

Euthanasia Policy

The vision of the Florida Keys SPCA is to inspire and engage the community to end animal suffering. We accomplish this through our mission: The Florida Keys SPCA is dedicated to the protection of abandoned, unwanted and mistreated animals by providing a safe environment, health care and adoption service.

Euthanasia is never considered for adoptable animals that have been relinquished to the Florida Keys SPCA. Our commitment to the adoptable animals in our care means that we are willing to pursue all reasonable efforts in order to provide for their well-being. We do not place a time limit for adoptable animals waiting for a home.

Because the Florida Keys SPCA does not turn any animal away, some animals arrive at our shelter in poor condition – either physically or mentally. Euthanasia is considered only after a reasonable and appropriate pursuit of all other viable options. Euthanasia is only performed when there is a consensus that it is the most humane option for the animal in question, or the only reasonable option to ensure staff or community safety. It is a decision that is made only after the utmost careful consideration of all the factors, as we know them.

Frequently Asked Questions About Humane Euthanasia

Q: Do you euthanize pets at your facility?

A: Yes, as discussed above, euthanasia is sometimes the only humane solution for animals with severe health and/or behavioral problems.

Q: How does an “open-admission” shelter differ from a “limited admissions” shelter?

A: A limited admission shelter accepts only healthy, adoptable animals on a space-available basis. An open-admission shelter accepts animals regardless of health, temperament or shelter space. Unfortunately, this means that open-door shelters often admit animals with physical and temperament issues that make them unadoptable, or a danger to the community. Each animal that comes to our shelter is evaluated by our staff and while most are treated and rehabilitated and eventually adopted, a small number must be humanely euthanized for those health and behavioral problems that make them unadoptable.

Q: Why not just become a “no-kill” shelter?

A: Because we have an open-door policy, we do not turn any animal away. This includes all animals from our community regardless of their health or temperament. If we were to turn these animals away, there would be no other option for them in our community. We feel that humane euthanasia is the final kindness that we can provide for an animal with these kind of issues.

Q: How long do you hold an animal before you euthanize it?

A: The Florida Keys SPCA does not place a time limit on the length of time an adoptable

animal can wait for a new home. Our longest resident cat was with us for five years before being adopted.

Q: Does The Florida Keys SPCA work with pure breed rescue groups?

A: Yes. We work with many rescue groups and other animal shelters. The rescues we work with have been evaluated by the Florida Keys SPCA to ensure the animals will receive good care with the goal of finding them a new home.

Q: When an owner surrenders an animal, if the animal has a chance of being euthanized, is the owner told?

A: Yes. Our staff and volunteers are trained to communicate this information clearly and answer any questions you may have. Owners are informed that we cannot guarantee adoption of any animal and that we do humanely euthanize animals with severe health or behavioral problems.