

BAY COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**6401 Bayline Drive
Panama City, FL 32404
(850) 248-8480**

April 21, 2014

BAY COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

Welcome to Bay County Animal Services!

Thank you for giving your very valuable time to our organization. We could not continue to provide the high level of service for the Bay County community without the support of our volunteers.

We want you to feel that you are an integral part of our team. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us; we are here to assist you in having your volunteer hours result in a meaningful, rewarding experience.

As with any program, volunteer activities must be structured and directed in order to maintain the integrity, uniformity and consistency of the overall operation of Bay County Animal Services. Every effort is made to accommodate a volunteer's desire for placement in the program and if at any time you would like to make a change or take on an additional task at the shelter, please do not hesitate to discuss it with the Animal Services Division Manager or his/her designee.

After reviewing this manual, you will have the knowledge and understanding of the Volunteer Policies of Bay County Animal Services (BCAS). You will then be able to participate in the scheduled volunteer training classes provided by BCAS.

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1. Introduction

Thank you for giving the animals of BCAS your very valuable time as a volunteer. Without the help of volunteers, we could not give the level of service that we do. Because of this, we recognize how valuable your time is, and how important it is for you to be happy with the volunteer job that you do.

The purpose of this manual is to help you get to know what role Bay County Animal Services serves in the community and to understand how we function as a department within Bay County Government.

1.1 About Us

Bay County Animal Services (BCAS) is a division of the General Services Department of Bay County Government. BCAS is responsible for servicing a territory of approximately 1,003 square miles. This area includes the municipalities of Callaway, Parker, Panama City, Springfield and unincorporated Bay County. In addition, we also assist Panama City Beach when needed. BCAS is the only enforcement agency within this area for domestic animal complaints.

Duties handled by the department include: animal cruelty/neglect investigations, animal bite investigations, rabies control, dangerous dog investigations, and violations of state and county ordinances. In addition, BCAS also maintains the County's adoption program, volunteer program and Bay County Animal Shelter.

1.2 Bay County Animal Services Mission Statement

To ensure compliance with local and state animal related laws, to return strays to their owners and promote adoption of homeless animals to new families, and to work toward ending the community problem of pet overpopulation.

1.3 Volunteer Mission Statement

To support the mission of BCAS through voluntary labor and to provide companionship, care and attention to shelter animals.

1.4 Hours of Operation:

Office Hours

Monday – Friday

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Shelter / Adoption Hours*

Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

&

Saturday, 10:00 – 3:00 PM

*The shelter is closed to the public on Sunday & Monday and the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

**The shelter will be closed during any other state of emergency.

Animal Control Officers (ACO) are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. After hours calls are dispatched through Bay County Emergency Services at (850) 248-6034.

All volunteer shifts will occur during Shelter Hours with few exceptions, unless volunteering is performed away from the shelter.

1.5 Contact Information

Shelter.....248-8480
Division Manager.....Paula Hunter.....248-8493
Veterinary Technician.....Robyn McCormick.....248-8494
Administrative Assistant.....Sherry Hatton.....248-8495
Dispatch.....248-6034

2. Volunteer Conduct

2.1 Code of Conduct & Ethics

Volunteers for BCAS are good will ambassadors, and such status involves a degree of duty and obligation regarding public and private conduct. The attitude and behavior of a BCAS volunteer should at all times be such as to promote good will and a favorable attitude of the public toward BCAS programs and policies. No volunteer shall engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral or other conduct injurious or prejudicial to the County. All BCAS volunteers must abide by a code of ethical and professional communications with peers, supervisors, employees, vendors, and the public. Such communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and for others. As such, the following rules must be followed when communicating with anyone:

- A. Avoid argumentative tones and comments.** Volunteers should state their position clearly and factually in a normal tone, allowing the other individual an opportunity to share her or his position, and inviting open discussion regarding both such positions.

- B. Honesty is always required.** It is critical that volunteers never engage in deceit, exaggeration or express dishonesty when dealing with other individuals. While some communications may be extremely difficult, volunteers are always expected to convey them in a candid, but respectful, manner.

- C. Respect issues of confidentiality.** Volunteers of BCAS will be faced with topics of great confidentiality at times and, as such, must avoid sharing any such information with anyone not needing to know the confidential information as part of their volunteer duties with Bay County.

- D. GIFTS:** No volunteer may either solicit or accept anything of value, including a gift, loan, and reward, promise of future employment, favor or service that is based on any understanding that the action or judgment of the volunteer would be influenced by such a gift. All volunteers are encouraged not to accept gifts, no matter how small, to avoid appearance of impropriety.

Volunteers who fail to comply with the County's standards of conduct may be disciplined up to and including termination.

2.2 Attendance & Punctuality

The reporting hour is extremely important and is **your** responsibility. Every volunteer will be given access to sign in and out electronically. It is important that you use this reporting system each time you volunteer for BCAS.

When scheduled for a shift at the shelter or special event, please arrive on time and stay for the entire scheduled shift. Absenteeism, tardiness and leaving early places a burden on other volunteers, the animals and staff of BCAS. In the event that a volunteer cannot attend a scheduled shift or special event, please notify the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee prior to the scheduled shift or special event.

Volunteers who are inactive with no recorded hours for 6 consecutive months will be placed on the “inactive” list. Volunteers that have no recorded hours for 12 consecutive months will be terminated from the BCAS Volunteer program. Once termination has occurred, the volunteer must fill out a new volunteer application and attend the volunteer orientation before they can return as a BCAS active volunteer.

2.3 Dress Code

All volunteers that have completed the required orientation and training will receive one BCAS volunteer t-shirt and one name badge upon arrival for their first scheduled shift. You must wear your BCAS volunteer t-shirt and name badge every time you volunteer at the shelter or at a scheduled special event. Any volunteer that reports to the shelter or special event without wearing their required t-shirt and name badge will not be able to volunteer on that day. The BCAS volunteer t-shirt identifies you as a BCAS volunteer to staff members and the public.

When volunteering at the shelter, wear washable clothing as you will get wet, dirty and full of animal hair. Clothing must be laundered between visits to the shelter. This reduces the spread of viruses and disease. Closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes such as athletic shoes or workman’s boots are necessary to reduce the risk of slipping on wet floors. No sandals of any kind will be permitted. No mules, cros (a very soft rubber shoe) or open heeled shoes will be permitted. Any volunteer who reports to the shelter not in compliance with the proper shoes will be unable to volunteer that day.

As weather permits, walking length shorts are permitted. No beach attire, halter, crop or tube tops will be permitted. No torn shorts or pants will be permitted. Inappropriate clothes can be distracting and a safety hazard. Jewelry should be kept at a minimum.

Protect yourself from the sun. You may wear a hat and please use sunscreen at all times when you are outdoors with the animals or volunteering at a special event that requires you to be outdoors. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes while outdoors.

2.4 Drug & Alcohol Use

Being under the influence of a drug or alcohol while volunteering for BCAS poses serious safety and health risks to the user and to all those who work with the user. The use, sale, purchase, transfer, or possession of an illegal drug on shelter property or at an off-site BCAS event, and the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol also poses unacceptable risks for safe, healthy and efficient operations. It is the Bay County BOCC policy to prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation or use of alcohol or controlled substances in the workplace. Any volunteer who willingly volunteers under the influence of such above substances will be immediately sent home and may be terminated from the volunteer program.

2.5 Loss or Theft of Property or Money

County property, equipment and materials will be utilized only for that which it is made and will not be destroyed, damaged or used for personal purposes. Proper authorization is required for removal of county property or others' personal property, or property belonging to a member of the public. Failure to adhere to these standards may warrant disciplinary action that may include the termination of volunteer privileges.

Bay County Animal Services will not be responsible for the loss, disappearance or damage of volunteer's personal property or valuables. Please keep your personal belongings with you. We recommend that you do not bring bags or purses when you volunteer.

2.6 Volunteer Compliance

Volunteers are expected to assume the responsibility of following BCAS policies and procedures, as outlined in this manual. These policies have been adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and may be revised as necessary by the County Manager and/or his designee. There will be periodic training meetings to keep volunteers updated and current on the regulations. In the event a volunteer chooses not to adhere to the policies

and procedures, BCAS reserves the right to terminate his/her volunteer privileges.

The following are considered “high risk” areas and are restricted areas in which no volunteers are allowed unless escorted by a BCAS employee:

- Quarantine Area
- Sick Room
- ACO Intake Area
- Euthanasia Room
- Dangerous Dog Area
- Storage Rooms in Offices and Kennel Areas
- Crematory
- Other areas deemed “off limits” to the public

A drawing of the BCAS building and grounds is included outlining areas that are “strictly” prohibited by volunteers, unless accompanied by a BCAS employee.

Volunteers may take dogs in and out thru the front door only. Volunteers working with cats will be allowed to go inside the cat adoption room; cats cannot be removed from that room.

Volunteers will only be allowed to exercise the adoptable dogs and socialize with the adoptable cats.

2.7 Volunteer-At-Will Status

This manual, nor any other written or verbal communication between you and the staff of Bay County Animal Services, is intended to create a volunteer contract between you and Bay County Animal Services. BCAS has the right to terminate volunteer services at any time with or without cause. In other words, our relationship can be described as Volunteer-At-Will.

2.8 Volunteer Friends & Family

Volunteers of BCAS are asked not to invite friends and family members who have not completed a volunteer application, attended a volunteer orientation and received the necessary training to work with the animals at the shelter.

This is for the safety of the friends and family members as well as for the safety of the animals staying at the shelter.

2.9 Non-Discrimination of Volunteers

Bay County Animal Services will not remove volunteer privileges from qualified persons on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation or handicap. BCAS will provide reasonable accommodations to enable volunteers with disabilities to perform volunteer duties, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the organization or create an unsafe working environment.

2.10 Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct for volunteers of Bay County Animal Services includes, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Fighting or attempting bodily injury to another volunteer, BCAS staff or a member of the public while representing BCAS as a volunteer.
- Refusal or failure to perform assigned work.
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property.
- Defacing, stealing, or intentionally breaking equipment or property of BCAS or that of another volunteer, sponsor, or member of the public.
- Possession, use or sale of an alcoholic beverage or an illegal drug while on duty.
- Reporting to a BCAS function under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug.
- Engaging in sexual harassment.
- Possessing weapons at any BCAS function.
- Sleeping at a BCAS event/function.
- Failure to comply with safety practices or jeopardizing the health, safety and/or well-being of other volunteer members, representatives, the public or the animals staying at the shelter.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential personal information.
- Gaining unauthorized access into confidential records such as volunteer or adopter and distributing or discussing such information with other individuals.

- Behavior toward fellow volunteer members, BCAS staff or the public that does not meet community standards of decency or is generally recognized by law or custom as outside the bounds of acceptable social behavior.
- Interference during the adoption process with the adopter or shelter staff.
- Use of abusive, threatening or obscene action or language.
- Injuring or harassing a fellow volunteer, BCAS staff or the public.
- Conviction of a felony or any heinous crime.
- Any instance of personal dishonesty.
- Violating any federal, state and/or local laws, rules, regulations and policies.
- Violation of cell phone, camera and/or audio-video recording devices policies.
- Violation of social media policies.

While volunteering you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner which respects our guests, staff and other volunteers. If you fail to follow the policies and guidelines outlined in this handbook or other training classes you attend, you will be counseled. If there is a repeat offense, the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee may decide it is necessary to terminate your volunteer privileges. Volunteers are a great asset, so we want to ensure your experiences here are pleasant. Please inform the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee if anything occurs that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

2.11 Social Media

If you choose to identify yourself as a volunteer of BCAS or discuss matters related to BCAS on the web, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of BCAS. In light of this possibility, your communications should be transparent, ethical and accurate. Please follow the below guidelines when using social media:

- Please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect BCAS views. To help reduce potential for confusion, BCAS would appreciate it if you put the following notice, or something similar, in a reasonably prominent place on your site: *The views expressed on this website /*

web blog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of BCAS.

- Respect the fact that BCAS deals with confidential and sensitive matters. No details should be released regarding any animal that is not available for adoption.
- No details at the time of writing should be released regarding any owner or potential owner of any animal.
- Only pictures of animals available for adoption should be posted. Pictures of any other animals should not be posted to personal sites.
- Ask the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee if you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in your blog.
- Be respectful to BCAS staff members, volunteers, guests and other humane organizations.
- Understand and comply when BCAS asks that topics not be discussed for confidentiality or legal reasons.
- If you don't want to friend BCAS staff members, volunteers, guests and other humane groups on social networking sites, don't feel pressured to.

The following are guidelines BCAS request you abide by when volunteering your time at the facility:

- Do not access your personal social network while performing volunteer duties.
- Be smart about what you publish. Once you put something out there, it can be difficult to retract.

2.12 Use of Cellular Phones, Cameras and/or Audio or Video Recording Devices

Volunteers are not allowed to bring cell phones, cameras or any type of recording device into the shelter areas. Cellular phone or camera use by staff while on duty shall be limited to necessary work related calls made on work issued phones. Use of personal cameras, whether cell phone cameras, stand alone cameras or any other type of video or recording device, whether digital or film while on duty performing work on behalf of Bay County is strictly prohibited and may result in termination. Under no circumstances

shall any person be permitted to post shelter animals or co-workers in uniform to any social network.

No images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment may be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, posted, shared or distributed in any manner without the express written approval of Bay County.

2.13 Contact with News Media

The Public Information Officer, County Manager, or their designee shall be responsible for all official contacts with the news media during working hours, including answering questions from the media.

3. General Information

3.1 Application Information

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer at the shelter must complete an application on-line. Applications are available on the Bay County website at <http://co.bay.fl.us/hr.php>.

The application must be filled out completely and be approved prior to volunteering. The applicant must also complete the Release of Liability Waiver that releases Bay County from any and all liability from injury that may occur while volunteering.

Each volunteer will be required to attend orientation and safety training regarding policies & procedures, personal conduct, proper handling of animals, proper caring of animals, and approved cleaning methods prior to performing any activity at the animal shelter. Orientation will be held once every 90 days.

It is recommended that all volunteers receive rabies and hepatitis B vaccinations. All shots will be at the expense of the volunteer. If the volunteer chooses not to receive the vaccinations, a waiver must be signed before the volunteer can work at the shelter.

In order to help this program run effectively and efficiently, we require that volunteers schedule their volunteer visits in advance through our volunteer website at www.volgistics.com. This helps ensure that we have our volunteer positions covered and are not under or over staffed. It is important that in the event you cannot make it for your scheduled hours, you remove yourself from the schedule. If you do not have access to a computer, please

let the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee know so they can add or remove you from the schedule.

A computer will be provided for volunteers and all volunteers will be required to sign in & out electronically every time they volunteer.

Volunteers will need to sign up for pre-determined volunteer work days electronically and will be scheduled as needed. **Volunteers cannot just “show-up”.** All tasks performed at the shelter by the volunteer will be assigned by a BCAS staff member. After signing in electronically, the volunteer will contact a staff member for their daily assignments. Tasks performed outside the daily assignments as directed by staff, shall be approved by a staff member prior to conducting the task.

The minimum age requirement to become a BCAS volunteer is 16 years old. However, all applicants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who is also a BCAS approved volunteer. This is for the safety of the volunteers when working with the animals at the shelter.

Always clean up after yourself and make sure to return all equipment that you may have used back to the proper place.

If you notice any of the animals at the shelter showing signs of illness, please notify BCAS staff or the Division Manager immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

3.2 Volunteer Orientation & Training

Orientation and training classes will be regularly offered to volunteers. All volunteers must attend the orientation class prior to being able to take part in a scheduled BCAS event.

3.3 Volunteer Positions & Descriptions

The selection for designation of volunteer positions is at the discretion of BCAS Management and designated assignments may be changed at any time with or without notice.

Animal Biographer

This volunteer position can work in conjunction with other volunteer positions, such as dog walking, greeter, cat socialization, etc. Once

you have spent a little time with an animal, you can write a biography about them to give the public more information about the animal. It is always important that these are well-written, witty and truthful, yet creative.

Duties include:

- Getting familiar with the adoptable animal
- Writing a biography about the adoptable animal that will show it's personality

Requirements:

- Excellent writing skills
- Ability to be creative

Animal Care Assistant

Help give the adoptable animals a healthy pleasant place to live while they are in our care.

Duties include:

- Cleaning small animal cages in the adoption areas
- Cleaning dog & puppy kennels in the adoption areas
- Feed and water animals in the adoption areas
- Washing food and water bowls
- Laundering bedding, towels, etc.
- Cleaning and stocking restrooms and general public areas

Requirements:

- Must be able to bend and lift
- Must be able to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours per visit

Dog Walker

Dog walkers provide exercise and socialization for pre-screened adoptable dogs and puppies. The extra attention calms the animal and eases their tension, which makes them more adoptable. Aside from exercise, this task acclimates the dog to walking on a leash, provides basic obedience training and safe dog handling, which result in desirable behaviors for adoption.

Duties include:

- Walk dogs located on adoption row in designated areas
- Socialize/walk puppies on adoption row in the designated puppy area

- Provide basic obedience training

Requirements:

- Must attend the mandatory Dog Walking Class
- Must be able to bend and lift
- Must be aware of adoption procedures

Event Volunteers

Event Volunteers are on an as-needed basis to assist in special events. This is an excellent opportunity for those volunteers that do not enjoy working in the shelter environment.

Duties include:

- Distribution of flyers and other advertisements
- Recruiting event participants
- Collect materials and transport to event locations
- Attends and participates at events which include setup/cleanup
- Assist in transporting applicable animals to events
- Speaking to the public under the instruction of the Volunteer Coordinator

Requirements:

- Must be able to bend and lift
- Must have excellent customer service and communication skills
- Must be familiar with Animal Services adoption procedures
- Must attend Dog Handling Class for off-site handling of animals

Greeters

Smiling, enthusiastic people are always needed at the Animal Shelter to greet everyone who enters our doors.

Duties include:

- Welcoming everyone who visits the shelter
- Directing the public to the appropriate areas
- Making the public aware they need to sign-in when necessary
- Ensuring the lobby and cat adoption areas are clean and neat
- Assisting the public with general questions
- Ensuring the cats in the cat adoption area have food, water, dry bedding and clean litter

Requirements:

- **Must have excellent customer service and communication skills**
- **Must be aware of adoption procedures**
- **Must be able to bend and lift**

Groomer

Groom animals that are available for adoption. This helps the animal's appearance and makes them more adoptable.

Duties include:

- **Bathes, brushes, trims and maintains the overall appearance of animals available for adoption**
- **Grooming may include the use of scissors, clippers, brushes, combs, shampoo, flea and tick dip and other devices**

Requirements:

- **Must have working knowledge of the tools and devices used when grooming**
- **Must be able to bend and lift**

Transport Volunteer

We are always in need of dedicated volunteers willing to transport animals to spay/neuter surgery and transport animals to other shelters or rescue facilities. Volunteers must use their personal vehicle to transport animals. Approval of volunteers to transport is entirely at the discretion of BCAS Management.

Duties include:

- **Insuring the safety and welfare of animals that you are transporting**
- **Arriving and departing at scheduled times**

Requirements:

- **Must be punctual for each transport event assignment**
- **Must possess a valid driver's license and current proof of insurance**
- **Must be able to bend and lift**

3.4 Communications

Almost all communication in the volunteer program is via e-mail. Due to the large number of volunteers, phone calls are not possible and sending mail via the postal services would be too expensive. Volunteer newsletters, notices and updates, and other important information about the volunteer program will be e-mailed. Any of our volunteers who do not have e-mail at home may have web e-mail that they can access on a friend's computer or the computer at the local library. If this is not an option for you, a copy of most communications will be placed on the volunteer bulletin board. If you have an urgent need or concern that cannot wait, please see the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee.

3.5 Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

There are many volunteer opportunities within Bay County Animal Services, some of which are fulfilled by volunteers who work with animals. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at BCAS, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capabilities:

Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to handle small tools.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to pick up containers.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around BCAS, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read notes on animals' paperwork.
- Average sense of smell in order to detect unpleasant odor of animal fecal matter while working in the kennel environment.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.

- Ability to speak and effectively communicate in English verbally, as well as in written form.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces and react and move quickly in order to prevent animals from escaping.
- Ability to handle animals of small to large size (up to 65 pounds) with caution and care. This requires average vision, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength and mental alertness.
- Ability to capture loose and escaped animals with quick and quiet movements, and ability to use hands simultaneously with a blanket or leash for capture.
- Must not have strong allergies to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning, or to animals in our care that cannot be managed by medication.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, fleas, ticks and feces.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.
- Ability to judge an animal's reaction and to change voice to a soft or strong, authoritative tone in order to change an animal's response.
- Ability to reach cabinets and cages at least six feet in height, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to push carts and barrels of laundry; load and unload washer and dryer; fold clean laundry and put away, reaching shelves from ground level up to six feet, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to wash dishes and put away in cabinets and drawers from ground level up to six feet in height with use of step stool as needed.
- Average strength to assist with lifting small to medium size animals (up to 50 pounds) into bathing tub, which is approximately four feet high.
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases, such as ringworm and mange.

Essential Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.

- Ability to differentiate the needs of animals and adjust working mannerisms around each type of animal.
- Competent in reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand words such as quarantine, euthanize and other common industry-related terms), and a mastery of the English language.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to observe and evaluate response to handling, as well as health and behavioral problems that are revealed during socialization.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Ability to work independently for short periods of time, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

Essential Emotional Capabilities

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to cope with the presence of abused/neglected animals in need.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally-charged environment with some animals that are unviable or abused, as well as the reality that the animals in our care may be euthanized.
- Ability to understand Bay County Animal Services (BCAS) policies and positions regarding animal control, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing BCAS.

3.6 Inmate Work Program

It is the policy of BCAS to use inmate labor to defray personnel services expenses while providing the best possible animal care and sanitation within

the shelter. BCAS may restrict, at its discretion, volunteer hours and times when inmates are not working at the facility. The following rules regarding the use of inmates and staff/volunteer contact with the Inmate Work Squad Officer and/or inmates will be followed at all times:

- Inmates will work as a unit under the direct supervision of an Inmate Work Squad Officer. Volunteers will not be allowed in any area where inmates are working.
- BCAS staff and volunteers will not talk to, give items to, or accept items from inmates. If an inmate approaches a staff member or volunteer to converse or request an item or attempts to give a staff member or volunteer an item, the staff member or volunteer will immediately notify the Inmate Work Squad Officer and Division Manager. Volunteers will not interact at any time with inmates.
- BCAS staff and volunteers must be aware of members of the general public who may have interpersonal relationships with or may be acting as agents of inmates. Staff and volunteers must keep conversations with such persons strictly within the bounds of BCAS business. Staff and volunteers will not give items to, or accept items from such persons.
- If any staff member or volunteer observes any unusual behavior or activity associated with an inmate, they are to notify the Inmate Work Squad Officer and Division Manager immediately.

3.7 Reporting Injuries

Accidents, injuries and/or bites may happen, however diligent a volunteer may be. Any accident, injury and/or bite must be immediately reported to a BCAS staff member. A report will be completed to document the incident so further assessment can be made. The report will assist in providing you the necessary medical attention, if needed. Bay County Animal Services provides registered BCAS volunteer's with medical coverage only under Worker's Compensation for injuries received while volunteering. No compensation is provided for lost wages.

3.8 Stray Animals (Ord. 13-34, Sec. 4)

BCAS receives many animals each year. The total intake for animals in the 2012 fiscal year was approximately 6,952. Stray animals are brought to the shelter by the public and retrieved from the community by Animal Services

Officers. They are then housed in the stray dog and cat areas that are not accessible to the public or volunteers for health and safety reasons.

Upon intake into the shelter, all strays are physically checked by a shelter vet technician for any visible wounds or injuries. Animals are given age appropriate vaccinations, de-wormer and flea/tick control treatment. Information will be documented on each animal by the Vet Technician.

In accordance with Bay County Ordinance 13-34 Section 4-501, the hold time frame for stray animals is 72 hours / 3 days. This does not include Sundays and Holidays. During the holding time frame, a behavioral assessment is done on all animals. This is to ensure they can be good adoption candidates and do not have any behavioral issues that may potentially harm another animal or human.

3.9 Owner Surrendered Animals (Ord. 13-34, Sec. 4-503)

BCAS may accept animals that are no longer wanted by their owners. The total owner surrendered animals in the 2012 fiscal year was approximately 1,944. Pet owners surrendering their pets must pay a \$10.00 surrender fee. Once the surrender form is signed by the pet owner, the animal becomes the property of BCAS. The animal(s) are then evaluated for potential adoption placement.

3.10 Euthanasia (Ord. 13-34)

Euthanasia is probably the most difficult subject to understand at the shelter. Most people would rather not even think about it when considering working at the shelter. Yet it is a very real part of working at a shelter, and therefore, something we want to face up front. There are countless numbers of dogs and cats breeding indiscriminately in our community, and there are just not enough homes for all of the unwanted animals. As a result, too many animals are just left to starve to death, or die after being hit by a car, poisoned or attacked by a predator.

Animals brought into BCAS shelter are cared for in the most humane manner possible, with food, shelter and most importantly, people to give them the care and attention they need. In many cases, the time spent at the shelter is the best time of their lives. Some of these animals have never known a loving voice or a caressing hand. They come in shaking from fear and cower in a corner. Usually by day 2-3, they are looking for that gentle hand that has been touching them for the past couple of days and then the tail will begin to wag.

Anyone who works in an animal shelter is a special kind of person. They are the type of person who loves animals, and are, in fact, usually owners of several pets of their own. This, of course, makes it all the more difficult to euthanize any animal, but especially healthy, pet quality animals. Shelter workers at BCAS are torn by the conflicting emotions of understanding the need for them to perform euthanasia in certain instances and, at the same time, suffering from pain and guilt about it. Added to this is the extra pain caused by friends, relatives, and even total strangers who are critical of shelter workers who must perform this task. Such attitudes add to a shelter worker's difficulty in coping with the emotional side of euthanasia.

As a volunteer, it is important to consider these facts when dealing with shelter personnel. Please do not add to the difficulty by telling the staff, "Make sure you don't put this one down! He's so cute!" or asking, "Why didn't Fifi make it?" Careless (though well intentioned) comments such as these could cause added pain to a staff member (especially one who is carrying out someone else's orders!)

These decisions are an extremely stressful, heartbreaking part of our job responsibility. Individuals who cannot support humane euthanasia should not join the BCAS volunteer program. Volunteers with questions or concerns regarding the disposition of any animal at BCAS should speak with the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee. Under no circumstances may any volunteer disparage a staff member over euthanasia decisions, doing so is cause for immediate dismissal from the volunteer program.

The humane euthanasia of abandoned and surrendered pets is the devastating result of a community wide problem. BCAS is committed to working with pet owners and community members to reduce the number of unwanted animals within Bay County.

BCAS humanely euthanizes all animals that we know to be seriously sick or injured and beyond our limited capabilities to provide care.

BCAS humanely euthanizes all animals that we know to be dangerously aggressive toward people, animals or unfit to be made available for adoption.

Although BCAS makes every effort to place the animals at our shelter in permanent homes, the reality is that there are more animals than there are loving homes. You may hear the term "euthanized due to lack of space" in conversations and publications; the sad truth is that it is sometimes necessary to humanely euthanize animals **due to lack of homes**.

Every community member has the ability to change the lives of the homeless animals and the responsibility to do so. You can help by:

- Educating your friends and family on the problem of pet overpopulation.
- Understanding and accepting the nature of the lifetime commitment you are making to an animal when you bring it into your home.
- Adopting your next pet and encouraging others to do so as well.
- Spaying and neutering your pets and teaching others the importance of this easy step to preventing unwanted litters.
- Encouraging your federal, state and local governments to pass laws protecting all animals.
- Supporting your local shelter through membership, volunteering and financial contributions.

3.11 Adoption Policy (Ord. 13-34, Sec. 4-504)

All potential adopters must complete an adoption application. The approval of the application is necessary before anyone is permitted to adopt.

3.12 What Kind of Pets Can I Adopt?

BCAS handles a wide variety of domestic animals in addition to dogs and cats. These include: rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, birds, goats, chickens, sheep, ducks and horses in addition to other livestock. Occasionally, BCAS also receives exotic animals, however only at the discretion of the BCAS Division Manager.

As a BCAS volunteer, you must follow the adoption procedure as any other public person would do. BCAS will not hold any animal for a volunteer as adoption is on a first come first serve basis. BCAS respectfully asks that if you choose to adopt from us that you do so at a time when you are not volunteering.

3.13 Customer Service Expectations

Volunteers are considered shelter ambassadors just like paid staff, so how you conduct yourself while in view of the public is very important. Be friendly. Smile. Say “Hello”. If you look grouchy or as though you are having a bad day, our guests may perceive this as a manner in which we treat our animals. Ask a guest if they need assistance and help direct them where they

need to go. If a guest asks you a question and you do not know the answer, please direct them to a staff member. If you have a conflict with a guest or another volunteer, immediately notify the BCAS Division Manager or his/her designee.

Please leave pet counseling and advice to our experienced staff. The staff has access to each pet's medical and behavior profile. While you may have the best of intentions, your personal opinion may not serve in the best interest of an adopter or the pet.

Be mindful of the privacy of our guests. Refrain from joining in on conversations staff is having with them. Many of these conversations are of a very private or sensitive nature.

3.14 Animal Welfare Groups & Volunteers

Bay County Animal Services works with local Animal Welfare Groups as warranted to address transporting and/or fostering of animals.

Bay County Animal Services employees may work with or assist any organization concerning the welfare of animals, but due to the Department of Labor Regulations regarding overtime, employees cannot volunteer at BCAS when off duty.

4. Animal Handling Policies

4.1 Dog Handling Guidelines

Dogs in a shelter are not the same as your dog at home. Your dog knows his surroundings and is familiar with your moods and what your expectations are. Dogs in our shelter are in a confusing situation. They are in an unfamiliar setting, surrounded by other dogs and handled by strangers.

Many different people might handle one dog during the course of the day. With staff and volunteers working together, we can reinforce good behavior that will help our dogs find wonderful homes. Always follow the guidelines of the staff. Our kennel staff knows our dogs very well. For example, if you are told that a certain dog can only be handled by more experienced volunteers; you must accept the judgment of the staff. We will be happy to train you to become an experienced volunteer, but we do not want either you or our dogs to be placed in a dangerous situation.

Always use caution when dealing with the dogs. Be alert to your surroundings. Be aware of what each dog is telling you. If you pick up signs that a dog is nervous or fearful, remove him from the situation immediately.

Shelter dogs are not the same as your family pet. It is easy to misinterpret what they are telling us. When a dog licks the muzzle of another dog, it is a sign of submission from a dog within a pack. Pushing a dominant dog to give a kiss or to receive a hug may be asking for a nip. Hugging a dog tells him that you are dominant. Your dog at home might accept your behavior, while a strange dog may see your behavior as a challenge.

Remember, the role of our volunteers is to keep the animals in our care as stress free as possible and to avoid situations that promote inappropriate behavior.

- **Always check the dogs kennel card first. If a kennel card says “staff only” do not enter that kennel.**
- **Handle only one dog at a time.**
- **Choose a dog appropriate for your size and skill level. If the dog is walking you; the dog is too much for you to handle or you are not skilled for this size/type dog.**
- **Maintain control of the dog at all times.**
- **Do not handle a dog that makes you feel uncomfortable or nervous; the dog will know!**
- **Before you remove a dog from a kennel, make sure that the leash you are about to use is in good repair.**
- **When removing a dog from a kennel, open the door and have a leash ready to slip over the dog’s head and adjust as needed. Keep your voice soft and even. Always approach the dogs calmly and encourage them to be CALM and QUIET before you remove them from the kennel.**
- **Do not allow dogs to jump up or play bite. Correct them calmly. Never HIT a dog. Remember, we want them to learn good habits so that we can find good homes for them.**
- **Never leave a dog unattended. Whether you are walking, bathing or playing with a dog, you must be with the dog at all times. Do not turn the dog over to someone else. Take the dog back to the kennel yourself. Remember, when you take a dog out, you are responsible for that dog until you return it to the kennel.**

- When taking dogs out, please pay attention to the kennel card and note whether or not the dog gets along with other dogs.
- Dogs that are on medication will have a colored medication sign attached to the top of their kennel card. If they are on medication, they cannot be taken out to the dog runs or taken out of their kennels.
- When taking dogs to the play areas for exercise, please make sure to pick up any feces that the dog may have left behind before putting a new dog in the same run. There are many diseases and parasites that can be transmitted between dogs through their feces (i.e., roundworms, tapeworms and parvo).
- When finished walking dogs, please make sure to return all leashes that you may have used to the proper place. These leashes are reusable, and we must recycle them as much as possible.
- Only toys that are hard plastic are allowed in the dog kennels and dog runs. Toys that are made of cloth are not allowed as they cannot be properly disinfected the way hard plastic toys can.
- All dogs must be returned back to their kennels 15 minutes prior to close of business.
- Please do not feed any of the animals, unless instructed to do so by staff. This does not include feeding treats.
- If a kennel card says “Do Not Touch” that means **DO NOT TOUCH**. Do not put your fingers into the kennel or touch the dog in any way.
- Never take a dog out of the kennel for a citizen, without first checking with the staff.

4.2 Cat Handling Guidelines

Cats are not dogs. They respond to stimuli in different ways and have different ways of showing their stress and happiness. Volunteers are critical in helping them to be happy and well-adjusted during their stay here. A few tips on general cat behavior and on cat behavior in a shelter environment can be helpful in learning to handle them properly.

From the familiar housecat to the 500 pound tiger, felines are social animals. Domestic cats form bonds with their owners, as well as with other cats and species in their household.

Cats have especially expressive body language. Arching the back and puffing up the tail are warning signs: The cat is telling you to stay away! Hissing, flattening ears and backing away are defensive signs.

Vocal communication also clues us in to what a cat is thinking. A hissing, growling or spitting cat should not be handled. Purring is generally associated with contentment, but cats often purr when they are stressed. Sick or injured cats also purr.

When cats first arrive at the shelter, they are often stressed. They are in an unfamiliar, frightening environment. Volunteers can help reassure the cats and put them at ease. Speak softly and keep your voice even. Pet them gently. Move slowly around them. Handle them firmly and with confidence, but carefully. If you are assigned to work with a cat that is exhibiting frightened behavior, leave it alone and report this to staff. They will give it time to calm down and will work with it later.

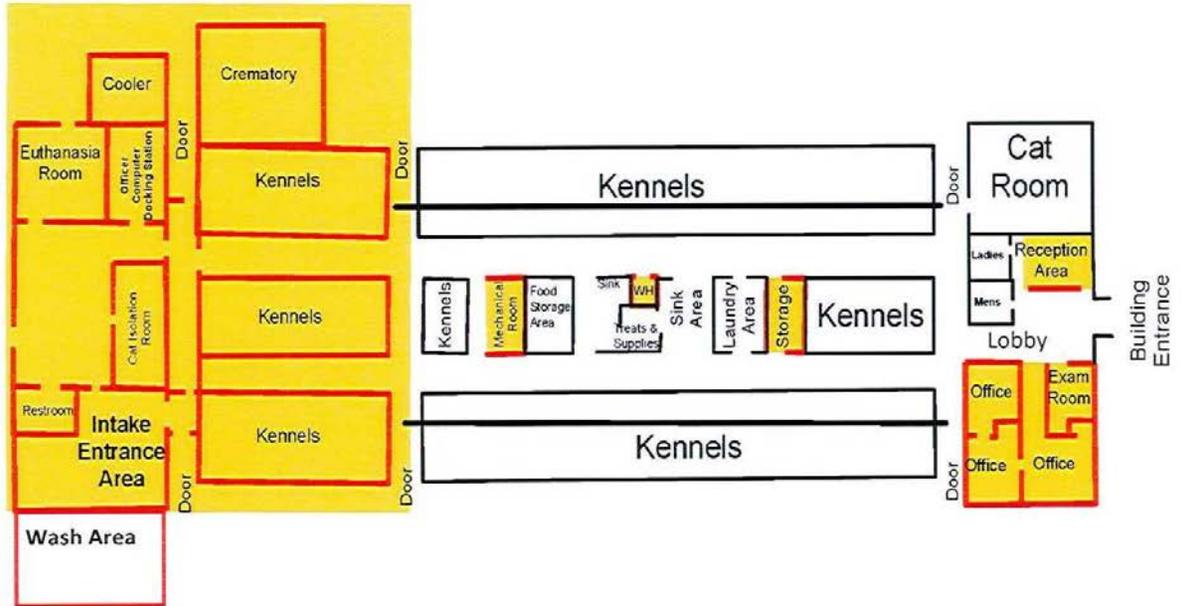
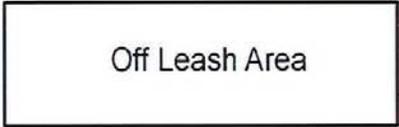
Once cats have been here a while and have calmed down, they often seek attention. Do not underestimate how important you are if you spend time grooming and petting cats. Never go home thinking that you didn't do anything important because you "just played with the cats". What you did is very, very important!!

- Take health precautions. Always make sure to wash and/or disinfect your hands between handling cats. This prevents the spread of disease and sickness in the cat room. Obey signs regarding sick rooms. Don't touch your eyes, etc.
- Reinforce good behaviors. Don't tolerate things that you might tolerate from your own cats (play biting, etc.).
- Discipline by tone of voice or by placing two fingers on the cat's forehead with a gentle push – no hitting or yelling!
- Keep your volume level low. Don't get excited. Monitor visitors, especially children, for too much noise or activity.
- If a cat escapes from its cage or the observation room, follow it and say "loose cat" as you walk (not run). Others will join you in catching the escapee.
- Pay attention to the cat's body language. Cats aren't always predictable.
- Always pay attention to whether or not the cat you are taking out likes other cats before putting cats together in the cat playroom; this will always be noted on their kennel card.

- **All cats must be returned to their cage 15 minutes prior to close of business.**
- **Please do not feed any of the animals, unless instructed to do so by staff. This does not include feeding treats.**
- **Please return all scoops to the tub with the disinfectant water located in the kennels.**
- **Report observed behavior or health problems, including fur mats, excessively long claws, etc. to BCAS staff.**
- **Brushing is good. Ask for help in dematting, if it is serious.**
- **Fill water bowls, if empty. It's ok to give a few treats to cats.**



Bay County Animal Services Building



 Restricted Areas - must be accompanied by an Animal Services Department Employee