

Checklist: How Does Your Shelter Measure Up?

Begin by sizing up your local animal shelter, using these general guidelines, and then follow up with routine visits to the shelter using the enclosed sample “Animal Shelter Inspection Form.”

■ **Every decent, caring animal shelter should have the following:**

- a compassionate, trained staff
- a policy of accepting every animal brought in
- a sick ward and isolation area for animals who may be ill
- a pre-adoption home check and follow-up program to determine potential adopters
- a humane method of euthanasia, usually an intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital, administered by well-trained, gentle staff members
- a policy against giving or selling animals to laboratories or allowing animals to be used as guard dogs or cats as “barn cats” or “mousers”
- cruelty investigators
- a veterinarian on call 24 hours a day
- a no-fee policy for surrendered animals
- indoor/outdoor dog runs
- a large, sunny cat room with raised perches for sitting and individual cages for cats who must be isolated
- a quiet room for potential adopters to meet and get to know animals
- an active public education program to teach children and adults to care for animals properly
- a volunteer network
- a spay-and-neuter program that ensures that all animals are sterilized prior to adoption or that guarantees that all adopted animals are later sterilized
- a policy of holding lost and stray animals for a minimum of five operating days, including at least one Saturday

For more details, please see the enclosed factsheets on animal shelters, euthanasia, pound seizure, and spaying and neutering.