

## Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana



Date **August 22, 2012**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian**

Name of Facility **DeRidder Animal Shelter**

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There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include...

- Louisiana minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities and quarantine facilities, Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana Revised Statutes 2431 et seq.
  - This statute addresses requirements for veterinary treatment of animals, limitations on fees, authority of parish governments to adopt, general shelter standards, shelter construction, shelter operating procedures, sterilization requirements, adoption standards, and branding.
- Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians, Louisiana Revised Statutes , Title 37, Chapter 18B, Louisiana Revised Statutes 1551 et seq.
- The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III
- American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia ([http://www.avma.org/issues/animal\\_welfare/euthanasia.pdf](http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf))

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the

Humane Society of the United States, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians in shelter evaluations. Resources are listed below:

- National Animal Control Association Guidelines  
(<http://www.nacenet.org/guidelines.html>)
- Humane Society of the United States Guidelines for the Operation of an Animal Shelter  
([http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource\\_library/policies\\_and\\_guidelines/guidelines\\_for\\_animal\\_shelter\\_operations.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/guidelines_for_animal_shelter_operations.html))
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, Association of Shelter Veterinarians  
([http://www.shelternet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks\\_with%20security.pdf](http://www.shelternet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks_with%20security.pdf))

The list of questions below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as “**MANDATED**”) and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

**LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.**

**A. Animal Euthanasia**

1. Y N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?  
*NA No one at the facility is trained or licensed to perform euthanasia. Euthanasia is performed by local veterinarians on a rotating basis.*
2. Y N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?  
*Although not a written protocol, a protocol exists where any animal taken in that is injured or sick is immediately taken to the veterinarian.*
3. Y N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?  
*See above!*

*Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:*

4. Y N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?  
*NA See above!*
5. Y N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?  
*Euthanasia is performed by licensed veterinarians.*
6. Y N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?

*There is a sturdy, stainless steel table for euthanasia located at the facility.  
There is no euthanasia room. The table is stored distant from and in an area not visible to other animals.*

- 7. Y N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?  
*The table is outside.*
- 8. Y N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?  
*NA Controlled drugs are not stored at the facility*
- 9. Y N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?  
*NA Controlled drugs are not used in the field.*
- 10. Y N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?  
*NA See above!*

*Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:*

- 11. Y N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?  
*NA. There is NO GAS CHAMBER!*

**B. Management:**

- 1. Y N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?
- 2. Y N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?
- 3. Y N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?  
*No regular on-site veterinarian exists, however routine veterinary consultations are sought on a fee for services basis at four local veterinary offices.*
- 4. Y N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian  
*NA See above!*
- 5. Y N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?  
*LAWC recommends that some local government authority establish a program whereby a written evaluation of the animal shelter is done twice per year.*
- 6. Y N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?  
*LAWC recognizes the importance of written policies for procedures at public animal shelters. The staff of the DeRidder Animal Shelter does not, at present, have written policies governing any routine procedures. LAWCC recommends that management finalize and publish written policies for storage of food and supplies, shelter hygiene, employee training, isolation of animals, euthanasia, feeding, and shelter oversight. These protocols will assist in training employees and should reduce the chance for inadvertent errors.*
- 7. Y N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?

- The standard rule is that only one animal is permitted per cage.*
8. Y N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?  
*The Animal Control Supervisor requires that animals are spayed or neutered after adoption, however the papers distributed with adopted animals do not fulfill the requirements set forth in the revised statutes by the Louisiana legislature. This deficiency must be corrected immediately to bring the shelter in compliance with Louisiana law.*
9. Y N Have staff been immunized against rabies?  
*The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that animal control personnel receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. The vaccine regimen is comparatively expensive and many shelters only administer vaccinations to workers who have been employed for some specified duration (usually 6 months to one year). The DeRidder Animal Shelter should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work. The DeRidder area is considered endemic for skunk variant rabies, so a real danger exists. Wildlife are not routinely handled at the facility, however contact of local domestic animals with wildlife can be assumed.*
10. Y N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?  
*Bats are never handled and the supervisor related only one occasion in recent years where a sick wild raccoon was picked up. Handling wildlife is not routinely done.*
11. Y N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?  
NA
12. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?  
*Pit bulls are released to rescue groups, but not adopted out.*
13. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?  
*Rottweilers are restricted in the same manner as pit bulls.*
14. Y N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. Y N Was this shelter a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. Y N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?  
*Although the DeRidder Animal Shelter abides by city and parish ordinances in issues related to impoundment, shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinances. Local government officials are strongly urged to work to include shelter standards in local ordinances.*
17. Y N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?  
*The emergency telephone number is NOT displayed on the exterior of the building. LAWC recommends that this oversight is corrected as soon as possible. Signs will be displayed in the future.*

18.  Y  N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?

19.  Y  N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

*The grounds are large enough to facilitate pens where the public could acquaint themselves with shelter animals, however this addition would require an additional outlay fo funds for shelter improvement.*

**C. Records:**

1.  Y  N Are records computerized?

2.  Y  N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.

3.  Y  N Do the animals' records document daily observation?  
*Although individual records do not document daily observation, all animals in each kennel are evaluated daily. This is done primarily by the staff in their daily walk through, and daily duties always bring problems to the attention of the Supervisor or Office Manager.*

4.  Y  N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?  
*All incoming animals are scanned. The animals are also scanned at the time of euthanasia or adoption.*

**D. General Structure:**

1.  Y  N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?  
*Cats are offloaded in carriers, therefore although the area is open-air, proper precautions in offloading cats are taken to prevent escape. The area is adequately secure for canines.*

2.  Y  N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?

3.  Y  N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?

4.  Y  N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?  
*More "under roof" storage is warranted.*

5.  Y  N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?  
*Animals are separated from drains by fencing. Drain troughs are not located in walkways.*

6.  Y  N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?

7.  Y  N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?

**E. Water and Electric Power:**

1.  Y  N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?  
*There is only one regular sink and a slop sink available for use.*
2.  Y  N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3.  Y  N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4.  Y  N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5.  Y  N Is hot water available?
6.  Y  N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?  
*Although none is available, the shelter can acquire a generator on an ad hoc basis. LAWC strongly recommends acquisition of a generator for use in emergencies and with routine prolonged loss of power.*
7.  Y  N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
8.  Y  N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
9.  Y  N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10.  Y  N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?  
*See above*
11.  Y  N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?  
*There is no bath tub and no sink available to bathe animals.*
12.  Y  N Is there a restroom for staff use?  
*A port-a-potty is provided for staff use.*

**F. Waste Disposal:**

1.  Y  N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?  
*The animals go directly to the incinerator and are incinerated within hours.*
2.  Y  N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
3.  Y  N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4.  Y  N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5.  Y  N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?  
*All veterinary procedures are conducted off site, so medical waste is not generated.*

**G. Storage:**

1.  Y  N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?

*Space appears available, but more enclosed storage areas would be desirable. This is a small shelter with a limited budget. Considering the building space available the shelter manager maintains supplies in an exemplary fashion.*

2.  Y  N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?  
*Cleaning chemicals are stored in the kennel area, but are separated from the animals.*
3.  Y  N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?  
*Food is stored in a former ice container, sealed from the environment.*
4.  Y  N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
5.  Y  N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6.  Y  N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?  
*There is no long-term storage of food at the facility.*
7.  Y  N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?

#### H. Primary Enclosures:

1.  Y  N Is one dog housed per pen?  
*The goal of the shelter is to house one animal per pen, however, when the census demands more space, two dogs per cage are permitted. Dogs are separated into appropriate cohorts.*
2.  Y  N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?  
*NA Cats are not housed at this facility.*
3.  Y  N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?  
*Nose to nose contact is possible. This may promote transmission of disease and aggression against adjacent animals.*
4.  Y  N Do the pens have tops on them?  
*Tops are recommended on this type of caging. Some dogs may attempt to climb fencing and could be injured in the process.*
5.  Y  N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?  
*NA*
6.  Y  N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7.  Y  N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?  
*For the most part it is. There are a few cages that have been patched by various means. The City of DeRidder should consider more permanent repairs.*
8.  Y  N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
9.  Y  N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
10.  Y  N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?  
*NA*
11.  Y  N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?

12. Y N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?
13. Y N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?
14. Y N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?  
*As stated previously some cages are in need of more permanent repairs.*

**I. Feeding/ Watering:**

1. Y N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?  
*There is adequate counter space, however counters are constructed of unfinished wood. LAWC recommends covering the counters with a more easily sanitized surface, such as stainless steel or formica.*
2. Y N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?  
*The shelter utilizes an automatic watering system and the water supply is constant and cannot be tipped over.*
3. Y N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?
4. Y N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?

**J. Pest Control:**

1. Y N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?  
*Shelter management and city employees apply pesticides and enforce rodent control.*
2. Y N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?
3. Y N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?  
*NA*
4. Y N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasiticides?  
*NA*

**K. Rabies Quarantine**

1. Y N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
2. Y N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?  
*There is no separate area to isolate quarantine dogs, but shelter managers keep the dogs as far from the general population as possible.*
3. Y N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
4. Y N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?  
*NA*

- 5.  Y  N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
- 6.  Y  N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?  
NA
- 7.  Y  N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
- 8.  Y  N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

**L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem in animals taken into the facility. Your answers should reflect the gravity of the problem in incoming animals, not persistent problems at the facility.**

- |                                    |   |  |                                  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Intestinal parasites             |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Scabies (mange)                  |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Ringworm (dermatophytes)         |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Parvovirus                       |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper                 |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Canine cough                     |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Feline diarrhea                  |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Major  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Canine heartworm disease         |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Feline leukemia                  |

**M. Infection Control**

- 1.  Y  N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?  
*The shelter has no isolation area. The shelter manager separates incoming animals by placing the animals distant from animals that have been on premise for some time.*
- 2.  Y  N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
- 3.  Y  N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
- 4.  Y  N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
  - a.  Y  N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
- 5.  Y  N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
  - a.  Y  N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)

6. Y N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
7. Y N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?  
*Yes, but the requirement is inconsistently addressed.*

**N. Population Control**

1. Y N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?  
*All animals that are adopted out are taken to a local veterinarian and, if not already neutered or spayed, are neutered or spayed prior to adoption. This shelter is compliant with state statutes.*
2. Y N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
3. Y N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?  
NA

**Additional comments:**

The DeRidder Animal Shelter provided evidence that the shelter had euthanized 41.6% of the 202 animals taken in during the 2011 calendar year, a decrease of 93.5% from the previous year. This proportion of dogs euthanized is relatively low for a shelter serving a community the size of DeRidder. Adoptions were up 90% from the previous year.

Also, from the time of the initial inspection until the date of the report and the consideration by LAWC of a rating, the DeRidder shelter has corrected and is working on correcting several deficiencies. LAWC was late in producing the report and many corrections were not started or have not started at present because the shelter had not been informed. Examples:

- The automatic watering system will be altered so that animals cannot soil the dispensers.
- The City of DeRidder is budgeting presently to vaccinate the animal contact employees for rabies, as is recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Plans are now in the works to correct plumbing deficiencies in the shelter and to install a bath tub so that soiled animals can be bathed.
- A generator that powers a lift station will be connected to the shelter to provide automatic resumption of power in the case of a loss of utilities.

- Plans are underway to use some type of divider to extend the walls vertically to prevent nose to nose contact by neighboring animals.
- Fences are being repaired.
- The one part-time employee is now employed full-time.

The shelter, like many small community shelters in Louisiana, is limited in its capacity to undertake major improvements due to budgetary constraints.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

Written protocols for all routine shelter procedures are recommended. LAWC can provide templates for protocols.

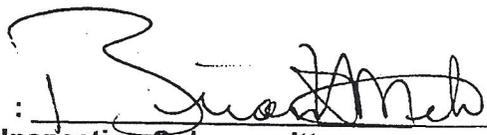
The shelter should contemplate surveillance for heavy ectoparasite infestations and should develop a plan to treat animals appropriately, whether by bathing in insecticidal shampoos or by other means. At the time of creation of this report, the shelter was investigating options for such a program.

The recommendation from shelter experts (HSUS, Association of Shelter Veterinarians) to better exercise infection control is to vaccinate all animals on intake. This should be a future goal of the DeRidder Animal Shelter, although additional funding would be necessary.

The wooden countertops should be replaced or covered with more easily sanitized materials such as formica or stainless steel. Again, at the time of the generation of this report, the shelter was planning to correct this deficiency.

**RATING:**

- Generally exceeds standards
- Meets standards
- Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM :  Date: 4-14-13  
Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee  
LAWC