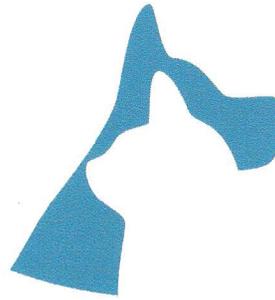


Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana



LOUISIANA ANIMAL
WELFARE COMMISSION

Date **May 30, 2012**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian, Zellie Rouse LSU SPH student**

Name of Facility **St. Charles Parish Animal Shelter**

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)

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.nacanet.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)
- 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)

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?
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 no euthanasia is done in the field, the protocol for handling injured and sick animals in the field is to take the affected animal to the shelter veterinarian for emergent care or euthanasia.
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?
Also, each euthanasia must be approved by the shelter director and at least one of the sub-directors. The veterinarian can also recommend euthanasia, however the director and sub-director must also approve.
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?
These drugs are stored in a locked safe.
- 9. Y N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?
NA
- 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?
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?
A contract veterinarian is present on the premises two days per week. If emergencies occur when the veterinarian is not present, animals are transported to the veterinarian.
- 4. Y N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian
A part time veterinarian is employed, however, the veterinarian does respond to emergencies on a full time basis. St. Charles Humane Society is actually the entity that contracts with the veterinarian. This is an example of a public/private partnership that works.
- 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?
- 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)?

- All animals are spayed and neutered prior to leaving the facility.*
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 St. Charles Parish Animal Shelter should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work.
10. Y N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
Parish animal control personnel will collect nuisance wildlife. Any personnel trapping wild animals should receive rabies vaccination (pre-exposure).
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 evaluated for aggression, as are all other breeds.
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?
Although the St. Charles Parish Animal Shelter abides by parish ordinances in issues related to animal cruelty, stray and nuisance animals, vicious animals, exotic animals, redemption of animals, vicious dogs, rabies inoculations, animal bites, seizure, impoundment, licensing of breeders, groomers and pet shops; shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinance. Local government officials are strongly urged 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.
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?
There are separate indoor acquaintance areas for both dogs and cats.

C. Records:

1. Y N Are records computerized?

Records are computerized, and the system is web-based. The shelter is new and the shelter has experienced problems with internet service that are presently being corrected. Temporarily paper records are being kept that will be later entered in the electronic database.

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 checked daily and a log is maintained listing any irregularities noted irregularities.
4. Y N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?
Animals are scanned three times during residence at the shelter: on intake, at the time of spay/neuter, and immediately prior to euthanasia.

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?
Although none is available, the shelter plans on acquiring a generator in the near future. 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?
When not elevated 3 to 4 feet above the floor, self closing receptacle covers are deployed and effectively prevent animals from coming in contact with power outlets.
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?
A walk-in freezer is present at the shelter and is used for carcass storage.
2. Y N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
See above!
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?
The shelter contracts a company called Bio-Cycle Medical Waste to pick up Four (4) times a year. This should be adequate, however if the need arises, the service can be increased to monthly.

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?
Storage areas are large enough to adequately separate cleaning supplies and food from other stored items.
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?
Dry food was stored in bags stacked directly against the wall. This does not permit adequate air circulation around food products and may adversely affect shelf-life. The director assured the inspector that storage methods would be corrected immediately.
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 is to house a minimum of 2 large dogs or 3 large dogs in each dog run. If space is available only one dog is placed in each cage. If dogs are housed together, they are matched by gender (unless spayed or neutered), age, and size. Also the cages can be separated into two individual cages with the guillotine apparatus, if necessary.
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?
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?
8. Y N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
In most cases guillotine doors separate indoor (air conditioned and heated) and outdoor (fans and open windows or garage type doors) areas, although outdoor areas are still under the eaves of the structure and protected from the elements.
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?
Food prep areas are available in or adjacent to all wards.
2. Y N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
In cat cages, water bowls are secured to the cage. In dog cages, heavy water bowls or large stainless steel pails are utilized, filled and monitored continuously. Bowls are maintained in a filled condition and no capsized containers were observed.
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?
There is a contract for monthly service from a licensed pest control company.
2. Y N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?
Monthly topical flea medications are applied to all animals. Infested animals are bathed with a fleas shampoo upon entry.
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"?
An isolation ward for rabies dogs is present, however the shelter uses the ward for other animals also. A "Danger-Rabies Quarantine" sign is placed on each cage housing a quarantined animal. If possible a roped off area of the ward should be created and appropriate signage displayed.
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?

7. Y N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
This is not consistent, since some testing is sent to the veterinary school laboratory at LSU.

8. Y N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?
St Charles does participate, but not always. DHH 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 (504-568-8315) 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).

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input 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 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?
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?
 NA
4. Y N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
- a. Y N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
 NA
5. Y N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
Advantage Multi is dosed to all animals upon entry.
- 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?
NA

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?
NA

Additional comments:

The St. Charles shelter conducts off site adoption events in Jefferson Parish, at Lakeside Mall. These events are organized and conducted with the assistance of the humane society.

Cat wards are constructed with all cages facing out, therefore there is very little ability for aerosol transmission of organisms that may be dispersed in this manner.

The euthanasia room is state of the art and shares the same disinfection characteristics as the surgical suite. Handling of deceased animal is performed in an exemplary manner through contract with a crematorium.

Cats are vaccinated and neutered and are held in isolation for one week prior to admittance into the "common" cat area, which features state of the art, easily disinfected cat interactive and exercise equipment. Dogs and cats are not permitted in the main facility until after observation, vaccination and spay/neuter surgeries.

The organizational structure of the shelter is conducive to efficient and humane control operations. The Director is responsible for the entire operation. At the next level, an administrator is responsible for all clerical and database activities; a Cat director is responsible for maintenance, management and treatment of all cats in the facility and the respective feline areas of the shelter; and a Dog director is responsible for everything dealing with dogs and canine areas of the shelter. A west bank animal control officer and an east bank animal control officer are

responsible for ambulatory services and enforcement in their respective areas of the parish. A director of medications is responsible for assisting the veterinarian and ordering, storing and administration of all medications.

The only personnel deficiency noted was the absence of a dedicated receptionist, which would likely assist in further streamlining operations.

Animals are held a minimum of seven days. During the seven day hold, the dogs and cats are observed for temperament, and shelter staff monitors health status. At the end of seven days, aggressive animals and animals whose physical condition precludes adoption are euthanized using the three tiered protocol mentioned above (approval of director and sub-director, with advice from veterinarian). Eighty percent of all animals euthanized are cats.

Upon intake, animals are transferred to...

- 1) Observation cages. The animals are observed for a period of hours for obvious signs of illness or aggression. From observation cages the animals move to...
- 2) Isolation cages. All cats and dogs are vaccinated with the appropriate vaccines (FVRCCP for cats, DHPLP for dog, rabies for both), dewormed and checked for heartworms. Evaluation continues for seven days. At the end of seven days aggressive and ill animals are euthanized and the others are transferred to healthy hold. After spay/neuter healthy hold animals are transferred to the...
- 3) Adoption area.

The Saint Charles shelter is one of the finest in the state, and is a facility in which all parish residents and leaders should take pride.

RATING:

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

Brian Melius, DVM : Brian Melius Date: 9-12-12
 Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee
 LAWC