

TALBOT HUMANE

# **Standards of Care**

**December 2016**

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## MISSION AND VALUES

**Mission:** Talbot Humane provides a safe and healthy environment for unwanted companion animals in its care; places adoptable companion animals in good homes; protects all animals from cruelty and neglect; and reduces the unwanted companion animal population through spay/neuter and educational services in Talbot County, Maryland.

### The 5 Freedoms

1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
4. Freedom to express (most) normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

### Talbot Humane Core Values

- All companion animals have the right to be healthy & safe.
- Animals thrive when they have educated and caring owners that are supported through quality community based programs.
- Engaging and participating in and with the community with regards to animal care and support services impacts the community and the owners of animals in a positive way.
- Supporting the owners and their families in adoptions, pet ownership and support services adds to the quality of the animal's life and an animal's place in our community.
- Supports and services are designed first and foremost for the Animals.

Talbot Humane's compassionate staff and dedicated volunteers are making a difference every day by fulfilling the needs of our community. Our adoption program is highly successful, placing animals not only in new loving homes but by working with other organizations. Whether we are receiving animals from other humane organizations in need of help or a 501.c.3 rescue group is accepting one of our special need residents into their care, we continue toward our mission of placing every treatable, adoptable pet coming through our doors into a forever home.

We continue to provide low cost spay/neuter services to county residents. Our Pet Pantry provides more than 3 tons of pet food annually to residents in need. Our educational programs serve the community, ranging from pre-K to adult, offer information and lessons on everything from humane care to kindness to animals. Our volunteers can be found at the shelter and in community events every week working with the animals, assisting the public, sharing the good news about our work at Talbot Humane and showing our animals for adoption.

Talbot Humane is contracted to provide Animal Control services to Talbot County MD 40 hours per week. As a nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) organization, we rely heavily on the support of our supporters, local businesses and friends so that we may continue fulfilling our mission to the animals of our community.

Our facility at 7894 Ocean Gateway in Easton, MD has expanded over the years to keep up with the needs of a growing animal population in the community. Talbot Humane is an open admission shelter to all Talbot County residents, caring for an average of 1,200 animals each year. This means we turn no animal away, no matter how full our cages, the medical condition or temperament of the animal in need.

# Standards of Care

## I. ANIMAL HOUSING

### A. DOGS AND CATS

#### 1. Cage Size, Design and Materials

Cage Size – Primary enclosures must provide sufficient space to allow each animal, regardless of size, to make normal postural adjustments (e.g., turn freely and easily stand, sit, stretch, move their head, without touching the top of the enclosure; lie in a resting position with limbs extended; be able to get away from defecation, and move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating). Food, water bowls and litter boxes (for cats) should not impede the animal's ability to stretch out. Dogs should be able to hold their tails erect when in a normal standing position.

Design – The primary enclosures must be structurally sound and maintained in safe, working condition to properly confine animals, prevent injury, keep other animals out, and enable the animals to remain dry and clean. There must not be any sharp edges, gaps, or other defects that could cause injury or trap a limb or other body part. Secure latches or other closing devices must be present. For cats, vertical as well as horizontal dimensions are important, as cats show a preference for spending time on raised surfaces and high structures rather than on the floor. Therefore, perches, dens, or a shelf are available in all cat cages.

Materials – Only non-porous surfaces that can be easily disinfected and that are durable enough to withstand repeated cleaning are used in all animal areas.

In certain situations, the above requirements are not practical or appropriate. These situations include:

- transport;
- decreased space required for medical reasons as determined by a veterinarian
- temporary pre/post-surgical confinement (24-48 hours total); and
- intake processing;
- large intake of animals at one time due to seizure from animal control, public emergency/disaster, etc.

#### 2. Ventilation and Air Quality

The standard acceptable level of air exchange 10-20 room air exchanges per hour with fresh air. Air system is cleaned and serviced on a regular basis.

#### 3. Temperature and Humidity

Temperatures are maintained between 60 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Relative humidity ranges from 30% to 70%.

Adjustments in temperature and humidity due to individual breed, hair coat, medical condition, and age are made as needed. This is typically accomplished by relocating the animal, adjusting the thermostat, and providing fans or warmer bedding materials.

#### **4. Drainage**

Drains function properly to readily remove waste and water from dog kennels and from all other rooms of the shelter.

#### **5. Lighting**

Facilities should be designed to offer as much natural light as possible, but when artificial light is the only source it should approximate natural light in composition, duration, and intensity. Periods of darkness are equally important and should mimic as closely as possible the natural pattern of sleep. Lighting is provided in each animal room during the day and turned off at the end of the day to mimic natural light cycles.

#### **6. Noise Control**

Loud and sudden noises can cause stress to shelter animals and staff. The following steps to help reduce noise and are taken wherever possible:

- Housing dogs and cats in separate areas, ideally with no ability for either species to hear one another.
- Educating the staff and public about the need to speak softly around the animals.
- Reducing dog barking by providing enrichment for the dogs.
- Maintaining all mechanical equipment in good working order to reduce noise and vibration.

#### **7. Standard Enclosure Items**

The following standard enclosure items are in every cage unless specified otherwise by the animal care supervisor or a licensed veterinarian:

- Appropriately sized clean water and food bowls;
- Clean bedding;
- Elevated resting place;
- Appropriately sized and clean litter boxes for cats.

#### **8. Feeding and Watering**

Dogs and cats are fed two times daily with dry food according to age and weight. Kittens under 12 weeks of age are given constant access to dry food. Canned food is provided to puppies (10 weeks and younger), daily for felines, nursing mothers, and other dogs as directed by the animal care supervisor or veterinarian. Feeding schedules and special diets are prescribed by the animal care supervisor or a veterinarian as needed. Clean water is available at all times unless directed otherwise by the animal care supervisor or a veterinarian.

#### **9. Enrichment**

Enrichment items are defined as items or actions that stimulate normal behavior and reduce stress and boredom.

Enrichment items are provided to all animals unless otherwise prescribed by the animal care supervisor or a veterinarian. Types of enrichment should vary daily. All new enrichment items must be approved by the animal care supervisor. Once approved, the item can be used, as needed, by animal care staff.

### **B. EXOTICS**

Animals brought to Talbot Humane that are not dogs or cats are hereafter referred to as exotics. This category includes, but is not limited to, birds, gerbils, hamsters, ferrets, rabbits, lizards, snakes, opossums, turtles, raccoons, squirrels, and fish.

The Animal Care Supervisor will determine aspects of care for exotics, including cage size, temperature, humidity, feeding, and other care decisions and will maintain a contact list of experts for exotics.

## II. CAGE INFORMATION

Every cage contains a cage card detailing basic information about each animal occupying the cage, including name, identification number, breed, age, gender; spay/neuter status, date of intake, reason for intake, physical description, and cage number.

Additional cage signs may be used to provide essential information regarding medical condition, behavioral concerns, handling notifications, or the animal's status, including availability for adoption, pending investigations, and any quarantine information. The information on these signs supersedes any other cage cards.

## III. SANITATION

This document uses the word "sanitation" to mean a combination of cleaning and disinfection. Talbot Humane maintains sanitary conditions to prevent the transfer of disease, which could result in an outbreak that could potentially lead to the closure of a portion or all of the facility. Proper sanitation is the foundation of every preventative medicine program.

### A. DEFINITIONS

- 1. Cleaning** - The act of physically removing organic matter (feces, urine, food particles, etc). An area that has been cleaned should look physically and visibly free from debris. However, harmful pathogens may still be present after cleaning.
- 2. Disinfection** - The process of killing pathogens in a given area.
- 3. Sterilization** - The killing of all microbes; this is what is done for surgical instruments.

### B. PROCEDURES

#### 1. Shelter in General

All common area floors are swept and disinfected every morning and throughout the day as needed, using disinfectants approved by the Animal Care Supervisor. Urination or defecation "accidents" on common area floors are cleaned up and disinfected immediately.

Garbage, trash, and recycling are placed in appropriate bins and removed at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.

#### 2. Dog Cages

Dog kennels are fully cleaned and disinfected inside and outside every day, with the animal contained in the side of the kennel not actively being cleaned. All enclosure items are changed or cleaned as soiled by the dog.

After the initial cleaning, dog cages are spot cleaned throughout the day as needed.

The cages of healthy puppies are cleaned first, followed by healthy dogs, sick puppies, and sick dogs.

Dog cages that house a seriously ill animal with an infectious disease are cleaned per specific guidelines set by the Animal Care Supervisor; this often includes multiple disinfections. This work may be done with the assistance of cat staff to minimize the potential for disease transfer to other dogs within the shelter.

Floors in dog areas are swept and disinfected each day.

### **3. Cat Cages**

Cat cages are spot-cleaned daily. Cats are left in cages during cleaning when possible. New litter is provided and food and water bowls are cleaned and refilled. If the bedding is not soiled or wet, it is shaken out and reused. The cage and perches are wiped clean with a paper towel without bleach or special cleansers. In some cases, additional cleaning of the cage may be required and the cat may be removed.

After the initial cleaning, litter boxes and/or cages are spot-cleaned as necessary throughout the day.

All cat cages are fully cleaned and disinfected prior to placement of a new cat.

The cages of healthy kittens are cleaned first, followed by healthy cats, sick kittens, and sick cats.

Cat cages that house animals with a known infectious disease are cleaned as prescribed by the Animal Care Supervisor. This may require multiple disinfections and the assistance of the dog staff to minimize the possibility of disease transfer to other cats in the facility.

Floors in cat areas are swept and disinfected each day and throughout the day as needed.

### **4. Outdoor Areas**

Feces are picked up immediately and placed in outside, lined trash cans. These cans are bagged daily and taken to the dumpster.

Certain outdoor areas may be temporarily closed per directives from the Animal Care Supervisor or Executive Director.

### **11. Personal Hygiene**

Hand washing is the most effective method of preventing the transfer of germs that can cause illness in both people and animals. While hand disinfectants are useful, thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is the most effective means of preventing the transfer of germs to other people and to animals.

Staff arrives at work in clean clothes and has a change of clothing available as necessary. Protective gear such as disposable gloves, masks, shoe covers, gowns, and eyewear are available for use as needed or as directed by the Animal Care Supervisor.

## **C. PEST AND RODENT CONTROL**

### **1. Exterminators**

Regular extermination services, using safe and humane methods, are performed.

## **2. Animal Food**

Dishes and enrichment items brought to the kitchen for washing are emptied of all food and organic matter before being placed on counters. All food is stored in sealed containers, including dog and cat treats.

## **3. Garbage and Trash**

All non-recyclable refuse, is collected and put in trash bags each evening. All garbage and trash bags are removed from the building prior to closing.

# **IV. INTAKE PROCEDURES**

An animal's general physical condition is evaluated upon arrival and any emergency medical issues are addressed immediately. The animal is weighed, the age is estimated, and its nutritional needs are determined. Each animal is checked for identification: e.g. microchip, tattoo, tags, etc. The animal is vaccinated and parasite controls are administered. The general behavior of the animal is also assessed. A record is established in TH database for the animal and all information is entered immediately. Housing is assigned and entered into the database and a kennel card specifically identifying that animal is posted on the cage.

If an animal is too fractious to safely handle or vaccinate, this is to be documented in the animal's record. Attempts to re-assess are to be made within 24 hours of arrive at Talbot Humane.

# **V. ANIMAL HANDLING**

## **A. PROPER RESTRAINT**

Proper handling protects animals and people from injury and minimizes stress for all. Handling an animal is carried out as humanely as possible by trained staff. The type and amount of restraint used must be appropriate for the individual animal and the specific situation. In all cases, the minimal amount of physical restraint needed to accomplish the task without injury to people or animals is used. Thus, all animal handlers are trained in proper restraint with emphasis on how to use the minimum amount of restraint required.

## **B. EQUIPMENT**

Examples of equipment used for animal restraint are as follows: leashes, collars, muzzles, control poles (used for dogs only), towels, squeeze cages, traps, cat nets, pole syringes, wall rings, tie-outs, and cat gloves.

## **C. EVENTS**

Animal handler volunteers at events are required to complete the appropriate animal training (dog walking and/or cat socialization training.). Each handler is approved for independent animal handling at events.

## **D. DOG WALKING**

Dog walkers are required to complete dog walking training and be approved for independent dog walking.

**E. CAT SOCIALIZING**

Cat handlers are required to complete cat socialization training and be approved for independent cat handling.

**F. PUBLIC INTERACTION**

Persons handling animals and interacting with the public at the shelter are required to complete the appropriate training. All public interaction is done in a safe and humane manner and in a way that does not cause stress or harm to the animal or the public.

**G. FERAL CATS**

Special consideration is given to the housing and handling of feral cats. Appropriate use of cage covers, cat dens, traps, squeeze cages, and sedatives can minimize stress and greatly reduce risk of injury to the animal or handler.

Feral cats are held for evaluation/7 day Talbot County Ordinance hold. Consideration will be made to return these cats to the field where a responsible caretaker is willing to provide care for the animals on privately owned property. Talbot Humane will pay for the spay/neuter and vaccinations of said cats.

**H. BEHAVIOR**

The assessment of each animal's behavior begins at the time of intake and continues until the final disposition. An animal's behavior will vary based on its prior experiences, the situation it was recently removed from, the adjustment period in a new environment, etc. Talbot Humane staff and volunteers monitor each animal's behavior daily through all types of interactions.

**J. DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

Talbot Humane goes to great lengths to ensure that the environment is safe for both humans and animals. Some animals present a higher risk of injury to people and other animals, including those with known bite or scratch histories, venomous snakes, reptiles, various types of wildlife or exotic animals, and animals that are anticipated to be aggressive. Special housing considerations are given to these animals and only specially trained staff is allowed to handle them.

Animals with a known bite history are housed in the areas of the shelter restricted to staff only. Only assigned staff can clean, feed, and handle these animals. Animals displaying threatening or dangerous behaviors on intake may be placed in the general population with special precautions and appropriate signage in order to give them time to settle in.

Dogs known to be highly aggressive are housed in the restricted area and with appropriate signage and fasteners on the doors, preventing the possibility of the dog getting loose and minimizing danger to staff handling these animals. Only qualified staff handles these animals.

Talbot Humane will not knowingly place an animal with aggressive tendencies or that has been deemed dangerous or vicious into the adoption program.

**VI. VETERINARY CARE****A. PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE**

Animal Care staff focuses on the prevention of disease and rapid diagnosis and treatment of ill and potentially contagious animals. Preventative measures are accomplished through the use of appropriate

vaccination protocols, internal and external parasite control, and nutritional support (proper nutrition for stage and state of the animal). All medical protocols are carried out by properly trained animal care staff under the direction of the Animal Care Supervisor. Licensed veterinarians prescribe medications and nutritional changes to diet. Animal Care Staff however, are trained and able to make initial assessments of animal condition, convey this information to a veterinarian, and administer care as prescribed by that veterinarian.

Individual animals are assessed for their state of health and nutritional status, as well as the population as a whole. Individual animals, groups of animals, and whole rooms may be placed under quarantine. The decision to quarantine a room and the length of quarantine are made under the direct supervision of the Animal Care Supervisor. The population is evaluated daily for contagious and infectious diseases and the decisions made are based on individual as well as population needs.

Emergencies are evaluated as quickly as possible. Animals may be treated at the shelter, humanely euthanized, or sent to a participating veterinary hospital.

Precautions taken to control the spread of disease include:

- Disposable gloves are worn when touching animals and/or hands are washed after touching an animal and before touching another animal. This decreases the risk of disease transmission from fomites, which are objects that are able to transmit infectious organisms (e.g. parasites, bacteria, viruses, fungi) from one animal to another; they may include toys, food and water bowls, hair, and clothing, to name a few.
- Disposable protective gear such as gowns are worn and changed between handling each ill animal. Lint rollers are used on all clothing that may make contact or exposed to the fur of an animal before touching another animal.
- Dogs on medication for infectious illness (such as kennel cough) are walked last and only in a designated area.
- When socializing cats with infectious disease (such as upper respiratory tract infection), the encounter takes place in the cat's cage instead of the socializing room.
- All articles in cages that are not disposable are disinfected as well as washed before being placed in another cage.
- Bins used in rooms (garbage cans, litter cans) are disinfected regularly.
- Food and water bowls and enrichment items are washed and disinfected as soon as they enter the kitchen area.

## **B. DISEASE OUTBREAKS**

When a disease outbreak occurs in the shelter, the Animal Care Supervisor may decide to quarantine an area. If the outbreak cannot be contained to one or two rooms, the Animal Care Supervisor, in consultation with the Executive Director, decides whether to close the shelter, at least for that species. Closing the shelter to a certain species means that Animal Control cannot bring any animal of that species to Talbot Humane, except for the purpose of euthanasia, and that Talbot Humane will not accept any surrenders or strays of that species. In such situations, Talbot Humane attempts to work with other area shelters and rescues to enlist their help so owners that must surrender animals during this time period are able to do so. When an area is closed for quarantine, no one except medical and designated cleaning staff will be allowed in that area. Protective outerwear is worn in these areas. All items removed from a quarantined area, such as waste materials, are placed into a garbage bag which is sealed and immediately brought to the dumpster outside of the shelter. Quarantine areas use only disposable materials (bowls, towels, etc.).

## VII. EUTHANASIA

### A. POLICY

Euthanasia is performed at Talbot Humane as a last resort and in a humane manner as needed to maintain a manageable population of healthy, treatable, and adoptable animals.

No more than three medical and animal care staff members that are certified, or trained, in euthanasia to assist are allowed to be present during the euthanasia process. This is to ensure a smooth and stress-free environment for the animal as well as the person(s) performing euthanasia.

The Executive Director may make special exceptions to this policy at his or her discretion.

### B. SELECTION

Each animal is evaluated on an individual basis for its potential to be reunited with its owner or participation in Talbot Humane's adoption or foster program, barn cat program, return to the field, rescue partnerships or other live release options. Those animals unable to participate in any of these programs or that cannot be reunited with their owners are considered for euthanasia.

Holding periods, as required by law, are considered:

- Talbot County Code dictates all animals without a known owner are held for 168 hours before a disposition is decided, Exceptions apply to the following:
  - Animals under 12 weeks of age may be adopted or placed in foster care
  - Animals experiencing pain and suffering, and are not able to be treated, may be humanely euthanized
- Bite quarantine animals are held for a minimum of 10 days or until Animal Control completes its investigations.
- Animal Control investigations require various hold periods.

### C. PROCEDURES

#### 1. Training/Certification

Employees performing euthanasia are trained and certified through an approved organization. Once this training is completed, the employee is then supervised in his or her ability to humanely perform the euthanasia. The employee then undergoes a final evaluation before receiving approval and certification by the Executive Director.

#### 2. Environment

The room in which euthanasia takes place is clean and private and maintained as a stress-free environment. Only one euthanasia is performed at a time. Only one animal is in the euthanasia room at a time so that euthanasia is performed in a quiet, calm environment.

#### 3. Microchip Scan

All animals are scanned upon entry to the shelter for microchips in an effort to identify them. Because these technologies are imperfect, scans are also performed during the medical intake process, prior to spay/neuter surgery and prior to any disposition including adoption, return to owner, and transfers to rescues. If euthanasia is elected, the previously unidentified animals are rescanned before being euthanized (by two different staff members) for the presence of a microchip.

#### **4. Drugs**

Only approved drugs are used for euthanasia. An animal may be sedated before injecting the euthanasia solution in order to provide sedation, analgesia, and anesthesia. Euthanasia solution, which is a barbiturate, is given in a vein once the animal is calm and sedated or in the heart or the peritoneum. If the intra-cardiac route is chosen, euthanasia does not take place until the animal is in a comatose state.

#### **5. Record Keeping**

Records for each euthanized animal are kept for a designated period of time.

### **VIII. ADOPTIONS**

All animals adopted from Talbot Humane are eight weeks of age or older, current on vaccinations, microchipped and altered. The goal of the Talbot Humane adoption program is to place as many animals as possible into suitable homes and prepare adopters for the responsibilities of pet ownership. This is accomplished by screening all potential adopters for past Animal Control violations, reviewing adopters' histories in the Talbot Humane database or corresponding agency in the town they reside, prior animal care history, requiring identification and proof of address, and requiring adopters to be 21 years of age or older. Potential adopters complete an application which is used to determine eligibility for adoption and to provide information to help make the best match for the potential adopter and the pets in our care.

Talbot Humane requires everyone in the home meet the animals prior to adoption. Exceptions to this may be made by the executive director.

Talbot Humane requires a meet and greet for dogs in the home with potential dogs for adoption.

Talbot Humane reserves the right to require training deposits for certain dogs in our care.

Upon approval for adoption, the adoption counselor also goes over all medical history for the pet including vaccinations, medications, and follow-up care. Animals are surgically altered prior to leaving the shelter unless determined unfit for surgery by a veterinarian. If an animal is not able to be altered prior to going home, the adoption counselor will make an appointment for the animal to come back at a later date for surgery and will then follow up on that animal's progress until it is altered. Educational handouts, medical history, and an adoption agreement are provided to the adopter.

As Talbot Humane does not have a veterinarian on staff, we require new adopters to take their new pet to a licensed veterinarian within 14 days of adoption. If any illness is found, the adopter may return the pet to Talbot Humane or request assistance from Talbot Humane for treatment.

Talbot Humane utilizes adoption promotions throughout the year to increase public awareness and encourage responsible people to adopt. The adoption program is evaluated on a periodic basis to ensure the needs of the animals and the adopting community is met.

### **IX. VISITORS**

Talbot Humane welcomes visitors. Visitors are directed and/or supervised through the building by a staff member or trained volunteer to maximize safety of both people and animals. Visitors may be here for a variety of reasons, including facility repairs or contract work, group tours, adoptions, rescues, and

redemptions. Staff and volunteers use this time with visitors as an educational opportunity, to convey information about Talbot Humane and the adoption or redemption process, and to answer any questions visitors may have. General visitors are not permitted in the restricted areas of the shelter which will be designated by appropriate signage.

## **X. FOSTER CARE**

Talbot Humane manages a foster care program in which certain animals are taken into homes temporarily rather than remaining in the shelter. In addition to saving the lives of animals, this program was designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Raise underage kittens and puppies to an age where they may become available adoption, providing bottle feeding if necessary, socialization, and special attention.
2. Provide special care to injured and/or sick animals until they heal and become adoptable.
3. Provide stress relieve and/or home living skills to animals in our care.
4. Make space for other animals at the shelter.

Animals available for fostering are identified by the Foster Coordinator or managerial staff. All foster parents are pre-screened and sign contracts with Talbot Humane prior to housing any animals. Throughout the foster period, the foster parent must maintain contact with the shelter, bring the animal(s) in for all scheduled vaccines and medical treatments, and communicate with shelter staff about any relevant information regarding the animal(s) in their care.

Animals placed in foster care are provided the same medical care as those housed at the shelter. Talbot Humane is responsible for providing support to the foster parents, including training if requested, regularly scheduled medical appointments, medicines as needed, emergency medical services as available, and ongoing help with questions and issues that arise. Talbot Humane is responsible for following up on all foster placements and maintaining the follow-up information in the Talbot Humane database. A foster placement may be terminated at any time by Talbot Humane, and foster animals that have been returned to the shelter are subject to the same space limitations and euthanasia criteria as all other shelter animals.

## **XI. ANIMAL HOLDS**

Animals arriving at the shelter are subject to various State and County requirements as to the length of time they must be held prior to being made available for adoption.

### **1. STRAY ANIMALS**

Impounded stray animals are held for 168 hours. After 168 hours, the animal becomes property of Talbot Humane and thus may be placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized.

### **2. OWNER-SURRENDERED ANIMALS**

Owner-surrendered animals are not subject to a required holding period. When an owner surrenders an animal, he or she immediately relinquishes all rights to the animal and the animal may be immediately placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized.

### **3. ANIMALS LEFT BEHIND AFTER EVICTIONS**

Animals left behind when owners are evicted from their homes are considered to be property of the landlord. When signed over by the landlord, they may be treated as owner-surrendered animals. If the animal is not signed over by the landlord, or if the manager chooses to hold the animal based on its circumstances, the animal will be treated as a stray animal.

### **4. INVESTIGATIONS**

Some animals are the subject of investigations by Animal Control or the police for various reasons (suspicions of cruelty, abuse, neglect, fighting, etc.). The amount of time an animal is held varies as investigations are conducted and completed. The animals are released when they are no longer needed as evidence in a case.

### **5. BITE QUARANTINE AND DANGEROUS ANIMAL HEARINGS**

Talbot Humane follows state and county regulations for animals that have bitten a person or another animal and are suspected of being a potentially dangerous animal or rabies carrier. Animals that have bitten must be quarantined for 10 days at home or at the shelter as directed by The Talbot County Health Department. If an owned animal that has bitten is quarantined at the shelter, the minimum holding period is 10 days from the day of the bite but the holding period may be longer as it will not be lifted until the investigation is completed by Animal Control.

Only trained and approved staff are allowed access to quarantined animals; this includes bite cases as well as animals quarantined for rabies evaluation and/or infectious disease. Limited personnel access is mandatory to safeguard others from potential injury (bite, scratch, or infectious disease) as well as to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

### **6. EMERGENCY HOLD**

Talbot Humane does not offer regular boarding to the public due to space constraints at the shelter; however, during an emergency (natural disaster, fire, flooding, domestic violence situation, etc.), short-term holding may be provided on a case by case basis as determined by the Executive Director or his or her designee. Owners are encouraged to utilize other resources and find immediate alternatives for housing.

### **7. CONDITIONAL RELEASE**

Animals released to an owner may have a conditional release requirement. This means the Executive Director or Animal Control may require the owner to seek some type of medical care follow-up with their regular veterinarian, housing repair or other items, and provide proof of completion. If any of these requirements are not met, Animal Control will re-impound the animal.

## **XII. PERSONAL HEALTH**

### **A. STAFF VACCINATION**

All high risk staff handling animals at Talbot Humane must be vaccinated against rabies. It is recommended that all staff be current on tetanus and talk to their personal physicians for further recommendations on rabies vaccinations. Vaccinations may be administered by the Talbot County Health Department. To ensure that staff maintains effective protection against rabies, blood is drawn every two years after the initial vaccination and titers are determined by the Talbot County Health Department. Individuals with non-protective titers require re-vaccination. Tetanus vaccines must be given every ten

years. Staff exposed to either rabies or tetanus must seek immediate medical attention and may require re-vaccination. Talbot Humane will pay for the cost of provalactic vaccination to high risk staff.

## **B. ZOONOSIS**

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted by non-human animals to humans. There is the potential for the transmission of zoonotic diseases at any animal shelter. Zoonotic diseases that are commonly of concern at shelters like Talbot Humane are rabies, intestinal parasites, leptospirosis, cat scratch disease, ringworm, and sarcoptic mange among others.

The most effective way to decrease the risk of zoonotic disease caused by bite or scratch wounds is to immediately recognize potentially dangerous animals. Only those staff qualified to work with such animals may interact with them. Any animal that is fearful or in pain can potentially bite, scratch, or otherwise injure a person or another animal. To minimize the risk of injury, all animal care staff and volunteers must be adequately trained in handling dogs and cats, and be able to recognize the signs of potentially dangerous behavior.

Additionally, hand washing is extremely important in preventing transmission of disease. All staff, volunteers, and visitors must wash their hands thoroughly after touching any animal at the shelter. Whenever possible, staff should wear disposable gloves when handling animals and their waste products.

Human food items and dishes are not housed in the same sink as dog or cat dishes and litter boxes.

Human food must not be stored in the same refrigerator as animal food or biologics/medications.

The risk of disease outbreak at Talbot Humane is minimized by providing animals with medications to eliminate internal and external parasites as well as vaccinations against specific diseases. These tools are vital to protect the health of shelter staff, volunteers, and visitors. Immuno-suppressed humans are at an increased risk for infection by zoonotic diseases. These individuals are strongly advised to discuss their working/volunteering at an animal shelter with their human medical care provider. In most cases, work can be found that is helpful for Talbot Humane but safe for the individual.

## **C. NOISE PROTECTION**

Ear plugs are available to staff and volunteers. Ear plugs are encouraged when working in areas of high noise.

## **D. REPORTING INJURIES**

All injuries that occur at Talbot Humane, or while working on behalf of Talbot Humane, must be reported immediately to a supervisor. This includes any bite, scratch, or other injury that occurs. An incident report will be filled out and that person will be advised to seek help from a human medical doctor.

**XIII. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of an emergency situation at Talbot Humane, every effort is made to protect all staff, volunteers, and animals. The Executive Director (or his or her designee) implements the incident command emergency response structure when appropriate. When this occurs, the Executive Director is responsible for all decisions regarding the emergency response, and maintains contact with the County's emergency preparedness team, local weather advisory groups, the board of directors, and staff and volunteers. In addition, the Executive Director informs the public of the shelter closing as well as accessibility to shelter animals and/ or housing of animals; this information will be conveyed through the County reverse call system, the shelter's voicemail, website, and social media.

## ANIMAL CONTROL AUTHORITY

### A. Licensing and Redemption Fees for Dogs and Cats

Set by the Talbot County Council for Talbot County Animal Control Authority

#### Licenses- Dog and Cat

Altered:	\$5.00/animal
Unaltered	\$25.00/animal

Talbot county no longer provides a bulk license for kennels or catteries.

Each animal on the property must be licensed individually.

Each license expires on June 30th of every year.

### B. Redemption Fees

- |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| a. Altered:        |          |
| i. 1st impound     | \$35.00  |
| ii. 2nd Impound    | \$75.00  |
| iii. 3rd + impound | \$150.00 |
| b. Unaltered:      |          |
| i. 1st impound     | \$45.00  |
| ii. 2nd Impound    | \$135.00 |
| iii. 3rd + impound | \$300.00 |

This includes FVRCP vaccine for cats and DAPPV vaccine for dogs upon admission.

- |                                   |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| c. Board:                         | \$15/day per animal |
| d. Rabies vaccine if not current: | \$15.00             |
| e. Bordetella (DOGS ONLY):        | \$10.00             |
| f. Flea and Tick treatment:       | \$10.00             |

## XV. TALBOT COUNTY MD CODE CHAPTER 15: ANIMALS

Full code may be found here: <http://ecode360.com/10154532>

### AT LARGE:

An animal which is not on the owner's property or under the immediate physical control of a responsible person capable of physically restraining it; provided, however, that dogs will be permitted to run at large when accompanied by the owner, bailee, or authorized agent if the dog is being used or trained for hunting, or is being accompanied by its owner, bailee, or authorized agent on horseback.

**IMPOUNDMENT:**

Generally, Animal Control personnel may impound any domesticated animal whenever they have reasonable grounds to believe that it is:

- (1) Running at large without a license;
- (2) Running at large, displaying a current license, in response to a complaint by a landowner or tenant, provided, however, that prior to impoundment an attempt will be made to return the animal to its home;
- (3) A public nuisance;
- (4) An unconfined vicious animal, either unrestrained or unmuzzled; or
- (5) An unconfined dangerous dog, either unrestrained or unmuzzled.

State law unaffected. Nothing in this chapter is intended to enlarge or restrict any authority to impound an animal pursuant to state law. Animals impounded pursuant to state law shall nevertheless be subject to the administrative remedies and the jurisdiction of the Animal Control Board as provided in this chapter.

Notice to owner. When an animal is impounded, Animal Control personnel shall notify the owner of the date, time, location and reasons for its impoundment. The notice shall include a list of conditions, if any, which the owner must fulfill to reacquire possession of the animal.

Waiting period.

(1) Where the animal's owner cannot be identified and it is not claimed within 168 hours after being impounded, the animal may be adopted out or euthanized in accordance with procedures established by the Animal Control Board pursuant to § 15-15B.

(2) Exceptions:

- (a) Feral cats may be euthanized immediately;
- (b) Animals that are seriously diseased or severely injured may be euthanized immediately;
- (c) Animals under three months of age may be euthanized immediately;
- (d) Dangerous dogs or vicious animals may be euthanized 72 hours after being impounded;
- (e) Animals that are unadoptable, as determined by qualified Animal Control personnel in accordance with written regulations adopted by the Animal Control Board pursuant to § 15-15B may be euthanized 120 hours after being impounded; and

(f) When available space in the animal shelter limits the number of animals that can be accommodated, the length of time that an animal is required to be held before being adopted out or euthanized may be shortened from 168 to 120 hours if necessary to provide space to accommodate non-impounded adoptable animals.

**Charges for impoundment.** The Animal Control Authority's charges for impoundment shall be reasonably related to the cost of providing the service. No legally impounded animal shall be released to an owner unless all charges incident to the confinement have been paid. Owners of illegally impounded animals, or persons prevailing in an appeal to the Animal Control Board or in any court proceeding, shall obtain release of the animal without charge for impounding service fees, boarding, or veterinary care.

(1) Whenever an animal is legally impounded pursuant to this chapter or state law, the owner thereof shall pay an impounding service fee according to a schedule adopted by the County Council as a condition of release of the animal.

(2) In addition to the impoundment service fee, the owner shall pay the costs of any required veterinary care, boarding fee, and a license fee for any unlicensed animal.

**Animals impounded for running at large may be reclaimed during office hours Monday-Saturday. Boarding fees are not accrued on days Talbot Humane is closed to the public.**

**Animals seized for violation of a Talbot County Animal Control Board Abatement Order, violation of state or county dangerous or vicious animal laws, or violation of state anti-cruelty laws will not be reclaimed until the administrative or criminal investigation has been completed.**