



The Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force Shelter Best Practices Self-Assessment

Introduction

The Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force (LACATF) is committed to improving the quality of Louisiana public animal shelters and agencies. Our mission is to support each agency/shelter in reaching its goals. Our members are committed to assisting agencies with their needs and bringing value to every shelter/ agency in our state.

What is the Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force (LACATF)?

The Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force (R.S. 3:2364) was statutorily created in 2017 within the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry under the direction of the state veterinarian. The LACATF is dedicated promoting the proper treatment and well-being of animals. LACATF's work is focused on improving animal control agencies and shelters, supporting law enforcement, promoting education, formulating solutions to address pet overpopulation, and supporting animal control agencies in their efforts to build strong relationships within their communities. For additional information on the duties and functions of Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force, please visit: <http://lacatf.la.gov>

What is the Animal Control Shelter Inspection Program?

The Animal Control Shelter Inspection Program, administered by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, is a comprehensive shelter inspection program that provides recommendations to Louisiana animal control agencies/shelters on how to provide a high quality, effective, shelter to the communities they serve. The shelter inspection is pursuant to the Minimum Standards for Animal Shelters(R.S. 3:2461). In addition, the program assesses the shelter's participation in the voluntary Louisiana Animal Shelter Registry and Shelter Counts Basic Animal Data Matrix (R.S. 3:2366). The program ensures that shelters receive and are knowledgeable of the Louisiana Minimum Standards for public animal shelters (R.S. 2461) and are compliant with the requirements of laws pertaining to emergency planning and preparedness.

What is the purpose of Shelter Best Practices Self-Assessment?

The shelter self-assessment checklist is a tool designed to allow agencies to evaluate their compliance, knowledge, and understanding of the Louisiana Revised Statutes, Louisiana Administrative Code, National Animal Care & Control Guidelines, and Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. This document enables agencies to evaluate their performance and provide awareness of the industry's best practices.

How do I use this assessment?

- Check either yes, no, not applicable (n/a), in progress, or
- Fill in the blank, or
- Provide a brief description

Agencies/shelters should make an effort to answer all applicable questions. Additional space is provided at the end of the document for comments and/or progress notes of the answers recorded in previous sections.

Shelter Best Practice Self-Assessment

General Information

CHECKLIST COMPLETED BY:

Date _____

Name and Title _____

Agency

Phone Number

Email Address

General Structure

Are housing facilities for animals structurally sound and maintained to protect animals from injury?	Yes	NO
Do housing facilities properly contain animals and restrict the entrance of other animals?	Yes	No
Does the shelter facility have adequate electrical power and potable water available?	Yes	No
Does the shelter facility have washrooms or sinks in holding areas to maintain cleanliness among animal caretakers?	Yes	No
Is a restroom available for the staff and general public ?	Yes	No
Are the floors and walls of the shelter facility constructed of smooth, impervious material and sanitized daily?	Yes	No
Are animal holding areas sloped to drain and connected to a sanitary sewer or an approved sewerage system? Do animal rooms have operable floor drains?	Yes	No
Does the shelter facility have a suitable method in place to rapidly eliminate excess water from the floors of the housing facilities?	Yes	No
If a closed drainage system is used, is it equipped with traps and installed to prevent any backup of sewage on the floor?	Yes	No
Are rabies holding areas isolated from other kennels?	Yes	No
Are housing facilities sufficiently heated to protect animals from extreme temperatures? If the ambient temperature falls below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, are animals housed outdoors provided with bedding material to protect them from cold weather?	Yes	No
Does the facility provide adequate ventilation? Does the facility provide air conditioning and/or fans for both indoor and outdoor housing areas when the ambient temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher?	Yes	No

Does the facility provide animals ample light by natural or artificial means?	Yes	No
Does the facility offer sufficient shade to animals housed outside to prevent overheating from direct sun exposure?	Yes	No
For animals housed in outdoor kennels, does the shelter provide measures to keep them dry during inclement weather?	Yes	No
Is the facility secure to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?	Yes	No
Is the facility secured to prevent access by unauthorized persons?	Yes	No

R.S. 3:2464 Shelter Construction

(1) Heating. Indoor housing facilities for dogs or cats shall be sufficiently heated when necessary to protect the dogs or cats from cold, and to provide for their health and comfort. The ambient temperature shall not be allowed to fall below fifty degrees Fahrenheit for dogs and cats not acclimated to lower temperatures. (2) Ventilation. Indoor housing facilities for dogs and cats shall be adequately ventilated to provide for the health and comfort of the animals at all times. Such facilities shall be provided with fresh air either by means of windows, doors, vents, or air conditioning and shall be ventilated so as to minimize drafts, odors, and moisture condensation. Auxiliary ventilation, such as exhaust fans and vents of air conditioning, shall be provided when the ambient temperature is eighty-five-degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Water and Electric Power

Does the facility have hot and cold running water for cleaning?	Yes	No
Does the facility have an adequate number of water hoses, faucets, and sinks for cleaning?	Yes	No
Is there a backup generator available in the event of a power outage?	Yes	No
Is the electrical system adequate to meet shelter operations?	Yes	No
Does the current electrical system meet the parish and state electrical codes?	Yes	No

Waste Disposal

Does the facility have provisions regarding the daily removal and disposal of animal and food waste, dead animals, and debris?	Yes	No
Does the facility utilize an on-site freezer or refrigerator to store carcasses until final disposal?	Yes	No
Is animal waste properly disposed of in a sealed garbage container or sewer septic system?	Yes	No
Are medical waste materials disposed of utilizing appropriate practices?	Yes	No

Storage

Does the shelter have adequate storage to protect supplies and food against infestation and contamination by vermin?	Yes	No
Does the shelter keep dry food stored in a clean location in sealed containers elevated above floor level?	Yes	No

Primary Enclosures

Are primary enclosures structurally sound and maintained in good condition to protect and contain the animals and keep predators out?	Yes	No
Are primary enclosures constructed to keep animals dry and clean?	Yes	No
Are primary enclosures constructed to provide animals with convenient access to clean water and food?	Yes	No
Do primary enclosures provide sufficient space for animals to turn freely, stand, sit, and lie in a comfortable position?	Yes	No
Do animal holding pens and cages provide sufficient space for animals turn freely, stand, sit, and lie in a comfortable position?	Yes	No
Are primary enclosures for cats constructed with a solid resting surface of adequate size to provide a resting area independent of food & water bowls and the litter pan?	Yes	No
Do primary enclosures for cats and dogs meet the minimum floor space requirements?	Yes	No
Are no more than 12 dogs housed in the same primary enclosure at a given time?	Yes	No
Are animals housed in primary enclosures with wire floors provided with a solid resting platform with a smooth surface made of impervious material?	Yes	No
Are animals kenneled individually for the betterment of their health and safety?	Yes	No

Animal Care

Does the shelter provide an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?	Yes	No
Are animals housed in unconventional spaces other than designated animal holding areas? For example: bathrooms, closets, offices, and laundry rooms.	Yes	No
Are animals housed in temporary kennels/cages for longer than 24 hours?	Yes	No
Are animals taken out of their kennel/pen for exercise once per day for at least 15 minutes?	Yes	No
Are cages free of dangerous material, maintained, and routinely repaired?	Yes	No
Are dogs separated from cats? Are dogs separated from puppies? Are cats separated from kittens?	Yes	No

Is there a designated area for animals with infectious, contagious diseases or injured animals?	Yes	No
Is there an area designated for nursing females? Are intact males separated from females?	Yes	No
Are aggressive animals housed singularly, identified, and separated from the general population?	Yes	No
Are all cages cleaned daily of urine and feces?	Yes	No
Are kennel aisles clean and free of clutter?	Yes	No
Prior to hosing and disinfecting cages, are animals removed from cages?	Yes	No
Are food and water dishes cleansed with hot, soapy water and rinsed well daily?	Yes	No

Feeding and Watering

Is clean water available at all times for all animals?	Yes	No
Are dogs over three months of age fed at least once daily?	Yes	No
Are dogs recently weened provided food at all times or fed a minimum of 3 times per day?	Yes	No
Do all kittens have access to semi-moist or moist food at all times?	Yes	No
Do cats have access to moist or dry food at all times?	Yes	No
If self-feeders are utilized, are they mounted in a way that animals cannot urinate or defecate on them?	Yes	No
Does the shelter provide a sanitized work table for food preparation?	Yes	No
Are water bowls secured to prevent tipping?	Yes	No

Pest Control

Is the shelter maintained to prevent rodent and insect pest infestations?	Yes	No
Does the facility employ a program to remove external parasites (flea, ticks, & worms) from animals upon intake?	Yes	No
Are rodenticides, insecticides, rodent, and inset traps used or applied in a manner that satisfies all legal requirements?	Yes	No

Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Planning

Does the shelter maintain an emergency response plan for natural disasters and other catastrophic events?	Yes	No
Does the shelter conduct drills and training sessions to assure effectiveness of	Yes	No

emergency response plans?

Does the shelter annually submit its emergency preparedness response plan to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and parish Office of Emergency Preparedness? Yes No

Does the shelter have a Fire and Safety Plan? Does the Fire Marshall inspect the facility annually and provide capacity guidance. Does the shelter conduct fire drills periodically? Yes No

R.S. 29:729 E. (13) (a) In consultation with experts in the fields of animal sheltering, veterinary medicine, public health and safety, other professional and technical personnel deemed appropriate, and the state office of homeland security and emergency preparedness, formulate emergency operation plans for the humane evacuation, transport, and temporary sheltering of service animals and household pets in times of emergency or disaster.

Rabies Quarantine & Vaccination Requirements

Quarantine Requirements

Does the shelter follow the quarantine guidelines as stipulated in LAC 51 Part III §103A “The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases”? Yes No

Does the shelter have a written Rabies Quarantine and Bite protocol? Yes No

Are animals involved in rabies observation case separated from all other animals and their cages appropriately labeled? Yes No

Is public access to the quarantine area prohibited? Yes No

Does the shelter ship samples for rabies testing to the Louisiana Department of Health laboratory for testing? Yes No

Vaccination Requirements

Are shelter staff immunized with pre-exposure rabies vaccine? Yes No

Does the shelter enforce a mandatory rabies registration & licensing ordinance? Yes No

If yes, what is the method used to estimate compliance? _____

What is the estimate rate of compliance? _____

Does the shelter administer a rabies vaccination to animals prior to release? Yes No

If answered no to the above question, what protocol does the shelter implement to ensure all animals released from the shelter are appropriately vaccinated for rabies according to state requirements?

LAC 51 Part III §103A The Control of Rabies and Other Zoonotic Diseases. No person shall own, keep, or have in his custody a dog, cat, or ferret over three months of age that has not been vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian.

Animal Euthanasia

Do shelter euthanasia methods and procedures conform to recommendations outlined in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia?	Yes	No
Are persons who administer approved euthanasia drugs or who carry out humane euthanasia licensed as Certified Animal Euthanasia Technicians, as declared by the Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine or veterinarians licensed to practice in Louisiana?	Yes	No
Prior to euthanasia, are animals rescanned for microchips?	Yes	No
Is there a dedicated, quiet room with a sturdy table that can be sanitized provided for euthanasia?	Yes	No
In the dedicated room for euthanasia, is there ready access to supplies such as: needles, syringes, clippers, and restraining equipment?	Yes	No
When performing euthanasia, is there sufficient lighting to permit easy visualization of the injection site?	Yes	No
Are two or more people present when injectable euthanasia is performed?	Yes	No
Do euthanasia staff demonstrate proficiency when performing euthanasia?	Yes	No
Is level of unconsciousness checked by corneal reflex or toe pinch prior to intracardiac injection?	Yes	No
Has death been confirmed prior to disposal through percutaneous placement of needle into heart?	Yes	No
Are controlled drugs, used in the facility, stored in a securely locked cabinet and locked room?	Yes	No
Are controlled drugs used in the field securely locked in the animal control vehicles?	Yes	No
Are euthanasia drug logs current and available during an inspection?	Yes	No
Is the euthanasia log book kept in a secure location?	Yes	No
Does the shelter have a written euthanasia protocol available to staff?	Yes	No

R.S. 3:2465: Euthanasia by carbon monoxide gas chambers on cats and dogs is strictly prohibited. Euthanasia by intracardiac injection on cats and dogs is prohibited unless the animal is unconscious or rendered completely unconscious and insensitive to pain through injection of an anesthetic

Records

Does the shelter have adequate office space for record keeping?	Yes	No
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Does the shelter create a record of every animal that enters the shelter that includes the following: admitting animal control officers name, date, time, location of capture, physical condition, description tag/collar ID, breed, sex, size, coat color/pattern, ear ,markings, veterinary treatment received, length of hold time, fees collected, date euthanized, died, reclaimed, or adopted? Yes No

Are the individual records for each animal attached to their designated kennel or cage? For example: kennel card. Yes No

Are daily receipts for donations, impoundment fees, and adoptions recorded and filed? Yes No

Are shelter statistics regarding intake, rescue, adoption, euthanasia, redemption, and spay & neuter surgeries, kept current and available upon request? Yes No

Does the shelter utilize a computerized shelter management software system? Yes No

Are daily observation records kept on each animal? Yes No

Disease Prevention and Control

Do shelter personnel receive training to recognize symptoms of sickness, disease, abnormal behavior, or injury of shelter animals? Yes No

Are shelter personnel able to identify common infectious diseases and illnesses associated with shelter animals? For example: signs of canine distemper and canine parvo virus, ringworm, and upper respiratory symptoms in cats? Yes No

Do shelter personnel treat animals humanely and with compassion? Yes No

Is care rendered to an animal while in the shelter’s custody provided in a manner that prevents unnecessary or unjustifiable physical pain or suffering by the animal as required by the Louisiana Animal Cruelty Laws RS 14:102-14.102.26? Yes No

Do injured or ill animals receive care from a veterinarian? Yes No

Does the shelter have an on staff veterinarian, part-time, contract veterinarian available to provide immediate care or euthanasia for animals determined to be seriously ill or injured in the field, on intake, or during residence? Yes No

Please provide a brief explanation of the shelter’s protocol on emergency care for seriously ill and injured animals:

Four horizontal lines for providing a brief explanation of the shelter’s protocol on emergency care for seriously ill and injured animals.

Are adoptable dogs tested for heartworms? Yes No

Is there a stray hold isolated area? Yes No

Are adoptable dogs given heartworm prevention medication while in custody of the shelter? Yes No

Are all dogs and cats vaccinated during intake? Yes No

For example: Dogs DA2PP & Bordetella, Cats FVRCP.

Shelter Management

Is the shelter inspected once every six months by an authorized representative of the parish or local government? Yes No

Does the shelter maintain a current policy manual of standard operating procedures (SOP) outlining operating procedures for the facility relating to housing, cleaning, animal intake, animal care, facility maintenance, rabies vaccination, spay/neuter policy, and heartworm management? Yes No

Are shelter employees given a copy of the current shelter policy manual and/or SOP and required to review it? Yes No

Do the appropriate shelter personnel, such as Directors, supervisors, and ACOs, have working knowledge of the Minimum Standards for Animal Shelters RS 3:2461 and Louisiana Animal Cruelty Laws RS 14:102-14.102.26? Yes No

Is the exterior of the facility free of clutter and visually appealing? Yes No

Is there adequate exterior signage for the public to identify the building as a shelter? Yes No

Are shelter hours of operation, and emergency telephone numbers prominently displayed on the building exterior? Yes No

Is the reception area clean and welcoming to visitors? Yes No

Are fees visibly posted for public? Yes No

Is there an office free of animals to conduct administrative tasks? Yes No

Capacity for Basic Minimal Care

Does the shelter employ a system that determines the staff capacity for daily care of animals? Yes No

Does the shelter employ a system that determines the required holding capacity for animals? Yes No

What is the shelter's monthly daily average (MDA)? _____

What is the average number of employees on staff? _____

What is the average length of stay for an animal? _____

What is the average annual intake? _____

Recommended Formulas: NACA - <https://nacanet.site-ym.com/default.aspx>

Formula for Determining Kennel Staffing Needs

_____ (Human Population)	Multiplied by 7% =	_____ (Incoming Animal Population Per Year)
_____ (Incoming Animals Per Year)	Divided by 365 (days per year)	_____ (Incoming Animals Per Day)
_____ (Incoming Animals Per Day)	Times ____ Day Holding Period =	_____ (Animals in Shelter Per Day)
_____ (Animals in Shelter Per Day)	Times fifteen minutes** per animal =	_____ (Number of Minutes Needed)
_____ (Minutes Needed)	Divided by 60 (minutes) =	_____ (Number of Hours Needed)
_____ (Number of Hours Needed)	Divided by 3*** (hours for cleaning/feeding) =	_____ (Staff Needed Per Day)

Recommended minimum of 15 minutes of care per animal per day.

(6 minutes for feeding and 9 minutes for cleaning)

On -site observations and timing should be based on adequate procedures

Formula Example

40 animals x 15 minutes = 600 minutes = 10 hours of staff time per day

Animal Control Vehicles

What is the average length of time animals are held in animal control vehicles? _____

Are animals protected from inclement weather and extreme temperatures when transported? Yes No

How often are vehicles cleaned and sanitized? _____

Are vehicles stored in a secure area? Yes No

Are vehicles equipped with necessary equipment for field activity? Yes No

Sterilization Required

R.S.3: 2472 A. Provisions shall be made for sterilization all dogs and cats sold or released for adoption or purchased from any public or private animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society or by a parish, city, or other political subdivision by either: (1) Providing sterilization by a Louisiana licensed veterinarian before relinquishing custody of the animal or (2) Entering into a written agreement with the adopter or purchaser guaranteeing that sterilization will be performed by a Louisiana licensed veterinarian in compliance with a sterilization agreement that shall contain the following:(a) the date of the agreement,(b) the name, address, and signature of the releasing agency and the adopter, (c)description of the animal to be adopted, (d)a sterilization completion date which shall be either(i) the thirtieth day after the day of adoption in the case of an adult animal or(ii) the thirtieth day after a specified date estimated to be the date an adopted infant female or male puppy or kitten becomes six months of age.

Are animals adopted from the shelter sterilized prior to adoption or within 30 days of the adoption date? Yes No

Is there a written agreement with adopter guaranteeing that sterilization will be performed within 30 days from the adoption date? Yes No

Does the shelter enforce compliance with this agreement?
If yes, briefly describe the enforcement protocol utilized: Yes No

Training

Does shelter staff receive annual training on shelter safety, animal welfare, state laws and compliance procedures? Yes No

Does shelter staff receive any training on animal health, disease control, and basic animal control protocols and procedures? Yes No

Are field animal control officers trained to recognize animals in medical distress and how to safely transport all animals? Yes No

Would staff benefit from additional training?
If yes, please list specific areas. Yes No

R.S. 3:2463- Shelter personnel shall annually attend training offered by an organization that provides accredited continuing education courses regarding shelter safety, animal welfare, and state compliance procedures, such as Louisiana Animal Control Association (LACA), and should be trained as to animal health, disease control, humane and treatment, animal control and transportation of animals.

Shelter Development

Executive Leadership

Does the shelter have a written agency mission? Yes No

Does the shelter have an operating plan that outlines short -term and long-term goals? Yes No

Does the director demonstrate knowledge of the shelter budget? Yes No

Does the shelter provide a website accessible to the public with up-to-date shelter event information, and list of current adoptable animals? Yes No

Cruelty

Does the shelter have a written protocol available to the public on how cruelty complaints are responded to and investigated?	Yes	No
Does the shelter communicate to the public on how to report cruelty to an animal control and/or a law enforcement agency?	Yes	No
Does the shelter educate and encourages the public to report all instances of animal cruelty and neglect?	Yes	No
Does the shelter work with local law enforcement to facilitate the prosecution of cruelty cases?	Yes	No

Mandatory Registration & Licensing

For municipalities where registration & licensing does not exist in the local ordinances:

Does the Director work with its local governing body to establish a mandatory rabies registration and licensing ordinance for dogs and cats as recommended by the National Animal Care and Control Association ?	Yes	No
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For municipalities where registration & licensing does exist in the local ordinances:

Does the shelter employ an effective means to enforce registration & licensing compliance and monitors compliance rate?	Yes	No
Does the shelter institute a fine for non-compliance with mandatory rabies licensing and registration?	Yes	No

Shelter Programs & Partnerships

Programs

Does the shelter implement programs aimed at reducing the euthanasia rate?	Yes	No
Does the shelter implement community initiatives to increase awareness about adoption?	Yes	No
Does the shelter implement community education programs on responsible pet ownership and the importance of spaying and neutering?	Yes	No

What type of shelter programs are currently implemented?

(please check all that apply)

Adoption	Transport	Social media	School Programs
Foster	Grooming	Return to Owner (RTO)	Free Rabies clinics
Volunteer	Rescue	Cruelty Education	Surrender Prevention
Subsidized spay/neuter program		Spay/neuter education	Obedience training
Inmate/Pet Rehabilitation		Cruelty prevention	

Partnerships

Does the shelter work to build relationships with community veterinarians?	Yes	No
Does the shelter work to build relationships with local business community?	Yes	No
Does the shelter work with local schools and civic organizations?	Yes	No

Rescue Groups & Humane Organizations

Does the shelter work to develop partnerships with rescue groups and humane animal organizations? Yes No

If yes, does the shelter implement a rescue release policy requiring the following: Yes No N/A

- Tagging protocol of eligible animal
- Copy of organization's 501c3 status
- Signed MOU
- Inspection building facilities, if applicable.

Please list other shelter partnerships not listed above:

Resources

National Animal Control Association - <https://nacanet.site-ym.com/login.aspx>

Louisiana Animal Care And Control Association - <http://lacainfo.com/>

Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force - <http://lcatf.la.gov/>

Louisiana School of Veterinary Medicine - <https://www.lsu.edu/vetmed/>

Association of Shelter Veterinarians - <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>
