

RECOMMENDED PET SHELTER TRIAGE GUIDELINE

These recommended guidelines have been developed by the Virginia State Animal Response Team (VA SART) Board of Directors in consultation with several veterinarians.

These guidelines are applicable to co-located Pet Friendly Disaster Shelters operated by local jurisdictions. The final decision to not accept an animal is to be made by the pet shelter supervisor the best health assessment available, the capabilities within the shelter, and the safety of the owners if outside conditions are hazardous.

It is recommended that alternative arrangements be planned for animals that cannot be accepted in the disaster shelter for reason of infectious disease, non infectious illness or aggression. It is advisable for the local jurisdiction to have MOU's with facilities that could accepted such animals, i.e. private veterinary facilities.

Grounds for rejection for entry into shelter or for referral for medical care within 24 hours (all species), unless otherwise indicated):

I. Potential Infectious Diseases signs and symptoms:

- Bloody or water diarrhea

- Diarrhea in a puppy under 16 wks of age or in any dog of unknown DHPP vaccine status (Distemper/Parvo)

- Coughing in young dogs or unexplained cough in older dog not due to treated heart, nor straining against leash (possible kennel cough).

- Severely runny nose &/or eyes in cats

- Severe sneezing in cats (more than 3 sneezes in 1 hour)

- Persistent vomiting (more than 5 times a day or for longer than 2 days)

If the safety of the owners warrant accepting these animals then they must be housed in an isolation area. The animal in task form must be specify annotated with the signs and symptoms and be sure the Waiver form is signed.

II. Non Infectious Health Condition

A. Medical Emergencies: These animals need immediate veterinary care.

- Difficulty breathing

- Newly developed neurologic signs, especially seizures, in coordination, paralysis or partial paralysis, coma

- Distended abdomen or nonproductive wrenching in large and medium breed dogs

- Serious eye injuries (severe squinting, constant rubbing at eye, cloudy eye, protruding eye)

- Severe bleeding (soaks though bandages, spurting)

- Severe lameness with obvious recent trauma

- Crouched stance, hunched over

Pale gums - sign of anemia (especially if accompanied by weakness)

B. Non Emergency Conditions: These animals require continuous treatment and monitoring that is beyond the capability of the shelter. If these animals are accepted for owner safety reasons stated above then their conditions must be documented on the intake forms and waivers signed.

Skin ulcers

Any of above accompanied by significant weakness or depressed attitude or with evident of recent Trauma

Aggressive dogs that cannot be safely handled

Not eating at all 2-3 days

Severe dehydration - skin does not return to normal position when picked up (Tenting)

Yellow tinge to skin, gums or whites of eyes (Jaundice)

Infected wounds that need medical attention or medications.

Any wound that extends into underlying tissue or is extensive in nature.

Any condition in which the triage person believes would need blood work, X-rays, sedation or anesthesia.

Late term pregnancy or newborns less than 4 weeks old

Animals under treatment by a veterinarian but require regular monitoring, such as but not limited to anemia, unregulated diabetes, daily bandage changes, poorly controlled seizures.

Consider isolation, but not refusal of entry:

Patchy hair loss or scabs in cats

Large areas of hair loss accompanied by severe itchiness in dogs

Diarrhea (if not referred, as above)

Vomiting (if not referred as above)

Animal aggressive

Animals being treated for heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, eye disease, moderate to severe trauma or seizures (monitoring isolation/observation)

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