

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

Date **May 18, 2010**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary Balsamo (State Public Health Veterinarian, Louisiana Office of Public Health), Aristide Marshall (Registered Sanitarian, Louisiana Office of Public Health)**

Name of Facility **Lafayette Parish Animal Control 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 (Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana R.S. 2431 et seq.)

La. R.S. 2431 to 2439, Humane society may arrange for care of animals; Arrangement with stable for care of animals; Employment of veterinary; Stable to register animals cared for; Determination whether animal may leave stable; Sale of animal on owner's failure to pay for treatment; Liability of society to stable or veterinary; privilege upon animals; Opportunity to owner to treat animal if proper treatment is given; Court review of humane society's treatment of animal, damages limited to costs

La. R.S. 2461 to 2465, Authority of parish governing authorities to adopt, Definitions, General shelter standards, Shelter construction, Operating procedures.

La. R.S. 2471 to 2476 Definitions, Sterilization required, Adoption standards, Confirmation of sterilization, Exceptions, Fees

La. R.S. Branding of animals impounded

La. R. S. 1558(3), Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians

Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III, The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases

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 American Animal Control Association, and the Humane Society of the United States in shelter evaluations. The list 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.

### 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?

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?
3. Y N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?

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?
5. Y N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
6. Y N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
7. Y N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
8. Y N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?
9. Y N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?
10. Y N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

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?

**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?
4. Y N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian?
5. Y N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?
6. Y N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?
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)?
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)?
9. Y N Have staff been immunized against rabies?
10. Y N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
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)?
12. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
13. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
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?
- 17. Y N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
- 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?

**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?
- 4. Y N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?

**D. General Structure:**

- 1. Y N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?
- 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?
- 5. Y N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?

12. Y N Is there a restroom for staff use?

**F. Waste Disposal:**

1. Y N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
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 1/4-1/2 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?

**G. Storage:**

1. Y N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
2. Y N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
3. Y N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
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?
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?
2. Y N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. Y N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?
4. Y N Do the pens have tops on them?
5. Y N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?
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?
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?
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?

**I. Feeding/ Watering:**

1. Y N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?
2. Y N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
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?
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?
4. Y N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasiticides?

**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"?
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?
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?
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 with these diseases over the past year.**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper                 |
| 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough                     |
| 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease         |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input 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?
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?

**N. Population Control**

- 1. Y N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
- 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?

**LAWC Comments and suggestions:**

A2-4. LAWC recognizes the importance of written policies for procedures at public animal shelters. It is the suggestion of LAWC that a protocol with at least two levels of authorization, perhaps the shelter director with the consent of his or her direct supervisor, be written and strictly followed. This does not have to be physical supervision of each procedure, but could be, in the least, written documentation of approval by an additional person in a supervisory role. In other jurisdictions, decisions for euthanasia by single individuals have often been challenged, rightly or wrongly, and can often be difficult to defend. LAWC was assured that a written euthanasia protocol was under development at the time of the inspection. A written protocol did exist, but it was no longer in use, since the protocol addressed euthanasia in a gas chamber.

A9. No controlled drugs are employed in the field. All animals are returned to the shelter for evaluation by a veterinarian.

A10. The carbon monoxide chamber was properly maintained and safely operated, but is no longer in use and should be removed from the premises.

B5. Louisiana law states that "shelters should be inspected at least once every six months by an authorized representative of the parish to determine compliance with the requirements" set forth in state statutes. Although the supervisory structure of the shelter was thoroughly explained to the auditors, no written record of a formal system of inspection by any parish official was brought forth. LAWC suggests that the parish establish a regular program of inspection and document the results for later examination by OPH auditors. This system of inspection should be recorded in a written policy.

B15. This information was collected for statistical purposes only.

B16. Although Lafayette Parish Animal Control abides by ordinances in issues related to stray animals, impoundment, and rabies control; shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinance. Parish government is strongly urged to include shelter standards in Parish ordinances.

B17. The phone number was not prominently posted on the outside of the facility to be observed by the public when the facility is not open for business.

C3. A record is maintained on each animal for the duration of its stay at the shelter; however no daily annotation is made on each record confirming observation of the animal on a daily basis.

C4. Animals are scanned on entry and prior to adoption. LAWC recommends that animals be re-scanned prior to euthanasia also.

D1. Animals are removed from animal control vehicles in cages in a secured area in the rear of the facility. Animals are handled in an area open to the outside, therefore some species of animals, such as cats, could escape. It would be optimal if species such as felines were removed in an enclosed indoor (garage) area or a fenced area that is also enclosed at the top.

D5. Inspectors noticed a few drains that were uncovered. Drain guards should be installed to prevent injury to animals or staff.

E4. Inspectors observed hoses not in use on the ground in the intake area. Management should consider use of automatically retracted hoses to promote safer and more hygienic work conditions.

E7-9. Not all outlets were covered, however most were. Some outlets were not located at optimal height above the floor. Electrical receptacles that did not feature GFI devices were observed in areas where significant amounts of water were used for cleaning

E10. There is a general shortage of sinks and tubs for all types of cleaning, however management has constructed several makeshift tubs, located in the receiving area, that are utilized for cleaning animal contact equipment, such as food and water bowls.

G1. Storage space at the facility is obviously inadequate, due to the cluttered condition of the receiving area which is also used for food storage, storage of food and water bowls and cleaning equipment. Carrying cages and traps are scattered throughout the secured area in the rear of the facility. Management should attempt to store the materials in the receiving area in a more organized manner.

G3. Food storage areas, as stated previously, are also used for storage of other items. Dry food is stored on shelves, which is optimal, but the food is kept in the receiving area, which is exposed to the elements. More optimal food storage would be in an area better protected from the environment.

G5. The food appeared to be stored haphazardly and no evidence of a first in-first out system of rotation was observed. These conditions of storage could lead to usage of more recently acquired foods before foods that have been in storage for some time.

H1 The maximum number of dogs in any one run is 3. The maximum number of cats in a cage is 3.

H2. For the most part, animals enjoy a minimum of 4 square feet of individual space, even within multiple animal cages. Only a few situations were noticed in which animals may have been provided with inadequate space, and these involved housing of cats. Two or three of the cat cages housed cats that were at least 6 to 7 months of age, and yet 3 cats were observed in cages exhibiting dimensions that provided less than the minimum required space per animal.

H4. Many, but not all, runs are topped with fencing material. The runs that do not feature cage ceilings could encourage some dogs to attempt to climb fences, which could result in injury to animals or workers, or potential breaches in security.

H5. Cage run clearance appears to be six feet, not seven feet. Seven feet of clearance is more conducive to comfortable access by taller employees, and thus is more conducive to thorough cleaning and safe handling of animals.

H13. Most primary enclosures are constructed of materials that are easily sanitized; however some of the outdoor runs feature inter-cage panels made of unpainted plywood. These panels certainly will become soiled, and thorough cleaning and disinfection is precluded by the porous nature of the material. These "separators" should be painted with a type of paint or coating that renders the material as non-porous as possible, and should be routinely observed for weathering or wear. Optimally, porous wooden structures should be replaced with non-permeable plastic structures or fiberglass structures.

Although the cat cages located in the receiving area meet minimum standards, the construction of these cages, especially in a relatively high volume shelter, is barely adequate. Since the cages are constructed of galvanized or anodized metal, not stainless steel, over time these cages may present problems with pitting or oxidation. In fact, several of these cages showed evidence of extreme wear. Some evidence of persistent soiling was observed by inspectors in these cages.

I1. There is no dedicated food prep area. Easily sanitized tables are located in several animal wards, however, as is typical in most shelters, uncluttered work space tables are lacking. The advantage of easily sanitized and plentiful tables or work surfaces is that cross contamination of food bowls from infectious materials on various surfaces is mitigated.

I4. Drying racks for food and water bowls are present in several areas of the facility. Inspectors observed several food and water bowls being dried on wooden pallets in the outdoor area at the rear of the facility. Food and water bowls were being dried along with litter pans. Litter pans and food bowls should be cleaned and dried separately.

J2. There is no procedure to eliminate external parasites from animals on entry; however adopted animals are treated for external parasites prior to departure.

K7-8. The shelter submits animal brains for rabies testing to the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. OPH reminds the shelter that, in instances where human victims are involved, the Public Health Laboratory will perform testing free of charge. The only requirement is that the submission be cleared first by the state public health veterinarian (504-219-4593) or a member of the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section Staff (800-256-2748). Data pursuant to bites processed by the public health laboratory also are included in rabies surveillance data submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

L10. The shelter has no means to gauge the problem with feline leukemia, since no testing is done.

M1. No isolation area is present. For effective infection control the optimum situation is to isolate animals apart from the general population on intake. In adoptable animals this isolation should be maintained for a duration of at least 2 weeks. The facility may not be large enough to facilitate such infection control procedures.

M2. All dogs are vaccinated against distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, and parvovirus. Bordetella vaccines are given when the management and veterinary staff deem their use appropriate. Only adoptable cats are vaccinated for FVRCCP.

M4, 4a, 5, 5a. All dogs are treated for intestinal parasites upon entry into the facility, however cats are not treated until they are determined to be adoptable. Dogs are not routinely checked for heartworms.

M7. Adoptable animals are vaccinated for rabies at the shelter. Animals that are too young to be vaccinated are given a voucher to be redeemed by a licensed veterinarian for rabies vaccination.

N1. Some animals are spayed or neutered at the facility, however all animals that are adopted are required to be spayed or neutered.

**Additional comments:**

Office space for employees is provided, but is not permanent. The offices are in rented trailers, which in times of scarce resources could be removed from the premises.

Lighting is insufficient in some areas of the shelter and should be improved. Adequate lighting is conducive to safety and to more effective sanitation.

In areas where sinks are not available, management should consider use of waterless hand sanitizer stations.

One of the cage frames in the rear yard exercise area was incomplete and could be vulnerable to animals aggressively attempting escape.

The cat intake area appears to be a problem at this facility. A more secure, better equipped ward for cat intake should be a goal for the future. This area is very congested and, since many equipment items and supplies are stored in the area, this cat receiving area could serve as a "distribution" point for troublesome infectious diseases. The open-air state of this ward is also conducive to cat escape. In addition, LAWC received photographic evidence from a reliable source that indicated cat cages in the facility were not maintained continuously in the state that was observed at the time of the inspection; however, LAWC had no way of verifying the date the photos were taken. Despite staffing problems, management should ensure that cats are not overcrowded, that cages are cleaned thoroughly, and that clean litter plans are provided and maintained in a sanitary condition.

Often sick animals with contagious diseases are kept in the surgery area. If the cleaning staff fails to sanitize cages sufficiently, this multi-purpose use could leave surgical animals at risk of infection with environmentally persistent infectious organisms.

Inspectors observed soiled towels stored adjacent to food supplies. This practice could lead to cross contamination and distribution of infectious organisms throughout the facility.

Many of the ventilation fans in the facility were characterized by a thick accumulation of hair and dirt. LAWC recognizes that these materials can accumulate rapidly in a shelter environment, but if resources are available,

maintenance staff should add routine cleaning of ventilation equipment to work protocols.

The shelter still utilizes plastic food bowls in some animal cages. These materials may become pitted and could eventually preclude effective cleaning. Stainless steel bowls are recommended, however if plastic bowls are utilized, these objects should be continuously monitored for pitting, wear and splintering by animal chewing.

The primary problem with this facility is a lack of staffing. Besides evidence in some areas of build-up of hair and other materials on ventilation equipment, inspectors also observed that some outdoor exercise areas were not cleaned at a desired frequency. This lack of attention could exacerbate problems with intestinal parasite transmission from animal to animal. A facility serving one of the most densely populated areas of the state should employ a larger staff.

Inspectors observed the intake of an opossum and a raccoon during the visit. Animal control officers removed the animals from the trap with a catchpole. The animals were transferred to a holding cage and were re-caught for the euthanasia procedure. This process unnecessarily exposes employees susceptible to wild animal bites (and potential rabies transmission). LAWC recommends that the animals, if they are to be euthanized, be tranquilized while in the trap itself and administered euthanasia solution immediately. Changing the procedure will eliminate unnecessary risk to handlers.

**RATING:**

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

Margaret George, Commissioner.



Date:

