



# TOWN POLICY

## COUNCIL POLICY:

# Animal Euthanasia Policy and Standards of Operation

**POLICY NUMBER: E-10**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 2023-53

**ADOPTED:** March 28, 2023

**REFERENCE:** *Animal Protection Act, RSA 2000, c A-41; American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals.*

**SUPERSEDES:** New

**PREPARED BY:** Communications Clerk

**DATE:** December 28, 2022

**UP FOR REVIEW:** December 28, 2027

### Policy Statement:

The Town of Cardston is committed to the well-being of companion animals and to the preservation of life. Euthanasia is not considered for adoptable animals in the Town of Cardston. Factors contributing to the euthanasia of any animal in the town's care include quality of life, and risk to the health and safety of other animals, and people.

Council and Staff of The Town of Cardston recognize that the subject of euthanasia is a sensitive and difficult topic to manage. The Town of Cardston believes that responsible ownership of companion animals, especially through training, spaying/neutering and proper identification reduces the necessity of euthanasia.

However, irresponsible owners, and the sometimes endless stream of homeless animals flowing into Cardston places the Town in a difficult situation. Aside from being a nuisance, these animals have the potential to create a risk to public safety or the health of the community. Animals left to fend for themselves outdoors suffer, and they may die because of exposure to extreme weather, injuries caused by motor vehicles, starvation, dehydration, abuse by cruel people, or disease. Because of the high number of homeless animals—and lack of suitable homes—sometimes the most humane thing that can be done is give them a peaceful exit from a world where they have been neglected and abandoned.

### The purpose of this policy is to:

Define practices and procedures for euthanizing animals pursuant to the Animal Protection Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter A-41 (the Act). Section 8 of the Act prescribes that unclaimed animals may be destroyed within 3-10 days of being received depending on circumstances. The Town of Cardston Animal Bylaw also has regulations concerning this matter.

This Policy is intended to supplement the Act and the Town of Cardston Animal Bylaw in regards to





# TOWN POLICY

**TITLE: Animal Euthanasia Policy and Standards of Operation**

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standards of operation by providing Town Employees with guidance for when euthanasia should be considered, and how animals may be euthanized.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

- "*Adoptable*" means an animal that is deemed, in the opinion of the Animal Control Officer or designate, to possess the qualities required to be re-homed in a reasonable amount of time.
- "*Euthanasia*" means 'good death', which is the word's literal translation from Greek. It is the practice of humanely providing an animal with a good death if they cannot be given a good life.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Cardston Animal Bylaw specifies unclaimed animals may be euthanized 72 hours after the day of impoundment; however euthanasia is only to be considered *after* a reasonable and appropriate pursuit of all other viable options, and may be held longer than 72hrs as needs be. Some examples of alternative options to pursue include, but are not limited to:

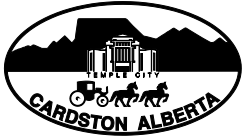
- Return to owner;
- Transfers to a placement facility;
- Adoption of animal;
- Foster placement;
- For feral cats: TNR.

Euthanasia is performed when it is the most humane offering for the animal in question or the only reasonable option to ensure staff or community safety. It is never a decision that is made without the utmost consideration for all of the factors, as we know them.

The Town of Cardston accepts that euthanasia for animals detained in the pound is considered necessary for the following situations:

- If it is determined that an animal is suffering from medical conditions that cause the animal pain, or prevent the animal from living a comfortable and quality life.
- Behaviors that are beyond management that are deemed unsafe to other animals, people, and to itself.
  - Quality of life evaluations are made for every animal entering the shelter and periodically during their stay to ensure they do not deteriorate in the pound waiting to be reclaimed by their owners and are not suffering during their stay.
- Animal owner authorized euthanasia (at the cost of the owner). However, Town of Cardston staff has the right to decline this service if the staff determines that the animal can be successfully rehomed by some other means.
- When the animal is not adoptable.





# TOWN POLICY

Page 3 of 4

**TITLE: Animal Euthanasia Policy and Standards of Operation**

**POLICY NUMBER: E-10**

- In determining whether an animal is adoptable, consideration will be given to the age, temperament, physical and mental condition of the animal, as well as the capacity of nearby shelters, or lack of suitable homes. If it is decided that an animal is unlikely to be adopted, or adopted in a reasonable amount of time—that it may be forced to spend many weeks in the pound or months in a shelter awaiting adoption—or that confinement would not provide the animal with a good quality of life, then euthanasia shall be considered the most humane thing to do for the animal.

## **STANDARDS OF OPERATION**

Each animal admitted into the Town of Cardston pound will be evaluated initially at intake. Animals placed in the Town's care will be evaluated for medical and behavioral considerations.

Evaluations are intended to identify:

- Animals that are suffering mentally, emotionally or physically.
- Animals with a poor prognosis, protracted painful recovery, incurable illness, or who suffer from an affliction in which treatment is not reasonably feasible.
- Animals that are deemed to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, themselves or the public.
- Animals that cannot be transferred to a shelter, placement facility, or rehomed within a reasonable amount of time, due to factors such as shelter capacity or adoptability.
- Animals that have a condition that individually may not necessitate euthanasia, but that contribute to escalating other conditions that, in total, warrant euthanasia.

Prior to making the final decision to euthanize an animal, a final evaluation of the animal's welfare will be conducted by the veterinarian charged with conducting the euthanization.

If the animal poses an immediate or serious danger to animals and/or people, alternative options will not be considered.

When the decision to euthanize an animal is made, a Town of Cardston employee will make arrangements to ensure that the animal is euthanized in the most humane manner within reason that takes into consideration the physical safety of the animal and the employee, as well as the stress that may be inflicted upon the animal or employee.

### **Acceptable methods of humane euthanasia include:**

- Intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital or equivalent chemical administered by a licensed or qualified individual such as a veterinarian.
- Dictated by circumstances: any other method (excluding inhaled CO or CO<sub>2</sub>) that is considered "good husbandry" as defined by provincial legislation.

In the event that an aggressive animal is posing a danger to the public, or that the capture of an animal may cause injury or pose a threat to the wellbeing of any individual, the Peace Officer, RCMP, or any other authorized law enforcement authority may, at their discretion, use any tools at their disposal in compliance with any pertinent policy or bylaw to effectively euthanize the animal on site.



