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## **Policy: Public Tours – Animal Shelter**

### **1) Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistent, safe, and transparent public access to the City animal shelter while protecting animal welfare, maintaining biosecurity, preserving evidence/chain-of-custody where applicable, and avoiding disruption to essential daily operations.

### **2) Guiding Principle**

As a public facility, the shelter will provide reasonable opportunities for members of the public to view shelter operations. Public access will be provided in a manner that is safe, orderly, and consistent with operational needs, animal care standards, and applicable laws and regulations.

### **3) General Rule: Tours Are Allowed When Escorted**

- **Tours are permitted by appointment or as staffing allows** and must be **escorted at all times** by an authorized shelter staff member.
- When escorted, the public may generally view most areas of the shelter that are safe and appropriate for visitors, including operational spaces such as the **garage** and **laundry**, unless temporarily restricted due to safety, animal welfare, sanitation, confidentiality, or operational needs.
- Visitors must follow all staff instructions, posted signage, and facility rules during the tour.

### **4) Scheduling and Operational Priority**

- **Animal care and shelter operations take priority** over tours.
- If appropriate staff are not available, or a requested tour would disrupt daily operations, front desk staff are authorized to:
  - Offer an alternate date/time, and
  - Schedule the tour for the next available time when an appropriate escort is available, and
  - Communicate confirmation and any visitor requirements (arrival time, rules, and restrictions) to the requestor.
- The shelter may shorten, reschedule, or cancel tours due to staffing levels, emergencies, cleaning schedules, disease control measures, weather-related impacts, or other operational needs.

### **5) Restricted Areas (Not Open to Public Entry)**

The public will not be permitted to enter the following areas, except as specifically authorized by the Shelter Supervisor/Manager for an official purpose:

- **Court Hold / Evidence Hold Dog Rooms (and any evidence/hold areas)**
  - Restricted due to the evidentiary nature of animals in custody, chain-of-custody considerations, and because animals in these areas are generally not available for adoption.

- **Isolation / Medical Recovery Rooms (Cats and Dogs)**
  - Restricted to support recovery from illness or injury and to reduce the risk of disease transmission.
- **Feral Cat Trap Room / Trap Holding Areas**
  - Restricted to prevent visitor injury and to reduce stress and handling risks for feral animals.

#### **6) Temporary Restrictions (May Apply at Any Time)**

Even in normally viewable areas, staff may restrict access temporarily due to:

- Active cleaning/sanitation processes
- Animal intake/behavior concerns
- Biosecurity concerns (e.g., respiratory illness outbreaks)
- Maintenance or safety hazards
- Sensitive operational activities (e.g., euthanasia-related procedures, controlled medications handling)
- Privacy/confidentiality concerns

#### **7) Visitor Conduct Requirements (Minimum Expectations)**

Visitors must:

- Remain with the escort at all times
- Not open kennel doors or gates
- Not feed, handle, or touch animals unless explicitly permitted by staff
- Maintain appropriate noise levels and behavior to reduce animal stress
- Follow any required hygiene measures (e.g., handwashing, footwear protocols)
- Comply with directions immediately if asked to step back, exit an area, or end the tour

If you have questions about the application of this policy, please let me know.

Jeff Hammond