

# Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

## Policy 4.07 Dispatching Dangerous or Severely Injured Animals



**“Our Community...  
Our Commitment”**

### I. POLICY

While performing Department duties, officers of the Peoria Police Department may be required to discharge firearms for the purpose of dispatching dangerous or severely injured animals. In the course of duty, an officer may be confronted with situations in which wild or domestic animals pose a threat to the health or safety of the officer or the public. This policy outlines officer responsibilities in these situations.

### II. PROCEDURE

#### A. General Provisions

1. The definition of "dangerous animal" is an animal, wild or domestic, posing a hazard to the health or safety of the officer or the public.

2. Firearms should be discharged only after consideration has been given to the extent of the animal's injury, the extent of danger to the officer or the public, and the surrounding area in the event the bullet exits the animal's body.

#### B. Domestic Animals

1. The owner's permission and prior supervisory approval should be obtained before a dangerous or severely injured animal is dispatched. In cases where it may be necessary to dispatch a dangerous or severely injured animal, the officer will obtain supervisory approval. The officer must consider the danger to the public, the size of the animal, and insure that the line of fire is in safe direction.

2. A dangerous animal, either wild or domestic, which has bitten an individual, or an animal which is suspected to be rabid, should be shot with the duty weapon directly behind the front shoulder, halfway between the upper and lower body, when practical. Care should be taken to preserve the brain for examination. An immediate call shall then be made to the Police Services Officer assigned to Animal Control to arrange for removal of the body for medical examination.

3. Animals, such as dogs, should be shot with the duty weapon in or behind the ear, with the shot angling toward the brain area or a shot may be fired from the front, although care should be taken to dispatch rather than stun the animal.

a. When shots are fired to dispatch an animal from the front, the line of fire should be in a downward angle to the animal's forehead to avoid the possibility of a ricochet.

b. After dispatching the animal, a call should be made to the appropriate agency to arrange for removal of the animal's body.

#### C. Livestock

1. When severely injured livestock are posing a threat to the public, the owner's permission and prior

supervisory approval should be obtained before the animal is dispatched.

2. When practical, the officer should attempt to contain the animal in question while awaiting the arrival of an officer of the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board who is authorized to dispatch the animal.

3. Livestock, such as cows and horses, should be dispatched with a shotgun using a rifled slug and with a shot in or behind the ear, with the shot angling toward the brain area or a shot may be fired from the front, although care should be taken to dispatch rather than stun the animal. In shots fired to dispatch an animal from the front, the line of fire should be in a downward angle to the animal's forehead to avoid the possibility of a ricochet.

4. Following the dispatch of a livestock animal, the officer shall notify the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board, giving the location, type of animal, and reason for dispatch.

#### D. Wild Game, Fur-Bearing Animals, and Predatory Animals

1. Discretion should be used in the decision to dispatch an injured wild animal. Animals which appear to be injured may be merely stunned or only slightly injured. If an officer is in doubt over the extent of the animal's injury, a call shall be made to the Arizona Game and Fish Department giving the location, type of animal, and an appraisal of the extent of the injury.

a. If an officer of the Game and Fish Department can respond to the scene, the Peoria police officer's involvement will terminate, when practical, after removing the animal from the road.

b. In those cases where an officer of the Game and Fish Department cannot respond or will not arrive on the scene in a timely manner, the final decision for action rests with the Peoria officer.

2. Injured animals posing a traffic hazard should be removed to an off-road area, when practical, and dispatched if it poses a direct threat to the public.

3. Also, when practical, the animal should be shot at close range in or behind the ear with a duty weapon. Use of these weapons in dispatching an injured or dangerous wild animal enables the Game and Fish Department to perform a medical examination of the animal and to donate certain types of wild game animals to State and charitable institutions.

a. In those cases where shooting a severely injured animal at close range presents a hazard to the officer or to the public, or where a dangerous animal, particularly a large game animal, must be dispatched, the animal should be shot

with a shotgun using a rifled slug in or behind the ear or, if this is not possible, between the eyes.

b. When firing a weapon to dispatch an animal from the front, the line of fire should be in a downward angle to the animal's forehead to avoid the possibility of a ricochet.

4. Following the dispatch of a wild animal, the officer shall notify the Arizona Game and Fish Department, giving the location, type of animal, and reason for dispatch.

#### E. Removal of Dead Animals from the Roadway

1. Dispatched animals or animals found dead in the roadway, that create a traffic hazard, should be removed to an off-road area when practical. Gloves should be worn when handling these animals.

2. Small animals such as skunks, dogs, bobcats, and coyotes may transmit rabies. Consequently, special care should be used when touching these animals. The officer should wear gloves, preferably rubber gloves, in handling animals suspected of having rabies to avoid skin contact with saliva and other animal secretions. When possible, the dead animal should be placed in a double-thick plastic bag or closed air-tight container.

3. The type of animal will determine whether the officer calls the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, or in the case of domestic animals, the City's Sanitation Department.

#### F. Incident Reporting

1. The officer involved in dispatching a dangerous or severely injured animal will immediately report the incident to the on-duty supervisor.

2. The involved officer shall obtain an Incident Report number and title the report Dispatching an Animal. The officer shall document in the report the circumstances surrounding the incident and their actions.

**Peoria Police Department**

**An Internationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency**

**Policy 4.07 Dispatching Dangerous or Severely Injured Animals**

**Original Issue Date: 01/01/03**

**Last Revision Date: 07/01/05**

**Next Review Date: 07/01/06**

**Office of Primary Responsibility: CSS**

**Editor: J. Davies**

**Reviewed By: K. Ashley**

**APPROVED:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
**David C. Leonardo**  
**Chief of Police**