



HUMANE CANADA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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Introduction

Humane Canada (also known as the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies) has developed this national accreditation standard for Humane Societies and Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs) that are involved in sheltering, education, advocacy, and/or other animal welfare activities.

The standard and the accreditation program are designed to build a strong, professional animal welfare industry within these organizations throughout Canada.

The Five Freedoms

The standard and the accreditation program are based on the Five Freedoms, a core concept in animal welfare that states that an animal's primary welfare needs can be met by safeguarding the following freedoms:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
- Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- Freedom from pain, injury, or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind
- Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

An animal's quality of life is determined by the extent to which these freedoms are protected and opportunities for positive experiences are provided.

The quality descriptors

The standard is also based on eight quality descriptors that, when taken as whole, describe the values and characteristics exhibited by all high-quality Humane Societies or SPCAs.

1. **Accountable:** Acknowledging and assuming responsibility
2. **Best practice:** Following evidence-based policies and procedures
3. **Community oriented:** Supporting animal welfare needs in the community
4. **Effective:** Using the best approach to achieve a desired result
5. **Humane:** Meeting the needs of animals and people
6. **Leadership:** Setting direction to do the right thing
7. **Progressive:** Evolving strategies to anticipate and meet changing needs
8. **Transparent:** Providing open disclosure of practices and outcomes

Becoming accredited under this accreditation standard offers Humane Societies and SPCAs a mechanism to publicly demonstrate how they incorporate the Five Freedoms and the quality descriptors into their design and operations.

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The structure of the standard

The Humane Canada accreditation standard is divided into three parts:

- Part A: Governance and Management
- Part B: Sheltering and Animal Management
- Part C: Programs

Each part is sub-divided into sections containing the criteria that a Humane Society or SPCA is expected to meet to become accredited. The criteria detail what is required for an organization to show that it provides safe, humane, and ethical care. It is the organization's responsibility to demonstrate how it meets or exceeds these expectations, within its capacities and resources and in accordance with evidence-based practice and applicable legislation.

Each criterion lists evidence an organization might provide to show how it meets the criterion; the organization may choose to provide other evidence. Some criteria also include a guideline that provides additional information.

The following example shows a criterion with an evidence list and a guideline. Only the criterion (in bold) is rated as part of the accreditation process. Evidence and guidelines are not rated.

Volunteers are screened for suitability prior to being accepted into the program.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer screening process

Guideline: Screening could include vulnerable sector or police checks and recruitment, interview, and selection processes.

Decision framework

Humane Canada grants accreditation according to a decision framework that weights each criterion and takes into account the degree to which the organization meets it.

In addition to the weighting, the decision framework sets out the following caveats.

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1. **Imagine Canada certification:** Organizations that are certified by Imagine Canada are considered to have met the criteria in sections 1 to 6 and are therefore only required to meet the criteria in sections 7 through 20, as applicable to the services offered. Organizations must provide proof of Imagine Canada certification when they apply to the accreditation program.
2. **Eligibility criteria:** Organizations must meet two criteria to be eligible to apply for accreditation. These are: 1.1, registered charity or not-for-profit; and 15.1, spaying or neutering prior to adoption. These are noted in the standard.
3. **Accreditation Pending:** The following four criteria may affect the timing of when accreditation is granted, as outlined below: 1.4, mission, vision, values, and position statements; 2.4, board member compensation; 3.2, release of annual financial statements; and 18.1, euthanasia. These are noted in the standard.
 - If an organization partially meets one or more of these criteria and otherwise meets the threshold to be accredited, it will be issued a decision of Accreditation Pending with a specified timeframe to meet the criterion or criteria. Until it demonstrates that it meets the criterion or criteria, the organization will not be considered for accreditation and will not be authorized to present itself as accredited.
 - If an organization does not meet one or more of these criteria, it will not be accredited, even if it otherwise meets the threshold to be accredited.

PART A GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1 Leadership

- 1.1 The organization is a registered Canadian not-for-profit and/or charity that has been incorporated federally or provincially, and it meets the requirements to operate as such and is in good standing.

NOTE: *This criterion must be met for the organization to be eligible for the accreditation program.*

Evidence

- Proof of registered charity status or incorporated not-for-profit status
- Statement attesting that applicable Canada Revenue Agency requirements checklists are completed annually (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/checklists-charities.html>)
- List of complaints or investigations of legal status, if applicable

- 1.2 A designated senior staff person is assigned responsibility for oversight of the organization and provides regular organizational performance reports to the board, staff, and community.

Evidence

- Job description for the designated senior staff person
- Organizational chart or other similar document that shows the accountability structure
- List of the reports provided (e.g., annual report) and the most recent copy of each

- 1.3 A compensation package for the designated senior staff person is approved and regularly reviewed by the board.

Evidence

- Date and minutes of board meeting where the compensation package was last approved and/or reviewed

- 1.4 Organizational mission, vision, values, and position statements align with Humane Canada's mission, vision, values, and position statements and are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to be relevant to the organization's activities.

NOTE: *If this criterion is partially met, it must be met before the organization may be considered for accreditation. If this criterion is not met, the organization will not be accredited.*

Evidence

- Mission, vision, values, and position statements
- Description of how the mission, vision, values, and position statements are aligned with Humane Canada and how they are reviewed to maintain alignment

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- Description of how the mission, vision, values, and position statements are made available to the board, staff, and the public
- Date the mission, vision, values, and position statements were last reviewed by the board and the results of the review

1.5 A strategic plan is in place and regular progress reports are made against the plan's objectives.

Evidence

- Strategic plan
- Date the strategic plan was approved by the board
- Most recent strategic plan progress report

1.6 A risk management plan that addresses financial, physical, and human resources; infrastructure; and strategic and reputational risk is in place and reviewed regularly.

Evidence

- Risk management plan
- Description of the process used to develop and review the risk management plan, including the review schedule
- Date the risk management plan was last reviewed by the board and the results of the review

1.7 A disaster preparedness plan is in place and reviewed regularly.

Evidence

- Disaster preparedness plan
- Description of the process used to develop and review the disaster preparedness plan, including the review schedule
- Date the disaster preparedness plan was last reviewed by the board and the results of the review

1.8 Adequate insurance coverage is in place and reviewed regularly by the board.

Evidence

- List of insurance policies with coverage amounts and effective dates
- Date insurance coverage amounts were last reviewed and the results of the review

1.9 Board, staff, and volunteers adhere to a code of ethics.

Evidence

- Description of code of ethics practices and/or policy and protocol
- Code of ethics document that board, staff, and volunteers sign
- Description of how board, staff, and volunteers are informed about the code of ethics
- If applicable, description of recent code of ethics breaches and how they were managed including responses, dates of the breaches, and when responses were issued

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- 1.10 Board, staff, and volunteers disclose potential or actual conflict of interest in accordance with a conflict of interest policy.

Evidence

- Description of conflict of interest practices and/or policy and protocol, including organizational definition of conflict of interest
- Description of how board, staff, and volunteers are informed of the conflict of interest policy
- Conflict of interest document that board, staff, and volunteers sign
- Description of the process to manage conflict of interest
- Description of recent conflict of interest disclosures and how they were managed, including responses, dates of the disclosures, and when responses were issued

- 1.11 Information is protected and is collected, used, and disclosed according to a privacy and confidentiality policy.

Evidence

- Description of privacy and confidentiality practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of how board, staff, volunteers, and the public are informed of the privacy and confidentiality policy
- Privacy and confidentiality document that board, staff, and volunteers sign
- Description of recent privacy or confidentiality breaches and how they were managed, including responses, dates of the breaches, and when responses were issued

- 1.12 Board, staff, volunteers, and the public can make a complaint about the organization according to a complaints policy that includes harassment and, in the case of a complaint against the board, access to an external assessment. Complaints are followed up.

Evidence

- Description of complaint practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of how board, staff, volunteers, and the public are informed of the complaint process
- Description of recent complaints and how they were managed, including responses, dates the complaints were made, and when responses were issued

- 1.13 Board, staff, volunteers, and the public can report illegal or unethical practices according to a whistleblower policy, without fear of retaliation and with confidence that their identity will be protected to the extent permitted by applicable legislation.

Evidence

- Description of whistleblower practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of how board, staff, volunteers, and the public are informed of the whistleblower policy

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- Description of recent whistleblower complaints and how they were managed, including responses, dates the complaints were made, and when responses were issued

1.14 Partnerships and collaborations with other animal welfare organizations and/or stakeholders are developed and maintained.

Evidence

- Description of interagency collaboration and/or policy and protocol
- List of agencies that are partners or collaborators

2 Governance

2.1 Organization bylaws are current and comply with legislated requirements, and they specify the length of terms and appointments.

Evidence

- Organization bylaws

2.2 The board consists of a minimum of three board members, all of whom are at arms' length from one another and from the designated senior staff person.

Evidence

- Current board member names, position on the board, term, and affiliation
- Statement that board members are required to be at arms' length from one another and from the designated senior staff person

2.3 The board's authority and role are defined.

Evidence

- Documents showing board's authority and role

2.4 Board members do not receive any salary, wages, fees, commissions, honoraria, or other compensation for their services and do not exploit their position for personal gain.

NOTE: If this criterion is partially met, it must be met before the organization may be considered for accreditation. If this criterion is not met, the organization will not be accredited.

Evidence

- Description of conflict of interest practices and/or policy and protocol, including organizational definition of conflict of interest
- Description of board member reimbursement practices and/or policy and protocol

2.5 Board meetings are held at least four times per year, and minutes are kept.

Evidence

- Board meeting schedule for the past 12 months
- Rationale for frequency of meetings

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- Recent board meeting minutes

2.6 Board committees have terms of reference and meeting minutes are kept.

Evidence

- Name of each committee
- Terms of reference for each committee
- Committee meeting schedules for the past 12 months
- Minutes from the last committee meeting for each committee

2.7 Board members are oriented to their roles.

Evidence

- Description of board orientation program
- Agenda and outline of the last board orientation, including the date it took place
- Number of board members who attended the last board orientation

2.8 Board functioning is assessed annually by the board as a whole.

Evidence

- Description of process to review board functioning
- Date of most recent board functioning review and the results of the review

2.9 An annual general meeting of the members is held each year, in accordance with applicable legislation.

Evidence

- Minutes of the last annual general meeting

3 Financial Accountability

3.1 Canada Revenue Agency financial practice requirements for registered charities and incorporated not-for-profits are followed.

Evidence (for registered charities)

- Public portions of most recent T3010 and the date it was filed

Evidence (for incorporated not-for-profits)

- Most recent T2 and the date it was filed

3.2 Annual financial statements are approved by the board and released publicly within six months of the year end.

NOTE: If this criterion is partially met, it must be met before the organization may be considered for accreditation. If this criterion is not met, the organization will not be accredited.

Evidence

- Date and minutes of the board meeting where financial statements were approved

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- Description of how financial statements are made publicly available

3.3 If the organization has over \$1 million in annual revenue, its financial statements are audited by an independent chartered professional accountant.

Evidence

- Financial statements or audited financial statements, as appropriate, from the past three years
- Statement or report from the auditor

3.4 An annual budget is approved by the board prior to the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year.

Evidence

- Date and minutes of meeting where the annual budget was approved
- Most recent annual approved budget

3.5 Financial reports are provided to the board at least twice a year, including a report of actual revenues and expenses compared to budgeted revenues and expenses.

Evidence

- Most recent financial report provided to the board
- Description of process used to monitor performance in relation to the annual budget
- Dates of last three reports of revenues and expenses versus budget

4 Fundraising and Donor Relations

4.1 Fundraising activities conducted by or on behalf of the organization are conducted transparently and ethically, and specify the organization's name and the affiliations of those involved.

Evidence

- Description of fundraising practices and/or policy and protocol, including that the organization does not directly or indirectly pay funders' fees, commissions, or a percentage of compensation based on contributions
- Date of last review of fundraising policies
- Description of how fundraising activities are monitored
- Documents (e.g., annual report, balanced scorecard) or data showing how funds raised are allocated to programs
- List of affiliations
- Recent fundraising materials

4.2 Fundraising policies that address gifts including restricted or designated gifts, naming, and endowments are in place and reviewed every two years.

Evidence

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- Description of gift acceptance practices and/or policy and protocol, including restricted or designated gifts
- Description of naming and endowments practices and/or policy and protocol

4.3 Donor wishes are respected, including wishes about frequency or method of contact and remaining anonymous, and donor lists are not sold.

Evidence

- Description of donor management practices and/or policy and protocol that address, at minimum, honouring contact or no-contact requests, anonymity requests, and management of donor lists including that donor lists are not sold and, if the list is rented, exchanged, or otherwise shared, this is done according to applicable legislation

4.4 Confidential information provided by donors, including names, addresses, and credit card information, is secured and protected.

Evidence

- Description of confidential information practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of safeguards that are in place to protect confidential donor information

5 Staff Management

Note: This section applies to organizations with paid staff.

5.1 Human resources policies and practices comply with employment, health and safety, human rights, and other applicable legislation, and policies are accessible to all staff.

Evidence

- Description of human resources practices and/or policy and protocol, with legislation cited
- Description of recruitment and selection practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of where human resources policies may be found
- Human resources manual

5.2 Human resources policies are reviewed at least every two years and when changes occur that impact the operation of the organization, and revisions are made if necessary.

Evidence

- Description of process to review and revise human resources policies
- Date of last review of human resources policies and the results

5.3 Succession plans are established for critical staff positions.

Evidence

- List of critical staff positions
- Succession plan that shows who will take over critical positions if necessary

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Guideline: Succession planning is an important part of emergency preparedness, helping to ensure the continuation of responsible care for animals in the event of a sudden loss of critical staff.

5.4 The compensation structure is reviewed regularly by leadership.

Evidence

- Date and results of last review of the compensation structure

5.5 Staff job descriptions specify credentials, roles, and responsibilities.

Evidence

- Recent staff job descriptions

5.6 Letters of employment that outline the terms of employment are issued for new hires and for internal staff moving to new positions.

Evidence

- Recent letters of employment, or templates, for new hires and internal staff

5.7 Staff are oriented to the organization and have access to organizational policies.

Evidence

- Description of staff orientation practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of staff onboarding program and recent onboarding materials
- Date of last orientation session and number of participants

5.8 Prior to working independently and on an ongoing basis, staff are trained on their roles and responsibilities.

Evidence

- Description of staff training practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of staff training program and staff training materials
- Date of last training session and number of participants
- Staff training plans and implementation strategy
- Training records for current staff

5.9 Staff performance appraisals that include identifying performance objectives and professional development and training needs are conducted annually.

Evidence

- Description of performance appraisal practices and/or policy and protocol
- Performance appraisal form

5.10 Staff have access to and are supported to participate in relevant professional development and training opportunities at a level appropriate to the size of the organization.

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Evidence

- List of recent professional development and training opportunities and how they are delivered (e.g., in class, online, meetings, video tutorials, conferences, workshops)
- List of recent professional development and training opportunities that staff have undertaken

5.11 Staff are provided with equipment that is specific to their duties and responsibilities.

- Description of equipment maintenance practices and/or policy and protocol
- List of equipment available to staff

5.12 Resources are available to staff to reduce stress and address compassion fatigue and burnout.

Evidence

- List of resources available to staff

6 Volunteer Management

Note: This section applies to organizations with volunteer programs.

6.1 The volunteer program follows professional management practices and is monitored by leadership.

Evidence

- Title of person or group responsible for the volunteer program
- Liability and confidentiality waivers
- Volunteer manual
- Recent volunteer records

Guideline: Professional management practices could include signing liability waivers and providing orientation, training, and evaluation for volunteers

6.2 The volunteer program is evaluated annually and reviewed by leadership.

- Volunteer program evaluation plan and date and results of last review
- Report from the last volunteer program evaluation, and action(s) taken in response

6.3 The status of volunteers is tracked.

Evidence

- Description of the process to track active and inactive volunteers

6.4 Volunteer job descriptions specify credentials, roles, and responsibilities.

Evidence

- Recent volunteer job descriptions

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6.5 Volunteers are screened for suitability prior to being accepted into the program.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer screening process

Guideline: Screening could include vulnerable sector or police checks and relevant recruitment, interview, and selection processes.

6.6 Volunteers are oriented to the organization.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer orientation program and recent orientation materials
- Date of last orientation session and number of participants

6.7 Prior to working independently and on an ongoing basis, volunteers are trained on their roles and responsibilities.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer training program and volunteer training materials
- Date of last training session and number of participants
- Volunteer training plans and implementation strategy
- Training records for current volunteers

6.8 Volunteers are supervised and given feedback on their performance.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer performance management practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of most recent case where performance management policy was exercised

6.9 Volunteers are recognized for their work efforts.

Evidence

- Description of volunteer recognition program

6.10 Resources are available to volunteers to reduce stress and address compassion fatigue and burnout.

Evidence

- List of resources available to volunteers

7 Fostering

Note: This section applies to organizations with foster programs.

7.1 The purpose and role of fostering is defined in organizational policy.

- Description of foster program practices and/or policy and protocol

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Guideline: Defining the purpose and role of fostering helps ensure that animals are placed in safe foster homes and that they are well cared for and receive medical care when they need it.

7.2 Criteria are followed to determine which animals are eligible for fostering.

Evidence

- Foster animal eligibility criteria

7.3 Foster volunteers are screened according to set criteria and are required to sign contracts and waivers.

Evidence

- Screening criteria for foster volunteers
- Contract that specifies the roles and responsibilities of the organization and the foster volunteer
- Recent foster volunteer waivers

7.4 Foster volunteers are provided with training.

Evidence

- Foster volunteer training manual and/or onboarding program
- Description of most recent foster volunteer orientation and training session, including date and number of participants

7.5 Long-term foster animals are re-checked regularly.

Evidence

- Description of how foster animals are monitored and/or policy or protocol
- Log or file detailing scheduled and unscheduled contacts
- Recent call logs, records and/or standard operating procedures showing re-checks on long-term foster animals

Guideline: Re-checking could include routine medical exams, a phone call, or a visual exam by a trained staff member or veterinarian.

7.6 Foster volunteers are informed of when and how to contact medical and emergency support, including after-hours support.

Evidence

- Description of medical and emergency support practices for foster volunteers and/or policy and protocol
- Description of how foster volunteers are informed about when and how to contact medical and emergency support
- Recent records of when after-hours support was accessed by foster volunteers

7.7 Up-to-date medical and behavioural records are maintained for foster animals, using standard shelter record systems, and foster volunteers are informed of what information to report, and how and when.

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Evidence

- Description of foster home record keeping practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent foster volunteer reporting records

8 Data Collection and Reporting

- 8.1 An electronic records management system that permits ready access to animal data and records and has the capacity to analyze data and produce reports is used.

Evidence

- Name and description of the records management system and its features

- 8.2 Data are reported to Humane Canada through its annual shelter survey, using the Shelter Animals Count Basic Animal Data Matrix.

Evidence

- Most recent annual shelter statistics submission to Humane Canada

- 8.3 Data are collected and analyzed to identify trends or issues in the organization and/or in the community, and results are used to monitor the program, develop strategy, and manage and improve the program.

Evidence

- Most recent data report and analysis
- Description of the most recent program improvement made as a result of data analysis

Guideline: Data that could be collected include length of stay, days to adoption, intake numbers, rate of return to owner, donor appeal response rates, cruelty statistics, number of cat colonies, number of licences issued, trap-neuter-return rates, mortality rates, number of outbreaks, and animal control and bylaw enforcement data.

PART B SHELTERING AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

9 Facility Design and Environment

- 9.1 Occupational health and safety codes and applicable legislation for safe operation are met.

Evidence

- Health and safety manual, with legislation cited
- List of safety equipment including personal protective equipment, eye wash stations, and first aid supplies, and where the equipment is kept

- 9.2 There is sufficient space for shelter operations such as intake, examination, holding, housing, adoption, isolation, treatment, euthanasia, food storage, and laundry.

Evidence

- Blueprint or diagram of facility with description of each area
- Photos of each area

- 9.3 There is sufficient space to accommodate each species housed, including sufficient space for feeding, drinking, rest, and urination and defecation in the primary enclosure.

Evidence

- List of all species housed in the facility
- Descriptions and measurements of the housing areas for each species
- Photos of each housing area, with a description of the areas for feeding, drinking, rest, and urination and defecation
- Photos showing separation among these areas

- 9.4 There is sufficient indoor and outdoor space for animals' physical activity, enrichment, training, and socialization.

Evidence

- Description of indoor and outdoor spaces and how they are used
- Photos of indoor and outdoor spaces
- Year-round socialization plan

- 9.5 Species that have a predator/prey relationship are housed and managed to limit sight and smell of each other.

Evidence

- Description of how species with a predator/prey relationship are separated and/or policy and protocol
- Blueprint or diagram showing separation of species with a predator/prey relationship
- Photos of housing areas showing separation

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- 9.6 Ventilation, humidity, temperature, and lighting are controlled to meet the needs of each species being housed.

Evidence

- Description of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems
- Description of lighting systems and whether natural light or light that mimics natural light is available
- Maintenance logs or other records showing that systems are kept in good repair

- 9.7 Animals are moved safely within the facility.

Evidence

- Description of how animals are moved within the facility and/or policy and protocol

10 Sanitation

- 10.1 Facility design permits adequate sanitation to reduce opportunities for spread of disease.

Evidence

- Description of waste removal practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of drainage system and how drainage is managed
- Description of how sanitation systems are monitored
- Description of food preparation and laundry areas
- Photos of drainage system, food preparation, and laundry areas

- 10.2 Pests and mould are controlled through active prevention and control measures that include preparing and storing animal and human food so as to prevent pests and mould.

Evidence

- Description of pest control management and prevention practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of food storage practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of types of food storage containers
- Photos of food preparation and storage areas

Guideline: Active prevention and control measures could include sealing holes and doorways, storing food in sealed containers, monitoring, and trapping or eliminating pests that gain access (e.g., using humane traps or bait stations) in accordance with applicable legislation.

- 10.3 Human food is not stored or eaten in animal areas.

Evidence

- Description of human food storage and consumption practices and/or policy and protocol

- 10.4 Surfaces in animal housing and food preparation areas are non-porous and easy to clean and sanitize.

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Evidence

- Description of surfaces in animal housing and food preparation areas

Guideline: Porous surfaces such as concrete can be made non-porous with appropriate paint.

- 10.5 Cleaning, disinfection, and laundry practices that are specifically designed for animal shelters are used to help reduce the transmission of disease in animals and people.

Evidence

- Description of cleaning, disinfection, and laundry practices and/or policies and protocols for each
- Description of cleaning order and/or policy and protocol, showing that the order is based on animals' susceptibility to disease and potential risk to the general population
- Description of equipment cleaning practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of infection control, disease transmission, and/or biosecurity practices and/or policy and protocol
- List of products used for cleaning and disinfecting
- Description of how chemicals are handled and stored

- 10.6 Outdoor animal areas are kept clean and areas that can be disinfected are disinfected regularly.

Evidence

- Description of cleaning methods for outdoor areas and/or policy and protocol

- 10.7 Vehicles and equipment used for transporting animals are cleaned thoroughly and disinfected regularly and between successive groups of animals.

Evidence

- Description of cleaning process for vehicles and/or policy and protocol

- 10.8 Staff and volunteers are trained, supervised, and monitored with regard to fomite control, cleaning and disinfection, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems.

Evidence

- Description of training methods on fomite control, cleaning and disinfection, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems
- Staff and volunteer training materials on fomite control, cleaning and disinfection, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems
- Statement that all staff are trained on Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems
- Description of how sanitation systems are monitored

Guideline: Fomites are inanimate objects such as clothing, structures, or furniture that can carry infectious organisms and serve as disease transmission points for humans or animals.

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- 10.9 Waste, including biohazardous waste, is disposed of as required by legislation, and biohazardous waste is isolated from other waste.

Evidence

- Description of waste disposal practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of biohazard disposal systems
- Recent invoice for biohazard disposal

- 10.10 Sinks and/or hand sanitizer stations are available for staff, volunteer, and public use in all areas used for animal housing, food preparation, laundry, and animal treatment.

Evidence

- List of locations of sinks and hand sanitizer stations

11 Biosecurity and Infectious Disease Control

- 11.1 The health and welfare of the animal population is monitored and managed through infectious disease prevention and control measures.

Evidence

- Biosecurity and infectious disease prevention plan including a description of processes, policies, and procedures
- Infectious disease response plan with description of how isolation, quarantine, sanitation, and flow are used to manage disease
- Staff and volunteer training materials on infection control and disease transmission

- 11.2 Antibiotics are used prudently and under veterinarian oversight, and are not used in healthy animals.

Evidence

- Description of antimicrobial stewardship practices and/or policy and protocol
- Statement that antibiotics are not used in healthy animals

- 11.3 Animals, including animals arriving from other locations, are segregated, isolated, or quarantined in accordance with a preventive health plan that is developed with a veterinarian.

Evidence

- Description of segregation, isolation, and quarantine practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of animal housing spaces and how animals are housed based on health status
- Blueprint and description of segregation, isolation, and quarantine spaces
- Description of recent use of segregation, isolation, and quarantine

- 11.4 Disease outbreaks are identified and managed.

Evidence

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- Description of disease outbreak practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of facility capacity to manage outbreaks
- Photos of signs or notifications used during outbreaks
- Staff and volunteer training materials on managing disease outbreaks

11.5 Appropriate training on the use of personal protective equipment to maintain safety and prevent disease transmission is provided to staff and volunteers, and staff and volunteers adhere to personal protective equipment requirements.

Evidence

- Description of personal protective equipment requirements and/or policy and protocol
- List of personal protective equipment available
- Staff and volunteer training materials on personal protective equipment

11.6 Precautions are taken to prevent transmission of rabies and other zoonotic diseases to humans, and incidents and exposure are reported and managed as required by applicable legislation.

Evidence

- Rabies vaccine policy and protocol
- Zoonoses risk assessment plan that addresses animal-to-human and human-to-human rabies transmission and specifies reporting requirements
- Staff and volunteer training program materials on zoonoses risk, safety, and reporting

12 Population Management

12.1 On intake, a record that includes a unique identifier, a description, and a photo is established for each animal.

Evidence

- Description of intake practices and/or intake policy and protocol
- Recent intake records

Guideline: A unique identifier could be a collar with a unique number, a microchip, a description, or photo.

12.2 On intake, thorough efforts are made to identify stray and lost animals and contact their owners, and the efforts and the results are documented.

Evidence

- Identification and contact practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent intake records

Guideline: Identification efforts could include checking for visible identification and microchip or tattoo, and cross-referencing with reports of lost animals.

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- 12.3 All animals are accepted into the organization through legal authority and in accordance with applicable legislation.

Evidence

- Description of intake practices and/or policy and protocol, with legislation cited
- Description of owner surrender practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent owner surrender forms
- Enforcement authority

Guideline: When animals are dropped off without legal authority, the organization follows a legal process to establish authority and staff know what steps to take in questionable situations.

- 12.4 Maximum capacity by species is tracked and monitored, and animal needs are addressed when there is a short-term need to exceed capacity.

Evidence

- Maximum capacity and rationale for each species
- Maximum capacity plan, including a plan for when maximum capacity must be exceeded
- Description of how capacity is tracked and monitored
- Description of intake management

- 12.5 A current inventory and the location of all animals in the organization's care, including animals housed off-site, is tracked and monitored.

Evidence

- Description of how inventory is tracked and monitored, including animals off-site at veterinary clinics, satellite adoption locations, and foster homes

- 12.6 A plan is used to ensure efficient animal flow from intake to outcome.

Evidence

- Description of animal flow practices and/or policy and protocol
- Log showing daily inspections of all animals
- Recent records of evaluations to monitor capacity and identify suitable housing

- 12.7 Length of stay is tracked and additional support is provided for animals who are sheltered for longer than three weeks and who are exhibiting signs of poor welfare.

Evidence

- Description of housing provided for long-term animals
- Recent length-of-stay reports
- Plans for animals who have stayed in one area for more than three weeks

Guideline: The Canadian Advisory Council on National Shelter Standards (2013) states that long-term confinement of any animal, including feral or aggressive animals, who cannot be provided with basic care, daily enrichment, and exercise without inducing stress, is unacceptable. Longer length of stay, excluding in foster homes, requires additional support

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that could include alternative housing, extra enrichment, foster homing, and/or pathway decisions.

13 Physical Health and Well-Being

- 13.1 On intake, each animal's health history is reviewed if it is available, the health history is documented, and the animal's health is evaluated.

Evidence

- Description of intake practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent intake forms

- 13.2 There is a defined relationship with a veterinarian(s) to provide medical care.

Evidence

- Description of the relationship with a veterinarian(s)
- Description of how a veterinarian(s) provides care to the animals

- 13.3 Appropriate nutrition and fresh, clean water are available for animals according to the type, age, and reproductive state of the animal.

Evidence

- Description of nutrition practices and/or policy and protocol
- Staff and volunteer training materials on feeding

- 13.4 Physical pain and suffering are prevented where possible, or identified and alleviated in a timely manner.

Evidence

- Description of pain management practices and/or policy and protocol, including pain management for commonly performed surgeries
- Description of practices to address pain and suffering in animals whose legal status is unknown and/or policy and protocol
- Staff and volunteer training materials on recognizing and addressing physical pain and suffering

- 13.5 Animals are vaccinated according to a vaccination protocol that has been developed in consultation with a veterinarian and includes vaccination as part of the intake process. Deviations from the protocol, at the direction of a veterinarian, are documented.

Evidence

- Description of vaccination practices and/or policy and protocol, with codes and regulations cited
- Recent vaccination records

- 13.6 Accurate and up-to-date health and medical records are maintained for each animal.

Evidence

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- Description of how health and medical records are maintained, such as in logs or a database
- Recent health records
- Recent medical records

Guideline: Health and medical records could be kept separate by keeping records of vaccinations, deworming, and medical care separate from the general record.

- 13.7 Emergency medical care, including after-hours care, is available for any animal who needs it.

Evidence

- Description of emergency medical care practices and/or policy and protocol
- Plan to provide access to emergency care

Guideline: In remote settings, access to emergency medical care could include telephone consultation.

- 13.8 Critically ill or injured animals, as defined by a veterinarian, are monitored appropriately.

Evidence

- Description of plan to monitor critically ill or injured animals and/or policy and protocol

- 13.9 Parasites are eliminated to the extent possible using a preventive approach, and controlled and treated in consultation with a veterinarian.

Evidence

- Description of parasite control practices and/or policy and protocol

- 13.10 Medical protocols and preventive health care protocols for common conditions are established by a veterinarian and followed.

Evidence

- List of common medical protocols that are followed
- List of preventive health care protocols that are followed
- Staff and volunteer training materials on medical and preventive health care protocols

14 Behavioural Health and Well-Being

- 14.1 On intake and where possible, a thorough animal behavioural history, including history of aggressive or problematic behaviour, is documented.

Evidence

- Description of intake practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent behavioural intake records for all species housed by the organization

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- 14.2 Staff are trained to use species-specific body language and behavioural interpretation to identify emotional distress in animals.

Evidence

- Staff and volunteer training materials on animal emotional well-being and distress

- 14.3 Each animal's psychological well-being and welfare is monitored and the suffering of animals displaying emotional distress is alleviated in a timely manner.

Evidence

- Description of emotional distress practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent records and treatment plans for emotionally distressed animals

- 14.4 Every animal is given appropriate environmental enrichment that allows for expression of natural behaviours.

Evidence

- Description of enrichment methods

- 14.5 Socialization plans are followed for animals in their critical socialization period.

Evidence

- Description of socialization practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent socialization plans

- 14.6 Only humane, evidence-based training methods are used for behaviour modification.

Evidence

- Description of training methods and/or policy and protocol
- Staff and volunteer training materials on humane training, with evidence cited

15 Adoption

- 15.1 Dogs or cats adopted into homes are spayed or neutered prior to the adoption contract being signed and ownership being transferred, except where medical considerations warrant delaying those procedures. Spay or neuter surgeries are performed by a licensed veterinarian or by a veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian and in compliance with applicable legislation, as per the Canadian Advisory Council on National Shelter Standards (2013). Direct supervision by a veterinarian is also required for interns who perform spay or neuter surgeries.

NOTE: *This criterion must be met for the organization to be eligible for the accreditation program.*

Evidence

- Description of spay and neuter practices and/or policy and protocol

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- Description of adoption practices and/or policy and protocol

15.2 Post-surgical care that includes pain management and follow-up are provided.

Evidence

- Description of pain management practices and/or policy and protocol
- Description of access to medical care for post-spay or post-neuter concerns or complications
- Recent post-spay or post-neuter surgical plans

15.3 Adoptions follow a clear and consistent application process that aligns with the organization's position statements.

Evidence

- Description of adoption application and screening practices and/or policy and protocol

15.4 Adopter records are linked to each animal being adopted.

Evidence

- Description of adoption practices and/or policy and protocol

15.5 Potential adopters and adopters are provided with a complete record for the animal that includes bite history and behavioural and/or medical issues.

Evidence

- Description of information provided to potential adopters and adopters, and how it is shared
- Description of process for release of records to veterinarians
- Behavioural and/or veterinary waivers
- Recent signed adopter behavioural and/or veterinary waivers showing they received information

15.6 Permanent ID, in the form of a microchip or a tattoo, is applied prior to adoption and documented in an appropriate database with information about the new owner. If tattoos are applied, this is only done under anaesthetic.

Evidence

- Description of permanent ID practices and/or policy and protocol

15.7 Post-adoption support is provided.

Evidence

- Description of post-adoption support practices and/or policy and protocol
- Recent post-adoption records where support has been provided

16 Animal Handling

- 16.1 Safe, humane, and animal-appropriate handling techniques are used, and appropriate restraint and protective equipment is available for all species accepted into care and is kept in good repair.

Evidence

- Description of animal handling and restraint techniques and/or policy and protocol
- Description of restraint techniques and equipment used to minimize stress
- List of equipment used for restraint for each species
- List of personal protective equipment used with each species
- Cleaning and repair logs

- 16.2 Staff and volunteers are trained, supervised, and assessed to ensure they are competent to handle animals, including shy, feral, aggressive, injured, sick, and dangerous animals.

Evidence

- Description of animal handling practice and/or policy and protocol, including methods of appropriate and humane restraint
- Staff and volunteer training materials on animal handling

- 16.3 Animals who require special handling restrictions or requirements, such as aggressive, sick, or injured animals, are identified.

Evidence

- Description of animal handling practices and/or policy and protocol, including methods of appropriate and humane restraint that are used
- Photos of signs or other measures used to identify animals who require special handling restrictions or requirements
- Recent records and treatment plans for animals who require special handling

17 Transport and Importation

This section applies to organizations that transport or import animals.

- 17.1 Transfer animals are transported in a manner that ensures their safety and security, including appropriate ventilation, during transport and at the receiving facility, and also ensures public safety.

Evidence

- Description of transport practices and/or policy and protocol, including how long animals can be transported and how long they can be in carriers
- Description of carriers or kennels for each species transported
- Vehicle requirements for vehicles used to transport animals
- Recent vehicle maintenance records

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- Training requirements for vehicle drivers

Guideline: During transport, closely stacked containers, especially those with few openings or sides that sit against one another such as disposable box-type kennels (plastic kennels have sides that prevent them sitting fully adjacent) can limit ventilation, without this being evident. It may be difficult to ensure that vehicles that are not purpose-designed for animal transport provide adequate ventilation.

- 17.2 Staff and volunteers who are responsible for transporting animals are trained and supervised.

- Description of training and supervision provided to staff or volunteers who transport animals

- 17.3 The medical and behavioural history of transfer animals is disclosed to the receiving facility.

- Recent communications with a receiving facility regarding the medical and behavioural history of transfer animals

- 17.4 Transfer animals are assessed for fitness for transport, including health and behavioural status, prior to being transported.

Evidence

- List of animal records that are sent at the time of transport (e.g., identifiers, medical history, behavioural history)

- 17.5 Transfer animals are assessed, sterilized, vaccinated, and treated for parasites prior to transportation or by the receiving facility, in consultation with a veterinarian.

Evidence

- Description of assessment, sterilization, vaccination and deworming practices for transfer animals and/or policy and protocol
- Description of vaccination practices for transfer animals and/or policy and protocol
- Description of process used to validate the receiving facility's processes for assessment, sterilization, vaccination, and treatment for parasites

- 17.6 If the organization accepts transfer animals from areas with a high or an unknown risk of infectious disease, including international or out-of-province locations, documented procedures, policies, and protocols for high-risk transfer that have been endorsed by a veterinarian are followed.

Evidence

- Description of high-risk transfer practices and/or policy and protocol, including organizational definition of high-risk transfer
- Description of recent high-risk transfers that were accepted, showing how many and where they came from

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Guideline: The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2016) provides additional information on importation of animals.

- 17.7 Records are maintained and reconciled for all animals received by the organization to ensure the animals can be traced, and include identification, source or origin, complete record from the source organization, and verification of safe arrival.

Evidence

- Description of process to receive animals and/or policy and protocol
- Recent records for animals received from other locations

18 Euthanasia

- 18.1 Euthanasia practices comply with applicable legislation, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association position statement on euthanasia, and the Humane Canada position statement on euthanasia.

NOTE: If this criterion is partially met, it must be met before the organization may be considered for accreditation. If this criterion is not met, the organization will not be accredited.

Evidence

- Euthanasia policy and protocol that specifies acceptable methods and processes and that include, at minimum, low-stress handling, sedation/anaesthesia, and separation from other animals
- Staff and volunteer training materials on euthanasia
- Controlled substance storage policy and description of storage area
- Recent entries from the controlled substance log
- Recent records for animals who were euthanized

- 18.2 Animals are designated for euthanasia according to a defined decision-making process that includes verification of the animal's identity and confirmation of the reason for euthanasia.

Evidence

- Euthanasia policy and protocol that includes decision-making process for euthanizing shelter and owned animals

- 18.3 Deceased animals are disposed of according to applicable legislation.

Evidence

- Description of disposition practices and/or policy and protocol, with legislation cited

PART C PROGRAMS

19 Community Outreach, Education, and Advocacy

- 19.1 As appropriate to the size and resources of the organization, community animal welfare needs are assessed and relevant programs (e.g., community cat management, dog overpopulation, humane education, pet therapy, human/animal bond, access to veterinary care) are identified and implemented.

Evidence

- Community needs data, assessments, and/or surveys
- Community outreach plan if available
- Terms of reference for community outreach programs run by the organization

Guideline: The organization could examine its own data to assess community needs (e.g., many animals admitted without identification reveals a need for outreach or education on pet identification); follow its own strategic plan; or base its outreach activities on the Five Freedoms or the elements of responsible animal ownership.

- 19.2 Humane education that is based on accurate and credible sources is used to guide public education activities, as appropriate to the size and resources of the organization.

Evidence

- Description of education program, with sources cited
- Recent informational materials such as newsletters, brochures, and media releases
- Website link
- List of recent public relations activities and events

- 19.3 Animal welfare position statements have been developed or adopted from a reputable organization, and the organization's animal welfare advocacy work, including, at minimum, advocating for responsible animal ownership, is based on those statements.

Evidence

- List of animal welfare position statements that have been adopted or adapted
- List of advocacy methods used by the organization
- List of advocacy activities undertaken in the past year

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