



## FACA Policy Statement

### Euthanasia

The realistic truth is that certain animals are unadoptable due to health and behavioral traits. Euthanasia may be necessary when an animal poses a public health risk due to disease or aggressive behavior, when an animal is suffering from an untreatable condition, or when the numbers of animals in the shelter outweigh the available resources to provide appropriate and humane care. Every organization has a “capacity for care (CC)”. The CC will vary widely depending on housing, staffing, the types of animals received, and other resources. Organizations should not operate beyond their capacity for care by being forced or required to accept animals at any time, for any reason, in any number.

The responsibility for humanely euthanizing unadoptable animals falls largely on animal control and protection personnel. The Florida Animal Control Association (FACA) strongly believes that since our responsibility is so vast in this area, it is incumbent upon us to take the lead in setting standards for humane euthanasia in Florida shelters.

It is the policy of FACA that:

- 1) All animals which must be euthanized by an animal control or protection agency, either in the shelter or in a field emergency, must be humanely euthanized, while following the mandates of FL Statutes 828.05, 828.055, 828.058 and 828.065.
- 2) All personnel performing euthanasia in Florida shelters must be certified in accordance with Florida Statute 828.058 utilizing the FACA curriculum, as approved by the Florida Board of Veterinary Medicine.
- 3) All entities that perform humane euthanasia must do so in accordance with the guidelines provided by the American Veterinary Medical Association, The Association of Shelter Veterinarians and the National Animal Care and Control Association.
- 4) Euthanasia solutions containing sodium pentobarbital, or a sodium pentobarbital derivative, may only be administered via intravenous (IV), intraperitoneal (IP), or intracardiac (IC) routes.
- 5) Intracardiac (IC) injection may only be performed on animals that are fully unconscious with no palpebral/corneal (blink) reflex and toe-pinch reflex.
- 6) Intraperitoneal (IP) injections should only be used on small animals such as kittens, puppies, friendly cats, reptiles, birds, small mammals, and small wildlife.
- 7) Certified euthanasia personnel must determine the most appropriate method and route based on the animal’s species, age, and temperament.



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- 8) Animals should be scanned for a microchip prior to performing euthanasia. If a microchip is located that was not previously identified, the microchip should be fully investigated, if the animal is not suffering, and all attempts of locating an owner should be exhausted prior to proceeding with euthanasia.
- 9) Certified euthanasia personnel performing euthanasia must make every effort to minimize fear and reduce stress with each animal. Certified euthanasia personnel are expected to perform euthanasia with skill and compassion.
- 10) All entities that perform humane euthanasia must foster a work environment and culture designed to protect staff, both physically and emotionally, from burnout and compassion fatigue.

*Revised March 2022*