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Euthanasia Training

The Michigan Department of Community Health regulates the use of injectable barbiturates, such as sodium pentobarbital. For a shelter to be able to possess and use sodium pentobarbital, the main type of barbiturate used by shelters to euthanize animals, the shelter must obtain both a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) controlled substance registration and a Michigan controlled drug. For a shelter to be granted a Michigan controlled drug license, the shelter must also submit documentation of all employees of the shelter that have been trained to administer euthanasia with sodium pentobarbital. A shelter must have at least one employee properly trained to able to administer sodium pentobarbital. The shelter must submit the names and addresses of all individuals that have completed training, as well as the names of the veterinarians that trained each individual, to the Michigan Department of Community Health on a designated form. This form is the same form used to apply for the Michigan controlled substance license. Documentation of all individuals trained to administer euthanasia must be submitted not only when applying for a license, but every 6 months thereafter. To access this form, go to: ww.michigan.gov/healthlicense, click on "Pharmacy," then scroll down and click on "Sodium Pentobarbital Use Application." To obtain a DEA license, call 1-800-882-9539.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has set training requirements that must be satisfied before an employee of an animal shelter can euthanize. All employees of an animal shelter that wish to administer sodium pentobarbital must receive at least eight hours of training by a licensed veterinarian. Training must include lecture, self-study instruction, and "hands-on" experience. The veterinarian must teach the individual how to competently administer sodium pentobarbital intravenously, intraperitoneally, and intracardially, as well as how to determine death. For more information on training to administer sodium pentobarbital or on obtaining a Michigan controlled drug license, contact the Michigan Department of Community Health, Board of Pharmacy at 517-335-0918.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development also has requirements as it relates to euthanasia. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) requires all animal shelters to euthanize animals humanely. Like most states, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development accepts the *AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) Guidelines on Euthanasia* as the authority on humane euthanasia and expects all individuals administering euthanasia to follow these guidelines. This document details different euthanasia methods, explaining what methods are humane and for what animals certain methods are best. This document is reviewed and revised every few years. The current version was revised in 2007 and is included in your packet. Per the guidelines, "Intravenous injection of a barbituric acid derivative is the preferred method for euthanasia of dogs, cats, other small animals, and horses. Intraperitoneal injection may be used in situations when an intravenous injection would be distressful or even dangerous. Intracardiac injection must only be used if the animal is heavily sedated, unconscious, or anesthetized." When using barbiturates like sodium pentobarbital, it is only considered humane to euthanize an animal via intravenous injection, intraperitoneal injection, or, if heavily sedated, anesthetized, or unconscious, via intracardiac injection.