
Capacity for Care (C4C)



THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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OUR MISSION: To protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

Purpose

Developed by shelter medicine experts at UC Davis, C4C is an initiative to allow animals in our care to experience the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare, allow staff an environment where they can do a good job and increase the positive outcomes (adoptions, return-to-owner, spay/neuter release, etc) for all animals in our care. C4C allows us to meet the needs of every animal that is brought to our shelters and ensure that we have the resources to care for these animals.

Capacity for Care has NINE essential elements

1. Adoption driven Capacity (ADC) Formula

ADC = MDA x LOS

ACD = Adoption Driven Capacity

ADC is the recommended number of cats to have available for adoption on the adoption floor or on their way to being available for adoption if viewable in another room (i.e. stray cat that is highly adoptable, healthy, S/N ready and waiting for stray period to end)

General rule is you should stay within 80% of your ACD to accommodate for emergencies.

MDA = Monthly Daily Average Adoption (number of adoptions per month/days of the month)

LOS = Length of Stay

Some branches that have high incidence of cat overpopulation should also need to consider their transfer driven capacity. Your ADC may be low but the community need is high and you have an opportunity to transfer cats each week.

2. Capacity determination

In the past, we have generally only used physical holding capacity (PHC) to determine capacity but other factors play a role:

- Staffing (full-time equivalents (FTE) and volunteers)
- Physical holding capacity (PHC)
- Foster care capacity
- Ability to provide good welfare (not only staff and volunteer time but also includes training, resources, shelter set up, etc)
- Resources/Ability to treat health and behaviour problems, including availability of vet appointments

3. Portalization of cage/cat space minimums

Increased floor space allows for separation of eating and sleeping areas from elimination area – as per the Canadian Standards of Care in Animal Shelters (CSC) – areas for sleeping/resting, elimination, and eating should be 2ft apart

As per the CSC guidelines, cats require 11ft² per cat in a kennel and 18ft² per cat in communal housing – this is essential for cats to experience the Five Freedoms.

4. Fast tracking

- Identify highly adoptable cats and moving them to adoptions as soon as possible
- Alleviate bottlenecks such as medical treatments and procedures
- Allow viewing of cats during stray hold (if shelter layout and staffing allow for this to be done safely)

5. Adopter-friendly adoption process – based on TRUST

- Adoption survey instead of lengthy adoption “application”
- Conversation-based adoption matching process instead of “pass-fail”
- Elimination of barriers to adoption including:
 - Vet references
 - Landlord checks
 - Whole family being present
 - Pets as presents

The BC SPCA adopted these five non-negotiables for adoption:

- I. Animal must be spayed or neutered before adoption.
- II. No animal will be adopted to a person who has a known history of animal or child abuse.
- III. No animal will be adopted to a person who is suspected of being intoxicated or high at time of application.
- IV. No companion animal will be adopted to be used as a food source.
- V. Adopter must provide photo identification.

6. Adoption fee adjustments

- Periodic promotions for cats with reduced adoption fees – these promotions can be specific to a branch, region or province-wide
- Branch discretion to reduce adoption fees in individual cases
- Significant medical or behavioural problems that will require life-long management
- Prolonged length of stay (LOS)

Studies show that free or discounted adoptions do not result in higher return rates or the animal being less valued in a home.

7. Managed intake

Also known as scheduled intake or intake coordination. Managed intake provokes action versus passive options such as wait-lists or holding surrendered cats that are already altered for monitoring.

- Conversation based wait-lists – provide support to the guardians – many times the reason to surrender may be for short-term reasons.
- Cats who are surrendered and are already altered and ready for adoption move to “Fast Track”
- Positive community engagement and service in collaboration with community veterinarians
- Reduced LOS, stress, and disease for cats housed at branch

8. Optimal animal management

- Pathway planning – anticipate pathway starting at intake and do everything to move animal quickly towards eventual outcome
- Consistent daily monitoring, rounds, huddle, and action items identified and completed
- Low-stress handling
- Housing design and selection based on species and behavioural needs
- Accurate data collection and reporting

9. Communication

Open communication and dialogue between provincial office, regional managers, branch managers, staff, volunteers, community council members, the board, adopters and the community is important to ensuring the success of C4C in your branch.