
Managed Shelter Admission Policy

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Stray Animal Admission Policy

At the York County SPCA (YCSPCA), our goal is to provide long-term human and animal services to the residents of York County. We provide services traditionally provided by and funded through local governments.

As such, **the YCSPCA can only accept stray animals from York County municipalities that contract with us for animal housing services.**

For a full list of our contracting municipalities, please visit: [Shelter Admissions | York County SPCA](#)

If you find a stray animal in a York County municipality that does not contract with us, we recommend reaching out to your municipality's administration directly to determine next steps.

To contact your municipality to urge them to contract with us, we suggest [using this letter as a template](#). Please contact us at info@ycspca.org with questions.

Stray Dogs

The YCSPCA can accept stray dogs from public citizens, animal control officers contracted by York County municipalities, York County police officers, and PA state dog warden. Stray dogs are accepted from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Sunday from these entities. We request that anyone transporting a stray dog to our facility notify us prior to bringing the animal to us.

To learn more about stray dogs in your municipality, [please visit our website](#).

Community (Stray) Cats

1. **Healthy free-roaming community cats.** In most situations, the YCSPCA will not accept healthy "stray" cats into the shelter as surrendered animals. In most cases, due
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to behavioral issues, feral or free-roaming cats will never be a candidate for adoption, which leaves those cats with an almost guaranteed outcome of euthanasia. Additionally, surrendering free-roaming cats does not reduce York County's free roaming cat population long-term. Instead, the YCSPCA advocates for data-driven, long-term solutions to address our county's cat population growth rates.

Residents should trap unowned cats and then bring those cats to the York County SPCA's low-cost spay/neuter clinic. At the clinic, all cats receive a thorough exam, spay/neuter surgery, ear tip, flea treatment, and are vaccinated for Feline Distemper and Rabies - all for a cost of \$40. For more information on this program, [please visit our spay/neuter clinic page](#). The next day, residents should pick up the cat and return the cat back to where it was found. Upon completion of the veterinary exam, any health issues are addressed by our staff. If the cat arrives in a healthy condition, research and industry professionals agree that the cat will continue to thrive in the same environment.

2. **Unhealthy free-roaming community cats.** If York County residents observe and trap unhealthy free-roaming cat, we accept those animals into our shelter. We strive to nurse the animal back to health in hopes of returning the cat to the original address where it was found. Again, free-roaming cats are not good candidates for adoption and typically thrive when returned to their outside home. *If you think a free-roaming community cat in your neighborhood is experiencing a health issue, please contact the YCSPCA prior to trapping the cat and bringing it to the shelter.*
3. **Owned, free-roaming cats.** If York County residents observe a free-roaming cat that appears to be owned (collar, harness, other obvious signs) we encourage residents to leave the cat where it is. Although it may feel counterintuitive, cats are 13 times more likely to be reunited with their owner when they remain or are returned to the area where they were found. Unless there are signs of illness or abandonment (trying to get into homes, frightened outside, cowering, hiding, etc.), it is better to return cats to their previous environment rather than bring the cat to an animal shelter. Alternatively, you may bring the cat to the shelter to have it scanned for a microchip. If there is no microchip, we will ask you to return the cat to the location where it was found. If there is a microchip, we will keep the cat and attempt to reunite it with the owner.
4. **Kittens with a mom.** If York County residents observe kittens and the mom cat is alive, we ask them to "leave the kittens be." If York County residents do not see the mother cat, it is likely that the mom is still alive but is out hunting or hiding from people. It is instinctual for community members to see a kitten and want to bring that kitten to our shelter for care and adoption. However, we must redirect kittens away from our shelter and into a foster home because they often experience health problems in a shelter setting due to their compromised immune systems. The best guarantee for a kitten's live outcome is to keep the kitten with its mom. Community members can help increase a kitten's chance at a live outcome by following these instructions. Avoid handling the kittens and watch them from a distance for 10-12 hours to see if the mother returns. If the kittens are exposed or in a dangerous

location, move them to a safe hiding spot nearby. If no mother returns, please contact the shelter at 717-764-6109 extension 9000. The next best option is foster care. Saving kittens must be a community effort. We are only successful in saving kitten lives if people volunteer to be kitten fosters. Once kitten fosters have nursed the kitten to about 2-pounds, their immune system is strong enough to allow them to return to our shelter for adoption. To learn more, [visit our Foster Program page](#).

5. **Kittens without a mom.** If York County residents find kittens and the mom is confirmed deceased, we will try our best to find a foster home for the kitten(s). We have a network of volunteers who are willing to bottle feed kittens until they reach two pounds and can be brought into the shelter. The finder may be asked to foster the kittens until they are two pounds if a foster parent is unavailable. All supplies and coaching will be provided. Feel free to contact us for more information or to learn how to become a feline foster parent. To learn more, [visit our Foster Program page](#).

After Hours Sick/Injured Stray Animal Assistance

Any severely sick and/or injured stray animal that needs care outside of normal York County SPCA business hours should seek assistance at Mason Dixon Animal Emergency Hospital (MDAEH). The York County SPCA has a negotiated agreement with MDAEH, to hold and stabilize severely injured or ill animals until the next day when an agent of the YCSPCA can transport the animal to our shelter. If the injured or ill stray animal is stable, the staff at MDAEH will inform the finder to hold the animal overnight and bring to the YCSPCA the following morning.

Please note, Mason Dixon Animal Emergency Hospital can only provide care on our behalf to stray animals from contracting municipalities. If you find a stray animal in a municipality that does not contract with us, please contact your municipal administration.

Surrendering Animals to the York County SPCA

The York County SPCA's (YCSPCA) goal is to keep people and pets together. Alternative options and support will be offered to find a solution to keep your pet happy and healthy at home and even strengthen your bond with them.

The York County SPCA partners with [Adopt-a-pet.com](https://www.adopt-a-pet.com) to provide community listings for pets that are in search of their new forever homes. Through Adopt-a-Pet.com, we can help pet owners find new families for their pets without these pets ever having to enter a shelter. By skipping a stay at the shelter, your pet will experience a calmer and much more comfortable transition and avoid the potential fear and stress of staying at the shelter. Listing a pet on Adopt-a-pet.com is \$5. *When you use the YCSPCA referral code, your listing fee is just \$1.*



Referral code: **RCXHAQTL2U8AD8Z**

We understand that giving up your pet to a shelter can be a difficult and emotional decision. The YCSPCA provides a non-judgmental approach to working with you and your pet. Prior to submitting a surrender form, please review our [Alternatives to Surrender](#) and [Resources](#) section on our website.

If you have considered alternatives and still need to surrender your pet, please complete the appropriate surrender form with as much detail as possible. Surrender forms are located on our website at the following address: <https://ycspca.org/resources/giving-up-your-pet/>

A YCSPCA staff member will review the form and contact you to discuss your application.

A completed surrender form requires:

1. Link to ReHome listing for your pet - more information is available here: <https://ycspca.org/resources/rehoming-your-pet/>
2. A photo of the pet(s) you would like to surrender.
3. Veterinary records for the pet(s) you would like to surrender.
4. Training or behavior records for the pet(s) you would like to surrender (if available).

A completed surrender form is not a guarantee that your pet will be accepted into the shelter. Pets are surrendered by appointment only to ensure we have adequate space and resources to care for your animal. A surrender evaluation appointment will be scheduled, and the pet will be assessed by departmental leadership. If the pet can be safely handled the animal will be accepted for surrender and will be signed over to our care at the appointment. If the animal is denied for surrender based on the assessment criteria, additional resources will be provided to the owner for alternative placement options. Alternative placement will be the responsibility and discretion of the owner.

Please note that while we will accept surrendered pets from all of York County, in times that our shelter capacity is strained, we will prioritize surrender intakes from municipalities that contract with us for animal housing services. Please visit [this page](#) for a full list of the municipalities that contract with us.

