

Policy Pertaining to Mandatory Euthanasia Training (Chapter 821)

According to Chapter 821 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Treatment and Disposition of Animals, a person may not euthanize* an animal in the custody of an animal shelter unless the person has successfully completed, not more than three years before the date the person euthanizes the animal, a training course approved by the Department of State Health Services (formerly the Texas Department of Health) in the proper methods and techniques for euthanizing animals.

Therefore, anytime an animal in the custody of a shelter is euthanized, a person who has successfully completed the mandatory euthanasia training must directly supervise the entire euthanasia process. This person must also be the one to accomplish certain functions in the euthanizing process (refer to item #1 below). However, a person without the mandatory euthanasia training may complete some of the other functions involved with euthanizing an animal (refer to item #2 below) if he/she has received instructions for that function and is performing under the direct supervision of a trained person. The Department of State Health Services has developed the following guidelines for interpreting which individuals involved with the euthanasia process must have the mandatory training.

1. Training is mandatory for the person:

- administering sedation and/or anesthesia before the injectable euthanasia solution is administered;
- administering the euthanasia solution;
- determining how and when the animal is to be loaded into the carbon monoxide chamber;
- loading the animal into the chamber or overseeing (i.e. being physically present) a person who is loading the animal into the carbon monoxide chamber;
- administering the commercially compressed carbon monoxide gas;
- surveying the animal in the carbon monoxide chamber or the animal that has received an injection of euthanasia solution;
- regulating the storage and accountability of the euthanasia solution;
- operating the carbon monoxide chamber and checking the equipment; and
- checking vital signs to determine if the animal is deceased.

2. If the person is performing the following tasks under the direct supervision of a trained staff member, training is recommended, but not mandatory, for the person:

- holding the animal while the sedative, anesthesia, or euthanasia solution is being administered;
- loading the animal into the carbon monoxide chamber with oversight (i.e. physical presence) by a person who has successfully completed the mandatory euthanasia training;
- storing or disposing of the animal carcass; and
- cleaning the carbon monoxide chamber or euthanasia area.

* Note: the only allowable method of euthanasia for dogs and cats in the custody of an animal shelter is sodium pentobarbital. All other animals in the custody of an animal shelter must be euthanized in accordance with the methods, recommendations, and procedures of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) in the latest version of the *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals* applicable to that species of animal. Additionally, the standards set forth in Texas Administrative Code 169.81-84 must be implemented.