

# Welcome to the Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care Service

**CURRENT  
TRIAGE LEVEL**

**We understand that bringing your pet to the emergency room can be stressful. Our team is here to help — and your pet's health and comfort are our top priorities.**

Our Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care (SAECC) Service works differently than a typical veterinary visit. We operate without appointments and use a triage system, which means pets are seen based on the severity of their condition — not the order they arrive. When you check in, a veterinary professional will assess your pet to determine how urgently care is needed. **Clients are required to stay with their pet during the emergency visit — we do not allow unattended drop-offs or treatment without prior consent.**

Pets facing life-threatening emergencies are treated first. If your pet is stable, you may experience a significant wait, sometimes several hours. In some cases, we may recommend following up with your primary care veterinarian or another facility, especially if our service is at full capacity. The SAECC Service is not a direct route to our other specialty services or to advanced diagnostics, such as CT scan or MRI, unless one of our emergency doctors determines otherwise and the intended specialty service can accommodate.

We appreciate your patience and kindness toward our doctors, staff and students during this time. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated and may result in you being asked to leave. Thank you for trusting us with your pet's care.

## LEVEL 1: LIFE-THREATENING ONLY

Only patients with conditions that require immediate, life-saving intervention will be seen.

*Examples: shock, gastric dilatation-volvulus (GDV), sepsis, congestive heart failure, urinary obstructions, collapse/active seizures, respiratory distress, etc.*

## LEVEL 2: CRITICAL ILLNESS OR RISK OF RAPID DECLINE

Level 1 + patients with conditions that could become significantly worse or life-threatening without timely treatment will be seen.

*Examples: toxicoses, myelopathies, bite wounds, excessive vomiting and/or diarrhea, etc.*

**Wait time to see a doctor could apply (1 hour +)**

## LEVEL 3: URGENT BUT STABLE

Levels 1-2 + acute manifestations of chronic disease will be seen, e.g. acute on chronic kidney disease, relapsed immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA), infrequent vomiting for several days, not eating, non-weight bearing lameness.

**Substantial wait time could apply (at least 1-2 hours +)**

## LEVEL 4: MINOR ISSUES

All levels seen. Critically ill patients will take priority over stable patients, but all patients are expected to be seen on the same day.

*Examples: ear pain/infection, sneezing/nasal discharge, infrequent diarrhea without vomiting, minor wounds, weight bearing lameness.*

**Stable patients will likely have a significant wait time (3-4 hours +)**



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