

Standards of Care for Austin Pets Alive! Cat Programs

Purpose

This document defines the minimum acceptable standard of care to be provided to onsite cats at Austin Pets Alive! locations.

Scope

This policy applies to all APA! Cat staff members and volunteers who are responsible for providing care for cats in all onsite and offsite adoption centers and isolation areas.

Policy

Access to Food and Water

1. All cats shall have access to fresh, clean water at all times, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian.
2. If a cat has not eaten, or has eaten 50% or less of her ration within 24 hours, the [Feline Hunger Strike Protocol](#) is to be initiated and followed by all staff.
3. Healthy adult cats in adoption centers
 - a. Cats who are eating normally, have not been prescribed a special diet, and are able to safely eat solid food will be provided with a bowl of dry kibble approximately ½ cup to 1 cup in size, to be topped up no less than twice per day.
 - b. These cats will also be presented with approximately 2 oz (⅓ standard 6 oz can) of wet food once daily.
 - c. Castor and Pollux food will be used for all cats in this category unless:
 - i. Unavailable
 - ii. Cat is not eating, in which case Hunger Strike Protocol should be begun
 - iii. Otherwise instructed by Cat Manager or clinic staff
4. Healthy adult cats in feral/barn cat enclosures
 - a. Cats in barn enclosures shall be provided with ample dry kibble refilled at least once per day.
 - b. These cats will also be presented with 4 oz (⅔ standard 6 oz can) of wet food once daily.
 - c. Feral cats may be presented with non-Castor and Pollux food as available.
5. Cats in Isolation areas, FeLV+ cats, senior cats older than 7 years, kittens 6-10 weeks
 - a. Cats in isolation areas, senior cats, and young kittens in this category should be presented with a bowl of kibble that is refilled twice daily, if appropriate.
 - b. Cats in this category shall also be presented with approximately 2 oz (⅓ standard 6 oz can) wet food twice daily.
 - i. If necessary, this wet food may be mixed with water to increase cat hydration and adjust texture.
 - c. Castor and Pollux food will be used for all cats in this category unless:
 - i. Unavailable
 - ii. Cat is not eating, in which case Hunger Strike Protocol should be begun
 - iii. Otherwise instructed by Cat Manager or clinic staff
6. Cats on special diets prescribed by clinic staff
 - a. Cats who are prescribed special diets should be presented with the instructed wet or dry food according to clinic instructions.

Access to Appropriate Space in which to Eliminate

1. All cats shall have access to a litter box large enough for them to stand and turn around in at all times.
2. Litter boxes filled with clumping cat litter shall be scooped at least once daily, and completely replaced with fresh litter at least once weekly. If the litter box is soiled more often due to diarrhea or spillage, litter box will be cleaned as frequently as needed in order for it to remain hygienic and odor free.
3. Litter boxes filled with non-clumping cat litter shall be dumped completely once per day, and completely replaced with fresh litter once per day. If the litter box is soiled more often due to diarrhea or spillage, litter box will be cleaned as frequently as needed in order for it to remain hygienic and odor free.
4. Cats with no superseding health concerns and in adoptions areas shall receive approximately 4 cups of clumping litter per adult cat in the enclosure, and 2 cups per kitten 4 months or younger.
 - a. Non-clumping litter may be substituted if clumping litter is unavailable.
5. Cats in ISO spaces may have litter boxes filled with either non-clumping litter, shredded paper, or absorbent puppy pads, in order to facilitate efficient cleaning.
6. Incontinent cats and other cats with specific litter box needs noted by the clinic shall receive the prescribed care.
 - a. Cats with open wounds or abscesses shall receive non-clay, dust-free litter (crystalline litter whenever available) to prevent infection.
 - b. Kittens less than 6 weeks of age (including kennels with nursing mothers) shall receive non-clumping litter to prevent injury if litter is ingested.
 - c. Cats for whom no-sorb beads have been prescribed to facilitate in urine sample collection shall receive a litter box with these beads in the morning. When cat urinates and sample is collected, it shall be immediately turned over to the medical technicians, and the beads replaced with the cat's normal litter box.
 - i. If the cat does not urinate in the box by 6pm, the beads shall be replaced with the cat's normal litter box overnight, to prevent collection of a contaminated sample.
 - d. Other specific litter box needs described by the clinic technicians or veterinarians shall be fulfilled as prescribed.

Appropriate Kennel Space

Space

1. Kennels which will house cats shall provide no less than 4 ft² of usable movement space to each adult cat and 3 ft² to each kitten less than four months old, including space created using a Kuranda bed or similar raised platform. Kennels must also be tall enough for cats to stand and move normally in.
2. Feral and scared cats shall be provided with a feral den or other similar hide-box when being kept in single-cat isolation kennels.
3. Unless otherwise indicated for health or behavioral reasons, all cats shall be provided with at least one clean towel on which to rest, plus one piece of extra bedding for comfort.
4. Non-feral and non-critical cats shall be provided with at least one toy or similar enrichment item, unless otherwise indicated for health or behavioral reasons.

Cleanliness

1. At least once per 24-hour period, and completed before 2:00 pm, cats shall have their kennels cleaned according to the following protocol:
 - a. Litter box area shall be scooped and cleaned.
 - b. Spoiled or contaminated food shall be removed and replaced.
 - c. Water bowls shall be rinsed and refilled, and replaced if heavily soiled.
 - d. Soiled or wet bedding shall be replaced with clean, dry bedding.
 - e. Debris and organic matter shall be swept out of kennel and into trash.
 - f. Organic matter on the walls or bars of kennels shall be scrubbed to remove.
2. Before staff leaves in the evening, they shall ensure that each cat has appropriate food, clean water, and reasonably dry bedding.

3. At least once per week, cats shall be removed from their kennel, and kennel shall receive a deep cleaning according to the following protocol:
 - a. All bedding, toys, litter boxes, and bowls shall be removed from the kennel.
 - b. Kennel walls and bars shall be scrubbed with soap and water, Simple Green, or another detergent cleaner.
 - i. Wire "pop-up" kennels may be scrubbed with a scrub brush and hose to facilitate cleaning.
 - c. Trifectant, bleach (in a 1:32 part bleach:water dilution), or accelerated hydrogen peroxide (Accel®/Rescue®) shall be sprayed on kennel surfaces, allowed to sit for ten minutes, then dried.
 - d. Kennel shall be reset with clean bedding, bowls, litter box, and toys, and cat allowed to reenter.

Appropriate Medical Care

1. All cats shall be evaluated upon staff member arrival in area and periodically throughout the day, to ensure each is stable and not in need of emergency medical attention.
2. New or worsening medical concerns shall be reported to the clinic via a Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT) Check Request in ShelterLuv as soon as they are observed. If the issue cannot be reported via ShelterLuv, email may be used. New or worsening medical issues shall also be reported on the nightly EOD to make other team members aware. Medical emergencies shall be reported immediately to the Cat Manager On Duty and clinic via text or verbal communication.
3. CVT requests shall be addressed within 48 hours of their target check date. If requests remain unaddressed past this point, Cat Care Team staff will alert the Cat MOD, who will liaise with the clinic to ensure the concerns are resolved.
4. Prescribed medications and treatments shall be administered and logged in the Treatment Sheet module in ShelterLuv or on organized, legible paper trackers in a timely fashion. If treatments cannot be completed for any reason, the Cat Manager on Duty must be notified and must approve.

Capacity

For these purposes, when "condo" is used, a condo may contain one adult cat, one litter of kittens, one queen and kittens, or two bonded adults as long as there is ample space for cats to stand, move, eat, sleep, and use a litterbox at least 6 inches away or on a different level from food and sleeping areas. A kitten is defined as a cat 6 months of age or under.

These are baseline capacity numbers to be expected during normal operations, as of October 2018. In times of emergency, additional cats and condos may be temporarily added to each location for lifesaving purposes.

- TLAC Cattery: 70 cats/kittens
 - Senior Center: 6 cats
 - Other Group Rooms: 5 cats or 8 kittens
 - Honeymoon Suite: 2 cats or 4 kittens
- TLAC ISO Storage: 9 condos +/- 2 temporary condos
- FeLV Adoption Center: 10 free roaming +/- 4 in condos
- Ringworm: 85 cats/kittens
- Large Barn: 25 cats
- Medium Barn: 10 cats/kittens
- Small Barn: 4 cats or 6 kittens
- ISO Barn: 2 cats or 4 kittens
- ISO Room A: 8 condos +/- 2 temporary condos
- ISO Room B: 8 condos +/- 2 temporary condos
- ISO Room C: 11 condos +/- 3 temporary condos
- Calici ISO: 21 condos + 2 temporary condos
- MOD Office: 5 cats/kittens

Length of Stay (LOS)

1. Each cat in ISO Rooms A-C and ISO Storage shall have an exit plan decided upon by the Cat Program Manager in conjunction with the veterinary staff, considering input from all care staff. Exit plan is to be created within 72 hours of cat's arrival in the ISO area and is to be re-evaluated and communicated daily via the ISO EOD which is created by Cat MOD.
2. Exit plans for cats shall be communicated in nightly ISO status reports sent by the Cat Manager on Duty via email to ISO and clinic staff.
3. ISO Exit plans shall be reviewed no less than every 14 days to determine if progress has been made, or if plan must be reevaluated and alternative exit paths discussed.
4. Cats in the TLAC, TT, or offsite catteries will follow the [Action Plan for Long Stay Cattery Cats](#) SOP to monitor and address lengths of stay exceeding 60 days. Adoption Counselors working in these catteries are responsible for monitoring LOS and reporting LOS of 60 days or more to Cat Program Manager, per the [Action Plan for Long Stay Cattery Cats](#).
5. Ringworm Manager or Assistant Manager will monitor LOS and report to Cat Program Manager any cat who has been living inside the Ringworm Cattery for 90 days or more. Cat Program Manager will take action per the [Action Plan for Long Stay Cattery Cats](#).
6. Cat Care Specialists will monitor LOS and report to Cat Program Manager any cat who has been living in Calici ISO for 60 days or more. Cat Program Manager will work with APA! veterinarians for consideration of alternative options for these cats undergoing treatment.
7. Cat Matchmaker Program Manager will monitor LOS and report to Cat Program Manager any cat who has been living inside the FeLV Adoption Center in a condo for 60 days or more, or free roaming 90 days or more. Cat Program Manager will take action per the [Action Plan for Long Stay Cattery Cats](#).

Ratio of Staff/Volunteers to Cats

Under normal operating conditions and at the above listed Capacity numbers, staff in each department is expected to meet the Standards of Care for resident cats and is expected to utilize volunteers to assist. If staff is unable to meet Standards of Care, for any reason, all staff is expected to report immediately to Cat Program Manager with explanation of why standards cannot be met.

1. Staff count for cat capacity as listed is:
 - a. TLAC Cattery: 2 Cat Adoption Counselors at 10 hours per day, 1 Cat Kennel Tech at 4 hours per day.
 - b. Ringworm: 1 full time Ringworm Manager, 1 full time Assistant Ringworm Manager, 1 full time Ringworm Care Specialist, 1 Cat Kennel Technician at 4 hours per day
 - c. Tarrytown: 1 Cat Adoption Counselor at 10 hours per day
 - d. Cat ISO and Calici: 2 full time Cat Care Specialists, 2 part time Cat Care Specialists, one kennel tech at 4 hours per day.
 - e. FeLV Adoption Center: 2 full time Cat Care Specialists, 2 part time Cat Care Specialists, one kennel tech at 4 hours per day.
2. If population is within this ratio and standards of care are not being met, or if staff and volunteers are working significantly longer than their scheduled hours, the manager or lead for that ward/area is required to alert the Cat Program Manager whenever any of these issues occur and the Cat Program Manager shall evaluate the need for additional training, volunteers, or other resources. Resolution can be expected within 48 hours.
3. If resolution is not achieved within 48 hours, the manager or lead for that area/ward is required to follow the chain of command and alert Cat Program Manager's direct supervisor (Assistant Director of Lifesaving Operations and/or the Director of Feline Lifesaving).

Emergency Conditions

Emergency conditions can be expected to occur with relative frequency due to the mission of Austin Pets Alive! to save as many lives as possible within our resources. An Emergency, for this purpose, is any situation in which APA! elects to temporarily go beyond capacity due to urgent risk of life to felines with intake at APA! being the only life-saving option available. This includes, but is not limited to: natural disaster, partner shelter crisis, and/or internal operational crisis.

1. In Emergency Conditions, cats may be housed in temporary 'pop-up' kennels which may be kept in any indoor area of TLAC which is climate controlled. Temporary kennels should be 30" or larger for one cat or two kittens, with 42" crates being preferred whenever possible.
2. Cats living in pop-up kennels in non-cattery areas must have an Exit Plan with planned exit within 7 days, if not sooner.
3. If a cat cannot exit the emergency pop-up kennel within 7 days, Cat Program Manager will proactively communicate the reason/s and the exit plan with cat staff.
4. The APA! [Emergency Intake Protocol](#) applies to this situations.

Recourse for Violations of Standards

Failure to meet the standards of care outlined in this document shall be brought to the Cat Program Managers as soon as possible by the person(s) noting the failure so the issue may be addressed.

1. The Cat Program Managers shall liaise with other departments to create a plan to address resources and actions needed to bring care back to these standards within 48 hours.
2. In cases of population beyond capacity, the Cat Program Managers shall liaise with other departments to create a plan to address resources and actions needed to return to standard capacity within 14 days.
3. Continued failure to meet standards shall be brought to the attention of the Assistant Director of Lifesaving Operations and the Director of Feline Lifesaving to be addressed.