AC-16 WORKING CAT CARE

**Purpose**

To detail the responsibilities of staff who identify and care for cats that qualify as working cats.

**Policy**

Staff will identify cats that would not be suitable as inside pets, but would thrive in an indoor/outdoor garage type environment.

**Staff /Areas Affected**

* Cattery Staff
* Feline Enrichment Coordinator
* Admitting staff
* Vet staff

**Definitions**

**ISO** – Isolation (located inside room 218)

**ShelterLuv** – Database used by HSWM for all tracking of customers, animals and associated service

**Responsibilities**

Director of Animal Care is responsible for making sure this process takes place.

**Procedures**

This procedure ensure that working cats are identified and housed in a slightly different manner than cats who are intended to be adopted as indoor pets. Due to the potential difficulties in handling these cats, different protocol is used for care and medical treatment.

**Identifying working Cats**

Cats identified as working cats qualify for that identity by animal care staff in Admitting, Shelter Manager, Cattery staff or Vet Staff. Referrals of cats for this program are evaluated by the Feline Enrichment Coordinator.

Working cats are identified as those who have been living outside, are considered feral, have had limited human interaction are fractious or otherwise not deemed suitable to be adopted as indoor pets. Working Cats are typically not put on the adoption floor. However, there might be exceptions to this for logistic purposes.

**Daily care for cats in the outdoor shed**

* Care is only needed in the morning on moderate days, but during inclement weather, need care in the afternoon.
* In colder months, the warming discs need to be heated twice daily and water replaced twice as it will freeze.
* Shed should be locked and the key is located on the garage door switches in the garage.
* When entering and leaving the shed, be sure to not let any cats escape
* Bring food and water with you
* Empty any remaining food into the trash
* Sweep if needed
* Empty water bowls and provide fresh water
* Provide clean water & food bowls
* Food should be of a lower quality if possible. This is more what they are used to and more likely to be eaten than grain free or Science Diet brand.
* Give ½ cup of dry food and a spoonful of canned food per cat
* Scoop litter box into a bag and put in the dumpster. Replace box as necessary, when sides are dirty with feces
* Bring dirty bowls / litter boxes in and clean according to SOP AC-12
* Look around for any signs of insect or rodent infestation. Advise facilities staff if there are signs,

When outside temps are below freezing:

* Use plastic dishes because wet food and water freeze faster on the metal dishes
* Heat a Snuggle Safe (6 minutes) in the microwave prior to going out. Get a fleece sleeve to put it in. Do not heat for more than 6 minutes as it will damage them. (Pink Snuggle Safe brand – 6 minutes, Green generic ones – 3 minutes)
* A second trip out to the shed in the late afternoon should be made to bring fresh water to replace frozen water, unless a heated waterer is in use.

**Medical Treatment**

Due to the difficulty handling Working Cats, limited follow up can be done medically. Initial medical services provided are:

* Feline triple snap test
* Microchip
* FVRCP (and a booster if they're in our care long enough to be due for booster)
* Feline bordetella\*
* Flea prevention

\*Giving intranasal bordetella boosters is very difficult with these cats. Therefore, the initial is given while under anesthesia but the booster is not practical.

**Misc.**

The decision to move cats is made by the Feline Enrichment Coordinator and/or Director of Animal Care. Once the decision is made to move a cat it should be put in a clean carrier for the move to the new location. Covering the carrier with a towel helps minimize the stress to the cat.

Linens in the original location should be moved to the new location if they are not soiled. ShelterLuv is updated with the new location.

**Reference Documents**

* SOP AC-12 Cat Care Processes
* SOP CS-14 Working Cat Program
* Checklists

**Revision History**

V1 - Created 5/21/19

V2 - Revised 11/18/20

V3 - Revised 12/10/20