

Subtitle 17. Animal Shelters.

§ 2-1701. “Animal shelter” defined.

In this subtitle, “animal shelter” means:

- (1) A county or municipal animal control facility;
- (2) An organization that contracts with a county or municipality for animal control; or
- (3) An organization that shelters animals and has received a grant from the Spay/Neuter Fund under Subtitle 16 of this title during the previous year.

§ 2-1702. Legislative findings and intent.

(a) *Findings.* — The General Assembly finds that animal shelters perform an integral community service.

(b) *Intent.* — It is the intent of the General Assembly to enhance animal shelter services by promoting humane animal sheltering policies and strengthening community safety.

§ 2-1703. Written veterinary care protocol required

(a) *In general.* — On or before January 1, 2017, an animal shelter shall establish a written veterinary care protocol for dogs and cats that is consistent with guidelines set forth in the most recent Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters with respect to:

- (1) Basic care;
- (2) Sanitation;

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- (3) Population management;
- (4) Disease control and prevention;
- (5) Behavioral health and mental well-being; and
- (6) Euthanasia.

(b) *Contents.* — The written veterinary care protocol shall include:

- (1) Standards that are necessary to protect sheltered dogs' and cats' health, safety, and well-being; and
- (2) A plan for:
 - (i) Quality of life enrichment;
 - (ii) Veterinary care;
 - (iii) Prevention and control of contagious and other diseases; and
 - (iv) Any other health and environmental factors that materially affect sheltered dogs' and cats' health, safety, and well-being.

(c) *Exceptions.* — An animal shelter may disregard its written veterinary care protocol for a dog or cat that is deemed to be too vicious or dangerous to permit safe handling.

(d) *Updating.* — An animal shelter shall update its written veterinary care protocol as necessary to reasonably accommodate any subsequent updates to the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters.

(e) *Available on request.* — On request, an animal shelter shall make its written veterinary care protocol available to the public and the Department.

§ 2-1704. Posting and following written protocol for reclaiming animals; annual summary of intake and disposition data.

(a) *In general.* — On or before January 1, 2017, an animal shelter shall establish and make available to the public on the animal shelter's Web site or in a conspicuous location within the animal shelter's facility:

- (1) A written protocol for reclaiming animals from the animal shelter that includes:
 - (i) The minimum holding period for stray animals;
 - (ii) The hours of operation during which an animal may be reclaimed by the animal's owner or caregiver;
 - (iii) The fees associated with reclaiming an animal; and
 - (iv) Any identification or documentation that must be provided to the animal shelter before an animal may be reclaimed; and

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(2) An annual summary of intake and disposition data reported to the Department in accordance with § 2-1602 of this title.

(b) *Shelter to follow protocol.* — An animal shelter shall follow its written protocol for reclaiming animals.

§ 2-1705. Standards of care.

(a) *Adoption of standards by Department.* — On or before January 1, 2018, the Department shall adopt minimum standards of care for dogs and cats in animal shelters that are consistent with:

(1) The most recent Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters; and

(2) The most recent guidelines for standards of care in animal shelters prepared by the Professional Animal Workers of Maryland.

(b) *Shelter to follow standards.* — An animal shelter shall follow the minimum standards of care adopted by the Department.

§ 2-1706. Regulations.

On or before January 1, 2018, the Department shall adopt regulations to enforce this subtitle.

§ 2-1707. Civil Penalties.

(a) *Civil Penalty.* — A person who violates this subtitle is subject to a civil penalty not exceeding \$500.

(b) *Criminal penalties inapplicable.* — The criminal penalties under Title 12, Subtitle 1 of this article do not apply to this subtitle.