

There are times when the only humane option for an animal is euthanasia. The issue of euthanasia in rescue groups generally arises when an animal is suffering (physically or mentally) and the organization does not have the resources or ability to stop or ease the suffering.

The decision to euthanize is never easy, but you can find guidance within the Five Freedoms. While euthanasia philosophy may differ between individual organizations, policy should always ensure that an animal receives all Five Freedoms through the end of life. Once an animal's quality of life has deteriorated to the point where freedom from discomfort and pain (physical and mental) is no longer possible, euthanasia becomes the humane option.

Drafting a clear euthanasia policy and having it approved by the board of directors will allow you to create a policy that adheres to the values of the organization. It will also help your rescue group maintain consistency and avoid problems down the road.

All euthanasia must be conducted humanely by a veterinarian or certified euthanasia technician who administers an injection of sodium pentobarbital (a tranquilizer is not required, but may be appropriate), and the animal must be made comfortable throughout the procedure.

Working Dogs For Vets provides a lifetime commitment to all animals that come into our care whether they are in house or with a veteran teammate. While we do not euthanize any animal for time or space, unfortunately, there are some instances where euthanasia is the best or only humane option for an animal in our care. Each animal is evaluated as an individual and assessed under the circumstances as a whole. Euthanasia is only considered after an appropriate investigation of other viable and reasonable options. The following outlines the circumstances in which we consider euthanasia for an animal in our care, how that decision is made and how it will be carried out. Circumstances that may require euthanasia Working Dogs For Vets only considers euthanasia as an option for animals that are suffering mentally, emotionally or physically and have a poor prognosis; are experience unremitting pain or mental suffering that cannot be reasonably alleviated.

Euthanasia is not an option we take lightly and it will be done only when we have determined that it is the only humane option for the animal. Medical Issues After consulting with a veterinarian and following recommendations, we will consider euthanasia for an animal who has a poor prognosis, will have a long and painful rehabilitation process with little chance of a meaningful recovery, has an incurable debilitating illness or is not responding to the available treatment. How we make the decision to euthanize For standard medical cases, we will defer to the judgment of our veterinarians in making euthanasia recommendations. For those rare, controversial medical cases where the animal's quality of life may be unclear, the board of directors and executive director will convene to evaluate the data, consult other resources if necessary and make a determination by a simple majority vote. The provider for the animal in question will also be allowed to participate in the discussion and request a vote. How the animal is euthanized The provider or another representative from Working Dogs For Vets will be responsible for taking the animal to one of the organization's partner veterinarians for euthanasia. Whenever possible and appropriate, the provider or other representative from Working Dogs For Vets will remain with the animal during the entire process.



