

# ADOPTION POLICY

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## COMMITMENT & GOALS:

The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (SDHS) receives animals for a variety of reasons such as owners whom are no longer able to care for them, transfers from animal welfare partners needing assistance, animals involved in cruelty cases and animals that are lost or abandoned. We are looking for people who are willing to provide permanent, loving homes for these animals. Please consider carefully the time and money required to own a pet before you make the decision to adopt. Owning a pet is a lifetime commitment.

All animals that are available for adoption have passed an evaluation based on their known history, health and temperament. Animals remain available at our Adoption Centers as long as their good health and behavior continue. There is no time limit for how long an animal may remain on our adoption floors.

SDHS adoption counselors are available to assure the highest rate of animal placement success and to provide exceptional guest relations. These highly trained counselors are knowledgeable in animal behavior and assessment, and are an essential source of expertise in the successful matchmaking process for both the adopter and the animal. The primary goal is to assist the adopter in choosing an animal that best fits their lifestyle, home environment, and individual preferences. However ultimately it is the adopter who will choose their new animal under the guidance of our counselors and in accordance with the SDHS policy. The human-animal bond is a powerful and binding connection for most adopters, and we believe that an adopter who feels a connection with an animal almost instantly is an individual who will more likely commit to the continued relationship and needs of the animal.

## LOCATION:

The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (SDHS) has multiple locations throughout San Diego County:

- Central Campus
  - 5500 Gaines Street, San Diego, CA 92110
  - Adoption Center located in Petco at 540 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, El Cajon, CA 92021 (Dogs, and small animals)
- North Campus
  - 2905 San Luis Rey Road, Oceanside, CA 92058 (for dogs and puppies)
  - 572 Airport Road, Oceanside, CA 92058 (for cats, kittens, and small animals)
- Mobile Adoption Sites – please see [www.sdhumane.org](http://www.sdhumane.org) for calendar of events and locations

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

The main telephone number for all SDHS locations is (619) 299-7012. You may contact us via the web at [www.sdhumane.org](http://www.sdhumane.org).

## ADOPTION HOURS:

Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM  
Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM  
CLOSED HOLIDAYS (see website for exact dates)

Applicants will be scheduled to meet with an adoption counselor up to one hour before closing.

## **ADOPTION FEES:**

All adoption fees collected assist in the daily care and on-going needs of each animal admitted to SDHS. Adoption gift certificates are also available for purchase.

- Adoption Superstars - \$25.00 regardless of age for dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens
- Senior Dogs and Cats (over seven years old) - \$25.00
- Dogs seven months to seven years – \$95.00
- Cats seven months to seven years – \$65.00
- Puppies six months and younger - \$195.00
- Kittens six months and younger - \$125.00
- Rabbits, Guinea Pigs, Chinchillas, Large birds, & Reptiles - \$25.00
- Small birds (canaries, parakeets, finches), rodents (mice, rats, hamsters) - \$5.00
- Livestock – fees vary based on species
- Senior Adoption Program – Fee waived (Adopter must be 55 years or older to utilize this program)
- Buddy Pricing: Adoption fee is discounted 50% for kitten and puppy “buddy” adoption. For all other animals the “buddy” animal adoption fee is \$5. (Adoption of a buddy must occur at same time or within one year of the first adoption)
- Military Pricing: For active members of the military, there is a 25% discount with proof of active duty.
- Animal Welfare Partner fees – Adoption fee is waived.
- Independent 501c3 request fees: \$50.00

The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA reserves the right to hold special animal adoption promotions wherein prices may be reduced or waived altogether. These promotional campaigns will be advertised to the general public and honored during the promotional dates only. Following special adoption campaigns, adoption pricing will revert to original pricing until further notice.

## **MICROCHIP REGISTRATION & LICENSING PROCESS:**

Adopter will complete the appropriate registration forms. SDHS will complete the registration process assuring all animals adopted are properly registered.

Adopters in the cities of Oceanside, Vista, Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, San Diego, Santee, Solana Beach, and all unincorporated areas of San Diego County will receive their first year city license, at no additional cost, for their dogs and puppies.

## **ANIMALS AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION:**

All of our animals receive a comprehensive medical examination by one of our staff veterinarians. At a minimum, this will include the following services:

- Physical Examination
- Blood Analysis
- Vaccinations according to SDHS protocol
- Leukemia & Infectious Virus Testing
- General de-wormer
- Flea & Tick treatment
- Spay or Neuter with pain management
- Basic Dental Care

- Permanent Microchip ID

### **BEHAVIOR AND MEDICAL SERVICES:**

Small animals available for adoption will receive a physical examination, basic dental care, and a certificate for a free examination by a participating veterinary hospital or veterinary practice. Rabbits are surgically sterilized using anesthetics; however, guinea pigs, rats, hamsters and chinchillas are not surgically sterilized due to the risk involved with using anesthetics.

The SDHS veterinary staff may also provide other diagnostic evaluations which may include radiographs, ultrasounds and/or other prescribed medical treatments including surgery within the scope of resources available by SDHS.

All dogs and cats receive a behavioral assessment by trained and SDHS-certified staff members. Each certified staff member has nearly 200 hours of specialized training in understanding and interpreting animal behavior and characteristics.

Some animals may require either behavior or medical consultations prior to being adopted. In some cases, animals may require a consultation from both departments prior to being adopted. The potential adopter is encouraged to take the next available consultation appointment. Medical and behavior consultations are offered most days of the week. A hold will be placed on the animal for the potential adopter until the consultations are completed.

### **ADOPTION PROCEDURES:**

Prior to adopting an animal from SDHS, the potential adopter is required to complete an adoption application. Adoption applications are available by fax, email, on-line at [www.sdhumane.org](http://www.sdhumane.org) or in person at either a mobile adoption site or at any adoption location open to the general public. The public is encouraged to complete their adoption application prior to arriving at the shelter. This will expedite the adoption process and may shorten the applicant's waiting time to meet with an adoption counselor.

Upon arrival at the shelter those individuals interested in adopting an animal will be directed to the guest relations desk. The guest relations staff will provide an explanation of the adoption process. As noted above, the potential adopter will be required to complete an application before meeting with an adoption counselor or interacting with any animal. Once an application is completed, the potential adopter will be placed on wait list to meet with an adoption counselor on a first come first serve basis.

Individuals who enter the shelter during off adoption hours may complete an application and then return during regular adoption hours to view the animal(s) and / or meet with an adoption counselor.

The following guidelines are considerations for successful adoption completion:

- Potential applicants must be at least 18 years of age to adopt an animal, verified by a valid photo ID.
- SDHS will not adopt any animal to a person with a history of animal abuse or neglect.
- In keeping with the desire to successfully manage the animal population in our community, all adopted animals will be spayed or neutered before going to their new home, unless the procedure is unavailable or inadvisable due to animal type or health issues.
- Potential adopters must agree to comply with all state and local laws, regulations and ordinances applicable to the animal being adopted.
- Animals must only be adopted as companion animals and not used for any other reason including for food consumption, fighting, resale for profit, or as a working guard dog (Humane Society animals do not receive any special training for working dog certification status).

- For the greatest adoption success, we strongly encourage all members of the prospective adoption household be present and participate in the selection of the animal.
- If the potential adopter has current resident dog(s) in the home and is interested in adopting an additional dog or puppy, they are strongly encouraged to bring the resident dog(s) to the appropriate adoption location for a supervised introduction with the animal to be adopted.
- If, for some reason, the adopter cannot keep the adopted animal, SDHS should be contacted. We will always accept an animal back into our care regardless of time and reason.
- The potential adopter accepts the animal “as-is” and assumes all risks of ownership of the animal including any and all further financial obligations.
- If a potential adopter becomes verbally abusive to SDHS staff an adoption may be denied and the potential adopter will be asked to leave the premises.
- If a potential adopter has concerns regarding the adoption process they may request to speak with a manager or campus director.
- SDHS encourages potential adopters to review their property regulations, agreements and homeowner insurance regarding how many and what type of pets they are allowed to have.

**SDHS reserves the right to deny an adoption if they feel it is in the best interest of the animal or potential adopter.**

#### **ADOPTION RETURNS:**

Adoption returns will be defined as adopted animals which are returned within 30 days of adoption. In accordance with the adoption contract SDHS is under no obligation to reimburse the adopter for any medical treatment, expense or fees incurred in connection with the animal. If an animal is returned due to an illness which occurred within the first 14 days of adoption the adopter will be given a 90 day window to exchange for a different pet.

#### **STEP BY STEP PROTOCOL FOR POTENTIAL ADOPTERS (Internal Use Only):**

1. Staff will work collaboratively to assist guests with the adoption process before, during and after posted adoption hours.
2. Database search for prior adoption applicant information and / or historical data related to the applicant.
3. Verification that applicant is 18 years or older with valid photo ID
4. If it doesn't already exist, a potential adopter's profile record will be created and all applicant information will be entered into the database to create a person ID.
5. The potential adopter will be placed on the waiting list for the next available adoption counselor, on a first come first serve basis.
6. A wait list presented on a visible board will be maintained by the guest relations staff to provide potential adopters with a wait list status.
7. A pager system may be available at some locations for those potential adopters who want to view other animals or otherwise walk away from the waiting area.
8. The potential adopter will be paged when an adoption counselor becomes available.
9. Potential adopters will be added to the waiting list up to one hour before closing.
10. Adoption counselors are to inform the potential adopter of ALL animals available for adoption regardless of their current housing location.
11. At the discretion of the adoption counselor a limited “hold” of up to 24 hours may be placed on the specific animal. We will accept one additional “hold” on the animal so a home will not be lost if the first “hold” cancels.
  - a. When placing a “hold” on an animal which is housed at a different adoption location, the adoption counselor is responsible for first contacting the guest relations staff at that location to assure that the animal is still available for adoption.

- b. When an animal is placed on hold their database status will be changed to "Hold"
12. For those animals requiring a private consultation, the SDHS will generally provide a prepared package of information with additional details and animal history (if available) that will be provided to the potential adopter by the adoption counselor.
    - a. The counselor will contact the appropriate staff to schedule the consultation, scheduling the next available appointment, and will enter a memo into the SDHS database specifically for this potential adopter.
    - b. The consultation is the last step in the adoption process, and it is vital that all other adoption steps such as family interaction appointments, dog-to-dog introductions etc. be completed prior to the consultation appointment. The consultation is provided at no additional cost courtesy of SDHS.
  13. Once the potential adopter receives final approval and the animal is ready to leave for its new home the adoption counselor will:
    - a. Review the adoption package with the adopter
    - b. Complete the adoption process steps in SDHS database
    - c. Request that the adopter complete the microchip registration information
    - d. Print the animal's complete medical history, adoption contract, and payment receipt
    - e. Request the adopter read and sign the adoption contract
    - f. Provide recommendations for supplies and equipment necessary to help ensure adoption success.
    - g. Escort the adopter to the retail or guest relations area to pay the adoption fees and receive their city license if applicable.
  14. Once the adoption contract is signed and the retail guest relations staff collects the adoption fees the appropriate staff member will be paged or asked to discharge the animal.