



Euthanasia

Position

Calgary Humane Society supports the use of humane euthanasia when it is the most compassionate, ethically responsible, and appropriate decision for an animal's welfare or for public safety. This includes circumstances in which:

- An animal is experiencing severe physical or behavioural suffering, and no reasonable medical or behavioural intervention can restore an acceptable quality of life; or
- An animal presents a significant, unmanageable risk to the public due to severe behavioural concerns or unstable temperament.

Rationale

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) defines euthanasia (from the Greek meaning "a good death") as the intentional and humane ending of an animal's life, performed in a manner that minimizes fear, pain, and distress. Calgary Humane Society uses the term humane euthanasia to emphasize that all euthanasia decisions and procedures must adhere to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Calgary Humane Society accepts all animals surrendered or brought to the organization, including those who are injured, ill, behaviourally unsound, feral, or otherwise vulnerable. Each animal is assessed individually, taking into account medical condition, behavioural history, quality of life, and public safety considerations.

Calgary Humane Society is committed to preserving life when it is appropriate to do so, and every adoptable animal is given the opportunity to find a new home. Humane euthanasia decisions are never made on the basis of breed, age, length of stay, space limitations, or convenience. Instead, they focus solely on the best interests of the individual animal and the safety of the community.

Through evidence-based programs—including foster care, training and behaviour services, veterinary support, public access to spay/neuter, and responsible pet ownership initiatives—Calgary Humane Society actively works to reduce circumstances that lead to the need for humane euthanasia.

However, when an animal is suffering without a viable option for improvement, or when they pose a serious risk to people or other animals, humane euthanasia may be the only humane and ethical course of action.

When humane euthanasia is required, Calgary Humane Society ensures it is performed:

- Using accepted humane methods,
- By veterinarians or trained personnel under direct veterinary oversight,
- In alignment with recognized professional standards, including:
 - [The Association of Shelter Veterinarians \(ASV\) Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#)
 - [The CVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals](#)

Calgary Humane Society ensures that:

- Pain, fear, and distress are minimized throughout the process
- Methods selected are appropriate for the species, age, health status, and behavioural condition of the individual animal
- Death occurs as rapidly and peacefully as possible and is confirmed at the end of the procedure

Calgary Humane Society acknowledges the emotional toll euthanasia can have on veterinary professionals, caregivers, and volunteers, and is committed to providing ongoing support for staff involved in these compassionate but difficult decisions.

References

[Euthanasia | CVMA](#)

[Position Statement on Euthanasia | ASPCA](#)

[Association of Shelter Veterinarians \(ASV\) Guidelines](#)

[Humane Canada | Our Position on Major Animal Rights Issues](#)