



Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter

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WATSONVILLE SHELTER TEMPORARILY CLOSED DUE TO HEALTH CONCERNS

The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS), under the guidance of shelter Veterinarian Dr. Maris Brenn-White, has made the difficult decision to temporarily close its Watsonville shelter location due to a confirmed case of canine parvovirus and a confirmed case of feline panleukopenia.

These highly contagious diseases pose a serious threat to the health of the animals under SCCAS care, and steps are being taken to prevent spread and protect the lives of other animals at that location and at the Santa Cruz shelter location. Located at 580 Airport Blvd., the Watsonville shelter will be closed to the public until at least Tuesday, October 29th.

After identifying a case of parvovirus in a recently arrived stray puppy on October 18, the shelter paused intake of dogs at the Watsonville shelter to undertake quarantine and special cleaning and disinfection measures. On Tuesday, two stray kittens at the shelter were discovered to have feline panleukopenia, necessitating additional actions to prevent further spread of this disease. Both illnesses are life-threatening, particularly to unvaccinated puppies and kittens, and can spread rapidly through direct contact and contaminated surfaces.

Shelters have an inherent risk for introduction of such contagious diseases into their facilities because unvaccinated animals can acquire infections but not show symptoms for many days afterward, and there are no predictive tests for either of these conditions; that is, until symptoms are present, testing is ineffective to detect the disease. Vaccines provided upon intake at a shelter take a week or two to be fully effective.

Under the direction of our veterinarian and experienced shelter staff, the histories and risk factors for the animals currently at the Watsonville shelter have been fully evaluated and they are being quarantined and cared for safely at the Watsonville shelter until each is medically cleared to move to our Santa Cruz location, where they'll be made available for adoption. Meanwhile, the shelter is undergoing a thorough cleaning and disinfection process, and the Watsonville location will be reopened once we are confident it is safe for animals, staff, and visitors.

What This Means for Adoptions and Intakes

During the closure of the Watsonville shelter, we will not be accepting new animals or processing adoptions at that location. We understand that this may be a hardship for southern Santa Cruz County residents, but the safety and well-being of our current shelter residents must remain our top priority. The Santa Cruz shelter location at 1001 Rodriguez St. remains open, every day from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

For those looking to adopt, we have over 100 wonderful pets of all kinds available at the Santa Cruz shelter location. All cats and dogs are vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and microchipped, and all these services are included in the adoption fee. **Through the end of October, all adoption fees are reduced as part of our “Spooooky Low Adoption Fees” special. Dogs and cats are just \$31, and small pets are just \$13!**

How You Can Help

We are asking for much of the same support we generally ask during this closure:

- **Donations:** Financial support helps cover additional medical costs for screening and titer testing, plus extra cleaning supplies, PPE and other operational needs during this time.
- **Foster Homes:** For those able to provide temporary care for medically cleared animals, fostering reduces the number of animals currently in the shelter which allows staff more time to care for higher risk and higher-needs animals and to undertake additional deep-cleaning and sanitation.
- **Spread Awareness:** Inform other pet owners about the importance of vaccinations for dogs (against parvovirus) and cats (against feline panleukopenia) to help prevent further outbreaks in the community and the shelter.
- **Have you pet(s) vaccinated:** If you have a pet, you **MUST** inform yourself about needed vaccinations and make that investment in protecting your pets' health and safety. To help pet owners with limited incomes, The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter provides Healthy Pets for All vaccine clinics (the next one is Friday, October 25 in Felton).

About Parvovirus and Feline Panleukopenia

Canine parvovirus is a highly contagious viral illness that affects the gastrointestinal tract of dogs, particularly puppies. Feline panleukopenia is a severe viral disease in cats, often called "feline distemper," which primarily affects kittens and unvaccinated adult cats. Both diseases can be fatal if not treated promptly. Additional information can be found at [Canine parvovirus | American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and [Feline panleukopenia | American Veterinary Medical Association](#), and your veterinarian can advise you on the best timing for initial and booster vaccines for your particular pets.

We appreciate the community's understanding and patience as we work to ensure the safety of all animals in our care. We look forward to welcoming folks back to our Watsonville shelter when it is safe to do so.

About Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS)

The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter is an open admission shelter which welcomes EVERY animal in need. We're committed to protecting the well-being of homeless animals in our community and finding them loving homes.