




# Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General  
A State of Florida Commission on Law Enforcement Accredited Agency  
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Visit our website at: [www.miamidadeig.org](http://www.miamidadeig.org)

To: Annette Jose, Director  
Animal Services Department

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General 

Date: November 28, 2023

Subject: Receipt of Status Report and Case Closure, *Veterinary Services Provided by the Animal Services Department to the Department Director's Personal Pets*,  
Ref: IG23-0005-I

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On August 17, 2023, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a Report of Investigation regarding the above captioned matter. In that report, the OIG made four recommendations to the Animal Services Department (ASD) and requested a 90-day status report regarding their adoption and implementation. The OIG is in receipt of your status report, dated November 15, 2023. (Attachment 1)

We have reviewed the status report and are satisfied with ASD's reply. The OIG is pleased by the Department's prompt and complete response in adopting and implementing all of the OIG's recommendations. The OIG is encouraged by the new and updated Standard Operating Procedures that will clarify expectations and rules for all employees.

The OIG considers this investigation closed and, as such, no further action is required by ASD. The OIG would like to thank the staff of ASD for their cooperation and the courtesies extended to the OIG throughout this investigation.

Attachment


cc: Honorable Daniella Levine-Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County  
Honorable Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Chairperson  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami Dade-County  
Morris Copeland, Chief Community Services Officer, Office of the Mayor  
Jose Arrojo, Executive Director, Commission on Ethics And Public Trust

## Memorandum



**Date:** November 15, 2023

**To:** Felix Jimenez, Inspector General, Director  
Office of the Inspector General

**From:** Annette Jose, Director  
Animal Services Department 

**Subject:** Implementation of OIG recommendations re: Complaint Referral IG23-0005-I

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This memorandum serves to provide a status report on the Department addressing the implementation of the recommendations provided by the OIG in the report investigation - Veterinary Services Provided by the Animal Services Department to the Director's Personal Pets: Ref: IG23-0005-I.

**Recommendation 1: The OIG recommends ASD revise its SOP for the Pet Retention program to include the guidance contained in the COE's 2018 opinion regarding the ineligibility of ASD staff to avail themselves to program services, including veterinary care. Further, ASD should consider implementing eligibility criteria as suggested in the COE opinion.**

**Department Response:** The Pet Retention standard operating procedure (SOP) was revised to include language to the effect that ASD employees and their immediate families shall not be allowed to participate in the Pet Retention Program. We followed the exact language provided in the opinion from the Commission on Ethics in 2018. (Included within Exhibit 1- attached)

**Recommendation 2: The OIG recommends ASD train (or re-train) its personnel on the prohibition of staff requesting shelter veterinarians to care for privately owned pets outside of services offered for a fee to the public. Services that may be provided, such as spay and neuter surgeries, should be scheduled and arranged in the same manner provided to the public.**

**Department Response:** A memorandum from the department director was emailed to all employees to inform them about the prohibition of employees requesting shelter veterinarians to care for privately owned pets outside of services offered for a fee to the public.

**Recommendation 3: The OIG recommends that ASD create a policy addressing bringing personal pets to work.**

**Department Response:** The Pets in the Office SOP was created to advise Animal Services personnel that personal pets are not allowed in the workplace. (Included within Exhibit 1 – attached)

**Recommendation 4: The OIG recommends the creation of a digitalized, centralized, and indexed system for storage and access to all ASD standard operating procedures. The OIG further recommends ASD personnel receive ongoing training on its policies and procedures including how to access said policies and procedures.**

**Department Response:** An email was sent to all ASD employees to inform them about a digital and central shared drive where they may locate all department SOPs organized by divisions. Attached to the email, they were provided a document with instructions on how to access the

shared drive for ASD SOPs. (Exhibit 2 – attached) All new employees will be provided with the location of department policies.

In summary, All Staff received an email notification of the newly added language to the Pet Retention SOP as well as the newly created Pets in Office SOP; the two SOPs were included as attachments to the email. Additionally, all employees were required to complete an Acknowledgement Form, confirming receipt of the Pet Retention SOP and the Pets in the Office SOP. Supervisors within each ASD division were asked to ensure all employees completed the Acknowledgement Form and sent to the ASD HR team by November 14, 2023. (Exhibit 1 – attached)


Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. Should you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 305-418-7188.

## Policy Updates

Human Resources (ASD) <ASDHR@miamidade.gov>

Thu 11/9/2023 4:20 PM

To:(ASD) All Staff <ASD-AS@miamidade.gov>

 4 attachments (1 MB)

SOP Acknowledgement.pdf; Memo- Personal Pets and the Workplace.pdf; Pets in Office SOP - 2023 .pdf; Pet Retention SOP - 2023.pdf;

Good afternoon team,

Please take a moment to review the policy updates and memorandum attached.

We will need the acknowledgement form attached signed by you and given to your supervisor. We must receive your acknowledgement of these policy changes by Tuesday, November 14th. Please work with your supervisor on getting this accomplished as soon as possible.

*Sincerely,*

***Human Resources***

**Miami-Dade County Animal Services**

**Pet Adoption and Protection Center**

3599 NW 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Doral, Florida 33122

[Connect With Us](#) [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)



**Animal Services Department**

3599 NW 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Doral, FL 33122  
miamidade.gov/ animals

**Acknowledgment Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), with ID # \_\_\_\_\_

acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Pet Retention Program and Pets in the Office Standard Operating Procedures and understand that I must comply with this content.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

C: Employee File

# Memorandum

MIAMI-DADE  
COUNTY



**Date:** November 09, 2023  
**To:** ASD Employees  
**From:** Annette Jose, Director *Annette Jose*  
Animal Services Department  
**Subject:** Employee Pets in Office

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Animal Services Department (ASD) employees may not bring personal pets to work during their scheduled work hours.

If an employee is fostering a pet for ASD, the pet may be kept in the office during work hours. The pet is to be in a crate any time the foster parent or an assigned attendant is not present. The foster pet may not stay overnight at the shelter/facility.

In addition, please be advised that employees are prohibited from requesting shelter veterinarians to care for personal pets outside of services offered for a fee to the public. Services that may be provided, such as spay and neuter surgeries, should be scheduled and arranged in the same manner provided to the public.

Furthermore, in 2018 The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust opined that employees of ASD and their immediate families may not participate in the Pet Retention Program. Also, ASD employees and their immediate families may not reimburse the County for discounted pet veterinary services under the Program. The Pet Retention SOP has been amended to include this language.

C: Gilda Nunez, Interim Assistant Director of Humane Law Enforcement, ASD  
Charles Scherer, Assistant Director of Shelter Programs, ASD  
Dailin Sanchez, Human Resources Manager, ASD

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

EFFECTIVE DATE  11/01/2023	PROCEDURE TITLE  Employee Pets in Office	PROCEDURE	PAGE No.  Page 1 of 1
MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED  <b>All Staff</b>	APPROVED BY  Annette Jose	REVISES OR SUPERCEDES	
		PREPARED BY Director's Office	

**INTENT: To establish a protocol and policy for employees bringing personal pets to work.**

**Policy:** Animal Services Department (ASD) employees may not bring personal pets to work during their scheduled work hours.

If an employee is fostering a pet for ASD, the pet may be kept in the office during work hours. The pet is to be in a crate any time the foster parent or an assigned attendant is not present. The foster pet may not stay overnight at the shelter/facility.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to corrective counseling and/or disciplinary actions.



# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

<p>CREATED February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017</p> <p>EDITED July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018</p> <p>REVISED November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023</p>	<p>PROCEDURE TITLE</p> <p>Pet Retention Program</p>	<p>PROCEDURE</p>	<p>PAGE No.</p> <p>Page 1 of 13</p>
<p>MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED</p> <p>Clinic Staff Pet Retention Staff Receiving Staff Participating Vet Practitioners</p>	<p>APPROVED BY</p> <p>Kathleen Labrada Chief of Operations and Enforcement</p>	<p>REVISES OR SUPERCEDES</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>PREPARED BY</p> <p>Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

**PURPOSE:** To assist pet owners in keeping their pet by providing services, resources or medical care for a treatable medical condition during difficult times and/or help find homes for their pet without the need to surrender the pet to the shelter.

**POLICY:** The Department will offer services, resources (upon availability) and/or medical care to pet owners whose intent is to surrender the pet due to inability to provide adequate care or medical care to the pet.

ASD employees and their immediate families may not participate in the Department's Pet Retention Program. Furthermore, ASD employees and their immediate families may not reimburse the County for discounted pet veterinary services under the Program. (Refer to the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics Opinion RQO18-01)

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- MDAS Receiving staff: Counsel customers regarding the reason for wanting to surrender, evaluate if the resources available would be able to help the family, offer resources such as limited veterinary care, crates, leashes, enclosures, food, flea and tick products based on availability
- MDAS Veterinarian (s): Examine, evaluate and determine procedure (s) to be approved to be performed at the practicing veterinary clinic. Perform certain medical / surgical procedures when indicated.
- Pet retention coordinator: Communicate with clients, communicate with MDAS veterinarian(s), Communicate with participating vet offices to approve further medical care, approve / deny further medical procedures to be performed at participating vet offices, receive and process medical records to track treatments performed, receive invoices from participating vet offices and determine support to be provided to each case.





# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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<p>MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED</p> <p>Clinic Staff Pet Retention Staff Receiving Staff Participating Vet Practitioners</p>	<p>APPROVED BY Annette Jose (11/3/23)</p> <p>Kathleen Labrada Chief of Operations and Enforcement</p>	<p>REVISES OR SUPERCEDES</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>PREPARED BY</p> <p>Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

- Animal welfare officers and Anti-Cruelty Investigators: Communicate with constituents to determine if pet retention resources are appropriate to address unmet needs or to improve animal welfare. Provide services when appropriate to include veterinary vouchers, enclosures, shelter and other resources as available. Communicate with pet retention coordinator to advise of medical cases referred for treatment.
- Participating vet offices: Communicate with MDAS retention coordinator and veterinarians to discuss medical plans for each pet, communicate with pet owners regarding medical condition(s), perform services established by MDAS, and discuss additional services that may apply not covered by MDAS.

## PROCEDURES:

Receiving staff: Identify pet owners whose intent is to surrender their pet for counseling purposes. See additional intake procedures below. Should the owner's concern be related to a medical reason or boarding, call the Pet Retention coordinator to speak to clients regarding their needs and so the pet can be assessed for boarding services or veterinary care (see vet call order below) if the pet retention coordinator is not at the shelter.

- Place notes in the computer software indicating details of the case.
- Pet Retention Coordinator:
  - Speak to pet owners and get a history of the current medical / behavioral condition for wanting to surrender:
    - Age, sex (S/N), condition, medical history, vaccine history, chronicity of the condition, behavior...
  - If a medical condition:
    - Contact the shelter veterinarian scheduled for shelter rounds to assess the patient



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		<p>PREPARED BY Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

- Select from the list of participating vets who is closest to the pet owner or provides the required service(s)
  - Contact the participating private veterinarian and make an appointment for the pet
  - Give the pet owner the form specifying the appointment time, location and service approved to be performed.
  - Inform the pet owner that MDAS will only cover the approved service and that they will be responsible for additional services performed (not approved).
  - Email / fax details to the clinic and specify the medical condition(s) approved to be treated at the participating veterinarian.
  - Communicate with the participating veterinary office as needed for further approval of services (not to exceed \$500 pet patient).
- MDAS veterinarian:
  - Vet contact priority:
    - Chief Veterinarian
    - University of Florida professor
    - Treatment / Population veterinarian
    - Vet scheduled in shelter rounds.
  - The Department veterinarian (s) will evaluate the pet and determine the level of care or supplies required to help the pet stay at the current home. Medical cases will be referred to a participating veterinarian for diagnostics and limited treatments.
  - Get a complete history of the pet to be evaluated though the pet retention coordinator.



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- Examine the pet (wellness clinic or shelter clinic). May elect to examine the pet without the owner present.
- Define the level of care needed to help the pet and communicate with the pet retention coordinator of services to be approved at the participating private veterinarian.
- Decide if the procedure may be performed at MDAS and instruct pet retention to make an appointment for a special procedure (surgical).
- The Department veterinarian (s) may perform veterinary services if a participating veterinarian is not available.
- Participating private veterinarian:
  - Examine the referred pet
  - Provide the approved services
  - Communicate with the pet retention coordinator regarding the services performed or further required treatments to be approved.
  - Receive written approval for further services to be performed. Veterinary offices will require approval for additional procedures besides the one for what the pet was referred for. Pet/s will only be treated for the presenting condition. However, the owners will have the option to provide additional care at the participating vet office at their own expense.
  - Email medical records reflecting the services performed, including pet and client name and contact as well as the MDAS approval for the services provided. Email: [helpmypets@miamidade.gov](mailto:helpmypets@miamidade.gov)



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		<p>PREPARED BY</p> <p>Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

- The maximum amount to be paid by the department per patient will not exceed \$500
- Receiving Staff Process for Intake:
  - Bring the owner into the office to talk to them in private. Begin your counseling session by asking them why they have come to the decision of surrendering their pet. Once you have you have an understanding for the reason to surrender, advise the owner of the resources available that would allow them to keep their pet. You should have resources readily available for common reasons such as:
  - Pet Escapes**
  - Destructive Behavior**
  - Crate Training**
  - House Training**
  - Food Aggression**
  - Possession Issues**
  - Leash Training**
  - Introducing a New Baby**
  - Introducing Other Pets**
  - Pet Friendly Apartments Complexes**
  - Flea/Tick Infestation**
  - Non-Comprehensive Medical Conditions**
  - Common Pet Diet**
  - Treatable Medical Conditions**
  - Boarding**



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**The Retention Process:** Begin by going on to the Tag screen (see image):



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Look up the owner's account. You can look for their account by searching by address, full name, phone number and/or driver's license number. Make sure all information is



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current if anything is different. If the person does not have an account one must be created for them. Ask owner if he/she has an email address where they can be reached as well.

The screenshot displays a software interface with the following sections:

- Person Information:**
  - Person ID: P1228781
  - Last Name: INESTROZA
  - First Name: EDY ESPERANZA
  - Area: 786, Phone: 322-9623, Ext: [blank]
  - Area: 786, Phone2: 315-3222, Ext: [blank]
  - Area: [blank], Phone3: [blank], Ext: [blank]
  - No: 3070, Sfx: [blank], Dir: NW, Name: 26, Type: ST, Qdt: [blank], Apt: [blank]
  - MIAMI, FL, 33142
  - No: 0, Sfx: [blank], Dir: [blank], Name: [blank], Type: [blank], Qdt: [blank], Apt: [blank]
- Additional Fields:**
  - Geo: [blank], Jurisdiction: [blank], Address Notes: [blank]
  - Drivers LIC: 1523205769630, Identifier2: [blank], DOB: [blank], Sex: [blank], Spouse: [blank]
  - Extra1: [blank], Extra2: [blank], Extra3: [blank], InCollections: [blank], Tot: 1
  - Email Address: [blank], Contact: [blank]
  - Bad Check: [checkbox], Bte: [checkbox], Memo: [checkbox], Donor: [checkbox], No Adopt: [checkbox], Danger: [checkbox]
- Animal Information:**
  - Animal ID: A1688725, Description of Animal: COOKIE 3Y LARGE DOG GOLD S CHOW CHOW
  - Animal ID: A1688973, Description of Animal: REX 5M PUPPY DOG GOLD S LABRADOR RETR

Once you have created the Person I.D proceed with the animal's information. If the animal is registered with the county use that original animal I.D. If it has never been



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		<p>PREPARED BY  Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

registered then make sure to create a new animal I.D number for it. (See image below)  
 \*\*\* All animals MUST be scanned for microchips \*\*\*

Name	Type	Size	Sex	Color	Breed	DOB	Age	Animal ID
REX	DOG	PUPPY	S	GOLD	LABRADOR RETR	12/31/14	5M	A1688973

Make sure to get a photo of the pet (do your best to get a good photo of the pet). Once you have an animal I.D number proceed with a brief survey. Click on the memo icon and select client survey from the template selection. (See image below)





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Memo - LEIVAMI at COUNTER

File Commands Procedures Reports Extras Help

Memo No	Memo ID	ID Type	Date	Type	Subtype	Author
M_	A1688973	ANIMAL_ID	10/16/17	RETENTION		

Memo Text Templates CLIENT SURVEY **A** **R**

1. How can we help you today?
2. How likely would you be to give up this pet if you didn't get this help? What would you say on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being extremely unlikely and 10 being extremely likely? (# )
3. If you couldn't get this help, what would you have done?



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		<p>PREPARED BY</p> <p>Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	

*You will put "Retention" in the box labeled : "TYPE"*

*You will click in the Templates box and press F4 select "CLIENT SURVEY"*

*You will ask the question and type the answers than press F9*

Once all this is done then you will create the Retention U-Link number by hitting F9.

(See image below to see what the end result should be)

*You will put "Link" in the box labeled "Tag Type".*

*You will put "Retention" in the box labeled "Subtype".*

*You will put "Accept or Denied" in the box labeled "Status".*

*You will put "Type of Retention in the box labeled "Problem Code".*

*You will put the date of Retention in the box labeled "Status Date".*

*You will put the number for MDAS which is "100090" in the box labeled "Vet ID".*



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Tag/Link - LEIVAMI at COUNTER

File Windows Commands Procedures Reports Extras Help

Ready [Icons] [RENEW] E319359 E319359 2017-08-16 14:02:27.013

Person ID  
P1063325 CARIDAD CARMONA 8235239 1422 W 43 PL HIALEAH 33012

Animal ID  
A1279932 TOBY 7Y SMALL DOG TAN N CHIHUAHUA SH

Tag No	Tag Type	Subtype	S/N	Jurisdiction	Status	Problem Code
U17-117934	LINK	RETENTION			ACCEPT	MEDICAL

Tag Date	Term	Tag Exp	Vaccine	Cert No	Serial No	Lot Exp	Extra1
08/16/17	12	08/16/18					

Vac Date	Term	Vac Exp	Vet ID
__/__/__	36	__/__/__	G100090 MIAMI DADE ANIMAL SERVICES 8841102

**NEW VAC FOUND**

Batch No	STATUS DATE	Extra3	Extra4	Price	Receipt No
	08/16/2017	RABIES/TAG		.00	R17-206844

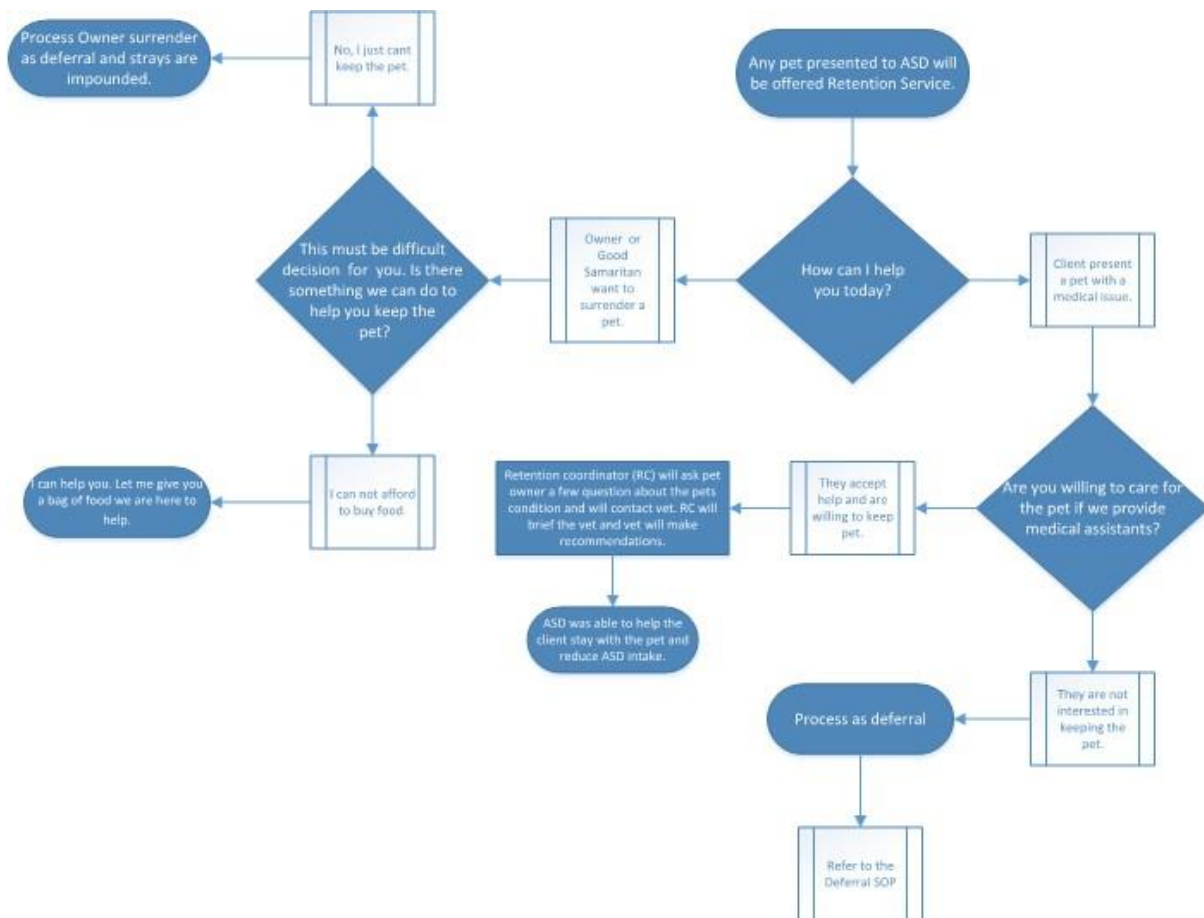
Person ID  
P

If the Retention case is medical seek further assistance from the Pet Retention Coordinator or your supervisor.



# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

<p>CREATED February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017</p> <p>EDITED July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018</p> <p>REVISED November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023</p>	<p>PROCEDURE TITLE</p> <p>Pet Retention Program</p>	<p>PROCEDURE</p>	<p>PAGE No.</p> <p>Page 13 of 13</p>
<p>MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED</p> <p>Clinic Staff Pet Retention Staff Receiving Staff Participating Vet Practitioners</p>	<p>APPROVED BY Annette Jose (11/3/23)</p> <p>Kathleen Labrada Chief of Operations and Enforcement</p>	<p>REVISES OR SUPERCEDES N/A</p> <p>PREPARED BY Maria A. Serrano, DVM Chief Veterinarian</p>	



## ASD SOPs Shared Drive

Vargas, Georgina C. (ASD) <GeorginaC.Vargas@miamidade.gov>

Wed 11/15/2023 4:56 PM

To:(ASD) All Staff <ASD-AS@miamidade.gov>

📎 1 attachments (114 KB)

Instructions to Locate SOPs Share Drive.pdf;

Good afternoon team,

Please be advised that all employees can access department SOPs electronically through a shared drive titled ASD SOPs. This is where you will find the most up-to-date, approved SOPs for the department - organized by divisions. Please take a moment to review the attached instructions on how to access this shared drive on your computer.

If you do not see the shared drive titled ASD SOPs (M), you may need to restart your computer to allow the system to update.

Should you have any questions or need help accessing the shared drive please see your supervisor or feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

**Georgina C. Vargas**

Executive Assistant to Dept. Director

**Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department (ASD)**

Pet Adoption and Protection Center | 3599 NW 79 Ave. Doral, FL.

Ph. (305) 418-7188 | [www.miamidade.gov/animals](http://www.miamidade.gov/animals)

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All Lobbyists must register prior to any meeting with County Personnel.

*Miami-Dade County is a public entity subject to Chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes concerning public records. Email messages are covered under such laws and thus subject to disclosure.*

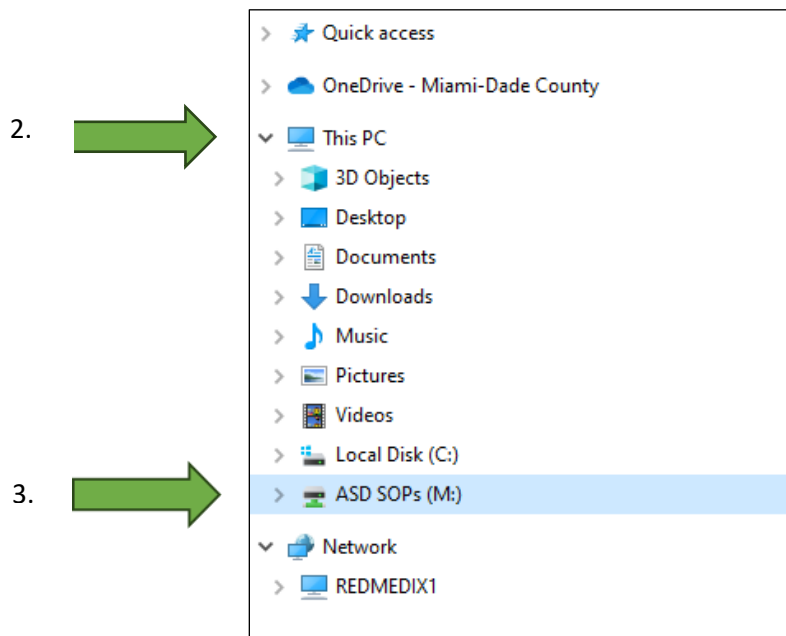
## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### HOW TO ACCESS DEPARTMENT SOPs IN SHARED DRIVE

1. On your computer locate and open your File Explorer (you may also search for this by clicking on the magnifying glass on the bottom left of your computer and typing “file explorer”)



2. Once in the file explorer, expand the section for “This PC” (to expand click the small arrow on the left of the title)



3. Locate the ASD SOPs (M:) shared drive. There you will be able to find all department SOPs organized by division. (Refer to picture above)

If you have any trouble accessing the SOPs or have any questions, please see your supervisor.

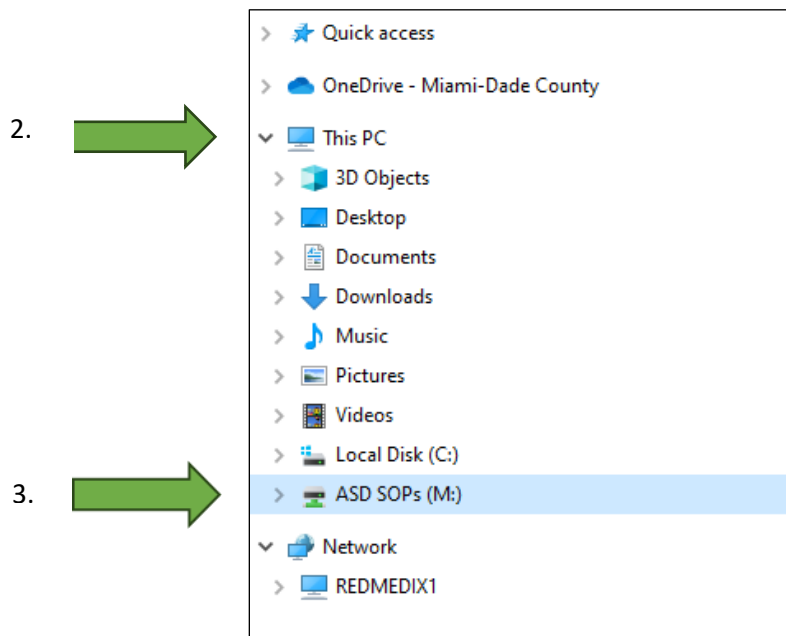
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