

Gentle Spirit Horses Rescue & Sanctuary Policy & Procedure Manual



Euthanasia Policy

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POLICY

Gentle Spirit Horses Rescue & Sanctuary, Inc.'s (GSH) policy is to humanely euthanize equines under the following conditions.

PROCEDURE

When it comes to euthanasia, there is no one size fits all policy. Each equine's situation needs to be weighed individually with our vets and decided on a case by case basis. This policy should be seen as a general guideline as to what goes into making the decision for euthanasia.

This policy applies to all equines in the direct care of GSH whether at a GSH facility or in a foster home. Adopters should refer to their Adoption Agreement for their responsibilities regarding euthanasia. At no time may an adopter authorize euthanasia of an equine for anything other than a life-threatening emergency, and only after all attempts to reach a GSH Board Member have failed.

GSH believes in humane euthanasia, which in all but the most extreme of cases means chemical euthanasia attended by a veterinarian. Sedation prior to the administration of the euthanasia drugs is encouraged, and should be discussed with the attending veterinarian. General anesthesia is generally not recommended.

Euthanasia is recommended in a Life Threatening Emergency. A life threatening emergency is defined as a fatal injury or condition (such as a severe colic) that causes severe pain that cannot be reasonably relieved.

If the equine is in a foster home, the foster home must contact GSH by phone prior to authorizing euthanasia. A voice message must be left for the Emergency Contact if not reached by phone. If the Emergency Contact cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time, attempts should be made to contact members of the Board of Directors or Officers of the corporation. If the foster home is unable to reach the GSH Emergency Contact or any Officer or member of the Board of Directors, and the attending vet is recommending immediate euthanasia, the foster home may authorize euthanasia. The foster home must submit an emailed report to the Emergency Contact within four (4) hours of euthanasia detailing the name and phone number of the attending vet, the injury or illness that led to euthanasia, the

treatment methods attempted, and the date and time of euthanasia. The Emergency Contact will follow up with the foster home and contact the attending vet to verify the circumstances within 48 hours of receipt of the report.

For equines in a GSH facility, the facility manager may authorize euthanasia in a life threatening emergency if recommending by a veterinarian. A report must be submitted to the Board of Directors within twenty-four (24) hours of euthanasia detailing the name and phone number of the attending vet, the injury or illness leading to euthanasia, the treatment methods attempted, and the date and time of euthanasia.

Euthanasia may be considered in a Non-Life Threatening Emergency. A non-life threatening emergency is defined as a situation in which the equine's quality of life is deteriorating due to a chronic disease, old age, lameness, or other condition. Discomfort and pain can be temporarily mediated through medications.

Under no circumstances may a foster home or adoptive home authorize euthanasia for a non-life threatening emergency.

In the case of a non-life threatening emergency, consideration must be given to the following:

- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- The particular animal's temperament/pain tolerance with regards to the treatment that will have to be administered/endured.
- Length of time that the treatment and recovery time will take and if we feel that the animal has the ability and strength to physically and emotionally endure it.
- Financial resources available for treatment and recovery
- Physical resources available for treatment and recovery
- Age of the animal in question

A veterinarian will examine the equine and a report of the equine's condition and prognosis will be forwarded to the GSH Emergency Contact or Executive Director of GSH. The facility manager/foster home/adopter who is responsible for the direct care of the horse and the Executive Director will discuss the horse's case and decide whether or not to euthanize the horse. In the event that the Executive Director is also the caretaker, or the caretaker is a foster home or adoptive home, then the Executive Director will consult with another Officer of GSH to decide whether or not to euthanize the horse.

If the caretaker, Officer and Executive Director cannot agree, the situation will be presented to the Board of Directors for a vote. Extra weight should be given to the caretaker's report, as the caretaker will know the equine best. The Board may vote to euthanize, to seek another vet opinion, or to monitor the equine and revisit the issue as needed, if the equine's condition deteriorates.