

## Animal Control

### 820.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for animal control officers and Red Bluff Police Department personnel in dealing with animal control related calls for service and to set forth procedures regarding animal control services, the handling of injured animals, and the abatement of animal nuisances.

### 820.2 ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

The Animal Control Officer (ACO) function shall rest with a Community Service Officer(s) (CSO's) assigned that responsibility. The CSO shall be responsible for enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals, and for appropriately resolving or referring animal problems as outlined in this policy. The ACO function shall be under the operational control of the Operations The Community Service Officers assigned to handle the ACO function will be scheduled by the Operations Division Commander.

During hours when the CSO's are on duty, requests for animal control services shall be assigned by the Dispatch Center or the Shift Sergeant.

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

### 820.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

During hours when the Community Service Officer is off duty, or if the CSO is otherwise unavailable, the following animal related calls for service will be handled by the appropriate on-duty officer.

Officers may be dispatched to animal related calls and should take appropriate actions to control the situation until the arrival of a CSO if one is available. Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper equipment, responding officers generally should only attempt to capture and pick up any animal without exceeding their own capabilities and by utilizing a CSO pickup, properly equipped to handle animals. The following are examples of when an officer should consider acting before the arrival of the CSO:

- (a) When there is a threat to the public safety.
- (b) When animal has bitten someone, officers should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- (c) When an animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- (d) When the owner/handler has been arrested and there is no other alternative placement for the animal.
- (e) When the animal is gravely injured.
- (f) When no CSO is or will be available within a reasonable time frame.

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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 CSO for follow-up. Officers shall not hesitate to take any immediate actions deemed necessary. 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(s) associated with the case.

#### **820.3.2 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS**

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, if contacted, to keep the animal confined on the property until contacted by the ACO. If the animal is a stray, then every effort shall be made to capture and impound the animal immediately.

#### **820.3.3 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, complaining person, owner information (if possible), location of problem, etc. Officers will also document any actions taken, citation(s) issued, related report numbers, etc.

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 to duty to handle. If the ACO is unavailable, the patrol supervisor may request the assistance of an animal control officer from an allied agency.

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

#### **820.4 DECEASED ANIMALS**

Deceased animals on public property will be removed and properly disposed of by the ACO. Officers will remove deceased animals when the Animal Control Officer is not on duty. The deceased animals may be placed in the dead pan of the Animal Control Officer's truck.

- (a) For health and sanitary reasons, deceased animals should be placed in a sealed plastic bag prior to placing in the ACO truck. Large animals should be double bagged and left next to the ACO truck, out of public view.
- (b) Neither the ACO nor any officer will be required to climb onto or under any privately owned structure for the purpose of removing a deceased animal.

#### **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 (Penal Code 597.1).

- (a) During normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary care clinic.

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- (b) If after normal business hours, the animal should be taken to the authorized Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Services Clinic.
- (c) 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.
  - 1. When the need to kill a seriously injured or dangerous animal is necessary, the department Firearms Policy shall be followed. The decision to dispose of a seriously injured animal will rest with the on-duty Shift Sergeant.
- (d) Injured wildlife should be referred to the SPCA, Marine Mammal Center or Department of Fish and Wildlife as applicable. The SPCA will not pick up common pigeons (red legs), starlings, bats or skunks.
- (e) When handling dead or injured animals department employees shall attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.
- (f) Each incident shall be documented and, at minimum, include the name of the reporting party and 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.

#### **820.5.1 RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN VEHICLES**

If an animal left unattended in a vehicle appears to be in distress, members may enter the vehicle for the purpose of rescuing the animal. Members should (Penal Code § 597.7(d)):

- (a) Make a reasonable effort to locate the owner before entering the vehicle.
- (b) Take steps to minimize damage to the vehicle.
- (c) Refrain from searching the vehicle or seizing items except as otherwise permitted by law.
- (d) Leave notice on or in the vehicle identifying the location where the animal has been taken and the name and Department of the member involved in the rescue.
- (e) Make reasonable efforts to contact the owner or secure the vehicle before leaving the scene.
- (f) Take the animal to an animal care facility, a place of safekeeping or, if necessary, a veterinary hospital for treatment.

#### **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

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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 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.

#### **820.8 STRAY DOGS**

If a stray dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner should be contacted, if 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 appropriate animal care facility.

Members shall provide reasonable treatment to animals in their care (e.g., food, water, shelter).