

**Euthanasia Training Course Requirements and Procedures**  
**Texas Department of State Health Services, Zoonosis Control**  
**Effective 1-1-2023**

**Mandated Animal Euthanasia Training**

To be in compliance with Texas Health and Safety Code, Treatment and Disposition of Animals, Section 821.055,\* a person (except for a veterinarian licensed to practice in Texas) may not euthanize an animal in the custody of an animal shelter unless he/she has successfully completed a training course in the proper methods and techniques for euthanizing animals. Additionally,

- the person has until the 120<sup>th</sup> day following the date of initial employment to complete training. During this interim period, nothing in Section 821.055 prohibits the person from euthanizing an animal.
- training must be completed not more than three years prior to the date the person euthanizes an animal.
- the training requirement was effective as of January 1, 2005.

**Euthanasia Training Course Requirements and Implementation**

Course sponsors must read and adhere to standards and curriculum prescribed in Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 821, Subchapter C, Euthanasia of Animals, and by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in this document. **Prospective euthanasia course sponsors not approved by DSHS prior to January 1, 2023, must also submit an application to DSHS for approval prior to conducting their first course.**

According to Section 821.055, the training course curriculum must include:

- (1) the pharmacology, proper administration, and storage of euthanasia solutions;
- (2) federal and state law regulating the storage and accountability of euthanasia solutions;
- (3) euthanasia technician stress management;
- (4) proper restraint and handling of an animal during euthanasia;
- (5) the procedures for administering commercially compressed carbon monoxide to an animal;
- (6) techniques for verifying an animal's death; and
- (7) the proper disposal of a euthanized animal.

**Initial-level training** courses must provide a hands-on training experience on injectable administration methods for trainees.

**Review-level training** courses, which can be taken by shelter staff who have already successfully completed an initial-level training course approved by DSHS, do not have to

provide hands-on training. However, all topics listed above must be included in the curriculum.

To successfully complete a course, the participant must pass an exam prepared by the sponsor (if the participant does not pass the exam, they must re-take the course and exam). The test must be designed to demonstrate that the participant has applicable knowledge of all the mandated course topics. It is the sponsor's responsibility to retain attendance rosters and exam results.\*\*

The current versions of Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 821, Subchapter C, Euthanasia of Animals, and its associated rule (Texas Administrative Code, Sections 169.81-84) must be taught during euthanasia training courses. It is the course sponsor's responsibility to make sure they are teaching the most current versions of these laws, which can be accessed at <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/health/zoonosis/laws/rules/>.

Additionally, Texas statutes are located at <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/> and Texas Administrative Codes are located at <https://www.sos.texas.gov/tac/index.shtml>.

Euthanasia training courses that meet requirements under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 821 and procedures presented in this document can also be used to meet CE training requirements for animal control officers under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 829.

It is the responsibility of the course sponsors to provide a certificate of completion to participants; the certificate must contain, at minimum: the participant's name; that the course is a continuing education euthanasia training course; the length of the course in hours; a statement that the course sponsor has been approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services; the course date and location ("virtual" or "online" may be substituted as applicable); and the sponsor's name and contact information. Failure to include the required information on a certificate of completion will result in the course sponsor issuing corrected certificates at their own expense. It is the responsibility of participants to retain proof of their training.

The course sponsor must include the following statement in a legible format and visible location on course material:

"If a participant wants to provide feedback on this course and/or its sponsor, comments can be either mailed to the Texas Department of State Health Services, Training Course Coordinator, Zoonosis Control, MC 1956, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas, 78714-9347 or emailed to [The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov)."

### **Requirements for Euthanasia Training Course Instructors**

There must be at least one instructor per course who is either 1) a licensed veterinarian who would be proficient and experienced in, at a minimum, intravenous and intraperitoneal administration of pharmaceuticals or 2) an individual who can provide a resume that includes proof of being proficient and experienced in, at a minimum, intravenous and intraperitoneal

administration of pharmaceuticals, including at least 3 years experience in a professional capacity.

**Administration of CO is a legislatively mandated euthanasia training course topic.** There must be at least one instructor per course (may be same as the instructor described above or another instructor) who can provide proof of being knowledgeable of the proper procedures for administering commercially compressed carbon monoxide (CO) to an animal (excluding dogs and cats as of January 1, 2014, per Senate Bill 360). To be approved for instructing this portion of the course, a person must have proof of direct experience or hands-on training with the administration of CO. In lieu of direct experience or hands-on training, a person can either have a notarized statement confirming that he/she has read the most current version of the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA's) *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals* or a signed statement from his/her supervisor attesting to this fact. Reading and being familiarized with the entire document is required because aspects of CO administration, including its use in various species, are found throughout this document. The *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition* is accessible at [https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/2020\\_Euthanasia\\_Final\\_1-15-20.pdf](https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/2020_Euthanasia_Final_1-15-20.pdf) Notarized statements or supervisor verifications obtained for reading a prior version of the *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals* will continue to be in effect, but instructors need to review the current version to ensure that they are in compliance with any updates.

Instructors who attend an entire course at which they are teaching may apply that course toward their euthanasia training requirement.

### **Virtual Courses**

Virtual euthanasia training courses: Review-level euthanasia training courses and the classroom portion of initial-level courses can be conducted virtually; an approved onsite instructor is needed for the hands-on experience of injectable administration methods. In addition to meeting the requirements already described for in-person courses, the course sponsor of a virtual euthanasia training course must incorporate a mechanism for ensuring the participant's actual attendance. Examples of possible options include using a virtual program in which the course participant can be visually seen, using a virtual program that can electronically document actual participation, implementing quizzes/tests or sign-in sheets within the course, and/or issuing a certificate of attendance in which there is a space for the participant's supervisor to sign verifying the participant's attendance.

### **Application for Approval of Euthanasia Training Course Sponsors and Curricula**

The DSHS is the entity tasked with approving sponsors and curricula for this training.

**Prospective euthanasia course sponsors not approved by DSHS prior to January 1, 2023, must submit an application to DSHS for approval.** Application materials can be sent to [The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov).

To ensure a response from DSHS prior to conducting the course, course sponsors should apply for approval at least 8 weeks prior to the course date and submit the duration (number of actual classroom hours not including time spent for lunch, breaks, or testing); a course agenda/outline; the name and credentials of the instructor(s); and a course contact name, email address, and phone number, plus fax number, if available, to

Texas Department of State Health Services  
Training Course Coordinator  
Zoonosis Control, MC 1956  
P.O. Box 149347  
Austin, Texas 78714-9347  
or  
[The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov)

Within 6 weeks, DSHS will respond as to whether the course has been approved and/or to inform the sponsor of additional documentation or information that must be provided to DSHS in order to have the course approved.

Once a sponsor has been approved, subsequent sessions of the identical course utilizing the same instructors may be given without requesting additional approvals. **However, pre-approval must be sought for changes in the length of the course or instructor(s).** If the length of the course changes, the sponsor must contact DSHS with the reason for this modification; if the instructor(s) changes, the sponsor must submit a bio(s) for approval.

If a euthanasia training course sponsor wants a course posted at <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/health/zoonosis/education/training/nonaco/> (which is part of the DSHS website), they must submit a written request and provide the following required information for posting on the internet: date, type (euthanasia - continuing education), title, location, contact name, contact's email address, and contact's phone number. To expedite posting, provide this information in the order presented here.

Course sponsors who are interested in obtaining Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) credits for their students should contact TCOLE at 512-936-7700.

### **Training Waivers Issued by the Office of the Governor\***

**Background:** On May 14, 2020, the Office of the Governor issued a waiver pertaining to the temporary suspension of Chapter 829 training requirements for animal control officers (ACOs) and a waiver pertaining to the temporary suspension of Chapter 821 (and associated Texas Administrative Code) training requirements for euthanasia technicians as a result of the March 13, 2020, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) disaster declaration. Extensions to these waivers were granted on August 10, 2020, and would be in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020, disaster declaration was lifted or expired.

Below is the notice issued on July 19, 2021, pertaining to the withdrawal/termination of training waivers from the Office of the Governor:

- **Effective 12:01 AM on September 1, 2021 withdrawal of waivers (*These are the animal control officer and euthanasia technician trainings*)**
  - 25 TAC § 169.84(g), extension approved on August 10, 2020
  - Texas Health and Safety Code § 821.055(a) and (d), extension approved on August 10, 2020
  - Texas Health and Safety Code § 829.002(1)(A) and (2)(A), extension approved on August 10, 2020
  - Texas Health and Safety Code § 829.004(a) and (b), extension approved on August 10, 2020

**\* For information on training policy modifications and suspensions/waivers due to COVID-19, go to**

<https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/health/zoonosis/education/training/ACO.aspx>

<https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/health/zoonosis/animal/control/shelters/Euthanasia.aspx>

<https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/health/zoonosis/education/training/ACO-Courses-By-Outside-Sources.aspx>

\*\* The advised retention period for euthanasia training course exam results and attendance rosters is a minimum of 3 years beyond the end of the calendar year in which the course was given; the results can be retained either in hard copy or database format.

**Disclaimer: During any disaster declaration, it is the responsibility of the course sponsor to determine if there are any applicable restrictions in place to which they must adhere, including those associated with an emergency declaration(s) or a local order condition(s).**

Revised 11/15/2022