

Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to the Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection

The Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (the “RCACP”) serves the City of Roanoke, the Counties of Botetourt and Roanoke, and the Town of Vinton, and is an “open intake facility”. The RCACP primarily handles stray animals picked up by the Animal Control Officers employed by the municipalities, but also accepts strays that are found, and animals owned, by citizens of the municipalities served. Each year the RCACP receives around 5,000 animals.

In accordance with Virginia law, stray animals are held for a minimum of ten (10) days if the animal has any form of identification and five (5) days if the animal has no identification. There is no minimum holding period for animals relinquished by owners, but the RCACP endeavors to hold animals relinquished by owners for a minimum of two (2) days.

While at the RCACP, animals are evaluated for adoption suitability. Animals that are not considered suitable for adoption are networked to rescue groups or humanely euthanized once the animal has been held for the required length of time. Animals that are considered to be suitable for adoption are, made available on our website and on Petfinders. The animal will continue to be held at the RCACP as long as the animal remains in good health and of good disposition and the RCACP continues to have space for the animal. Because there are more animals coming to the RCACP than the amount of available space at the RCACP or other shelters, animals that are considered to be suitable for adoption may be euthanized at the RCACP because of space limitations, the animal is too aggressive to be placed back in to the community or due to the medical condition of the animal. The RCACP uses the best available humane method of euthanasia, performed under the best possible conditions by certified euthanasia technicians.

As a volunteer, you are an ambassador for the RCACP and municipalities they serve; as such, you are to conduct yourself as a representative of those jurisdictions. Many volunteers are asked questions about these facilities. This handbook will answer many of those questions.

As Volunteer Coordinator, I am here to help volunteers and staff, work together for the animals. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas, please feel free to speak to me about them.

Thank you for considering giving of your time to the RCACP.

Jennifer Fleisher – Volunteer and Events Coordinator
jfleisher@rcacp.org
540-344-4922 ext. 300

The Role of Volunteers at the RCACP

Volunteers are expected to:

- Consider volunteer work a serious professional commitment and view the position as valid and important.
- Represent the RCACP in an appropriate, positive and responsible manner at all times.
- Be aware of and abide by the guidelines and procedures of the RCACP.
- Make a monthly commitment to volunteer in one or more of the assignments available. Notify Volunteer Coordinator if you are unable to work, promptly.
- Attend an Information Session and training sessions as scheduled and undertake continuing education, when provided, in order to maintain and enhance competence in assigned tasks.
- Act as a member of the RCACP team when working with other volunteers and RCACP staff.
- Follow the position description and accept supervision from RCACP staff.
- Be prompt and reliable in reporting for work and follow through on all commitments.
- Record volunteer work hours.
- Notify the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible if unable to work a scheduled shift due to illness or unexpected reason.
- Dress in an appropriate manner for position assigned.
- Wear a RCACP Volunteer T-Shirt at all times when volunteering for RCACP.
- Identify themselves as RCACP volunteers and not misrepresent your position as staff.
- Communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator to resolve any problems or concerns.
- Provide Volunteer Coordinator with two weeks notice before terminating his/her position.
- Handle animals in a safe and humane manner. Work in a manner to prevent risk to yourself and others.
- Attend at least 2 quarterly Continuing Education meeting per year.
- Follow the chain of command, which is: Volunteer Coordinator, Director of Operations, Executive Director, Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee, and then Executive Committee.

Volunteers may expect to:

- Work at a position that is worthwhile and challenging, with freedom to use existing skills and/or develop new ones.
- Receive a position description that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- Receive orientation and training as well as sufficient, ongoing training with clear and specific directions from the supervisor or volunteer coordinator.
- Be an important part of the RCACP team and be recognized for one's accomplishments.
- Receive periodic feedback.
- Receive support from the Volunteer Coordinator to resolve conflicts between the volunteer and a staff member.

Volunteer Policies and Guidelines

The Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection relies on its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours. By meeting your commitments, the program operates smoothly, not for the staff but for the animals in our care.

Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection Volunteers are expected to follow the policies and guidelines outlined in this Handbook. The RCACP is an open intake facility. The policies and procedures in this handbook are for the safety of the volunteers, staff, community and most importantly the animals in our care.

Volunteers are expected to meet all of the responsibilities of their specific role(s). This allows us to present a common standard of professionalism in any environment in which we work.

Safety and Security: Volunteers must abide by all security and safety rules as outlined in orientation, trainings and this handbook. The safety of our volunteers, shelter animals and the public are of paramount importance. Please take note of location of eye wash station and First-aid Kit.

- **Safety:**
 - Each volunteer shall be required to attend volunteer training before working alongside the RCACP staff.
 - Volunteers should only work at RCACP when scheduled.
 - Animals under a stray or impound hold may not be handled by Volunteers.
- **Security:**
 - The facility is locked and armed when staff is not on site.
 - Volunteers may be provided with a key card for access during hours the facility is staffed. To be considered a candidate to be a key holder, a volunteer must, at minimum volunteer once a week for 6 consecutive weeks, show proven animal handling skills and trustworthiness. Key cards will be assigned at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator and the Director of Operations.
 - Volunteers should never use their key card to allow access to anyone else. Doing so will result in termination of the key card access and suspension or termination of the volunteer.

Accident Prevention and Reporting: RCACP strives to provide a safe workplace. Accidents do happen; training, attention to detail and personal responsibility will greatly reduce the number of accidents in our shelter. Each volunteer is responsible for immediately reporting the presence of any hazard or unsafe condition to the RCACP front desk or kennel supervisor.

Fire Evacuation: In the case of fire, all employees and volunteers are to immediately evacuate the building through the closest exit, then proceed across the street at the corner of Light Street and Baldwin Avenue. Once everyone has evacuated, necessary arrangements will be made to evacuate the animals. Every effort will be made to evacuate the animals as safely as possible. The first priority is to ensure all employees, staff and customers are out of the facility.

Treatment of Animals: Volunteers and staff must treat every animal kindly, gently and professionally at all times. **Due to the nature of this facility, there are many animals that are being held by the municipalities as strays and impounds. Some of these animals may be aggressive or deemed dangerous by an Animal Control Officer or Kennel Staff. For the safety of the animals and**

volunteers, please handle only those animals off their stray hold or have been deemed safe to handle by RCACP staff.

Hours for volunteers: The hours vary dependent upon your assignment. For most volunteers, your hours will be during public hours unless otherwise requested by staff. Volunteers are not allowed in the facility in a volunteer capacity other than scheduled volunteer shifts.

Dress: We want you to be comfortable but look professional. Wear clothes you do not mind getting dirty. Volunteer t-shirt is required. You will be provided with one t-shirt free of charge and can purchase additional shirts at the RCACP front desk or from the Volunteer Coordinator for \$10. When working with the animals, volunteers must wear close-toe shoes, Sneakers with rubber soles, long pants and long sleeved shirts are the preferred attire. Minimal jewelry is also recommended. Remember, you will be working with and cleaning after the animals. Tank tops, halter tops, belly shirts, shirts with profanity, or shorts are not permitted. Pants should not drag on the floor.

****The above items are for your safety as animals have a tendency to play rough and may scratch or nip. According to Virginia State Law, any animal who scratches or bites, breaking the skin is required to be placed on a quarantine hold for 10 days.**

Attendance: Volunteers are expected to be punctual and reliable. If you are unable to fulfill your scheduled time, notify the Volunteer Coordinator. If you will be away for an extended period of time (i.e. vacation), please give the Volunteer Coordinator sufficient notification. Repeated no shows will be immediately removed from the schedule to allow committed volunteers the opportunity to serve. An “active” volunteer is one that serves in some capacity at least once per month. If you become inactive, the Volunteer Coordinator will notify you. If you were issued a key card, it will be disabled, and, depending on the lapse in time between volunteer shifts, you may need to attend orientation and training again.

Parking: Volunteers park in the places farthest from the front door. Please leave the closer parking spaces for the customers.

Communication: E-mail is our primary means of communication with volunteers. By providing us with your e-mail address, we can keep you up-to-date on upcoming events, volunteer needs, etc. We also utilize Volunteer Spot for event planning. The Volunteer Coordinator will send you a link to sign up once you have completed your orientation and training.

Volunteer sign-in log: Volunteers must sign in at the front desk when they arrive and sign out when they leave. Volunteers should only work when scheduled.

Volunteer t-shirts: Volunteers should wear their RCACP volunteer t-shirt at all times while working at the pound. This immediately identifies our volunteers to both the public and shelter staff. You will be provided with one t-shirt free of charge and can purchase additional shirts at the RCACP front desk or from the Volunteer Coordinator for \$10.

Valuables: The RCACP does not have a place for volunteers to keep valuables. Please lock your valuables, including cell phones or recording devices, in your vehicle. The RCACP is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Friends of Volunteers: At no time may volunteers bring friends along for their volunteer shift. If family or friends are interested in volunteering their time, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Health Insurance: It is strongly recommended volunteers have personal medical and health insurance. Volunteers are not covered under the RCACP or any of the participating Municipalities insurance policy.

Recommended vaccines: It is recommended volunteers are current on their Tetanus vaccination. In addition, it is important volunteers speak to their personal physician about volunteering with the RCACP.

Accident Prevention and Reporting: RCACP strives to provide a safe workplace. Accidents do happen, but with training, attention to detail and personal responsibility for keeping areas safe will greatly reduce the number of accidents in our shelter.

Reimbursement of expenses: Volunteers are not eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred while volunteering for the RCACP.

Whistleblower Policy and Procedures: The RCACP is committed to lawful and ethical behavior in all of its activities and requires directors, volunteers and employees to act in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies and to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. The RCACP has implemented a whistleblower policy and procedures to report material violations of law or policy or questionable accounting or auditing matter by the RCACP.

Cell Phones: For the safety of the animals and volunteers, texting and talking on cell phones while volunteering is prohibited. In the interest of our volunteer's family and personal safety personal cell phones may be carried while volunteering. It is expected the cell phone will be set on vibrate and used only in the case of an emergency.

Photography and recording devices (including cell phones): Most of the animals at the RCACP are owned by private citizens until their hold has expired or the owner has relinquished ownership. Pictures of strays are not allowed other than those taken by staff for the purpose of locating the owner. Intake photos of the stray/lost animals are posted in the "Pictures of Stray and Lost Pet" page of the website. Per the Animal Control Departments, photos are not to be taken of animals still on stray hold or being held for court proceedings; when in doubt, volunteers should ask permission prior to taking photographs. Photos, videos and audio recordings are permitted for available animals only. All other video or audio recording required the permission of management.

Staff Only Areas: There are areas in the facility where volunteers are restricted. Volunteers are prohibited from entering areas marked "Staff Only". When in doubt, volunteers should ask permission prior to entering an area or office.

Drug and Alcohol Policy: The RCACP is committed to a safe and healthful working environment for all employees and volunteers. We also have an obligation to our customers, general public and animals to conduct our operations safely and efficiently. The use, sale, purchase, transfer, possession or a detectable presence of illegal drugs or alcohol in a volunteers system while on shelter property is strictly prohibited. A drug test may be requested at any time. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination from the Volunteer Program.

Smoking: RCACP is a no smoking facility. Volunteers may smoke at the outside break area behind the building.

Representation: Volunteers are expected to represent the RCACP, ACO's and participating municipalities in a helpful, friendly and professional manner at all times. Our existence and effectiveness is dependent on the goodwill of the community. Our public image may be based on client contact with

volunteers. For this reason, it is important to always represent the RCACP in a positive manner and the beliefs and practices of the organization.

Professional Conduct: When dealing with customers and staff, always be polite, courteous and helpful. *If a customer asks a question you do not know the answer to, please direct the customer to a staff member.*

Staff and Volunteer Interaction: The RCACP encourages volunteers to assist in helping the animals housed there. It takes the dedication and service of both volunteers and staff coming from many different backgrounds and areas of expertise to help these animals. Always maintain a professional attitude when working with the animals, staff, volunteers and the public. If you are uncomfortable with what you are being asked to do or any other aspect of your volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. Your concerns and issues will be addressed as soon as possible.

Conflict Resolution: The RCACP will attempt to resolve differences of opinion and disagreements as informally as possible. It is our intent to create a positive climate in which integrity, trust and respect are evident.

Our Conflict Resolution Procedure is as follows:

1. Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts between involved parties directly.
2. If the conflict is still unresolved the volunteer should report the problem to the Volunteer Coordinator within 5 days of the incident. At that time a meeting will be scheduled if the issue can not be immediately resolved by the Volunteer Coordinator. The volunteer should present the problem in writing at that meeting.
3. If the conflict is still unresolved the volunteer may submit the problem in writing to the Director of Shelter Operations. A meeting may be scheduled between the Director of Operations and the volunteer(s). The Director of Operations will submit the conflict to the Executive Director for review.
4. If the Executive Director cannot resolve the issue, the volunteer may present the issue at the next meeting of the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee.
5. The decision of the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee is final unless the dispute is regarding the suspension or termination of a Volunteer.
6. If the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee cannot resolve issues regarding a suspension or termination of a volunteer, the volunteer may present the issue at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

The decision of the Executive Committee is final in issues pertaining to the suspension or termination of a volunteer.

Customer Relations: The RCACP strives to treat every animal and citizen in our community with respect, dignity and without judgment. The success of our organization is enhanced by the positive relationships between the Regional Center for Animal Control and Protection, our employees, volunteers, customers, and the general public. Our customers' impression of the RCACP is greatly formed by the people who serve them. In a sense, regardless of your position, you are RCACP's ambassador. As an open intake facility, our mission is "To provide temporary shelter for stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals for the purpose of returning them to their rightful owners or finding them permanent suitable new homes. To provide cost effective sheltering through a regional partnership to insure the highest live release rate practical for our community." **If you are uncomfortable with discussing euthanasia, direct customers to the front desk staff.**

Social Media Policy: Personal websites, web logs (blogs) and other social networks have become prevalent methods of self-expression in our culture. We understand that employees may use these mediums from time to time. There are, however, some minimum guidelines that must be followed. These guidelines apply to all blogs and social networking sites, including Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.

1. Use of social networking mediums should not occur during an employee's / volunteer's work time, but only during non-working hours and on non-work computers.
2. Personal blogs should have clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author in the blog are the author's alone and do not represent the views of anyone else including RCACP or the participating Municipalities.
3. Information published on any blog(s) or sites should comply with RCACP's confidentiality and other established policies as well as federal and state law, this means you should never disclose any confidential information.
4. Respect other individuals and do not make derogatory statements about other employees, volunteers, rescues or customers. You should assume that no matter how restrictive your privacy settings, your posts may become public.
5. Do not violate the privacy rights of other people or entities by posting their personal image without their permission, or sharing their personal information. This includes posting pictures without the specific prior permission of the person whose image is being posted.
6. There should be no discriminatory or harassing posts, or posts which violate applicable law.
7. Volunteers are expected to present a positive image of RCACP. Remember, whether you intend it or not, your online presence captured via images, posts, or comments could be interpreted as reflecting the perspectives of the RCACP. Negative posts about the facility will discourage potential adopters from coming to our facility and harm the animal's chances of being adopted.
8. Respect copyright and trademark laws, and reference or cite sources appropriately, plagiarism applies online as well.
9. The RCACP logo may not be used without written consent.

Any social networking activity which is detrimental to the RCACP, its employees, volunteers, rescue partners, board members, or customers will be considered in violation of this policy and may lead to discipline, including discharge. Legal action, both civil and/or criminal, may also be taken under appropriate circumstances. For any questions about these guidelines or any matter related to social networking, contact the RCACP Executive Director.

Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with any rights afforded to employees under the National Labor Relations Act or other federal or state laws.

Restrictions on Animal Interaction: Most of the animals held at the RCACP are on a stray or impound hold. It is the requirement of the animal control departments that volunteers **do not** interact with these animals until they have been evaluated by staff and received their vaccinations.

Personal Protective Equipment: Any staff or volunteer working in the RCACP kennels is required to wear hearing protection at all times. Ear plugs are available for volunteers to use while working in these areas.

Adopting an Animal: Volunteers may place an adoption request on animals at RCACP. The adoption process will not start until all hold times have expired. The adoption is contingent upon the animal's

behavior assessment, approved adoption application and payment of the adoption fee. Other rescue organizations may be used to facilitate the adoption. If the volunteer wishes to use another organization, please contact the rescue coordinator.

Adoption and Euthanasia: Please respect the decisions made by staff and management concerning adoptions and euthanasia. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Director of Operations. These issues must be addressed courteously in a proper venue and with respect to staff. We sympathize with your strong feelings on this subject, but know that every decision is a group decision at the Regional Center. Because of problems in the past, any inappropriate voicing of opinions may result in suspension of the volunteer.

Confidentiality: Any information pertaining to records to which you may become privy, including but not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, is confidential and may not be discussed with others or removed from the shelter. This includes personal information of persons relinquishing animals, court cases and redemptions.

Prohibition of Harassment and Sexual Harassment: The Regional Center for Animal Control and Protection is committed to equal opportunities for staff and volunteers. RCACP prohibits harassment against volunteers and employees because of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability or any other class protected by law. This covers illegal harassment by anyone in the workplace including supervisors, co-workers and volunteers. Employees and volunteers have the right to be free from inappropriate comments, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or based on a persons gender, or other protected class which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Termination: The RCACP reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's service with or without notice. Some of the following are circumstances where termination will result.

- Stealing

- Substance Abuse

- Discourtesy/rudeness to another volunteer, staff member, rescue partner, officer or citizen.

- Harassing or bullying staff members or volunteers

- Interfering with a staff member's performance of his/her duties

- Misrepresenting RCACP, RCACP staff, ACO or participating municipality in any way.

- Careless, negligent performance of volunteer duties

- Any deliberate act of cruelty to an animal

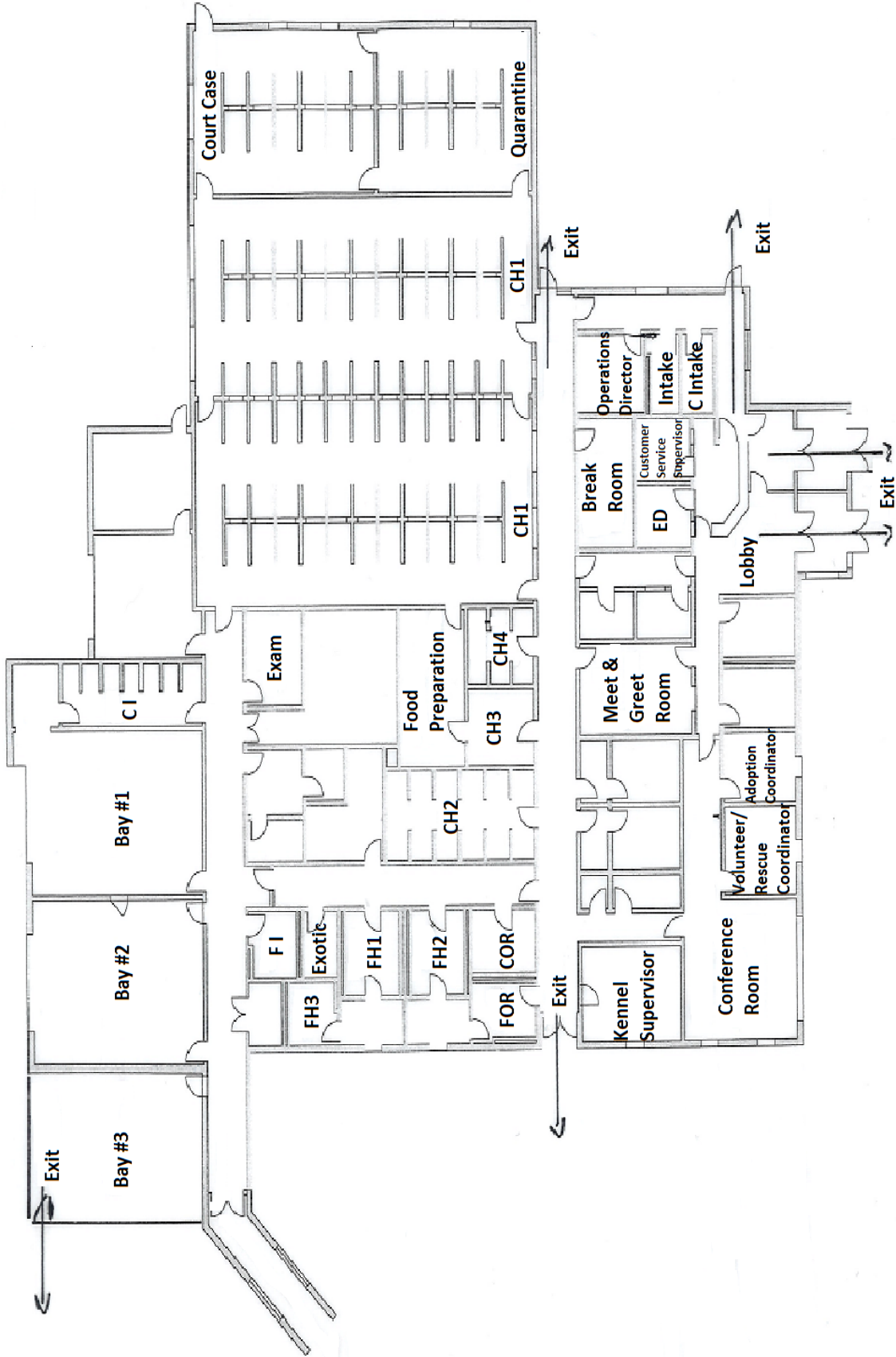
- Not following all staff directives

- Represent yourself as an employee.

- Not adhering to the policies and procedures of this handbook.

In the case of an accident, please report immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or Kennel Supervisor.

Regional Center for Animal
Care and Protection



ZOONOTIC DISEASE DISCLOSURE

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be passed from animals to humans. Examples are ringworm, tapeworm, roundworms and rabies. We impress upon all volunteers that safe handling techniques and hygiene are important elements of protecting ourselves from these diseases. Washing hands after handling any animal is critical. Please understand that many of the animals arriving at the shelter have had no previous veterinary care and may expose you to disease. While the occurrence of disease transmission is rare, please understand that the RCACP cannot assume financial, medical, or veterinary responsibility for any transmissions that may occur to yourself, your family or companion animals.

Anyone who is pregnant or may become pregnant or has a compromised immune system should consult their physician before volunteering at RCACP.

**It is recommended volunteers with pets at home have special “shelter shoes” and always change clothes immediately upon returning home and toss in the washing machine.

Every-day Practices that Help Prevent Spread of Disease

- Report any animal that appears sick to the kennel supervisor immediately.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often. To prevent the transmission of disease, rubber gloves are to be worn when handling animals at the RCACP. Gloves are to be changed between animals.
- Do not let animals housed apart interact or touch noses.
- Immediately pick up all feces once a dog has defecated on the grounds.
- After picking up feces, wash and then disinfect any cement or solid surface.
- Wash the laundry and dishes according to the posted written protocol.
- Don't keep dirty dishes lying around – take them to the dirty dish bin quickly.
- Change trash liners on a regular basis; don't let the trash receptacles overflow.
- Sanitize equipment such as carriers, grooming items, toys, leashes and pooper scoopers between use with trifectant.

If we all follow the same procedures the risk of disease transmission will be greatly minimized

Diseases and Vaccines

It is important each animal is vaccinated as soon as possible after intake to the facility, minimizing the transfer of diseases between animals. The RCACP vaccinates each animal entering the facility. Cats are given the FVRCP vaccine; dogs are given DHPP and Bordetella. The best prevention for these highly contagious diseases is vaccination. The following illustrates the importance of vaccinating each animal.

DA2PPv vaccinates dogs for:

Canine Distemper

- Highly contagious and immunosuppressive disease
- Transmitted by aerosol droplets from all body excretions of infected animals.
- Incubation is 1-2 weeks up to 4-5 weeks. Infection possible 10-60 days post infection.
- Clinical signs are coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, anorexia, dehydration and neurological signs such as seizures, blindness, incoordination, etc.
- Treatment is strict isolation and supportive care

Canine Parvovirus:

- Highly contagious and immunosuppressive disease

- Virus is extremely stable and resistant to adverse environmental influences. It can persist on clothing, food pans and cage floors for longer than 5 months.
- Transmission by exposure to contaminated feces with infected dogs carrying virus on their hair coat for as long as contaminated feces are attached to the hair shafts.
- Incubation is 3-14 days. Infection possible 7-10 days post infection.
- Clinical signs include anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea (often bloody), and may result in heart disease in puppies younger than 8 weeks, with heart failure occurring in otherwise apparently normal puppies 6 weeks-6 months. Death can occur as early as 2 days after onset of illness
- Treatment is strict isolation and supportive care often involving intravenous fluids and antibiotics

Infectious Canine Hepatitis/Canine Adenovirus-2

- Viral disease that primarily affects the liver but also attacks other organs including the lungs and often results in immunosuppression.
- Virus is moderately resistant and survives in the environment for days to months
- Transmission through exposure to contaminated feces or urine
- Incubation is 4-7 days.
- Clinical signs include coughing, fever, depression, lethargy, reluctance to move, abdominal tenderness, pale mucous membranes, anorexia, enlarged lymph nodes
- Treatment is strict isolation and supportive care

Canine Parainfluenza

- Kennel Cough is a highly contagious
- Transmission through aerosol droplets and survives in the environment up to 3 months post infection
- Incubation is 3-10 days. Infection possible up to 3 months post infection.
- Clinical signs may be mild or not apparent, coughing of varying frequency and intensity, may be accompanied by fever and anorexia.

FVRCP vaccine for cats:

Feline viral rhinotracheitis/feline herpes virus

- Highly contagious (common cause of feline upper respiratory disease in shelters)
- Transmission is direct contact with infectious secretions, rarely by aerosol exposure
- Incubation is 2-6 days. Infection possible 1-3 weeks post recovery.
- Clinical signs include sneezing, discharge from eyes and nose, conjunctivitis, fever and anorexia.
- Treatment is strict isolation and symptomatic treatment often involving antibiotics, eye ointments and antiviral therapy.

Calicivirus

- Highly contagious
- Primary problem in multiple cat environments
- Virus is susceptible to inactivation with bleach
- Transmission through direct contact with infectious secretions
- Incubation is 1-5 days and recovering cats are often lifelong carriers and are a continuing source of infection.
- Clinical signs include ulcers on the nose and tongue, sneezing, coughing, fever, lameness and anorexia.
- Treatment is strict isolation and symptomatic treatment often involving antibiotics and eye ointments.

Feline Pan leukopenia/feline parvovirus

- Highly contagious. Unvaccinated cats in multi-cat environments are at high risk of infection but clinical disease is almost non-existent in appropriately vaccinated cats
- Virus is extremely stable and resistant to adverse environmental influences. It can persist on clothing, food pans, and cage floors for longer than 5 months. It is similar to canine parvovirus and current strains of canine parvovirus are known to infect cats as well as dogs.
- Transmission through contact with infected cats or materials contaminated by infected feces (litter boxes, etc.)
- Incubation is 3-14 days. Infection possible 7-10 days post infection.
- Clinical signs include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, incoordination, acute death
- Treatment is strict isolation and supportive care often involving intravenous fluids and antibiotics

SAFETY FIRST - FOR YOUR AND THE ANIMAL'S SAFETY

- NEVER attempt to grab a fleeing animal.
- NEVER reach with your hands or insert any other body part into a fight.
- NEVER begin screaming should a fight occur.
- If one or more dogs are on leashes when a fight begins, **DROP THE LEASH(S)**. One animal may be able to escape the other and neither you nor the dog(s) will get tangled and possibly worsen potential injuries.

Points to remember when approaching an animal:

- An animal should first be touched or petted in the non-threatening areas: under the chin or on the chest.
- Never “loom” over the animal.
- Looking directly into the eyes is considered by the animal to be a threatening dominance gesture.
- Always move and speak quietly and gently.
- Kneel or squat so that you are more on the animal's level.
- Always leave the animal room to exit around you if he/she feels threatened.
- Do not attempt to “kiss” an animal.

Keep in mind that animals are prone to bite, flee or be frightened when:

- they are eating.
- they are fighting with another animal.
- there is a sudden loud noise or unexpected movement.

Signs of a potentially aggressive response:

- Yawning - a yawning animal may be conflicted.
- Backing away, turning face away
- Lifted lips with or without teeth exposed
- Hackles (hair along back) raised
- Growling, snarling, hissing
- Staring
- Tail raised stiffly and/or wagging stiffly

NOTE: These suggestions for both your safety and the animals' will only work if you take the time necessary to observe an animal before you approach it or open a cage/run door.

Policies and Procedures for the RCACP

Medical Treatment for Animals at the RCACP

Each animal that enters the facility is vaccinated. Cats are given the FVRCP vaccine and dewormed. Dogs are given DHPP, Bortatella and dewormed. The facility has a contract veterinarian and an animal health coordinator. All animals are given a preliminary health exam within 48 hours of arrival at the facility. If an animal comes into the facility needing immediate medical attention, the municipalities have given permission for animals under hold to receive veterinarian services by the in-house vet if available or an outside vet as needed.

Stray Animals

RCACP receives around 5,000 animals each year. Stray animals are brought to the facility by the public and by Animal Control officers. Animals are housed in the facility and are not accessible to the public for health and safety reasons. “Accessible” refers to the handling/touching of the animal, the public is able to walk through the facility accompanied by staff or volunteer assigned to the front desk may escort individuals who are looking for their lost pet(s) through the facility. Sometimes, a citizen who has found an animal will offer to hold the stray animal in their home until the owner is found or the hold time expires. This is called “Stray held by Public”. We have a report on this animal and will add it to our stray list for people to locate their lost pets.

All strays are scanned for microchips and if found, the owner will be notified. Strays that have any identification (collar, microchip, tattoo, etc.), will be held for 10 days. When identification can be found, staff will notify the owner, if possible. Any animal that comes into the facility with out any identification will be held for 5 days. At the end of the hold time, the animals will be behaviorally assessed for suitability for adoption. Those deemed good adoption candidates will be made available for adoption or transferred to a local rescue organization (provided they have room or an available foster home), networked by staff and volunteers to other adoption facilities or rescue organizations and networked on various websites to the public. The RCACP will hold an animal for as long as possible in order to find a safe place for the animal. However, this is not always possible and the decision to euthanize may have to be made.

Owner Relinquished Animals

The RCACP accepts animals that are no longer wanted or can no longer be cared for by their owners. The facility accepts the responsibility for these animals **without judgment** and will hold them for 72 hours as long as there is space available and the animal does not have significant medical or behavior issues. Each animal will then be behaviorally evaluated for suitability for adoption. Citizens who relinquish their pets to the RCACP must sign a disclosure notifying them of the possibility their pet may be euthanized.

Impound Animals

Animal Control Departments for the municipalities will impound an animal while awaiting a court decision and for an animal who has bitten and is awaiting rabies verification. For your protection, these animals are not to be handled by any volunteer.

Guidelines for Availability of Animals

1. Only animals that have been previously tested for their temperament and approved for placement shall be made available for adoption or transfer to rescue organizations.
2. No animal involved with a possible rabies exposure case, livestock or poultry attack, or in the judgment of Animal Control constitutes a danger or threat to the public shall be made available for placement or transfer.
3. No animals impounded as evidence for court in a possible criminal case shall be made available for placement, transfer or adoption until all court decisions have been made
4. No animal shall be made available for placement, transfer or adoption until full custody of that animal has been determined.
5. Stray dogs and cats without any identification should be held for a period of 5 days. If identification of any form is found to determine ownership, the animal is held for 10 days. Health, welfare, and any other physical limitations may affect the length of holding period for each individual animal; however, Animal Control may hold animals more than the specified time given further information to determine possible ownership.
6. At the end of the holding period, RCACP will attempt to place the animal in an permanent home through adoption, with an approved rescue partner or network the animal through websites (i.e. Petfinder), provided the behavior assessment deems the animal as suitable for adoption.
7. RCACP staff will determine the limitations of space and other factors involving population limits within the shelter including other environmental factors, conditions of the animals, and any other circumstance that may affect the facility operations.
8. RCACP staff will make every attempt to place as many safe, healthy, and compatible animals in adoptive homes or rescues as possible.

Euthanasia Policy

Euthanasia is probably the most difficult subject to understand at the shelter. It is a very real part of working at RCACP and is a topic we must understand and acknowledge. There are countless dogs and cats breeding in our community and there are not enough homes for all 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. 5000 animals go through RCACP each year. The simple reality is there are not enough homes for all these animals. Until our community embraces spay and neuter, animal overpopulation and euthanasia will remain a reality. We strongly encourage the public to spay/neuter their pets.

The RCACP staff devotes their energy, love, time and care to the animals held at the facility. The decision to euthanize is made after carefully evaluating three issues – the animal’s health condition, temperament and space available to house and care for the animals

1. Health concerns include: age related problems, infectious diseases, needed surgery and cost of surgery, daily medications and cost of medications, etc.
2. Temperament concerns include: some types of aggression, ability to handle, stress related behavior, depression, anxiety, fearfulness, etc
3. Space concerns: volume of animals, available kennel space and time spent in shelter.

The “No-Kill” reality check. Our community is committed toward having the highest live release rate possible. That is performed by reducing shelter intakes and increasing the number of animals reclaimed

by their owners or adopted. Our community and the shelter is going through an evolutionary process to end the euthanasia of savable animals. It is the hope of community leaders to reach a 90% live release rate at RCACP. The over abundance of feral cats in our community has prevented RCACP from reaching that goal.

Many no-kill shelters exist in our community; these shelters are called “closed admission” shelters because when they reach capacity, they are able to shut their doors to additional animals coming into their facility. RCACP is an “Open Admission” shelter that cannot shut its doors to animals when it reaches its capacity; instead, animal must be euthanized in order to make room for more animals.

If the decision is made to euthanize an animal, a trained staff person who possesses a state certification to perform the procedure, will administer a lethal injection. This method is widely considered the most humane and painless euthanasia procedure.

It is unfortunate that this procedure must be conducted and it is very difficult for our staff. This task requires our staff to cope with both emotional and psychological challenges. Knowing that these challenges exist, we ask you to respect what our staff deals with and to be sensitive if talking about the topic. We do not want to add to our staff’s challenges by insinuating that they are the “bad guys” or question why this task is performed.

Potential Volunteer Opportunities

- Bathing/grooming: Brushing and giving baths to dogs and/or cats.
- Cat Socializer: Work with kittens/cats who need more handling/socializing before transfer.
- Dog Walker: Help exercise the dogs while teaching them the basic commands, leash manners. Only dogs that are no longer being held by the municipalities and have been assessed behaviorally as suitable for adoption may be walked by volunteers. The RCACP Kennel Supervisor and staff may request animals held on stray hold to be walked by volunteers on a case by case basis after determining the behavior and safety for both the dogs and volunteer. Volunteers may, after walking dogs for a minimum of once weekly for 6 consecutive weeks be issued a keycard for access to the volunteer door. This card is property of the RCACP and may be disabled at the discretion of management if it is misused (this may include allowing others without a card access or allowing someone else to borrow your card)
- Enrichment coordinator: organizing volunteers to provide daily enrichment to the animals at RCACP. This may include walking dogs, taking dogs to training, scheduling filling and distribution of kongs for both dogs and cats, etc...
- Front Desk assistant: Answer phones, retrieve messages and give general information about the facility. Help with paperwork. Explain the options for the public to find their missing pets, take lost/found reports, keep lost/found books current, co-ordinate w/ online lost/found and current animals at RCACP.
- Kennel Assistant: Assist the kennel staff in the thorough cleaning of animal cages and runs in the Canine and Feline holding areas, food prep rooms, feeding, watering and walk dogs as requested each morning.
- Off-site Adoption Volunteer: Volunteers responsible for the transport care and safety of dogs and cats at off-site adoption events.
- Rescue Desk: Working with the Rescue Coordinator, volunteers will assist in contacting rescue groups to arrange transfer of animals to other facilities and in networking the animals via social media.
- Shelter Aide: assists in cleaning of non-animal areas, i.e., laundry, dishes, bathrooms, public areas
- Shelter Photography: Taking quality photos of pets available for adoption through an adoption facility or rescue by a 501(c)(3) rescue organization. Writing positive realistic biographies to be used with photographs to increase the chance of adoption.



Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection Volunteer Statement of Agreement

It is the policy of the Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection to provide humane care for all animals lost, impounded and relinquished by owners in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Botetourt County and the Town of Vinton. Please read and sign the statement of agreement and Pledge for Humane Discourse and Conduct.

- I have received, read and agree to follow the policies and procedures outlined in the RCACP Volunteer Handbook and agree to comply with the requirements of the Code of Ethics and the Culture Agreement.
- I understand that, notwithstanding any philosophical differences with the policies of the RCACP, I must be able to perform any and all assigned tasks.
- I understand that as a volunteer, I am responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information I am exposed to as a volunteer. This includes information that may involve a paid employee, volunteer, client, or other person.
- I understand that my volunteer assignment with the RCACP may be terminated at any time.
- I understand volunteers are permitted to handle only animals evaluated and approved by staff. Animals on stray holds, quarantine, court case and impound cases are **not** to be handled by volunteers.
- I understand policy on Euthanasia and the Guidelines for Availability of Animals for Adoption.
- I understand the image of the RCACP and its affiliates are strongly affected by our portrayal in media. I will speak respectfully about the organization as well as employees, volunteers, customers, and partners of the RCACP. I will be considerate and non-judgmental of the public at all times. I will refer all media questions to the Executive Director or Director of Operations.
- I agree to follow RCACP's chain of command when dealing with problems or concerns.
- I certify that I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect or abandonment, of any offense involving the physical or sexual abuse of a child, or any felony.

I agree to allow the RCACP to perform a Criminal Background Check as part of my consideration for a volunteer position. I will do my best to represent this organization as a volunteer. I will take ideas, constructive comments, suggestions, and criticisms directly to the Volunteer Coordinator and agree to be supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator or assigned team leader. If communication concerns develop between employees and me, I will report them to the Volunteer Coordinator or Director of Shelter Operations as soon as possible. I authorize the RCACP to seek emergency medical treatment in case of accident, injury or illness and to hold harmless any agency in the event of an accident, injury or illness.

Signature

Date

Print Name