

Euthanasia Policy Toolkit



ADCH Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards relating to this Toolkit

specific guidance can be found in the Standards Booklet.

67	Any decision to euthanise an animal shall be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual animal. In most cases, except for feral (glossary 9) cats, this decision shall only be made after rehabilitation has been explored and a full and thorough examination carried out to determine the facts surrounding each individual case.
68	The key factors in deciding whether euthanasia shall be considered are as follows: (a) To prevent pain or suffering (including mental and emotional). (b) If an animal poses an unacceptable risk to people or to other animals. (c) If quality of life for the animal is compromised to an unacceptable degree, with no realistic prospect of improvement. (d) Any other good reason under organisation's operational procedures (e.g. space and resources) and/or its euthanasia policy.
69	Euthanasia shall only be carried out by or under the direction of a veterinary surgeon using an approved humane method and, where appropriate, using pre-euthanasia sedation
70	Each organisation shall have a written policy on euthanasia

How to use this Toolkit

This toolkit gives you a template intended to help members who do not currently have a documented euthanasia policy. There is no obligation for all members to use this template, and ADCH does not have any rules and makes no judgements regarding the specifics of members' individual policies. However, it is a requirement that all members have a documented euthanasia policy.

General considerations when writing your euthanasia policy

Every animal shall have a life worth living, not purely that its physical needs are met. Euthanasia can be a response to circumstances in which health and/or welfare are irreversibly and severely compromised and when it is not possible to meet an animal's needs.

Euthanasia is an extremely controversial topic and there are those who sincerely believe that no apparently healthy animal should ever be euthanised and, where rehoming is not an option, then the animal should be allowed to live its life in the animal welfare establishment. The ADCH fully accepts that there are circumstances where particular animals can enjoy a high standard of welfare and a good quality of life at an establishment over a long period.

However, it is important to remember that animal welfare is more than just physical health and freedom from disease. Other factors, particularly the animal's behavioural needs, which include the expression of social behaviour, have a profound effect on its welfare. The World Health Organisation defines "health" as: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Organisations which intend to keep animals on a long term basis need to consider whether the environment is capable of meeting the behavioural and psychological needs of the animal. Animals should be regularly reviewed for signs of deterioration in physical and mental health. Long term confinement of cats is not appropriate.

Policy

The five welfare needs should always be considered as guiding principles when setting out the parameters in your euthanasia policy to ensure best practice and decision making.

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Template Euthanasia Policy



Name of organisation: _____

The above organisation will euthanise dogs and cats under the following circumstances

(delete as applicable)

Health reasons

- In cases of severe ill health /pain / disability which cannot be treated
- In cases of ill health which could be treated, but for which treatment is unaffordable
- In cases of ill health which could be treated, but with extremely guarded outcome, and / or poor quality of life outcome
- In cases of contagious disease, that poses risk of infection to healthy animals or that poses a potential severe risk of infection to humans

Behavioural reasons

- Where the behaviour of an animal poses significant risk of injury to handlers
- Where the behaviour of an animal poses significant risk of injury to members of the public
- Where the behaviour of an animal poses significant risk of injury to other animals
- Where an animal exhibits significant and unmanageable stress in the kennel or cattery environment
- Where an animal's mental health is severely affecting quality of life and affecting their physical health.
- Where an animal is feral / semi feral, and cannot be housed in a way that meets its welfare needs (referring to ADCH Minimum Welfare and Operational Standard 50 and associated guidance notes)

Other reasons

(please add to this section if there are reasons not noted below)

- Where the number of animals housed has reached a maximum safe number and there is no other way to manage the population
- Where the law requires euthanasia

Cont...

Template Euthanasia Policy

...cont

Who is responsible for authorising euthanasia of animals?	Name:	
	Role:	
Further approval is required by (if applicable)	Name:	
	Role:	
Euthanasia will be carried out by: NB – this must always be a veterinary surgeon	Name:	
	Practice:	
Is a risk assessment required?	Yes:	
	No:	
Note any specific planning or equipment required to compassionately euthanise:		
Are any special arrangements required in relation to the previous owner i.e. inform, ashes, return of equipment:		
Policy created by:	Name	
	Role:	
Approved by:	Name:	
Date:		
Next review:		