

Collin County, Texas

Animal Services Impounded Animal Holding

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish rules and guidelines for the holding periods for animals that are impounded in the Collin County Animal Shelter and to establish that the legal ownership of the animal is automatically transferred to Collin County at the end of the specified hold period.

Background: Texas law requires that animals be held by shelters for a “reasonable” amount of time. In order to establish set guidelines for the length of animal holding in Collin County, the following policy has been adopted by Collin County Animal Services and applies to all animals (as noted in the policy) placed in the care of Collin County Animal Services/Shelter.

Definitions: For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined as:

- Livestock - means cattle, horses, mules, asses, sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, exotic livestock, including elk and elk hybrids, and hogs, unless otherwise defined in state law.
- Owner/owned - means a person who owns or has custody or control of an animal or an animal over which a known person has custody or control.
- Owner Surrender - means an animal that a person 18 years of age or older has willingly surrendered to animal control/shelter and has indicated in writing that they are the current owner of said animal and that they are no longer capable or willing to care for said animal.
- Quarantine - means strict confinement of an animal for 10 days from the time of a bite or scratch to a human, specified in an order of the department or its designee in order to determine the presence of the rabies virus in the animal's saliva at the time of the bite/scratch event.
- Seized/Protective Custody - animal seized from private property or person for reasons of suspicion of cruelty/neglect, or due to the arrest, hospitalization, death of owner or to remove the animal from a situation that could result in harm to the animal, another animal or a human.
- Stray - means roaming with no physical restraint beyond the premises of an animal's owner or keeper.

Policy for Animal Hold Duration:

Quarantine (any age/any species except livestock) –

- If owner surrendered – immediately becomes County property upon notice of surrender.
- If owner unknown – becomes County property 240 hours after bite/scratch occurs.
- If owner is known (through owner-contact with ACO or shelter, through microchip or tags, etc.) – becomes County property 336 hours after the bite/scratch occurs.

Owner Surrender (any age/any species) –

- Immediately becomes County property upon written notice of surrender (provided by any person over the age of 18 that is claiming to have current ownership of the animal).

Stray/Unknown Owner (5 months and older/any species except livestock) –

- Becomes County property 120 hours after impoundment at the Shelter or in the field.

Stray/Unknown Owner (under 5 months/any species except livestock) –

- May become County property immediately upon impoundment at the Shelter or in the field, depending upon certain circumstances –
 - Communicable disease concern
 - Evidence of possible ownership
 - Condition/health of animal
 - Need for care beyond what the shelter can provide

Stray/Known Owner (5 months and older/any species except livestock) –

- Becomes County property 120 hours after impoundment at the Shelter or in the field.

Stray/Known Owner (under 5 months/any species except livestock) –

- May become County property immediately upon impoundment at the Shelter or in the field, depending upon certain circumstances –
 - Communicable disease concern
 - Evidence of possible ownership
 - Condition/health of animal
 - Need for care beyond what the shelter can provide

Seized/Protective Custody Known/Unknown Owner (5 months and older/any species except livestock) –

- Becomes County property 120 hours after impoundment at the Shelter or in the field or as ordered by a court of law.

Seized/Protective Custody Known/Unknown Owner (under 5 months/any species except livestock) –

- May become County property immediately upon impoundment at the Shelter or in the field, depending upon certain circumstances –
 - Communicable disease concern
 - Evidence of possible ownership
 - Condition/health of animal
 - Need for care beyond what the shelter can provide
 - As ordered by a court of law

Medical Emergency (any age/any species) –

- Becomes County property immediately upon recognition of a medical emergency (as identified by a licensed Veterinarian). If the animal can be humanely stabilized, every attempt will be made to allow a possible owner time (up to 120 hours, if possible, after impoundment at the shelter or in the field) to contact the veterinary clinic where the animal is being held and make medical decisions and payment arrangements with the Veterinarian.