



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**ANIMAL CARE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Policy Title	Adoption Program
Policy Number	37-04-008
Initial Effective Date	12/19/2012
Revision Number(Date)	V.03(5/3/2016)
Policy Owner	Live Release Manager

Purpose

Primary Audience¹

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All ACS Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Outreach Division | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shelter Operations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Division | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clinic Operations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Live Release Division | |

I. Policy Details

1. **TYPES OF ADOPTION ANIMALS.** Adoption is ultimately the preferred disposition of healthy animals that cannot be returned to an owner. The objective of the ACS Adoptions Program is to provide outstanding customer service, and match potential adopters with a new pet. All of the following criteria must be met before an adopted animal can be transferred to their adopted family:
 - a. Animals deemed of age and adoptable by ACS Veterinary staff.
 - b. Animals that are no longer on stray wait.
 - c. Animals with suitable temperament, as deemed by ACS staff.
2. **GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES.** The following policy guidelines shall apply in all adoption situations:
 - a. ACS retains ownership of the animal until transfer of ownership to the adopter, as well as the final say in disposition decisions (adoption, rescue, euthanasia, TNR, foster or return to owner).
 - b. Pets shall be dispositioned in accordance with Policy 37-04-004: Holding period.
 - c. Any adopted animal must be outcomed in Chameleon to the adopter.
 - d. Transfer of ownership to the adopter occurs once the animal has left the ACS staff-operated kennels and has been outcomed in Chameleon.
 - e. Once ownership of the animals has been transferred to the adopter:
 - i. ACS is not liable for any injury or damage caused by the animal (to include spread of disease to other owned animals).
 - ii. ACS is not responsible for any medical or other veterinary costs for the animal.
 - iii. Surgery complications from any surgery performed at ACS may receive follow up care at the discretion of the ACS Veterinarian.
 - f. Permanent placement via adoption shall take precedence over animals transferred to rescue care or foster care.
 - g. Potential adopters must complete an adoption application, interview and contract, and be approved by Adoption staff.
 - h. Any adoption application can be denied at the discretion of Adoption staff within the guidelines set forth by the Adoption Supervisor. The applicant may appeal the decision in writing first to the Live Release Manager, and finally to the Office of the Director.
 - i. Adopters who reside within the city limits must comply with the City of San Antonio's, Ordinance Article 5, Section 5-109 (d) on Animal License and Permits:
 - i. "A maximum number of eight (8) cats or five (5) dogs, or an aggregate number of eight (8) is permitted at a residence. In order to have more dogs and/or cats than this chapter allows at a residence, an owner must apply for an excess animal permit which shall be valid for one (1) year."

¹ While every employee is responsible for adhering to all policies, the primary audience section of this policy simply identifies those divisions whose operations will heavily rely on the content of this policy.

- 3. ADOPTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES AT ACS.** The following items apply for adoptions taking place at an ACS facility.
- a. Any requests for adoption holds received by ACS staff should be directed to the Adoption staff (See *Policy 37-04-004: Holding period*).
 - b. As Adoption staff determine adoption interest in an animal, a hold and appropriate notes will be placed in Chameleon to communicate the animal's live release opportunity.
 - c. Adoption holds in Chameleon will be placed by the Adoption staff, in the order of receipt of payment for the adoption. If multiple adoption requests for a single animal are received, the Adoption staff will respectively note them in Chameleon.
 - d. No preference shall be given to ACS staff seeking to adopt an animal.
 - e. Adoption staff will enter applicant information in Chameleon and search for matching records.
 - i. If the applicant already has a Person ID# (PID) in Chameleon, the Adoption staff will note that number for use in any further entries on the adoption. Adoption staff will also verify information, make any necessary updates to address, phone number, e-mail and verify any registered pets currently listed with that PID.
 - ii. If the applicant does not currently have a PID, an animal care representative will enter the appropriate information to create a PID.
 - iii. A government issued ID with a picture is required at the time of adoption to establish residency.
 - f. If the adoption profile is approved, the applicant will fill out the Adoption Contract. Adoption staff will thoroughly explain each element of the contract to the adopter. The adopter will initial each portion of the adoption contract to indicate that he/she understands and agrees to that portion of the contract.
 - g. An Adoption contract is not valid unless the adopter initials each requisite item on the contract.
 - h. Adopters intending to take a heartworm positive animal will have the opportunity to have their adoption fee refunded if they provide proof of heartworm treatment (excluding monthly heartworm preventions) within 90 days of adoption. For additional information on heartworm treatment, see policy, "37-05-002: Heartworm Treatment."
 - i. On a case-by-case basis, the Director, Assistant Director, or Live Release Manager may reduce or waive the adoption fee upon request, and at their discretion, in other situations.
 - j. Once an animal is retrieved by the adopter, Adoption staff is responsible for completely outcoming the pet in Chameleon.
 - k. The adopter will be provided with a copy of the contract and an adoption folder which contains information on the pet's microchip, rabies tag and certificate, updated health record, and other information which may include behavioral tip sheets, disease symptoms to watch out for, merchant gift certificates, etc. as may be provided to ACS by outside providers.
 - l. Different colored sleeves housing kennel cards will be used to indicate adoption interest in an animal.
 - m. Animals with a confirmed adoption and requiring workup and/or surgery will be placed on the Clinic's schedule in Chameleon by the Adoption staff.
 - n. Animals adopted and ready for pickup (completed workup and surgery) receive the highest priority from the Adoption staff. It is imperative to shelter operations that animals ready to go leave the shelter to create space for potential new arrivals:
 - i. Adoption staff shall prioritize contacting adopters as soon as a scheduled pickup date and time can be identified.
 - ii. All reasonable attempts (phone, fax, email, etc.) will be made to notify the adopter when the animal is ready for pickup.
 - iii. Each attempt to contact the adopter to advise them their pet is ready to be picked up shall be noted in Chameleon.

- iv. If an animal is ready to leave the shelter, and the adopter does not respond within 24 hours, ACS retains the right to cancel the adoption and seek other live release options for the animal.
- v. Whenever possible, as a last resort, ACS staff should attempt pet delivery to the adopter's address.
- o. At the point of pick-up Live Release should report any medical concerns requiring immediate attention in person to the clinic staff before releasing.

4. ADOPTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES AT ACS. The following items apply for adoptions taking place off-site.

- a. All offsite adoption events will be scheduled through the Adoptions Supervisor and/or Live Release Manager and staffed with at least one Adoption staff member and/or cash-handling trained volunteer (Adoption Volunteer).
- b. Only sterilized animals ready to be taken home for adoption may be taken to adoption events. These animals may also include those currently in Foster care with ACS or an ACS approved partner.
- c. All events should be communicated to ACS Foster volunteers at least three (3) days prior to taking place.
- d. All administrative requirements of onsite adoptions apply to off-site adoptions, including, but not limited to, the adopter completing an Adoption contract, and the adoption information being outcomed in Chameleon by Adoption staff.
- e. Adoption staff and Volunteers are responsible for loading and transporting animals to adoption events. Only ACS staff that has attended the City's "Defensive Driving Course" may drive the adoption van to and from the event.
- f. Adoption staff and volunteers are responsible for unloading and thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing the adoption van or other City vehicles following off-site events. The Adoption staff is responsible for restocking any supplies on the van that may have been used at the adoption event.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ADOPTER.

- a. To provide a safe and secure home for a new family member:
 - i. Ensure a humane living environment for the animal.
 - ii. At the adopter's expense, provide any required medical treatment for the animal while in the adopter's care.
 - iii. Provide reliable transportation for the animal from the ACS facility.
- b. All adoptions are considered final after the adoption fee has been paid and ownership for the animal has been transferred to the adopter.
- c. Any adopted animal returned to ACS must first be approved by the Live Release Manager or Adoption Supervisor. Any Live Release supervisor shall assist if the live release manager and adoption supervisor are unavailable. The return must take place within two (2) weeks of taking ownership of the animal for the City to process the refund request. Any returns beyond two (2) weeks will need to follow applicable owner-surrender policies and procedures, unless otherwise approved by appropriate Live Release Staff.
- d. Adherence to the department's patron code of conduct policy entitled, "37-15-006 Patron Policy."

6. ADOPTIONS RETURNS. Adoptions returns are approved by the Adoption Supervisor or Live Release Manager, preferably in advance of the adopters returning the pet. Supervisor will place notes under the animal and the PID indicating that we have approved this pet for an adoption return. Notes will also indicate any paperwork that adopters have been asked to bring.

- a. Reasons for an adoption return.

- i. A vet has diagnosed their pet with a medical issue that we did not notify them about. Adopters must have proof of diagnosis and approximate medical costs to treat.
- ii. An adopter has received permission to return an adopted pet to ACS due to extreme and dangerous behavior towards humans and they can show proof of a vet visit within 3 business days of taking the pet home. Refunds or credits for another pet are at the discretion of the adoption supervisor.
- iii. Individual decision of the Adoption supervisor or Live Release Manager.

Policy Authorization

Signature: _____

Name (Title): XAVIER URRUTIA (ACS INTERIM DIRECTOR)

Date: _____

06/01/16