



Public Information Division

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Shelter not accepting, adopting dogs

The City's Animal Shelter has, upon the advice of the state's regional zoonosis official, halted the intake and adoption of dogs as its population is monitored for signs of distemper.

The shelter will be closed this week and possibly next week, depending upon the condition of the animals there and the counsel of Dr. Kenneth Waldrup, a veterinarian in charge of zoonosis control for the Texas Department of State Health Services' Public Health Region 10.

Distemper is a highly contagious viral disease that affects the gastrointestinal, respiratory and central nervous systems of dogs. It is usually transmitted through contact with respiratory secretions and is often carried by wild animals, such as skunks, raccoons and foxes. It is not curable and is often fatal. Distemper is easily preventable if pets are vaccinated.

The disease is more prevalent west of San Angelo, which has seen more rescue animals from the Midland, Odessa and Big Spring areas. Currently, the shelter is housing 117 dogs and 63 cats. Cats are not susceptible to distemper.

"Because the shelter accepts strays and unwanted animals, it is not immune to the diseases they may be carrying," said Bob Salas, director of the City's Neighborhood and Family Services Department. "We vaccinate animals as soon as we receive them, but dogs in the early stages of distemper don't always show the signs. The best precaution citizens can take is ensuring their dogs are immunized, which is a critical part of responsible pet ownership."

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