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## **Stray Canine Intake Policy (Beginning January 1, 2026)**

**Updated: October 2025**

- Purpose: To provide safe, consistent, and humane intake of stray canines while protecting the safety of staff, citizens, and animals.
- Scope: Applies to all contracted municipal partners, animal control officers (ACOs), police officers, dog wardens, and public citizens who bring stray canines to the shelter.

The York County SPCA (YCSPCA) can only accept stray companion animals from York County municipalities that hold a service contract with our organization. For more information, please visit: <https://ycspca.org/resources/stray-canine-intake-policy/>

### **Stray Intake Procedure**

- **Call the YCSPCA and seek guidance**
  - Stray dogs can be brought to the YCSPCA from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., seven days a week.
  - All calls regarding stray dogs will first be referred to the municipality's stray dog transportation provider (an animal control officer, police officer, or dog warden). This is the preferred and safest practice.
  - Stray dog transportation providers must call the YCSPCA before transporting any animal to our facility.
  - If no provider is available or the municipality directs otherwise, citizens may transport stray dogs to the YCSPCA, subject to the requirements below.
- **For ACO, Police Officer, or Dog Warden Transports from Contracting Municipalities**
  - When the ACO, police officer, or dog warden arrives at the YCSPCA, they should leave the dog in their vehicle and check in with a staff member in our shelter lobby.
    - Shelter staff will not remove dogs, whether secured or unsecured, from vehicles. Finders are responsible for safely bringing dogs to the shelter door.

- ACO, police officers, and dog wardens are required to provide the following information.
  - Date and time found, citizen information (name, address, phone number, and email), and municipality.
  - Condition and behavior of the dog at pick-up.
  - Location (exact address) where the dog was found.
  - The municipality where the dog was found.
- Additional questions or information may be required on a case-by-case basis.

*Failure to provide this information will delay a dog's intake until our team can collect it.*

- **For Citizen Transports from Contracting Municipalities**

- Important Considerations
  - Citizens should never chase or attempt to secure dogs that show obvious signs of aggression. Aggressive or unsafe animals **must** be handled only by the municipality's designated stray dog transportation provider. Citizens should not attempt to catch or handle aggressive animals.
  - Aggressive behavior may include, but is not limited to:
    - Growling, snarling, bearing teeth, or sharp and repeated barking
    - Snapping or biting
    - Stiff, rigid body posture, leaning forward, or lunging/charging
    - Raised hackles
    - Tail held high and rigid
    - Ears forward or pinned back tightly
    - Direct, hard stare
    - If they appear to be guarding something
- Intake Process
  - If the dog can be safely secured, the citizen should leash the dog and travel with them in a crate or carrier whenever possible.



- When the citizens arrive at the YCSPCA, they should leave the dog in their vehicle and check in with a staff member in our shelter lobby.
- Citizens transporting stray dogs will be required to provide:
  - A driver's license
  - Location (exact address) where the dog was found
  - Condition and behavior of the dog when found
- Citizens will be required to complete a stray intake questionnaire
- The staff at the YCSPCA will need to verify all information provided before accepting the dog into our care.
- Once directed, the finder should return to their vehicle, retrieve the dog, and meet a member of our staff at the shelter lobby doors to transfer the animal into our care.
- A citizen choosing to transport a stray dog assumes responsibility for safely securing and transporting the dog to the shelter.
- The shelter staff reserves the right to use restraint devices to intake animals that present an immediate safety risk. These devices include, but are not limited to, catch poles, chemical restraint/sedation, crates, and cages.
- Owner Surrenders
  - If a citizen attempts to surrender their personal pet as a stray, we will deny the pet into our care. All citizens must follow the York County SPCA's process for owner surrenders, which starts with a surrender application. Because shelter space is limited, we must manage our admissions, and stray dog intake is prioritized over owner-surrendered dogs. Owner-surrendered dogs require an intake evaluation and are often placed on a waitlist until an enclosure becomes available. More information on owner surrenders is available here: <https://ycspca.org/resources/giving-up-your-pet/>

Stray dogs from non-contracting municipalities will not be accepted. Citizens from non-contracting municipalities will be directed to their municipal administrators for guidance. A list of non-contracting municipalities will be maintained on the YCSPCA's phone system and website.

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