

Animal Control

820.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for Animal Control Officers (ACO) and Peoria Police Department personnel in dealing with calls related to animal control and to set forth procedures regarding animal control services, the handling of injured animals and the abatement of animal nuisances (ARS § 9-499.04).

820.1.1 TRAINING

ACOs shall successfully complete the required basic and continuing education animal control courses as approved by the Department.

820.2 ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The ACO shall be responsible for enforcing city, county, and state laws relating to animals and for appropriately resolving or referring animal problems as outlined in this policy

Specifically, the ACO is assigned the tasks necessary for the daytoday responsibilities and rabies control as regulated by the Department of Health Services (ARS § 11-1003).

The ACO shall be under the operational control of the Neighborhood Services Section. The Animal Control Officer's assigned working hours will be scheduled by the Neighborhood Services Manager. During hours when the ACO is on-duty, requests for animal control services shall be assigned by Communications Section or field supervisor.

Requests for assistance by the ACO shall be acknowledged and responded to promptly.

820.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

During hours when the ACO is off-duty, or if the ACO is otherwise unavailable, the following animal-related calls for service will be handled by the appropriate on-duty officer. In the event of a true animal related emergency, Communications may contact and request that the on-call ACO respond.

Officers may be dispatched to animal-related calls and should take appropriate actions to control the situation until the arrival of an ACO. Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper equipment, responding officers generally should not attempt to capture and pick up any animal, but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of the ACO. The following are examples of when an officer may consider acting before the arrival of the ACO:

- When there is a threat to the public safety.
- When an animal has bitten someone, officers should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- When an animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- When the owner/handler has been arrested and there is no other alternative placement for the animal.
- When an animal is gravely injured.

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820.3.1 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS

Officers shall conduct a preliminary investigation on all reports of animal cruelty and forward the information to the ACO for follow-up. Officers shall not hesitate to take any immediate actions deemed necessary. If immediate action is necessary, officers seizing an animal shall comply with the notice requirements of ARS § 13-4281.

The assistance of an animal control officer may be requested to assist with the investigation when appropriate for the purpose of handling the disposition of any animal associated with the case.

820.3.2 STRAY DOGS

If the dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner should be contacted if reasonably possible. If the owner is contacted, the dog should be released to the owner and a citation may be issued if appropriate. If a dog is taken into custody, it shall be transported to the animal shelter if it is open or to the holding pens, making sure the animal has food, water and shelter.

The animal impound form must be completely filled out and placed in the ACO's box. Releases will be handled by the ACO or, in his/her absence, by a patrol officer.

The ACO will transport any animals in the holding pens to the animal shelter as soon as possible. Once a dog has been transported to a shelter, all releases should be handled by the animal shelter. Holding of animals for extended periods of time require the approval of the animal control supervisor.

820.3.3 ANIMAL BITES TO HUMANS

Officers shall obtain as much information as possible for forwarding to the ACO for follow-up. Officers shall instruct the owner of a biting animal that is a pet, farm animal or domesticated wild animal that, if contacted, to keep the animal confined on the property until contacted by the ACO. If the animal is a stray, every reasonable effort shall be made to immediately locate the owner and contain or impound the animal.

820.3.4 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS

Officers shall obtain and forward to the ACO as much information as possible regarding the nature of the complaint, the complaining person, owner information (if possible) and location of problem. Officers will also document any actions taken, citation issued and related report numbers.

In the event responding officers cannot fulfill urgent requests for service because the animal is difficult or dangerous to handle, the ACO may be called. If the ACO is unavailable, the patrol supervisor may request the assistance of an animal control officer from an outside agency.

All requests to call in the ACO must be approved by a field supervisor or the Patrol Lieutenant.

820.4 DECEASED ANIMALS

Deceased animals on public property will be reported to Dispatch who will contact the contract removal service to arrange removal of the animal.

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820.5 INJURED ANIMALS

When any injured domesticated animal is brought to the attention of a member of this agency, all reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner or responsible handler. When the owner or responsible handler cannot be located and the animal is not an immediate danger to the community, it shall be taken to a doctor of veterinary medicine as described below.

- During normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary care clinic.
- If after normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary emergency services clinic.
- The only exception to the above is when the animal is an immediate danger to the community or the owner of the animal is identified and takes responsibility for the injured animal.
- When it is necessary to dispatch a seriously injured or dangerous animal the Firearms and Qualification Policy shall be followed. The decision to dispose of a seriously injured animal will rest with the on-duty Patrol Lieutenant or supervisor if notice is possible (ARS § 9-499.04(B)(1), ARS § 13-3107(C)(6)).
- Injured or deceased ranch animals or wildlife should be referred to the appropriate agency as listed by the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, the Bureau of Land Management or the Animal Services Division of the Arizona Department of Agriculture.
- When handling dead or injured animals, Department employees shall attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.
- Each incident shall be documented, at minimum, to include the name of the reporting party and the veterinary hospital and/or person to whom the animal is released. If the ACO is off-duty, the information will be forwarded for follow-up.

820.6 CITATIONS

It should be at the discretion of the handling officer or the field supervisor as to the need for, or advisability of, the issuance of a citation for a violation.

820.7 POST-ARREST PROCEDURES

The arresting officer should make a reasonable effort to ensure that animals or pets under a person's care will be provided with adequate care when that person is arrested. This is only required when there is no person to provide care and the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animals.

Relatives, friends, or neighbors may be contacted, with the owner's consent, to care for the animals. If no persons can be found or the owner does not consent, the appropriate animal control authority should be notified.