the reasons an owner wants to surrender. Perhaps CCAS could offer a bag of food or help arrange for spay or neuter surgery, or provide a referral to a trainer.

- RTO in the field: Field Services Officers should try to find the owner of a pet first, before bringing it to the shelter.
- Make it easy for pet owners to rehome their pet themselves through adoptapet.com or getyourpet.com.
- Divert community cats directly to a veterinarian for spay/neuter rather than to the shelter.
- Offer humane traps for rental so citizens can conduct TVAR themselves

Thanks and Future Collaboration

Thank you for the opportunity to visit and assess the operations of Chesterfield County Animal Services. We truly enjoyed the time we spent with your compassionate staff at your facility. We sincerely hope that this assessment will provide helpful insight that will serve to improve delivery of care to the animals and people of your community. We anticipate that you will have questions and look forward to working with you in order to tailor recommendations to fit the needs of your staff and the animals that you serve.

This report serves as the beginning of a collaboration. We are available to Chesterfield County in whatever capacity you feel is best, from advising to writing protocols to offering staff training. We will assist in any way we can to help you implement these recommendations and provide humane care to the animals in your facility.

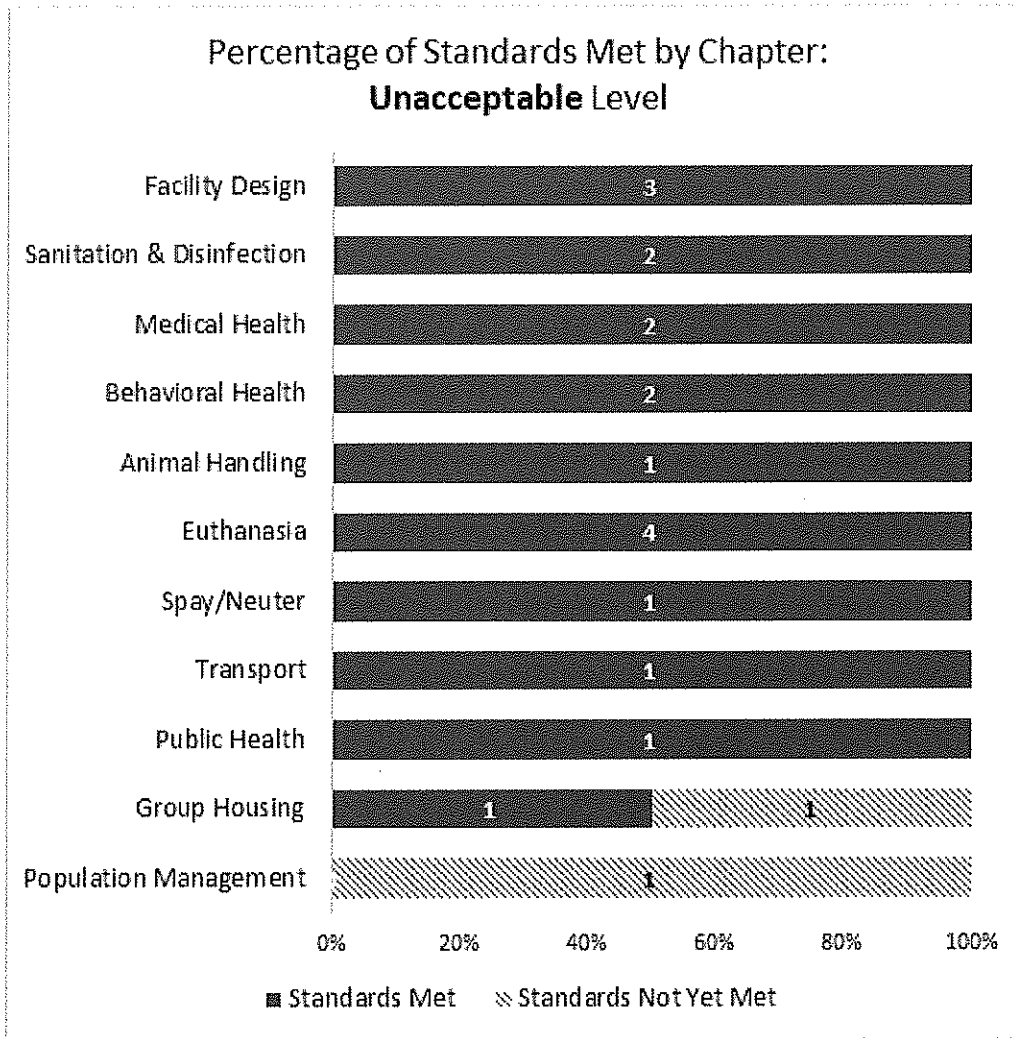
Appendix 1: Index of Recommendations

Resource Requirements		Functional Area	Recommendation	Page
Time	\$			
Low	Low	Population Management	Conduct daily shelter rounds	22
Low	Low	Animal Care	Review deep-cleaning protocols. Implement potty and spot-cleaning protocol for dogs.	9
Low	Low	Animal Care	Review setup of cat cages	7
Med	Low	Facility	Rearrange shelter facility to create biosecure pathways	10-14
Low	Low	Facility	Anchor chain link dog kennels to concrete. Replace missing fence ties	8
Med	Med	Medical Care	Contract with a veterinarian to provide on-site services	10
Med	Low	Medical Care	Create a decision matrix for animal outcomes	10
Med	Low	Administration	Implement a shelter software system such as Shelterluv	18
Low	Low	Administration	Create a standard ordering list for supplies. Review pricing annually	17
High	Low	Management	Update SOPs to reflect modern sheltering practices. Receive shelter veterinarian approval of medical SOPs	19
Med	Low	Management	Reorganize organizational chart and update job roles and titles	20-21
Med	Low	Management	Develop and implement a training program for staff	19
Low	Low	Leading Practices	Make adopters welcome	23
Low	Low	Leading Practices	Remove breed restrictions to adoption	24
High	Med	Leading Practices	Implement a community cat program	24-25
Low	Low	Leading Practices	Utilize Finding Rover, microchip tracing, adjust stray hold period to increase Returns to Owner	25
Low	Free!	Management	Use No Kill South Carolina as a resource	27

Appendix 2: List of Standards Met and Still to be Attained

Unacceptable-Level Standards

Summary



Standards Still to be Attained: Unacceptable Level

Group Housing

- Animals are randomly housed in groups.

Comment: Cats in communal cat cages are separated by gender but not by health status, age, temperament, etc.

Population Management

- Operating beyond an organization's capacity for care is an unacceptable practice.

Comment: There is insufficient housing for the number of cats in the shelter

Standards Currently Met: Unacceptable Level

Checkmark indicates that the Unacceptable item is avoided at Chesterfield County Animal Control (If the box is checked, no problem was observed.)

Facility Design & Environment

- Cages or crates intended for short-term temporary confinement or travel are used as primary enclosures.
- Tethering is used as a means of confinement.
- Wire-mesh bottoms or slatted floors are used for cats and dogs.

Sanitation & Disinfection

- Animals walk through footbaths.
- Kennels or cages are sprayed down while animals are inside.

Medical Health

- Shelter allows animals with severe infectious disease to remain in the general population.
- Treatment for pain is not provided.

Behavioral Health

- Animals confined on a long-term basis, including feral or aggressive animals, are stressed during basic care, daily enrichment and exercise.
- The use of physical force as a punishment or in anger is utilized for behavior modification.

Group Housing

- Animals who fight are grouped together.

Animal Handling

- Physical force is used as a punishment or in anger.

Euthanasia

- Agents and/or methods unacceptable to the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia are used.
- Agents that induce convulsions prior to loss of consciousness are used.
- Carbon monoxide is used as a method to euthanize dogs and cats even through there are multiple humane, operational and safety concerns.
- Intra-cardiac injections are used when it has not been verified that the animal is unconscious, comatose or anesthetized (i.e. lack of deep pain/toe withdrawal reflex).

Spay/Neuter

- Shelter animals are allowed to breed.

Transport

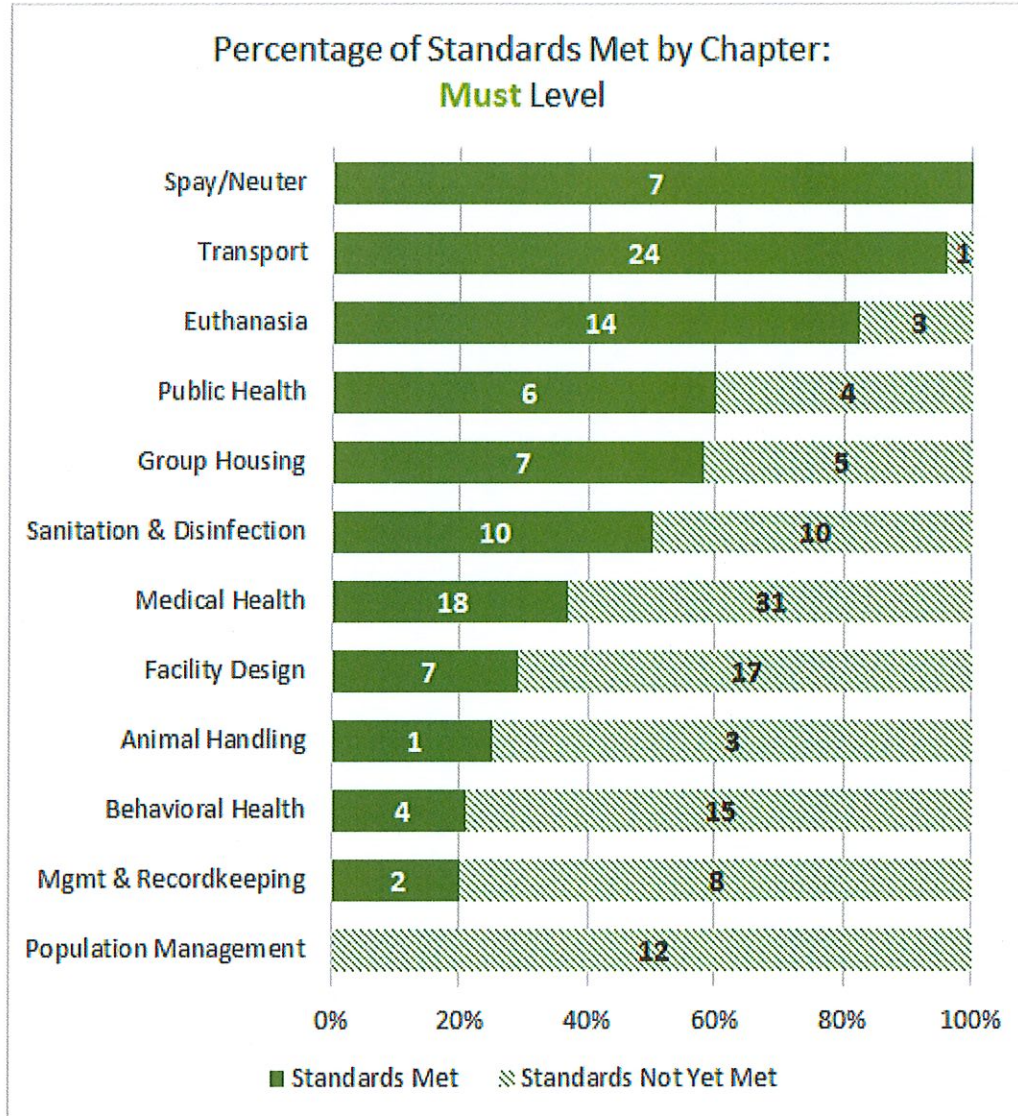
- Shelter transports unconfined or tethered animals in the back of an open pickup truck - an illegal practice in many jurisdictions.

Public Health

- Alternate housing is not provided for any animal housed in an enclosure that requires dogs to be removed by use of a control pole or cats to be removed using nets or tongs for daily cleaning or care

Must-Level Standards

Summary



Standards Still to be Attained: Must Level

Animal Handling

General

- Handling is as humane as possible and appropriate for the individual animal and situation.

Restraint

- Adequate training is key to limiting the use of unnecessary force during handling and must be provided to anyone who will be handling animals.

Comment: Both standards relate to the same situation - the intake of a large dog where the dog was handled inappropriately exposing the animal and staff to imminent danger.

Location & Timing

- Handling methods prevent escape. Comment: Cat cages are left open unattended during cleaning, we needed to intervene to prevent a couple of cats from falling out of the cage.

Behavioral Health

Considerations on Intake

- All incidents or reports of a history of aggressive behavior along with the context in which they occurred are recorded as a part of an animal's record. Comment: No animal record has any behavior notes on it.
- Care is given to minimize stress during intake. Comment: Improper cat and dog handling leading to stress.

Behavior Evaluation

- Animals are monitored daily in order to detect trends or changes in well-being and respond to their behavioral needs.
- If many animals are displaying signs of unrelieved stress, steps are taken to improve the shelter's stress reduction protocols.
- Staff is trained to recognize body language and other behaviors that indicate animal stress, pain and suffering as well as those that indicate successful adaptation to the shelter environment.

Comment: Staff is not trained to monitor and to recognize behavior changes and trends in animals. Several cats were presenting signs of distress and the situation wasn't recognized and addressed. There are no protocols for stress reduction.

In-Shelter Care

- A high priority is placed on ensuring proper socialization of young puppies and kittens. Comment: Kitten socialization doesn't take place.
- Alternatives to traditional cage housing are provided for any animal staying in the shelter long-term. Comment: There is no alternative housing available.
- Animals are provided regular social contact, mental stimulation and physical activity. Comment: There is no schedule or protocol to provide animals with physical and mental stimulation.
- Cats are allowed an opportunity to exercise and explore in a secure, enriched setting. Comment: There is no setting available.
- Dogs are provided with daily opportunities for activity outside of their runs for aerobic exercise. Comment: During the assessment only one dog was observed outside its run. There is no protocol or schedule to provide animals with opportunities to exercise, even though there is a large area for the dogs to do it.
- Even short-term housing meets the minimum behavioral needs of animals, providing separate areas for urination/defecation, feeding and resting and sufficient space to stand and walk several steps and sit or lie at full body length. Comment: Cats are in cages too small to allow normal behavior.
- For animals who are housed short-term and with unknown health backgrounds, social interaction is balanced with infectious disease control. Comment: During the intake of a litter of stray kittens the animals were handed over from staff to staff, not considering disease transmission.

- For long-term shelter stays, appropriate levels of additional enrichment are provided on a daily basis. Comment: No enrichment program for cats and dogs.
- For puppies and kittens housed in a shelter, socialization is balanced with infectious disease control.
- When animals must remain confined for health or behavioral reasons, positive social interaction is still provided without removing the animal from the enclosure.

Comments: During the assessment. No positive social interaction was provided to the kittens and there is no protocol or schedule for it.

Euthanasia

General

- An assessment is made of each animal's size, weight and temperament so the appropriate drug dose, needle, syringe and restraint method can be used.
- The identity of each animal to be euthanized is determined with certainty beforehand, including scanning multiple times for a microchip using a universal scanner and verifying that the animal is properly designated for the procedure.

Comment: The euthanasia procedure we've observed the weight of the cats wasn't verified and it wasn't scanned for microchip.

Environment & Equipment

- Staff performing euthanasia wears protective garments, which are removed before going on to other animal care duties. Comment: The euthanasia procedure we've observed, staff wore only gloves.

Facility Design & Environment

General

- Facilities are appropriate for the species, the number of animals receiving care and the expected length of stay. Comment: facility is not appropriate for cats, as they are kept in hallways, in cages too small to allow normal behavior and in some cases in the same room as dogs.
- Shelter provides an environment that is conducive to maintaining animal health. Comments: Some examples are that the shelter doesn't have an established biosecurity path, the environment is stressful for cats, there are no physical barriers in between dog runs, and fans are not maintained or cleaned.

Primary Enclosure

- All animal areas have non-porous surfaces that can be easily disinfected and are durable enough to withstand repeated cleanings – especially important in areas where puppies, kittens and animals who are infectious or newly admitted are housed.
- Animals can sit, sleep and eat away from areas of their enclosures where they defecate and urinate.
- Animals who are housed long-term have opportunities to hide, play, rest, feed and eliminate.
- As the length of stay increases (beyond 1-2 weeks), mentally and physically stimulating spaces are provided.
- Cats have places to hide.

Comment: Cat cages are too small to provide such opportunities.

- Enclosure is structurally sound and maintained in safe, working condition to properly confine animals, prevent injury, keep other animals out and enable animals to remain dry and clean.

Comments: Outdoor chain link structure is not fixed and allows animals to move it and get into other runs. The chain link is broken on a kennel, with a broken bent wire, creating a hazard for the dog housed inside.

- The size of each primary enclosure is sufficient to meet the physical and behavioral parameters described in [the ASV Guidelines]. Comments: Single cat cages are smaller than 11ft². Group housing does not meet minimum requirements of 18ft² per cat.
- There are no sharp edges, gaps or other defects that could cause an injury or trap a limb or other body part. Comments: Door gaps in some kennels are too wide and can harm an animal.

Heating, Ventilation, & Air Quality

- All ventilation systems are adequately maintained. Comments: Fans are covered in dust.
- Each animal is monitored individually for comfort and to ensure he or she is maintaining proper body temperature.
- To ensure animal comfort and safety, necessary measures are taken when an animal appears to be too hot or too cold.

Comments: Dog shivering in his bed and no one noticed or addressed the situation.

- Ventilation is accomplished without compromising the maintenance of the animals' body temperatures. Comment: Dogs and cats located closer to the fans got colder and one was shivering.
- Ventilation is maintained to ensure clean air is provided in all areas of the shelter. Comment: Ventilation is not consistent throughout the housing areas and does not guarantee 10 to 20 room exchanges per hour.

Sound Control

- Staff is instructed to avoid creating excessive noise during routine activities. Comment: staff throw food bowls around producing excessive noise and not acknowledging it.

Group Housing

Facilities

- For group housing of cats, a variety of elevated resting perched and hiding places are provided to increase the size and complexity of the living space.
- Sufficient resources (e.g. food, water, bedding litter boxes and toys) are provided to prevent competition or resource guarding and ensure access by all animals.

Comment: There are not enough shelves to allow the cats to present normal behavior and not enough resources for the number of cats group housed.

Selection

- Even for littermates, all requirements for group housing are met. Comment: Too many cats in enclosures that were too small to allow normal behavior.
- Single, enriched housing is provided for animals who are fearful or aggressive toward other animals, are stressed by the presence of other animals, require individual monitoring or are ill and require treatment that cannot be provided in group housing. Comment: There was a brown medium sized dog housed in the same kennel with other dogs.
- Unrelated or unfamiliar animals are not combined in groups or pairs until after a health and behavior evaluation is performed. Comment: Cats are housed together without proper vaccination, intake exam and behavior evaluation.

Management & Recordkeeping

Policies & Procedures

- All staff and volunteers have access to protocols related to the tasks they will be performing.
- Organization has a clearly defined mission with policies, protocols that reflect current information, adequate staff training and supervision and proper management of animal care.
- Protocols are developed and written down in sufficient detail to achieve and maintain the standards set by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and updated as needed to ensure they reflect industry norms and pertinent legislation.

Comment: The current SOP manual is not available to all staff, and volunteers have no access to it.

Management Plan

- Authority and responsibility are given only to those who have the appropriate knowledge and training.
- There is a clearly defined structure that outlines accountability, responsibility, and authority for management within the organization and it is communicated to all staff and volunteers.

Comment: The lack of proper procedures shows that responsibility has been given to staff with no knowledge or training in leading practices of animals sheltering.

- When making decisions, each of the following are considered: resource allocation, population health, and individual animal welfare.

Comment: The kitten euthanasia represents the lack of a balanced decision making process.

Training

- The skills, knowledge, and training to accomplish each task are successfully demonstrated before proficiency is assumed.

Comment: Training is on the job and given by staff with no proper knowledge of leading practices in animal sheltering.

Animal Identification and Recordkeeping

- A unique identifier (e.g. name and/or number) and record is established for each animal upon intake

Medical Health

General

- Appropriate medical treatment is provided in a timely fashion.
- Individual animal welfare is maintained within the balance of decisions and practices that support the overall population.
- Proper medical management and health care for shelter animals is recognized as an absolute necessity and includes attention to the overall well-being of all animals.
- Shelter medical program includes veterinary supervision and the participation of trained staff to provide evaluation, preventive care, diagnosis and treatment.
- Training and education is provided to those who carry out protocols.

Comment: Several situations that compromised the welfare and health of the animals were observed during the assessment. Staff is well intentioned and compassionate, however have no proper training and protocols to provide humane care of the animals.

Veterinary Relationship & Recordkeeping

- Medications and treatments are only administered with the advice of a veterinarian or in accordance with written protocols provided by a veterinarian, and all drugs are dispensed in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Comment: Kittens were treated without veterinarian supervision or protocol written by one.

Vaccinations

- Animals are vaccinated with core vaccines at or prior to intake. Comment: Not every kitten is vaccinated at intake. According to several staff members, kitten vaccination at intake doesn't occur because they are likely to be euthanized anyway so it would be a waste of time and money.
- Puppies and kittens are re-vaccinated at 2- to 3-week intervals for the duration of their shelter stay or until they are over 18-20 weeks. Comment: If puppies stay at the shelter for that long they get vaccinated up to 16 weeks of age.
- Vaccine strategies are specifically tailored for the shelter because of the higher likelihood of exposure to infectious disease, the likelihood of exposure to infectious disease, the likelihood that many animals entering the shelter are not immune and the potentially life-threatening consequences of infection.

Comment: Vaccination procedures are not based in animals sheltering leading practices.

Pain Management

- Pain is recognized and treated to alleviate suffering. Comment: Kittens were suffering and no treatment was provided to alleviate their discomfort.

Parasite Control

- All dogs and cats are dewormed for roundworms and hookworms before leaving the shelter. Comment: There is no deworming protocol to ensure it.

Monitoring & Daily Rounds

- Animals are provided with appropriate grooming and/or opportunities to exhibit species-specific behaviors necessary for them to maintain normal healthy skin and hair coat or feathers. Comment: Cats in cages too small to allow grooming behavior.
- Any animal who is observed to be experiencing pain, suffering, distress, rapidly deteriorating health, life-threatening problems or suspected zoonotic medical conditions is assessed and appropriately managed in a timely manner. Comment: Kittens experiencing suffering and health deterioration weren't cared for until one of the assessors mentioned it. Staff is not trained to recognize it and more importantly how to properly address it.
- Rounds are conducted at least once every 24 hours by a trained individual in order to visually observe and monitor the health and well-being of every animal. Comment: No rounds are conducted.

Nutrition

- A schedule of regular sanitation is followed for all food and water containers. Comment: There is no schedule.
- Animals who guard food or prevent access by cage mates are housed or fed separately. Comment: Litter of kittens, some eating some not and no concern to move them or provide food separately.
- Food and water is provided in appropriate dishes that are safe, sufficient in number and of adequate size. Comment: Not in cages with litter and cat group housing.
- Food preparation and storage areas are easily sanitized and maintained in clean condition. Comment: Not kept in clean condition.

- Food that is consistent with the nutritional needs and health status of the individual animal is provided. Comment: Kittens and puppies do not receive food consistent with their life stage,
- Healthy puppies and kittens are fed small amounts frequently or have food constantly available through the day. Comment: Puppies eat only twice a day.
- Fresh, clean water is accessible to animals at all times unless there is a medical reason for water to be withheld for a prescribed period of time. Comment: water bowls are not thoroughly rinsed, meaning dogs have to drink water with disinfectant

Population Well-Being

- Animal health plans are reviewed in response to changes observed in animal health, illness or deaths.
- Shelter medical staff regularly monitor the status of individual animals and the population as a whole.

Comment: There is no proper monitoring or health plans.

Response to Disease & Illness

- Animals with a suspected infectious disease are isolated until diagnosis or subsequent treatment determines them to be a low risk to the general population.
- Depopulation is viewed as a last resort after all other options are fully examined, and includes considering disease transmission, morbidity, mortality and public health.
- During an outbreak, physical separation is established between exposed, at-risk and unexposed animals or groups of animals.
- Response to disease and illness is considered an integral part of the shelter health program.
- When a specific pathogen has not been identified, a risk assessment is performed.
- When isolation is impossible or inadequate to control transmission of the particular pathogen, the shelter weighs consequences of exposure of the general population against euthanasia.

Comment: There is no isolation area, sick animals are kept with general populations, cat euthanasia is considered even when other options are available, and response to illness is not always addressed.

Medical Treatment

- Medical decisions balance both the best interest of the individual animals requiring treatment and the shelter population as a whole.
- Those providing treatment have the necessary training, skills and resources to ensure treatment is administered correctly and safely.

Comment: Staff providing treatment to animals haven't had proper training to do so. Some examples: Dewormer and other medications are mixed with food, without ensuring the animals are taking it, and the staff withdrawing blood for heartworm testing was holding the syringe by the needle hub.

Population Management

Capacity for Care

- The type of care and enrichment provided to sheltered animals is appropriate to the length of stay.
- Adequate staffing is available to ensure that each critical point of service (e.g. vaccination or medical evaluation, spay/neuter surgery or a physical move to adoption) is delivered promptly. Comment: Spay and Neuter is a bottleneck, medical evaluation doesn't take place.
- Maximum housing capacity is based on the number of animals who can be adequately housed within available primary enclosures.
- Maximum housing capacity is not exceeded.

- Organization does not exceed its capacity for care.

Comments: Capacity for care hasn't been defined, and the housing capacity has been exceeded as cat cages are inhumane.

- Organization practices active population management, which is one of the foundations of shelter animal health and well-being and is based on an appreciation that capacity to provide humane care has limits for every organization, just as it does in private homes. Comment: Active population management is not considered or based in humane care of the animals.
- Staffing or volunteer work hours are sufficient to ensure that the basic needs of animals in the shelter are met each day. Comment: Only one staff person cleans kennels on weekends

Protocols for Maintaining Adequate Capacity for Care

- Appropriate interventions are made before animal numbers exceed the capacity for care and housing.
- Inspection of all animals is performed daily in order to routinely evaluate and monitor adequacy of capacity and to identify needs for housing, care or service.
- Policies provide a means of balancing admission with the outcomes available (e.g., adoption, transfer, release, returns to owner, euthanasia or others).
- Shelter has policies and protocols to maintain adequate capacity for care and housing.

Comments: Capacity for care hasn't been defined, there are no protocols to actively manage population and balance intake and outcome to provide humane care.

Monitoring Statistical Data

- At a minimum, statistics include monthly intake (e.g. stray, owner-surrendered) and outcomes by type (e.g. adoption, euthanasia, returned to owner) for each species.

Comment: No minimum statistics are monitored.

Public Health

General

- Hearing protection is provided for employees working in loud environments.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, smocks, goggles, masks, etc. is provided by the shelter in order to protect employees from exposure to chemical and biological agents.
- PPE is available in sizes to accommodate all staff, including those with special concerns such as latex allergies.

Comment: No PPE are available but gloves and gowns.

- Shelter maintains compliance with federal and state occupational and safety regulations regarding chemical, biological and physical hazards in the workplace. Comment: There are no Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) available - staff didn't know what we were talking about.

Animal-Related Injuries

- To identify possible rabies exposures, everyone presenting an animal is asked if the animal has bitten anyone within the last 10 days or had any contact with wildlife. Comment: It is not asked.

Sanitation & Disinfection

Cleaning & Disinfection

- Enough staff is assigned to complete sanitation tasks promptly so animals spend the majority of their time in sanitary conditions. Comment: During the assessment dogs and cats spend most of

the time in dirty enclosures, after the morning cleaning staff passes by a dirty kennel and does not pick up feces or cleans a dirty cage, while they spend time chatting and sitting in their desks.

- Food and water bowls are disinfected prior to use by a different animal. Comment: There is no protocol.
- Garments are changed after handling an animal with a diagnosed or suspected serious illness such as parvovirus. Comment: Staff handled a dog suspected of parvovirus and just washed her hand once an assessor asked about it, no garments were worn and the animal was kept in general populations.
- Protocols are based on current knowledge and recommendations developed specifically for animal shelters and include specific methods and agents for achieving the goal of both cleaning and disinfection.
- Sanitation protocol addresses proper hygiene of shelter staff, volunteers and visitors; includes information about who is responsible for ensuring sanitation compliance, shelter sanitation signage and hand sanitation.
- Sanitation protocols are revised as needed during an outbreak in order to address specific pathogens.
- Sanitation protocols include A) Removal of gross organic matter B) Pre-cleaning of surfaces with a detergent or degreaser C) Application of a disinfectant at the correct concentration and for sufficient time, rinsing and drying.

Comment: Sanitation protocol is not current, staff doesn't follow manufacturer instructions of dilution, not every surface of the enclosure is sprayed, and feces are not removed before spraying the disinfectant.

- Sinks are equipped with soap and disposable paper towels. Comment: No paper towels are available.
- When developing sanitation protocols, considerations include an assessment of the facility, animal population, training, equipment and procedures. Comment: training and procedures are not considered.
- When dishes are sanitized by hand, they are thoroughly washed and rinsed prior to disinfection. Comments: Water bowls are sprayed with disinfectant and not thoroughly rinsed.

Transport

Responsibilities of Participants

- The enclosure is sturdy and permits adequate ventilation. Comment: It doesn't provide adequate ventilation.

Standards Currently Met: **Must Level**

(These items are not of concern at Chesterfield County Animal Services)

Management & Recordkeeping

Policies & Procedures

- Policies address resources and legal/contractual obligations of the organization.

Management Plan

- Veterinarians have supervision of medical and surgical care of animals.

Facility Design & Environment

Primary Enclosure

- Cats have litter boxes large enough to comfortably accommodate their entire body.
- Crates or cages are not stacked upon each other in a manner that increases animal stress and discomfort, compromises ventilation or allows waste material to fall from the cage above into the cage below.
- Food and water bowls – or suitable alternative receptacles – are provided.
- Outdoor spaces are suitably enclosed.
- There are secure latches or other secure closing devices.

Surfaces & Drainage

- Adequate drainage is provided.
- Drains located in common areas are carefully cleaned and disinfected prior to allowing animals access to the area.

Sanitation & Disinfection

Cleaning & Disinfection

- All clothing and bedding used at the shelter is laundered and thoroughly dried before reuse.
- Detergents and degreasers are used as needed to maintain clean surfaces free of visible dirt and debris.
- The disinfectants that are used are effective under the conditions present in a given environment and with demonstrated activity against pathogens for which the animals are at risk.
- Litter pans and dishes are not cleaned at the same time in the same sink.
- Transport cages, traps and vehicle compartments used for animal transport are thoroughly disinfected after each use.
- When mopping cannot be avoided (e.g. when hosing is not possible), a disinfectant with good activity in the presence of organic matter is used.
- When water or cleaning and disinfecting products are sprayed in or near primary enclosures, animals are removed from the cage or kennel or separated from the area being cleaned by guillotine doors.

Other Cleaning

- Feces are removed from outdoor areas a minimum of once a day.
- Outdoor areas around the shelter must be kept clean (recognizing it is impossible to disinfect gravel, dirt and grass).

Rodent/Pest Control

- Solutions to rodent and pest problems are humane, safe, and effective.

Medical Health

Veterinary Relationship & Recordkeeping

- Documentation is made of all medical care rendered to each animal.

Vaccinations

- Protocols for managing adverse reactions are provided by a veterinarian and required treatments are accessible.

- Vaccines are considered to be vital lifesaving tools and are used as part of a preventive shelter health care program.

Emergency Medical Plan

- An emergency medical plan is in place.
- The emergency medical plan ensures that animals can receive proper veterinary medical care and pain management promptly or be humanely euthanized by qualified personnel as permitted by law.

Pain Management

- Analgesia is an appropriate strength and duration to relieve pain.
- Animals must be reassessed periodically to provide ongoing pain relief as needed.
- It is generally assumed that if a procedure is painful in human beings, then it must also be painful in animals.
- When adequate pain relief cannot be achieved, transfer to a facility that can meet the animal's needs or humane euthanasia must be provided.

Nutrition

- Animals displaying inappetance or extreme weight loss or gain are evaluated by a veterinarian and treated as necessary.
- Food intake is monitored daily.
- Food is fresh, palatable, free from contamination and is of sufficient nutritional value.
- Food that has been offered to an animal and remains uneaten is not offered to another animal.
- Healthy adult dogs and cats are fed at least once per day.
- Uneaten food is discarded after 24 hours.

Response to Disease & Illness

- Shelter makes sure that all federal, state and local laws are followed concerning reportable diseases.

Medical Treatment

- Shelter has specific protocols to provide immediate care when legal status is an issue.
- The legal status of an animal never prevents treatment to relieve suffering (which may include euthanasia if suffering cannot be alleviated).

Behavioral Health

General

- Shelter takes into consideration the behavioral care of each animal as well as the conditions experienced by the entire population.

Behavior Evaluation

- Assessment of an animal's behavior begins at the time of intake.
- For humane reasons, long-term confinement is avoided for feral animals and for those who remain markedly stressed/fearful and are not responding to treatment/behavioral care.

In-Shelter Care

- Any animal who is observed to be experiencing mental suffering, distress or behavioral deterioration is assessed and appropriately treated in a timely manner or humanely euthanized.

Group Housing

Selection

- Animals are not housed in the same enclosure simply because they arrived on the same day or because individual kennel space is insufficient.
- Animals who are not socialized to other animals well as those who actively bully other animals are not grouped with other animals.
- Animals who have engaged in fighting with one another are not grouped together.
- Caution is used when attempting to include any animal with a history of fighting in a group.
- If group housing is utilized short-term for intact animals, they are separated by gender.
- Options for individual housing are available for animals when group housing is not appropriate.
- When placing single orphaned kittens and puppies with an alternate mother, with or without a litter, risks and benefits to health and behavior for all animals is weighed.

Animal Handling

Equipment

- The use of catchpoles for routine restraint of cats, including carrying or lifting, is inhumane and poses significant risk of injury to the animal and is not done.

Euthanasia

General

- Any euthanasia method used quickly induces loss of consciousness followed by death and ensures the death is as free from pain, distress, anxiety or apprehension as possible.
- Each individual animal is treated with respect.
- Euthanasia method is reliable, irreversible and compatible with the species, age and health status of the animal.
- Safety of the personnel and the emotional impact of euthanasia are considered.

Euthanasia Technique

- Because lack of a palpable pulse does not confirm that the heart has stopped, cardiac standstill is confirmed with a stethoscope or visual verification.
- Carbon monoxide is not utilized as a euthanasia method because any gas that is inhaled must reach a certain concentration in the lungs before it can become effective and this can create a haphazard euthanasia experience that can be prolonged, painful and ineffective.
- Death is verified by multiple methods by trained staff before disposing of any animal's body.
- Euthanasia method is quick, painless and does not cause distress.
- Sodium pentobarbital is not injected by any non-vascular route.
- To avoid causing any undue stress and anxiety, the least amount of physical restraint necessary to perform the procedures safely is used.

Environment & Equipment

- Euthanasia equipment includes a table that can be readily disinfected, a good light source, a universal microchip scanner, hair clippers, stethoscope, a variety of needles and syringes, muzzles and restraint equipment.

Staff Training

- Euthanasia training in specific techniques includes the ability to access alternative injection sites, handle various species, assess behavior and temperament for proper animal handling and verify death by multiple methods.
- Proper training is provided to all staff participating in euthanasia.
- The euthanasia technician and the assisting staff are proficient in animal handling and restraint.

Spay/Neuter

General

- Consideration is given to individual animal health or circumstances when it comes to creating the need for an exception to the required spay/neuter policy.

Veterinary Medical Guidelines

- A veterinarian makes the final decision regarding acceptance of any patient for surgery based on a physical examination and medical history (if available) as well as the capacity of the surgery schedule.
- A veterinarian weighs the risks and benefits of spaying and neutering patients with mild infectious or non-infectious medical conditions.
- All controlled substances are maintained in accordance with DEA requirements.
- Medical records are prepared for every patient indicating the surgical procedure and anesthesia administered.
- Spaying or neutering surgery is performed by veterinarians or veterinary students under the direct supervision of a veterinarian in compliance with all legal requirements.

Surgery & Anesthesia

- Policies for managing complications and emergencies that occur within 48 hours after surgery are in place.

Transport

General

- Risks and benefits for all animals affected by the transport program are carefully weighed.

Responsibilities of Participants

- A contact person is identified at each transfer point.
- Animal enclosures are cleaned and any litter replaced as often as necessary to prevent soiling of the animals from vomit, urine or feces.
- Animals are safely and securely confined within the enclosure.
- Animals destined for transport are vaccinated prior to or upon intake at the organization of origin.
- At a minimum, vehicles adhere to all federal and local statutes.
- Attention is paid to the provision of shade, because even in comfortable temperatures, a vehicle parked in full sun can rapidly exceed safe temperature levels.
- Clearly written health records that describe health status and identify animals (health certificate, rabies certificate and a copy of shelter record) accompany each animal.
- Crates and cages are not stacked upon each other in a manner that increases animal stress and discomfort, compromises ventilation, allows waste material to fall from the cage above into the cage below, interferes with care and observation or hinders emergency removal.

- ☑ Doors on the primary enclosures are secured to prevent movement within the vehicle during transport.
- ☑ During transport, animals have adequate space, comfortable environmental conditions and good air quality.
- ☑ Each primary enclosure is positioned in the animal cargo space in a manner that provides protection from the weather and extremes of temperature.
- ☑ Extra care is provided when transporting puppies and kittens, including prevention of exposure to temperature extremes, maintenance of adequate hydration and nutrition and protection from infectious disease exposure during the transport process.
- ☑ Flooring prevents injury, discomfort and leakage of fluids into other enclosures.
- ☑ Fresh air free of exhaust fumes is ensured.
- ☑ If animals are sedated, veterinary guidance is provided for their care.
- ☑ If more than one animal is in the primary enclosure, there must be enough space for each occupant to lie down comfortably at the same time without needing to lie on top of one another.
- ☑ In addition to any examinations required by state or federal regulations, all animals being transported are examined within 24 hours of transport for any problems.
- ☑ Information on the health and behavior of animals – as known at the source shelter – is accurately described and communicated.
- ☑ Points of destination have enough trained personnel ready to receive and evaluate animals upon arrival.
- ☑ Primary enclosures are large enough for animals to stand and sit erect, to turn around normally while standing and to lie in a normal position.
- ☑ The receiving facility has adequate housing prepared for the arriving animals.
- ☑ The vehicle driver or animal attendant has sufficient training in animal health, welfare and safety issues to recognize and respond to animal needs during transport.
- ☑ Unfamiliar animals are not transported together in the same primary enclosure.

Public Health

Zoonoses

- ☑ Enclosures of animals with suspected zoonotic disease are clearly marked to indicate the condition and any necessary precautions.

Animal-Related Injuries

- ☑ A thorough investigation of individual circumstances is undertaken before consideration is given to re-homing an animal with a history of biting or threatening behavior.
- ☑ Shelter staff is able to identify potential rabies exposures and understands the regulations that apply to reporting and managing bites to humans and animals.
- ☑ The cages of animals known to be aggressive or potentially dangerous are clearly marked to advise caution.

Emerging Diseases & Antimicrobial Resistance

- ☑ Routine use of antibiotics is never used as a substitute for good animal health management.