



Euthanasia Protocol*

Flagler Humane Society (FHS) is an open-admission, full-service shelter, which means that any animal in need of shelter and care is welcome here. We accept all animals regardless of age, health, breed, and behavior. We are dedicated to preventing animal suffering and cruelty and to providing quality care for every animal. FHS has been consistently recognized by Best Friends Animal Society, the nation's leading authority on animal welfare, as a no-kill shelter for many years, most recently three years consecutively: 2022, 2023, 2024.

Our **vision** is a community that values, nurtures and protects all animals.

Our **mission** is to transform the lives of animals through compassionate care and services, outstanding educational programs, and advocacy for all animals.

Our **values** encompass

- Compassion for animals
- Integrity in actions
- Quality of service

DECISIONS

Humane euthanasia of animals is a practice acknowledged by most animal protection organizations as a necessary means for alleviating or preventing suffering of animals. Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It's a decision no one wants to make or carry out. But occasionally, we must.

We use our experience and protocol to evaluate an animal's needs and balance those needs with the greater good of the animal population in our care. Since euthanasia may be the final act of kindness that can be shown to an animal, it is our policy that animals be handled with respect and compassion, and protected from fear and pain.

Alternatives to euthanasia will always be reasonably explored for all animals entering FHS. Some examples include cooperating with other facilities, animal welfare organizations, and appropriate foster care.

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THE DECISION MAKERS

The management staff responsible for this difficult task are experienced, compassionate, and skilled experts, and their decisions must be respected, even if they are different from your own. It is critical for those who do not make euthanasia decisions (staff, volunteers, and the public) to understand the emotional stress and strong sense of regret associated with this role.

EVALUATIONS

Each animal who comes to us is evaluated individually, considering many factors. Euthanasia must be considered when an animal is suffering mentally or physically with a poor prognosis, facing a long and painful recovery, or has an incurable illness.

- In cases in which physical or mental health issues are unclear, there is a consultation with the Veterinarian to help determine whether or not an animal may be saved or should be euthanized. For example:
 - If an animal is sick or showing signs of an illness, the animal is moved to the isolation area for that species for observation. Notations are made on an animal's kennel card and in PetPoint as to the type of illness and its severity. The animal is given an opportunity to recover.
 - If the animal is adoptable and space is available, medication may be offered to cure or manage the illness and documented by the Veterinarian.
 - If an animal's illness is contagious (i.e. it may infect the entire kennel or human health) or if the animal is suffering, euthanasia may be recommended.
 - Animals who test positively for parvovirus, feline panleukopenia and feline leukemia are in many cases euthanized as these diseases are fatal.
- Although an animal may be considered for euthanasia due to health reasons, and if euthanasia is not immediate, we continue to give the animal necessary medications to increase their comfort and reduce pain.
- In cases where an animal is deemed to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, itself, or the public based on aggressive behavior, euthanasia may be recommended. Aggressive behavior includes defensive and threatening behaviors, actual attacks, lunging at humans, and bite history.

We also must recognize that the adoptability of animals may be impacted by:

- Temperament
- Previous history
- Age
- Health and body condition
- Ability to cope with kennel stress
- Breed, size and potential lack of proper housing within shelter if no suitable alternative exists
- Foster care resources, human resources and budget
- Requirements ordered by the Courts or mandated by law

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LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Euthanasia must be performed in accordance with Florida State Statute 828.058. By law the pre-euthanasia anesthetics and the sodium pentobarbital must be stored in a securely locked cabinet within a securely locked room. Drug logs for all controlled substances must be maintained in accordance with Florida and DEA regulations. FHS is routinely inspected to ensure compliance with Florida and DEA regulations and laws.

SUMMARY

Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It's a decision no one wants to make or carry out. The animal's quality-of-life is our guiding principle.

In addition to the above factors, we strive for the day when animals also are no longer euthanized due to a lack of proper homes. Flagler Humane Society offers educational and veterinary programs, and animal welfare services that attempt to solve the problems at the source, including spay/neuter services, wellness clinics, and adoption programs.

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*Excerpted and edited for length from Flagler Humane Society Standard Operating Procedures Manual (2025).