

Humane Society in N.Y. Shut Because of Feline Distemper Outbreak

Facility near Albany expected to remain closed until Oct. 2.

Posted: September 25, 2006, 5 a.m. EST

The Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society near Albany, N.Y. will remain closed through at least the end of this month because of a feline distemper outbreak that's led to the euthanizations of more than 300 cats in the past month.

Feline distemper, which can't be transmitted to humans but can be transmitted among cats, causes a cat's white blood cell count to fall and also severe stomach and intestinal damage. It spread through the shelter from an infected cat and, so far, has led to the euthanizations of 340 felines, according to the shelter.

Because of the feline distemper outbreak, the shelter closed to the public Sept. 20 and is expected to remain closed until at least Oct. 2 to prevent further contamination. While it's closed, it won't accept any animals that have been in foster care or are unwanted.

The shelter's also looking into whether it can legally suspend its municipal contracts and stop accepting strays, according to humane society board Vice President Mary Anne Kowalski.

The shelter still cares for more than 100 cats that have shown no signs of feline distemper and plans to accept online adoption applications. The shelter will hold a parking lot adoption clinic once it reopens, Kowalski said.

Recently, however, several local animal groups have publicly said they'll no longer work with the Mohawk and Hudson River facility because of concerns about how the shelter's run.