



Burlington County Animal Shelter

& Friends of the

Burlington County Animal Shelter

# Volunteer Handbook

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Burlington County Animal Shelter volunteer program! We are excited and pleased to have you join our team. This handbook is an information tool to help you learn about our services and also guide you as you begin your volunteer work with us. Feel free to ask questions. We believe all questions are important, so please do not hesitate to ask. Again, welcome and thanks for volunteering.

Daisha Pierce, Jackie Dennis and Jamie DePolo

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Burlington County Animal Shelter makes our community a better place for people and animals by:

- Sheltering stray and unwanted animals while providing food, water and care.
- Providing an adoption program that places animals in a caring and responsible home.
- Controlling the pet population by encouraging spaying and neutering.
- Serving as an advocate for animals, promoting humane standards and preventing animal cruelty.
- Striving for a minimum of 90 percent live release rate.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Burlington County Animal Shelter Volunteer Program, managed by the Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter (Friends of BCAS), a non-profit organization, is to promote animal awareness within the community and to educate the public about responsible pet care, ownership and safety for and around animals. The program helps teach quality care for the animals by allowing interaction between the volunteers and animals. The program is also designed to provide opportunities for residents to interact and with animals at the shelter and to help increase live releases for all shelter animals. Interaction provides meaningful insight regarding the personality and behavior of the animal, which is beneficial in marketing the animals to the public and ultimately finding a compatible home for every animal. Our goals are to:

- Humanely and temporarily house and care for adoptable animals and ensure they go to a new home as quickly and safely as possible.
- Provide a clean and safe environment for animals, staff and the public.
- Handle animals with the least amount of restraint necessary.
- Treat all animals with love and respect.
- Return lost or otherwise missing, animals to their owners.
- Adopt unclaimed stray animals into loving families.

- Educate the public on responsible pet ownership.
- Be a partner with our community to protect and advocate for animals.

## **ANIMAL SHELTER HOURS OF OPERATION**

Monday	Noon - 4 p.m.
Tuesday	Noon - 4 p.m.
Wednesday	Noon - 4 p.m.
Thursday	Noon - 7 p.m.
Friday	Noon - 4 p.m.
Saturday	Noon - 4 p.m.
Sunday	Noon - 4 p.m.

Phones at the shelter are staffed Monday- Sunday from 8 a.m.-close. Volunteers may enter the building at 11 a.m., after the majority of the cleaning tasks have been completed.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Burlington County Animal Shelter location: 35 Academy Drive, Westampton NJ 08060

The Burlington County Animal Shelter phone number: 609-265-5073

The Burlington County Animal Shelter website is:

[www.co.burlington.nj.us/168/Animal-Shelter](http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/168/Animal-Shelter)

For after-hours animal emergencies call non-emergency police or 609-267-8300.

## **Staff Information**

Management Specialist

Daisha Pierce – [dpierce@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:dpierce@co.burlington.nj.us)

Shelter Manager

Jackie Dennis - [jkdennis@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:jkdennis@co.burlington.nj.us)

## **Adoption Advocates**

John Richardson – [jrichardson@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:jrichardson@co.burlington.nj.us)

Kelly Donnelly – [kdonnelly@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:kdonnelly@co.burlington.nj.us)

Lisa Cliver – [lcliver@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:lcliver@co.burlington.nj.us)

## **Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter Information**

President

Jamie DePolo – [friendsofbcas.org@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofbcas.org@gmail.com)

Cat Volunteer Program Coordinator

Katrina Kates and Regina Arey - [teamcats@friendsofbcas.org](mailto:teamcats@friendsofbcas.org)

Dog Volunteer Program Coordinator  
Deanna Sahina -- [dsahina@msn.com](mailto:dsahina@msn.com)

## **VOLUNTEERS**

### **Definition of a Volunteer**

A volunteer is an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older, who without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of the Volunteer Program Coordinator(s) or on behalf of the Burlington County Animal Shelter. A volunteer must be officially certified by the Volunteer Program Coordinator(s) prior to performing any volunteer duties and may require special training or certification to perform certain animal and outreach duties.

### **How to Become a Volunteer**

Persons interested in volunteering for the Burlington County Animal Shelter should go online to obtain specific information: [www.friendsofbcas.org/ways-help](http://www.friendsofbcas.org/ways-help)

1. Everyone must first attend a General Orientation Session. The purpose of the session is to give an overview of the shelter, services provided and available volunteer opportunities.
2. Following the required attendance of the General Orientation Session, the prospective volunteer may be requested to schedule additional training sessions; based upon the area(s) of interest and/or expertise. The purpose of the additional training sessions is to instruct the prospective volunteer specific job duties and to ensure the volunteer is prepared to serve in the assigned/requested capacity.
3. All volunteers shall be required to read, sign, and submit the appropriate waivers of liability and release forms included in the volunteer application before starting service at the Animal Shelter. The volunteer application will be submitted at your first training session. Friends of BCAS and/or the Burlington County Animal Shelter will review your application.
4. Upon completion of your series of training class and submission of your volunteer application, you may begin volunteering at the shelter.

## Volunteer Qualifications

- Positive and friendly attitude toward people and animals
- Willingness to promote the Burlington County Animal Shelter
- Commitment to follow the policy and procedures of the Burlington County Animal Shelter
- Ability to work with staff, volunteers, customers and visitors
- Willingness to meet the minimum monthly volunteer commitment of four (4) hours per month
- Must complete volunteer application packet and attend all required training sessions
- Must be at least 18 years of age

## Volunteer Duties

Burlington County Animal Shelter volunteers assist animal services personnel and veterinary staff with daily operations and with special events. Duties may include, but not required:

- walking, socializing, bathing and grooming the animals
- assisting prospective adopters with information on animals ready for adoption
- spot-cleaning the animals' cages and/or kennels (no chemicals)
- cleaning and organizing food storage area(s)
- sweeping/cleaning cat room, work room and back hallway floors
- laundry of items used in cat and dog kennel areas
- assisting the veterinary staff in the routine care of shelter animals
- working at other special events

## Volunteer Opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities exist at the Burlington County Animal Shelter:

**Administrative & Adoption Support:** Provides assistance to the Burlington County Animal Shelter staff with office operations such as: assisting the public with information, greeting customers, adoptable animal photo production, filing, typing, telephone inquiries and other office work, as needed.

**Shelter Attendant:** Provides assistance with watering, cleaning and maintaining the kennels and cages for the comfort of all animals housed in the Animal Shelter.

**Animal Socialization:** Works with the shelter staff and other volunteers to determine dogs and cats that can benefit from additional interaction and playtime to make them happier, healthier and more ready to be adopted into a permanent or foster home or claimed by a rescue. This includes walks, playtime, petting, planned interaction with other dogs or cats and other activities as deemed necessary by shelter staff or volunteer management. Animals must be handled according to the color coding system, which will be explained at the first cat and dog training session.

**Adoption Assistant:** Provides assistance to prospective adopters by bringing selected animals to the designated visitation areas and relaying any information that the interested party needs to make an educated adoption. This task can only be completed by those who have received approval by the adoption advocate team and the volunteer coordinator(s).



**Grooming:** Baths, brushes, trims and maintains the overall appearance of the animals when ready for adoption. Grooming may include the use of scissors, clippers, brushes, combs, shampoo, and electrical or mechanical devices. Always be sure to check the paperwork first – no baths for 48 hours for any dogs who have had a flea treatment.

**Volunteer Veterinary Technician or Veterinary Assistant:** Assists veterinary technician with routine shelter duties under the direction of the veterinarian.

**Special Events:** Assists with a variety of special events including off-site adoption and fundraising events.

**Education/Outreach:** Speaking and providing handouts at schools, churches, civic groups.

**Foster Care:** Coordination of the joint BCAS/Friends foster care programs. Providing temporary care for animals.

\*\* Other opportunities may be created such as: pet detective and redemption, and grant writing as the program progresses.

## **Special Needs Volunteers**

The information below applies to adult individuals who require regular assistance with physical or cognitive tasks in their daily lives.

### **Volunteering with Assistance**

Individuals who do not meet the criteria for independent volunteering must always volunteer in the company of another adult capable of assisting them, such as a family member or a group home employee. Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter (FOBCAS) is not able to guarantee that it can provide assistants or mentors on an ongoing basis outside of the required training classes.

**IMPORTANT -- All Assistants Must Go Through Regular Volunteer Training**  
Every assistant (family, friend, employee, etc.) of a special needs individual must attend and pass the FOBCAS training program exactly like a regular volunteer before accompanying the individual to the shelter. These steps include each assistant submitting a volunteer application and attending and passing all required cat or dog training classes. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

### **Requirements for Independent Volunteering**

- **Classes:** Must attend and pass all required classes, as noted on the FOBCAS website.
- **Safety:** Must be able to remember and follow all instructions and safety rules. Must be capable of recognizing and reacting appropriately to potentially unsafe situations.
- **Communication:** Must be able to clearly communicate questions or problems via speech or handwriting.
- **Reading and Writing:** Must be able to read. Must be able to handwrite name, dates and times, and brief sentences about experiences with an animal.
- **For cat volunteers:** Must be able to bend and lift up to 25 pounds. Must possess enough coordination to pick up and hold a cat appropriately. Must be able to read cat body language adequately.

- For dog volunteers: Must have stable footing and good hand-eye coordination. Must be able to put a leash on a dog and walk it safely through busy kennels and on uneven ground.

FOBCAS reserves the right to make reasonable additions or exceptions to a volunteer's requirements depending on each individual's circumstances.

## **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Burlington County Animal Shelter and resident animals rely on volunteers to be dependable and effective during volunteer hours by following established policies and guidelines. This allows the shelter to operate smoothly, providing maximum benefits to the animals, staff, and volunteers.

Volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated, and it is important to the Burlington County Animal Shelter that every volunteer, resident and animal, encounter a rewarding experience from the volunteer program. Every effort will be made to ensure that your service is the best fit for both volunteers and animals.

### **Public Information**

Volunteers are required to maintain a high level of confidentiality regarding active cases; therefore, conversations regarding such animals are prohibited. Messaging of the shelter activities, the volunteer program or employees of the shelter needs to be carefully controlled.

- Volunteers are not to interact with the media nor offer information to the public, including through social media, (e.g. Facebook), without first checking with the shelter manager or the Friends of BCAS PR contact.
- All confidential information regarding animals, staff members, shelter activities and statistics are to be held in confidence.

### **Social Media**

- Defaming the shelter publicly, in social media or in any other venue does damage to the shelter, the volunteer program and ultimately, the animals. All volunteers are to refrain from posting information regarding BCAS or their staff which could embarrass or upset co-workers or which could detrimentally affect BCAS business. We ask that you be a positive representative and advocate for the animal shelter, the animals and the volunteer program both on and off the premises.
- When posting to social media, it is important to use good judgment. Information is often distorted or misunderstood, thereby misrepresenting the shelter. Keep in mind the speed and manner in which information posted on a blog, web page, social networking, twitter or similar site can be relayed and often misunderstood by readers. Should the material you are considering posting be of a sensitive or controversial nature, please check with the Friends of BCAS Board before posting. We pledge to reply to you promptly and take appropriate action as necessary. If the matter requires immediate attention when you are at the shelter, please seek out Daisha Pierce, Jackie Dennis, or one of the Animal Advocates on duty.
- Be respectful of your potential readers, colleagues and fellow volunteers. Do not use

discriminatory comments, personal insults, libel or slander when commenting about BCAS or Friends of BCAS, your superiors, co-workers, board members, fellow volunteers or other pet-related entities and/organizations affiliated with BCAS or Friends of BCAS.

- Failure to follow these guidelines may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

## **Confidentiality of Certain Rabies Vaccination Certificate and Dog/Cat Registration Information**

Information contained in a rabies vaccination certificate and/or dog and cat registration or in any record compiled from the information contained in them that identifies or tends to identify an owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of an owner of a vaccinated animal, is confidential. The information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity or a person that, under a contract with a governmental entity, provides animal control services or animal registration services for the governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. Therefore, volunteers who may help with paperwork, filing or data entry tasks, must be careful with this information and use it for its intended purposes only.

## **Parking**

Shelter volunteers park in the back of the building, alongside the staff parking or across Academy Drive along the curb near the trees. Volunteers are prohibited from parking in the employee lot between 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.. Do not park in the customer/visitor front parking area and do not park in the spaces reserved for animal control vehicles. Only handicapped volunteers may park in the visitor parking lot out front in order to utilize a handicapped parking space.

## **Entrance**

Volunteers use the staff entrance doors that say “Shelter Associates.” Do not use the front door to the facility or the doors for Animal Control, which access the center back hall.

## **Name tags & Shirts**

All volunteers are required to wear a Friends of BCAS-issued t-shirt or sweatshirt when working within the animal shelter. Each volunteer is also expected to wear a name tag. Printed name tags will be provided to volunteers who work a certain regular minimum number of hours. Each name tag will also display a sticker relating to the color code system which denotes quickly what level the volunteer has been approved to handle. All other volunteers are asked to wear a volunteer name tag available at the front desk or in the volunteer cabinet in the multi-purpose room.

## **Personal Appearance & Hygiene**

Volunteers are expected to maintain their appearance and grooming while at the Burlington County Animal Shelter or at any Burlington County Animal Shelter and/or Friends of BCAS-sponsored event. Volunteers will be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean, neat, and professional and that will not be a health or safety hazard or inappropriate. Volunteer identification will be worn at all times, while on duty at the Burlington County Animal Shelter or any Burlington County Animal Shelter function. A Friends of BCAS t-shirt or sweatshirt is

required for any volunteer working in the Shelter or at any off-site event. Proper dress is a necessity for public contact as it reflects on the person and the Animal Shelter. Clothing, which in the opinion of the Volunteer Coordinator, would be deemed inappropriate, offensive or a safety hazard will not be allowed. Any open shoes, such as flip-flops, sandals or bare feet are prohibited. Volunteers are encouraged to wear jeans or long pants while working at the Burlington County Animal Shelter to avoid injury from scratches or other items. Each volunteer is required to attend to his or her personal grooming so as to present a good public image. Hair must be clean, groomed and by nature of the style, not create a distraction. Volunteers will not be held to any personal appearance standard that employees are not held accountable to.

### **Laundry, Cleaning, Etc.**

Dishes and laundry can be done by volunteers after an orientation with a shelter employee.

Training on the machines is necessary in order to do the laundry.

All cleaning by shelter volunteers is to be spot-cleaning or mopping using the existing mop bucket. The shelter staff uses a strict cleaning regimen each day with specific types of cleaning products and quantities used. Using additional chemicals after this procedure can be unhealthy for the animals, shelter staff and visitors. If a cage or run is very dirty, please report this to a shelter employee immediately.

### **Handling of Animals**

**Dogs:** In general, dogs without a behavior sheet must not be removed from a run or handled by a volunteer. Blue-rated volunteers who are assisting a staff member in the evaluation of a dog's behavior with another dog may remove an unrated dog (ie, without a behavior sheet) from a run. All dogs, when removed from a confined area, will have a slip lead around their neck. Be sure the leash is firmly attached to the dog's collar or neck before leading it out of the kennel. Maintain the leash in your hand at all times to prevent the dog from running free. Dogs may be taken to play off/drop leash in the fenced yards located in the field away from the shelter anytime, except when playgroups are in session.

Dog volunteers may only handle dogs that are rated the color that they are approved to handle. For example, a volunteer who is approved to handle yellow/green dogs may not handle blue-rated dogs.

Animals that are on in restricted areas should not be handled by a volunteer, only Burlington County Animal Shelter staff.

Dogs can be removed from either the outside kennel door or the inside kennel door. The staff strongly suggests using the inside door for safety reasons; video monitoring, being in the sight lines of shelter employees, etc. You may also take dogs from the outside kennel doors, but at your own risk. It is suggested that you do not take an unusually excited dog out when there are children, numerous customers or other dogs in the walkway or area at the time. When taking a dog from a kennel, you must place a clothespin on the paperwork located on the inside kennel door regardless of which exit you choose to use. You must also place one on the kennel door outside if you have used the outside door to remove the dog. This is the only way that a shelter

employee or other volunteer knows the dog is being handled by another.

Cats: Volunteers may socialize cats and kittens in the Adoptable Cat room (AC), along the lobby wall cages and in the 3 Community Cat rooms (CC). Volunteers are expected to follow the sanitation protocols (hand washing and hand sanitizer) prior to any cat handling to maintain cat health.

Volunteers must review the paperwork to determine the personality and behavior of the cat. A cat may be petted in its cage or held if appropriate. If a volunteer determines that a cat is too scared to be handled, he/ she is encouraged to speak softly, move slowly and proceed cautiously. Cats that appear ill should not be socialized, but a sick slip must be completed and attached to the paperwork.

Volunteers are expected to be observant of their surroundings as well as the cat's behavior. After socializing, dated notes about the cat's behavior must be written on the Volunteer Activity Sheet.

Only Volunteer Animal Assistants (VAA) may assist with cat adoptions and remove a cat from the AC or CC to a "meet and greet" room. A volunteer may request to become a VAA following 30 hours and a minimum of 3 months of cat socialization.

**Small Animals:** Only those experienced with the various small animals the shelter may receive should handle these pets. Please check with the cat coordinator for more information on their proper care. It is important to not handle rabbits if you have not done so before.

**Injured or Sick Animals:** Volunteers should not handle ANY sick, injured or deceased animals. If a volunteer notices a sick, injured or deceased animal, they should immediately notify any Burlington County Animal Shelter staff member.

Should a volunteer have any questions about the health and/or well-being of any animal at the Burlington County Animal Shelter, you may direct your concern to a veterinary technician. You may not disregard signs or paperwork notifications regarding their treatment, feeding type or schedule, or various other information. Do not supplement the food or give an animal treats if the paperwork or a shelter employee has specifically told you not to do so. This can endanger the animal.

A volunteer should not handle any animals that a shelter staff member has directed not to be handled for any reason. This includes quarantines, court holds, animals that have not been evaluated, etc. This is for the safety of the animals, the volunteer and the public. Violating this policy may result in termination from the volunteer program or a reduction of available opportunities.

## **Off-Site Event Procedures**

Volunteers will have the opportunity to assist with and work at various off-site events. Volunteers desiring to assist with and work at off-site adoption events will be required to attend training sessions at actual off-site adoption events. The off-site training will be conducted by the volunteers that have been selected by the Volunteer Coordinator(s) to conduct such an exercise. Individuals selected to provide the training will determine how much training an individual will need and when the volunteer is ready to work at an event unsupervised by a trainer.

Volunteers are not to remove animals from the shelter without the prior written consent of the shelter manager, vet tech or adoption advocates.

Volunteers working at off-site events will be expected to know how to answer questions commonly asked regarding the animals being shown at the event, other animals that are available for adoption at the Animal Shelter and general questions surrounding the adoption process, fees and the customers' responsibilities.

Because many of the customers served at off-site events may not visit our Animal Shelter, these customers' experiences and opinions of the Health Department and our Animal Shelter will come solely from the interaction they will have with off-site event volunteers. Therefore, these volunteers will be considered ambassadors for the Burlington County Animal Shelter and must possess skills to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner with all customers. The main objectives for these volunteers to accomplish will be to showcase the animals currently available for adoption, to answer the customers' questions and to promote a positive image of the Burlington County Animal Shelter.

## **The Public, the Staff and the Volunteer**

It is essential that the volunteer, like the shelter employee, recognize that this facility is designed to serve the public. To that end, no shelter volunteer should interrupt a shelter employee when dealing with the public or a customer for any reason. If a volunteer has specific information about an animal that a customer is considering, they can offer that information to the shelter employee after they have finished speaking or if asked by the shelter employee.

Volunteers are to follow directions of the shelter staff. If the volunteer disagrees with a direction they should discuss it with the shelter manager and/or the volunteer coordinators. Volunteers must also recognize that the staff is here to do a job and may not have time to chat or interact casually. Please respect their work schedule and needs and help out without getting in the way. Additionally, if a shelter employee is inattentive to customers or is doing something which jeopardizes an animal, a potential adoption or the image of the shelter; this likewise should be reported to the shelter manager and/or the volunteer coordinators.

Certain volunteers will be undergoing a customer orientation so that they may work with the public to show animals and assist with adoptions. Please ask the volunteer coordinator if you would like to take this orientation.

We ask that volunteers be polite in all interactions with the public. Each volunteer is representing the animal shelter whenever on-site or wearing a Friends of BCAS shirt. It is imperative that we project a professional, courteous and kind image to the public at all times. Customer service, friendliness and a willingness to help the public is how we get animals adopted.

## **Volunteer Scheduling and Recording of Service Hours**

All volunteers are asked to keep a minimum commitment in mind and to sign in and sign out during each visit. A volunteer service record log will be kept at the Volunteer desk and every volunteer will be responsible for signing in and out using Volgistics. All volunteers are asked to work a minimum of 4 hours per month in order to remain an active volunteer. Volunteers who joined the Friends of BCAS prior to January 2016 may work as little as 2 hours per month in order to remain an active volunteer. A volunteer who is unable to meet this requirement should speak with a volunteer coordinator; otherwise they may be deactivated as a volunteer and would have to start over with the appropriate training session before working with animals.

## **Safety Procedures**

In an attempt to minimize accidents and injuries, the need exists for recognizing and following good safety principles. To accomplish this, Animal Shelter staff will provide all reasonable safeguards to ensure adequate working conditions. The cooperation of the volunteer and Animal Services staff in the observance of this policy will assist in providing safe working conditions and accident free performance.

1. Each volunteer shall be required to attend volunteer training before working alongside the Health Department staff in the Animal Shelter. Training consists of verbal and hands-on instructions given by the BCAS staff or the volunteer coordinator. The length of the training is dependent on the task to be performed and the speed at which the volunteer learns.
2. This document cannot anticipate all areas of potential injury or threat to safety and therefore it is expected that the volunteer will use good judgment and common sense when involved in Burlington County Animal Shelter activities.
3. Any accidents or injuries, no matter how slight, must be reported immediately to a Burlington County Animal Shelter staff and a report filed. This includes bites and animal scratches.
4. Any behavioral difficulty with an animal must be reported to an animal technician immediately. This is for the safety of the animal, the public and the staff.
5. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer be requested to handle or be exposed to any wild or dangerous animal which may come into the custody of the Animal Shelter.

## **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)**

These sheets provide important information for all hazardous substances to which employees and volunteers may be exposed. SDS explain what safety precautions and equipment to use when working with these substances. The SDS are updated as needed and are available to the volunteers. The SDS binder is located in the administration office.

## **Restricted Areas**

The volunteers and the public are not allowed inside any controlled access area without explicit permission from shelter staff or veterinary technicians. These are designated as

restricted to protect the volunteer, the animals, and the shelter. Volunteers will be briefed on these areas during orientation. The restricted areas are the intake sections, quarantine rooms, surgery rooms, and wild holding room. Only approved volunteers will be allowed around livestock, poultry or certain small animals. Please check with the adoption advocates, shelter manager or volunteer coordinators if you would like to assist with these animals.

## **Information Regarding Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is an unfortunate but necessary part of the work carried out by animal shelters across the country and a topic that most people would rather not think about. While it is probably the most difficult subject to understand, it is a very real part of the work conducted by animal shelters. Countless dogs and cats are brought to private and public animal shelters annually because they are unwanted, abandoned or lost. While an animal shelter may work very hard to place each of the animals they take in, there are always some that are beyond the help of medical intervention, suffering or have temperaments that are not considered safe for the public.

In addition, there may be times when a facility is running at full capacity and unsuccessful in placing animals in a foster home, adoption partner facility or with a rescue group. Euthanasia is a last resort and is typically used due to space requirements or health reasons.

As animal lovers, we all share a common goal for the pets in our community; we want them to have a warm place to sleep, good food to eat, a loving family, plenty of exercise and regular veterinary care. Unfortunately, there are times when this outcome may not be achieved. The decision to euthanize an animal is made after carefully evaluating the following issues: the animal's health conditions and our ability to treat a sick or injured animal, the animal's temperament and if adequate space is available to isolate sick animals, as well as housing and caring for all animals in our possession.

If the decision is made to euthanize an animal, a trained staff person who possesses a state certification to perform the procedure will work with an assistant and administer a lethal injection of sodium Phenobarbital. This method is widely considered the most humane and painless euthanasia procedure. The animal is held by the assistant who speaks to the animal in a gentle manner during the procedure. It is unfortunate that this procedure must be conducted and it is no doubt very difficult for our staff. This task requires our staff to cope with both emotional and psychological challenges. Knowing that these challenges exist, we ask you to respect what our staff deals with and to be sensitive if talking about the topic. We do not want to add to our staff's challenges by insinuating that they are the "bad guy", "culprit" or reason why this task is performed.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS**

### **Conflict Resolution**

We believe that the best way to handle any misunderstanding is to communicate honestly about it as soon as it happens. That is why we have an open door policy for bringing volunteer concerns to



the attention of the people who can best do something about them. If a volunteer has a concern, they should immediately bring it to the attention of the shelter manager or Friends of BCAS leadership. The Shelter Manager and Friends of BCAS leadership will work together jointly to address any conflicts.

## **Corrective Action Process**

The Burlington County Animal Shelter reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's connection with the organization at any time; however, the President of the Friends of BCAS must be notified and the rationale for termination must be provided. The Shelter Manager may provide verbal counseling and or written warning prior to termination, but is not required to do so.

### **Verbal Counseling**

When a performance problem is first identified or inappropriate behavior is displayed, it should be brought to the attention of the volunteer as soon as possible. Informal discussion between the Shelter Manager, Friends of BCAS leadership and the volunteer will often suffice as the corrective action needed for the problem.

The Shelter Manager should make and retain a written record of this conversation that summarizes the issues discussed and the date of the meeting.

### **Written Warning**

If an informal discussion with the volunteer does not result in corrective action, the Shelter Manager will prepare a written warning. This formal memorandum will highlight the prior counseling session and the subsequent infraction(s) leading to this warning.

This written warning should be addressed to the volunteer with copies to the Friends of BCAS leadership and should include all of the information required by the disciplinary process.

## **Volunteer Reassignment**

Volunteers who are unable to comply with shelter requirements and have not been responsive to counseling, both verbal and written, may be reassigned as necessary. Prior to any volunteer reassignment, the matter will be reviewed by Shelter Manager and Friends of BCAS leaders to ensure reasonable efforts towards corrective action have been adhered to.

## Termination

If the volunteer's performance continues to deteriorate or corrective action is not adhered to, the Shelter Manager should, after consultation with Burlington County Health Department Administration, prepare and deliver to the volunteer a memorandum summarizing all previous corrective actions and the specific problem(s) that warranted the termination action. Possible reasons may include:

- Failure/unwillingness to adhere to volunteer manual guidelines.
- For conduct on duty which would be detrimental to the organization and/or the animals, including any breach of confidence.
- Conduct off duty which would adversely affect the organization.
- Reporting to an event under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Theft of property or funds.
- Any abuse or mistreatment of animals.
- Releasing of confidential information.
- Gross misconduct.

The decision for termination shall be made after securing the facts from all concerned parties.

## Professional Standards

1. **POLICIES & PROCEDURES.** Volunteers must remember the Burlington County Animal Shelter staff has final say in all situations regarding the shelter and the animals impounded therein. Foster animals are property of the Burlington County Animal Shelter. All policies and established shelter procedures and requests from the Burlington County Animal Shelter must be strictly followed, no exceptions.
2. **CONFIDENTIALITY.** Volunteers may have access to records, staff discussions, and other information that may be confidential. As a volunteer, you are NOT permitted to share such information with others. Doing so could result in your volunteer status being withdrawn. If you have any questions regarding the professional standards, please do not hesitate to contact the Burlington County Animal Shelter staff for clarification or to discuss the matter.
3. **PROFESSIONALISM.** Always maintain a professional and courteous demeanor with customers, staff, as well as with other volunteers.
4. **DRESS CODE.** Proper dress should be conservative. T-shirts with profane, sexual or questionable prints/words are prohibited.
5. **VISITORS.** Volunteers may not bring friends or children to the shelter during their scheduled volunteer hours.
6. **GRIEVANCES.** Grievances or concerns will be reported to the volunteer coordinator(s) and/or the Manager of the Animal Shelter. Designated staff will be given opportunity to resolve issues.
7. **DONATIONS.** Volunteers are not to accept donations, financial or otherwise, to the shelter unless specifically directed to do so by shelter staff or members of the volunteer program board. If a member of the public approaches you at the shelter to donate funds or products, please thank them and bring them to the front desk or retrieve an appropriate staff member to

accept this donation. Shelter volunteers should not accept cash on behalf of the Burlington County Animal Shelter for any reason.

8. **MEDIA.** Volunteers are not permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the Burlington County Animal Shelter. Refer media contacts to the Burlington County Animal Shelter Manager, or the Health Department's office. For inquiries about the volunteer program, direct the public to our website; [friendsofbcas.org](http://friendsofbcas.org), to the president or to the public relations contact.
9. **RESIGNATION.** Please tell the volunteer coordinator(s) or Shelter Manager if you need to stop volunteering for any reason. Your opinion and feedback is important to us.

Departing volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback and agree to an exit interview which can help make our program better for volunteers and animals.

“An unshared life is not living. He who shares does not lessen, but greatens, his life.”  
(Stephen S. Wise)

Thank you for sharing your time to help homeless animals in our community.

## Revision History

Version No.	Date of Revision	Author	Summary of Revision
1	December 11, 2013	B. Feldstein	Document created and distributed
	December 11, 2013	B. Feldstein	Document
	June 26, 2014	B. Feldstein	Added: new parking rules for volunteers; Special Needs Volunteers
	January 28, 2015	B. Feldstein	Update to 'Handling of Animals'
2	May 9, 2016	T. Kopasz	Updates in personnel, additional volunteer opportunities, handling of animals, and recording of service hours
2.1	June 21, 2016	T. Kopasz	Updated the email address for the cat volunteer coordinator
3.0	Jan. 14, 2018	J. DePolo	Updated number of hours need to remain active volunteer, updated president, cat and dog volunteer contact information, fixed typos