

**TITLE: Adoption Policy**

**SOP NUMBER: Shelter SOP #2**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

**REPLACES/RECINDS: Previous Adoption Policy SOP #2  
October 13, 2013**

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the procedures followed in the adoption of animals from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, hereafter referred to as 'FCAS.'

## **II. POLICY**

It is the policy of FCAS to place all animals that are deemed adoptable into suitable homes, following national best practices in adoption counseling and following all state and county codes and ordinances.

## **IV. PROCEDURES**

Animal Services Division (ASD Forms #s not yet assigned)

ASD Form: Dog Adoption Questionnaire (separate forms for cats and small animals)

ASD Form: Dog Surrender Personality Profile (separate forms for cats)

ASD Form: Adoption Contract (sample completed contract)

Adoption Requirements

In order to adopt a pet, the adopter must:

1. Be at least 18 years old and possess a current photo identification card.
2. Present current rabies vaccine records for all currently owned pets.
3. Present proof of license for all currently owned dogs over four months of age.
4. Show proof of homeownership or lease or pet addendum or notarized letter from landlord.
5. Meet with the pet they wish to adopt.
6. Comply with requests made by adoption counselor, including bringing all members of the family to meet the pet or bringing currently-owned dog to meet dog the potential adopter wants to adopt.
7. Complete an adoption questionnaire and meet with an adoption counselor.
8. Sign an adoption contract.

Adoption Fees

- Adoption fees are non-refundable.
- Refunds and waivers may be made on a case-by-case basis by the shelter director or his/her designee.
- Adoption fees must be paid at the time of the adoption.
- Adoption fees are listed on flyers in the shelter lobby and on the FCAS website ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter)).
- The shelter director or his/her designee may reduce or waive adoption fees at various times for special promotions.
- Fees can be paid in cash, credit card or check.
- Employees of the Animal Services Division and shelter volunteers and foster families will receive a 50% discount on adoption fees.

### Pre-Adoption Procedures

Prior to completing an adoption application:

- A potential adopter may view available pets during the shelter's open hours.
- Once a potential adopter chooses an animal to visit with, they will alert a staff member or volunteer that they would like to visit with an available pet. Visits end one-half hour prior to closing on each day the shelter is open.
- Visits are supervised by a staff member or trained volunteer. During the visit, the potential adopter is told information about the pet and its history if known. If the animal was taken in as a stray, there may be very little information to share. The staff person or volunteer supervising the visit may leave the potential adopter in a visitation room to obtain the animal's paper file, which shall be kept in the adoption lobby area in a filing cabinet. Once the staff member or volunteer has obtained the paper file, they shall share information with the potential adopter, including information shared by the pet's previous owner, if this information is known.
- During the visit, the staff member or trained volunteer shall give the potential adopter a copy of the adoption requirements information sheet. The potential adopter will be instructed to review the document and make sure they meet the requirements to adopt. The content of the information sheet matches the adoption requirements listed above.
- All information given during the pre-adoption period is verbal. During this time, the potential adopter may ask questions and may discuss concerns with the staff member or volunteer.
- If the potential adopter decides to proceed, the animal shall be returned to its holding area by the staff member or volunteer.
- The staff member or volunteer who has been assisting shall place an 'adoption pending' card on the animal's kennel card. An animal with this card on its kennel will not be available for visits during the time the card is on its kennel.
- The staff member or volunteer who has been assisting shall obtain the correct adoption questionnaire and shall give it to the potential adopter.
- The staff member or volunteer shall escort or direct the potential adopter to the adoption lobby to complete the application and stand in line to meet with an adoption counselor.

- No holds will be placed on animals for any reason unless approved verbally or in writing by the director or a manager.

### Special Cases

- For pets with special medical or behavioral needs, the shelter director or his/her designee may accept multiple applications and select the applicant who s/he believes will provide the most suitable home for the animals.
- In the case that an animal is part of a bonded pair, the shelter director or his/her designee may make the determination the pets must be adopted as a pair. This will be noted in shelter software and will also be indicated on the kennel card.
- Preference may be given to adopters willing to adopt a pair of animals, even if the shelter has not determined the pair must be adopted together.
- In some cases, the shelter may require a home visit or additional veterinary information.
- The shelter director or his/her designee may refuse to complete any adoption at any time.
- Those wishing to adopt who are found to be on the shelter's 'Do not adopt' list shall be told by the director or his/her designee that they may not adopt from FCAS.

### Steps to Adoption:

1. The trained staff or VIPS volunteer adoption counselor shall review the questionnaire.
2. The counselor shall review the animal's record. Items the adoption counselor reviews include:
  - a. The paper file which will include a personality profile completed by the person who surrendered the animal, if the animal was surrendered
  - b. The electronic file which will contain intake, medical and behavioral notes.
3. The adoption shall verbally share all available medical and behavioral notes with the adopter.
4. The counselor shall discuss with the adopter the potential match between the adopter and the pet and the possible challenges the adopter will face. If any of the potential adopter's responses on the adoption questionnaire stand out, the adoption counselor shall discuss the responses with the potential adopter.
5. The adoption counselor shall record the potential adopter's information into the software system.
6. The adoption counselor will read any notes associated with the potential adopter's past activity involving the shelter. If the adopter is listed as a 'Do Not Adopt,' the adoption counselor shall alert a supervisor. The supervisor shall communicate with the director or their designee and shall alert the potential adopter they may not adopt from FCAS.
7. The adoption counselor will print the notes from the shelter software system and attach them to the adoption contract.
8. The counselor shall review the terms of the adoption contract and go over the packet with the adopter.
9. The adoption counselor shall instruct the adopter to initial next to each line of the adoption contract and to sign the contract.

10. Once the packet of notes and the contract is complete, the adoption counselor shall make a copy of all of this information to be filed at the shelter.
11. The counselor shall request and accept the adoption fee.
12. The adoption counselor shall insert the adoption contract and related notes into the adoption folder and give it to the adopter.
13. The counselor shall make an identification tag for the pet and allow the adopter to choose a collar.
14. If adopting a dog over four months of age to a current Fairfax County resident, the counselor shall sell the adopter a Fairfax County license.
15. If the pet is on medication, the counselor shall ask an animal caretaker to bring the medicine to the lobby.
16. The counselor shall give the adopter a small bag of food and feeding instructions.
17. The counselor shall page an animal caretaker or a volunteer to get the pet and bring it to the lobby or will ask the adopter to wait beside the kennel for the caretaker or volunteer.
18. The caretaker or a volunteer shall ensure the appropriate identification is put on the adopted animal and it is securely leashed or in a carrier prior to the animal exiting the building with the adopter.

Post Adoption:

- A shelter staff member or VIPS volunteer shall e-mail the adopter within three weeks of the adoption to provide resources and to give the adopter contact information if they have questions or concerns.
- An adopted animal may be returned during regular shelter hours any time throughout the duration of the animal's life.

This SOP becomes effective and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

Issued by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Animal Shelter Director



**How did you hear about FCAS?**

- Friends/Family   
  Social Media (Facebook/Twitter)   
  Adoption Event  
 Past Connection with Organization   
  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you:     Own     Rent     Sublet     Other

If you rent or sublet, please list the landlord or rental agency's contact information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of People in the Household: Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_\_ Ages of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Adults Living in the Household (18 and over):

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you applied to adopt a pet from FCAS before?     Yes     No    If so, how long ago? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of pet?     Cat     Dog     Other

If you have previously adopted from us, what happened with that pet? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all of the companion animals you have had in the last 5 years, including the ones that are still with you.						
Name	Type/Breed	Age	Neutered /Spayed	If cat, declawed?	Owned for how long?	Why is this animal no longer with you? (if applicable?)

Do you have a veterinarian?     Yes     No    Vet Clinic Name and Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check any topics you'd like to discuss with an adoption counselor:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeding your pet  | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging behaviors          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introducing your new pet to other pets                            | <input type="checkbox"/> What to do if your pet is lost |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Where to keep your pet during the day, at night, or while at work | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming/Training              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House training  | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior issues                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                   |

***I certify that all information provided is true and understand that false information may nullify this application and authorize The Fairfax County Animal Shelter to verify the above information.***

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Dog Adoption Questionnaire

Name of Pet You Want to Adopt: \_\_\_\_\_ A0# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Home# \_\_\_\_\_ Cell# \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the option on each line that you feel best suits you and your home:

I consider my home to be most like:	A library (calm and quiet)	Middle of the road (sometimes quiet, sometimes a lot going on)	Grand Central Station (We have lots of people coming and going and a lot going on most of the time)
I have owned a dog before:	No	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> 2-10 yrs ago <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ yrs <input type="checkbox"/> Within the past year	I currently own a dog
When I'm home, I want my dog to be by my side:	Little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time
When I'm not home, my dog will spend his time:	In the garage In a crate in the house	In the yard	Loose in the house Confined to one room
My dog will be mostly an:	Inside dog	Outside dog	
My dog needs to be able to be alone for:	Less than 4 hours a day	4-8 hours a day	More than 8 hours a day
I want my dog to be:	Not very Active	Middle of the road	Very active
I want a dog for:	Guard Dog	Companionship	Other
I am comfortable doing:	No training	Some training	A lot of training
My dog needs to be good with: (circle all that apply)			
	Dogs	Cats	Birds
			Other Animals
			Kids under 8
	Kids over 8	Elderly people	Other: _____
It is most important to me that my dog: _____			
Fill in the blank			