	Document Number:	MCAS-PLC-001	Revision Number: 1.0	Effective Date: 11/28/2023
	Approved By:	Director of Multnomah County Animal Services		
	Document Title:	Policy for Euthanasia		

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Euthanasia Policy is to outline the guidelines for the humane and responsible euthanasia of animals at Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS).

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all MCAS personnel. .

**RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY:** It is the responsibility of the Director of MCAS, or the Shelter Operations Manager to ensure that this policy is understood and followed.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Aggressive Behavior: A broadly used term that is defined as threats or harmful actions directed toward another individual person or animal. Aggressive behavior is a form of communication and may be appropriate in certain situations depending on the circumstances surrounding its usage. Aggressive behaviors can encompass a range of behaviors, including, but not limited to, snarling, growling, snapping, biting, lunging, swatting, and scratching. Aggressive behaviors can occur for a multitude of reasons, including, but not limited to fear, anxiety, social, barrier reactivity, protection, frustration, illness and resource guarding and are commonly categorized as defensive or offensive aggression.

Animal: Any nonhuman vertebrate.

Apparently Healthy: Pet is within normal limits (WNL); behavior or medical observation is within the range of what is considered normal for a pet or animal.


ASILOMAR guidelines: A reference to the 2004 Asilomar Accords that aim to provide uniformed definitions around medical and behavioral categories for pets within animal welfare agencies.

Capacity for Care: A term that, broadly, refers to the organization’s ability to meet the needs of animals admitted to the shelter through staffing capacity, physical animal holding capacity, flow through capacity, and/or adoption driven capacity.

Dangerous Dog: Defined by Multnomah County Code §13.002; Any dog found to have engaged in any of the behaviors specified in § 13.402.

Defensive Aggression: This type of aggressive behavior is typically rooted in fear and/or anxiety and lack of social skills. Pet displays behavior(s) such as showing teeth, growling, direct barking, etc. with intent to remove self from the perceived threat.

Distance Seeking Behavior: A type of Defensive aggression. The pet shows aggression with the intent to create distance between self-and/or the other object, pet, or individual. Most common situations involve the pet moving away quickly after advancing forward briefly.

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Euthanasia: To put an animal to death in a humane manner.

Major Health Concerns: A medical condition(s) that, for the age and species, is a life threatening condition that requires medical intervention immediately. May also be the result of multiple Moderate Health Concerns or concerns of population health.

Offensive Aggression: The pet will actively seek out and move towards another object, pet, or individual to aggress upon while unrestrained. Will chose to aggress even when they have an opportunity to flee or avoid the conflict. Does not include pets attempting distance seeking behavior and/or defensive aggression.

Owner: As defined in Chapter 13.002, any person or legal entity having a possessory property right in the animal or any person who has been a keeper of an animal for more than 90 days.

Pathway Planning (PWP): Process of assigning movement from intake to outcome for pets based on available history, database notes, in-kennel behavior, and medical condition.

Pet: A domesticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, rodent, fish, turtle, or other animal that is kept as a human’s companion rather than for commercial purposes.


Placement Partner: Any animal rescue organization which enters into a written inter-agency transfer agreement with MCAS for the purposes of finding a shelter animal a new home.

Uninterruptible Aggression: All attempts to curb or cease the behavior have been unsuccessful, and the pet cannot be influenced while persistently in an aggressive state.

Unpredictable Aggression: A pet’s tolerance of, and reaction to, situations and stimuli cannot be predicted or understood. Situations that have previously been successful or allowed by a pet are later unsuccessful. This does not include situations in which the pet is possibly displaying defensive aggression or distance seeking behavior, such as medical treatment or forced interactions while on leash.

Within Normal Limits (WNL): The pet falls within a range that, for the age and species of the pet, is considered normal and unremarkable. When discussing the health of a pet at MCAS, this is the range from “Apparently Healthy” to “Moderate Health Concerns.”

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

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MCAS is committed to ensuring the well-being of all animals in our care, while balancing resources of staff and volunteer time, kennel capacity, safety of the community, impact of the shelter environment and overall welfare of the animals in our care. It is rooted in our charge to provide humane care for all animals under our protection.


Under Multnomah County ordinance, MCAS is the primary shelter facility within Multnomah County for lost and found animals, potentially dangerous animals, and/or animals at risk of abuse or neglect. As a result, MCAS is obligated to maintain dogs that need safeguarding as well as protecting the community from dangerous dogs. These factors impact the organizational Capacity for Care.

When considering euthanasia for domestic animals, MCAS shall do so through the MCAS Rounds Review. MCAS Rounds Review team is composed of a variety of staff, including, but not limited to staff veterinarian(s) or Certified Veterinary Technicians (CVT), Division Director, Operations Manager, Animal Care Supervisors and Specialists. An interdisciplinary rounds review approach is an approach consistent with other shelters locally, regionally and nationally.

An exception to the Rounds Review process may be an animal that displays Major Health Concerns as defined above. An MCAS Veterinarian may ultimately determine to proceed with euthanasia without Rounds Review approval. In absence of a Veterinarian, then Animal Health staff, with approval from the MCAS Director, Operations Manager or Program Supervisor(s), are authorized to proceed with humanely euthanizing an animal under the ASILOMAR guidelines.

**POLICY:**

1. MCAS is committed to identifying a pathway plan for all pets that come into the shelter. It is important to note that a pathway plan is not a guarantee of placement. Pathway plans may be adjusted if there is a change in the pet’s medical or behavioral status. Pets admitted into MCAS care are considered one of the two categories:
  - 1.1. Eligible for Placement;
  - 1.2. Not Eligible for Placement.
2. All pertinent information shall be considered when determining placement eligibility and pathway planning. This includes but is not limited to:
  - 2.1. Information on the pet that occurred when pet was outside of MCAS custody;
  - 2.2. Observed and/or noted medical or behavioral Information;
  - 2.3. Options for transfer or foster care;
  - 2.4. Resources available for the pet within MCAS.
3. Pets that display or have verified history of the below are immediately considered not eligible for placement and shall not have a pathway designated through MCAS Foster, Adoption, or Transfer programs:

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- 3.1. Major Health Concerns that result in poor quality of life and/or have a poor prognosis for recovery.
- 3.2. Aggression that results in the pet unable to be safely moved or handled without the consistent use of a control pole or other safety handling equipment.
- 3.3. Caused injury requiring hospitalization and/or death to a person, pet, or animal. Circumstances may be considered if, when the incident(s) occurred:
  - 3.3.1. Pet was confined.
  - 3.3.2. Pet caused injury while under attack from another animal or person(s).
- 3.4. Uninterruptible when engaged in conflict.
- 3.5. Offensively aggressive towards people or pets.
- 3.6. Unpredictably aggressive towards people.
- 3.7. Classified as a dangerous dog per Chapter 13 County Ordinance.
- 3.8. If no owner comes forward to reclaim, these pets shall be moved to euthanasia at the end of the legal holding period.
4. All other pets may be considered Eligible For Placement. Consideration of placement is not a guarantee of placement.
  - 4.1. Other considerations for euthanasia may include the available resources to manage or address the needs of the animal, as well as lack of available placement opportunities.
5. If a pet is considered eligible for placement, the pet shall be reviewed for and assigned a Pathway Plan within 48 hours of admission.
  - 5.1. It is the responsibility of the Program Supervisor(s) to ensure this is completed as it aligns within their team function.
  - 5.2. Pet's assigned pathway may change at the discretion of the Director or Shelter Operations Manager.
  - 5.3. A pathway plan is not a guarantee of placement.

REVISION HISTORY			
Revision #	Author	Effective Date	Revision Summary
1.0	E. Grahek	11/28/2023	Initial publication