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When you adopt a cat or dog from the Burleson Animal Shelter, you don't have to arrange for rabies vaccinations or the required spay/neuter surgery. Your new four-legged family member will have that done before he/she ever steps into your home and it will only cost you an additional \$75 (the new adoption fee is \$140). The goal is to assist in reducing the overpopulation of unwanted animals not only in the Burleson area, but in the state.

Burleson City Council approved the spay/neuter ordinance Sept. 8 and it went in to effect Sept. 14. The Burleson Animal Shelter will launch the program Oct. 1. State law requires that all animals that are adopted from animal shelters be spayed or neutered. Before the new ordinance was adopted, 43 percent of those who adopted from the Burleson Animal Shelter did not comply.

The new program requires all adopted dogs and cats to be spayed/neutered, and have current rabies vaccinations, before leaving the animal shelter.

So here is the new drill. You check out the adoptable pet pictures on the City of Burleson website and watch the weekly Vines videos on the Burleson Animal Shelter Facebook. When you see a pet that you really like, stop by 775 S.E. John Jones Dr. and do a meet and greet between your family (including your current pets) and the potential pet. If you all click, the adoption paperwork is filled out at the animal shelter, but you don't take that new pet home immediately. Under the new ordinance, the animal shelter staff transports the adopted pet to the contracted veterinarian where that adopted pet will be spayed/neutered and receive the rabies vaccination. You and your new pet are reunited at the veterinarian office, not at the animal shelter.

The Burleson Animal Shelter sought bids for spay/neuter services as well as rabies vaccination services. City council approved the contracts for Alsbury Animal Hospital and the Texas Coalition for Animal Protection.

Before staff recommended the new program and fee, more than 10 area animal clinics were surveyed. The cost for an average sterilization plus rabies coverage cost ranged from \$47 to \$368. With the fee of \$75 for spay/neuter, that could save the adopter almost \$300.

Here's the breakdown. The fee, prior to the change, was \$65 and it covered the adoption (\$20), vaccination (\$20), microchip (\$15) and rabies voucher (\$10). Burleson Animal Shelter's new \$140 adoption fee covers the adoption (\$20), basic vaccinations (\$20), microchip (\$15), rabies voucher (\$10), and spay/neuter (\$75).

So stop on by, check out all of our adoptable pets, ask staff about the one you are interested in, and see which one you want to take home!