



# POLICY

## UNALTERED RESIDENT DOGS AND CATS

To qualify for adoption through Rescue A Golden of Arizona, RAGofAZ, an applicant must pass an application review and also meet the criteria that **all dogs and cats in the household are spayed or neutered**. Exceptions to this policy are listed on page 3.

### RATIONALE

Even if the unaltered dog is highly trained and/or non-aggressive, it is our experience that other dogs are more reactive towards unaltered dogs and there is an increased chance of fights. Unneutered males can be aggressive; unspayed females usually have hormonal issues that can contribute to aggression. We don't want our rescue dogs, who have been through enough already, to be subjected to unnecessary trauma and possible injury.

### WHY SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR DOG?

Here are three of the top reasons to spay or neuter your canine companion according to the AKC's Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Jerry Klein:

- **Prevent unplanned puppies.** If your female dog is unspayed, she will come into breeding season or "heat" for several weeks once or twice a year. Each time this happens, she'll be very alluring to male dogs that can smell the scent from far away. This can bring unwanted canine visitors to your yard and might produce a litter of unplanned puppies. Having a litter is expensive and involves a lot of time and energy on your part. The female will require veterinary care during pregnancy. Delivery can sometimes be difficult and involve costly surgery or result in the loss of the female or puppies. The litter will also require veterinary care and shots after birth. On top of that, finding good homes for puppies can be very difficult. Spaying and neutering is a responsible way to prevent accidental breeding resulting in unwanted puppies. Breeding should be left to breeders who have an organized plan and knowledge about canine genetics, and who are concerned with preserving a breed's best qualities for future generations.
- **Reduction of certain health risks.** Spaying or neutering can lead to a reduction in certain health risks for both female and male dogs. Unspayed females can develop a painful and life-threatening infection of the uterus called pyometra. Unspayed females are also at a higher risk of mammary tumors than females that have been spayed. Neutering a male dog prevents testicular cancer and reduces the risk of other problems, such as prostate disease. A neutered male dog might also have less desire to roam.

- **May help with certain behavior issues.** In addition to reducing roaming in male dogs, neutering can often, though not always, help reduce or eliminate undesirable behaviors, such as leg-lifting and mounting. Neutering may also decrease aggressive behavior in some dogs. Spayed females are also less likely to roam.

## **OTHER MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR DOGS AND CATS**

According to the SPCA International, aside from the many ethical reasons to spay or neuter, there are also quite a few medical findings to suggest that it is healthier for all our animals as well.

### **Females:**

- The number one cause of death in unspayed females is cancer of the ovaries and/or uterus; therefore, by spaying the occurrence of these diseases is vastly decreased.
- Spaying your female also prevents pyometra, an inflammatory process of the uterus that, if not treated in time will likely lead to death.
- Other health benefits are less frequency of mammary tumors and less evidence of pseudocyesis, a false pregnancy due to common hormonal disturbances.
- Biologically speaking, unspayed females attract unwanted attention; so, from a behavioral standpoint, spaying is the trouble free solution.

### **Males:**

- Neutering a male animal will avoid a long list of potential medical illnesses: testicular tumors, perianal hernias, and tumors of the hepatoid glands, perianal gland tumors, prostate tumors, and cysts, to name a few.
- Neutering will also reduce aggressiveness towards other males, especially when fighting for females.
- Common rituals such as territorial marking with urine or possessive dominant behavior tend to lessen post-surgery as well.
- And neutered males are less likely to run away if they were to smell a female in heat.

## **IF A FAMILY APPLYING TO RAGOFAZ OWNS AN UNALTERED DOG OR CAT**

The Home Visit Coordinator and/or the Director of Golden Operations will determine the reason they have an unaltered animal, and if it is within our exception guidelines, we will discuss the situation. If we find there are verifiable and justifiable reasons, we will approve the home for adoption, providing the rest of the application is approved.

For those considering putting in an application and currently have an unaltered DOG because of medical reasons, the applicant must supply a written note from the veterinary clinic to verify

the unaltered dog has a legitimate medical reason for not being altered. If there is any clarification that is needed, the Home Visit Coordinator and/or the Director for Golden Operations will contact the applicant's veterinarian. If the applicant claims they are currently and actively showing their dog, the Home Visit Coordinator and/or Director of Golden Operations will ask for proof by showing us current entries in **AKC or UKC** sanctioned shows. Matches do not count.

### **EXCEPTIONS TO THE UNALTERED DOG/CAT POLICY**

The only exceptions that would allow us to place a Golden in a home with an unaltered animal are as follows:

- The dog is being actively shown for their championship in AKC or UKC sanctioned shows (not matches). Proof required
- The dog has gained its championship and is being bred – RAGofAZ will respect the owner's right to breed a dog only if the dog has obtained its AKC or UKC championship and the person is a responsible breeder who breeds to "better the breed" and who does not over-breed. RAGofAZ does not condone a dog being bred because the owner feels they would be good quality, or they just want a puppy. The dog must have a legitimate AKC or UKC championship to show for their efforts.
- The dog has health issues where neutering/spaying is not recommended by their veterinarian. This will be verified with the veterinarian.
- The dog is too young to be neutered.
- A cat has health issues where neutering/spaying is not recommended by their veterinarian. This will be verified with the veterinarian.