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Official Statement

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For Immediate Release PST  
Lt. Jonathan Baxter, PIO

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## **Official San Francisco Fire Department Statement**

The City received an anonymous complaint regarding a cat in the SFFD workplace at Station 49. To clarify what has been reported in the media, the workplace in question is not a Fire Station. This facility is the Department's Ambulance Deployment Facility. Within this facility is Department Logistics, where medical supplies, equipment and pharmaceuticals used by ambulance staff to provide crucial lifesaving emergency health care are housed. In response to the complaint, an independent investigation was conducted and concluded that having the cat in the facility compromised the sterility of supplies, equipment and pharmaceuticals used on patients. Public health and safety concerns counseled removal of the cat from the premises.

Moreover, the Department has maintained a *Policy Prohibiting Animals on Department Property* for more than 20 years. Part of the reason that this Policy was adopted was for the safety of the animals, given onsite activities that routinely involve large apparatus and machinery operating under emergency conditions. In compliance with the findings, the reason for removing the cat from the facility is two-fold. First and foremost, the Department's primary responsibility and priority is public health and safety. Secondly, the cat must no longer remain on the premises for the animal's own safety and well-being. We are happy to report that a member of the Ambulance Deployment Facility has volunteered to adopt the cat as a pet at home, where she will be well cared for.

The Department has been a staunch supporter and advocate for providing emotional support to its members. A Peer Support Unit and a Stress Committee have been active for many years, and have provided critical self-help services, including counseling and stress management opportunities to members of the Department. The Department recently trained 80 members through a Peer Support program to enable our members to better support one another. Critical Incident Stress Debriefings are also conducted immediately following tragic or traumatic incidents.

In addition, the Department recognizes that animals can provide a great source of comfort to some individuals, especially for First Responders who work in stressful environments. To that end, the Chief of Department has personally reached out to the Executive Directors of San Francisco Animal Care and Control (ACC), San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), and Muttville, a non-profit rescue service for senior pets to coordinate a pet adoption day specifically for First Responders. San Francisco SPCA has also highlighted the availability of their shelter animals as sources of comfort through their "Cuddle Me" program. More information about these partner agencies can be found below:

San Francisco Animal Care and Control: <https://www.sfanimalcare.org/>

San Francisco SPCA: <https://www.sfspca.org/>

Muttville: <https://muttville.org/>