

DISPATCHER TRAINING MANUAL

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ANSWERING CALLS

VOICE QUALITY

You should speak slowly and clearly on the telephone and with adequate volume. If callers cannot hear or understand you, you will have to repeat your questions, which wastes time.

Your voice should project authority and knowledge, backed up by a certainty of what you are telling the caller. If you are hesitant or seem unsure, the caller will probably question your answers or your ability to help.

Use plain, everyday language with the public--never use legal terms or law enforcement jargon.

TELEPHONE GREETING

Because all calls to the Animal Control Operations Center are potential emergencies, you must promptly answer all incoming calls. If you are not able to immediately handle the call because of other incoming calls, radio traffic, etc., the phone call should be answered "Animal Control do you have an emergency?" If the caller says "No," tell them "Hold on, please." If the caller indicates they have an emergency, ask them "What is the emergency?" and then proceed to handle it as necessary.

ANSWERING PRIORITY

Dispatchers must answer all calls immediately and determine if an emergency exists. If so, handle the call. If not, ask the caller to hold or transfer them to the appropriate department, agency or person. If other calls are "ringing in" while you are handling a non-emergency call, you should ask the person "Hold on, please," put the person on hold and answer the other incoming call. Ask the caller "Do you have an emergency?" If they say "No," you should then return to the holding call as soon as possible. You should not answer calls by simply saying "Please hold" and putting the caller on hold. You must determine the priority of each call by asking each caller, "Do you have an emergency?"

If you put a caller on hold after obtaining some information about their problem, remember or write down the information so they won't have to start over when you return to them.

ETIQUETTE

When dealing with all callers, you are required to maintain a polite and friendly tone. You are not expected to tolerate profanity or other verbal abuse from callers, but must maintain a professional demeanor with the caller and attempt to provide resolution to their problem or request. If the caller has a legitimate request for services provided by animal control, dispatch an officer and do not become involved in an argument. If the caller clearly does not have an animal control related issue but persists on talking, refer them to the proper person, department, or agency and then say that you have other calls to answer.

If you determine that you cannot provide a service to a caller, explain to them why you can't. Tell them the department's policy on the subject, that the nature of the incident is handled by another agency, etc. Never simply tell a caller "We can't do that." Tell them why, too.

You should use the person's name when addressing them, especially if you must put them on HOLD. This will impress the person that you have not forgotten them and that you remember their call.

You should always maintain a business-like attitude when taking calls, even if the situation seems humorous or funny. You should sound sympathetic and never make light of a caller's situation. Don't make jokes or relate funny stories to illustrate a point--the caller may not get your punch line. If the caller comments that the situation is funny or odd, you might agree with them, but never make them feel foolish.

You shall not make remarks critical of any race, class, or group of people. The Animal Control Field Services Department provides service to anyone who has a proper need, without regard to other factors.

You are required to give your last name to any citizen who requests it. Many abusive callers try to put the dispatcher on the defensive by asking for their name. If the dispatcher refuses, the caller then takes advantage of the dispatcher's defensive position to make further complaints. The easiest way to handle these callers is to immediately give your name and to offer to connect the caller to a supervisor to resolve any complaint.

If a caller is upset, hysterical, hostile or angry, tell them "I understand that you're angry (upset, etc.) about this, but I need to ask you some questions so that an officer can respond. What is your address?...." This will demonstrate that you understand the situation that you intend to send assistance and need to obtain certain information to do it.

If the caller is abusive and it's obvious you cannot interact with them, ask them to hold and refer the call to a supervisor or another dispatcher. In most cases, "double teaming" with another dispatcher will resolve the initial conflict.

Many times, a sincerely-made apology for a dispatch delay, previous misunderstanding or another dispatcher's actions will satisfy the caller and put the call "back on track." You should never feel defensive about admitting a previous mistake. Apologize; give them the correct information and then move on to helping them with their problem.

CONTROL OF CONVERSATION

It's important that you maintain control of all telephone conversations, so that you obtain all the necessary information in the least amount of time. Talkative or insistent callers are difficult to question and may take a longer time to handle.

The caller usually knows what occurred, but not how to report it. It's up to you to direct the caller's knowledge into meaningful answers. You may tell the person, "Slow down for a moment. Let me ask you some questions," or "Take a deep breath, sir, and let me ask you some questions." Anything that will momentarily divert them, yet let them know that you are going to help them, will assist in maintaining control.

The most effective tactic is asking short, specific questions, such as their name, address, telephone number, where they are, etc. The questions should obtain relevant information and should maintain a "flow" free of interruptions. If you pause too long or become sidetracked with other duties, control of the conversation will end and you'll have to re-establish it.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CALLERS

If a caller on an emergency line does not speak English, you must have the conversation translated. The most common language other than English is Spanish. Ask the person to hold on and attempt to find someone on duty that may be able to translate. If that is not possible ask the caller if someone else with them can come to the phone.

COLLECT CALLS

The Animal Control Operations Center does not accept collect calls from citizens except in extraordinary circumstances. If an operator calls and asks if you will accept a collect call from a citizen, tell them, "This is the Animal Control Operations Center. We cannot accept collect calls." If the caller is in the District of Columbia and has an emergency, tell them to hang up and dial nine-one-one."

CALLS FROM JUVENILES/ELDERLY

You should be particularly sensitive to calls from children and the elderly. They may initially seem confused as to why they're calling and may not express themselves completely. Never assume that they are merely pranksters or senile. You must ask specific questions to find out why they are calling animal control.

Always obtain a child's name, address and telephone number first. Use their name when talking to them. You may ask them "Is your mother or father there?" but be aware that they may be calling about a problem involving their parents and won't want to give the telephone to them.

You may have to talk to an elderly person for several minutes to obtain sufficient information. Details such as where they live (a rest home, hotel, hospital, etc.), if they are alone, and the location of persons they might mention will give clues to why they are calling.

If you have any doubt as to the welfare of a child or elderly person, gather the appropriate information and notify MPD, explaining the circumstances of the call.

INCOMPLETE TELEPHONE CALLS

On occasion a caller will hang up, be disconnected or simply drop the telephone before giving you all the information you need. This may be due to a medical problem, panic, or an accident. Never assume that incomplete calls are pranks or persons reaching a wrong number. From the information you were able to obtain, you must then decide whether an emergency actually exists. If so and the caller was able to give you a location, dispatch normally. If you have no location but do have a telephone number, start the tracing procedures. If the caller hung up, try to call them back to obtain more information.

Sometimes, calls received from MPD come through a dispatcher who stays on or monitors the line during the call, and who can give you the caller's telephone number.

ACCURACY

It is vital to the safety of each officer on the street that you be accurate in your work. This is especially true when taking information from callers reporting animal related crimes and suspects. The suspect description you broadcast or the details of an incident which you obtain about an incident can be used by an officer in the field to safely handle the call. The consequences of being careless could be disastrous.

When receiving calls it is essential that you listen and hear everything that the person is saying. It takes a bit of practice to listen and write at the same time, and to do both tasks well. Don't make assumptions from the caller's statements. Let the statements speak for themselves and then ask questions that clarify the caller's statements. For instance, if a caller says that he just heard several gunshots; don't assume that the noises were gunshots. Question the caller on exactly what he heard and why he thinks they were from a firearm.

Don't let the caller use general words like "harassment," "aggressive," "hanging out." Ask them, "I don't know what you mean by aggressive. Exactly what is the dog doing?" Narrow down the activity by asking specific questions.

When you record the information, try to express the caller's words exactly. You can't and shouldn't try to write the caller's words verbatim. But you should also not make conclusions.

LOCATIONS

The first information you should try to obtain for any incident is the location.

Ask every caller for their address. You should verify the caller's location to eliminate the possibility of using an incorrect location.

For purposes of responding to an emergency, it's vital to obtain the precise location where the incident occurred or is occurring--

- What's the exact street address or intersection
- Occurring at a specific location or in the area?
- What area? Westside, Northside, close, far away?
- Inside or outside?
- Near what business or building?
- On the sidewalk, in a driveway, etc.?

The ability of the Animal Control Officer or HLE Officer to go *directly* to the location of an incident is a critical part of saving lives and protecting property. You should ask sufficient questions to narrow down the location as precisely as possible.

DESCRIPTIONS

An important element of Animal Control work is complete, accurate descriptions of animals, people, vehicles, and places. These descriptions are vital for locating, identifying, assisting the people with which the officers come into contact. The dispatchers are the important first link in obtaining these descriptions from callers who have first-hand experience.

When obtaining descriptions, take into account the circumstances of the incident and ask questions which will obtain the most useful description.

VEHICLES

Descriptions of vehicles should follow the following format:

- year
- color
- make
- model
- license
- unusual, damage

If the license isn't a state plate, you should make note of that on the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center Google document.

When dealing with autos you should ask exactly where it is; on the street, in a lot, etc., if it's occupied and which way it's facing. These facts will help the responding officers decide on their approach strategy.

WEAPONS

Never assume that weapons aren't involved because a caller doesn't mention them. Ask "Do you see any weapons?" Rely only upon what the caller sees. If they say a gun is involved, ask them "Do you see a gun?" Determine who has the weapons, where they are placed (in belt, pocket, or drawer) and what they are doing with them (waving it, holding it, shooting it). Obtain their full identification of the caller and call 911 to report this information. Animal Control Officers should not respond to these locations if a weapon is known to be present without the assistance of MPD.

SCREENING CALLS

The task of the dispatcher handling calls is to obtain the necessary information, route the caller to the proper person or agency, or to dispatch the proper emergency response. At the same time, the dispatcher screens out those calls not appropriately handled by animal control or which are not considered emergencies. To do this, the dispatcher asks a series of questions that elicit the most information in the least amount of time.

Citizens call animal control for many reasons, the dispatcher must know what services the animal control provides and which they do not. Further, you must know what group within the department handles each reported situation.

It is often difficult to determine why a person is calling. The first questions you ask should seek to determine if they have a QUESTION or want to TELL you something.

PATRON HAS A QUESTION:

Questions from citizens should be answered by the person most knowledgeable to answer them. If the question is general, simple AND you know the answer, you may give the citizen the answer. If the question involves specialized knowledge and a particular department (wildlife, investigations) is on-duty, direct the caller to that person. If the question is about a previously reported incident, direct the caller to the original handling officer or the investigator which handles such incidents.

A dispatcher is not permitted to give legal advice, which includes giving a caller an opinion on the best course of action involving a legal matter. You must refer callers to an attorney for specific interpretations of the law, advice or opinions. However, you may tell a caller what provisions of the law may apply to an incident and explain animal control procedures for a situation.

PATRON WANTS TO TELL:

NON-EMERGENCY

If the caller is reporting a non-emergency situation, you must determine if it is handled by animal control. If it is, you will complete the dispatch information onto the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center dispatch Google document, PetPoint and dispatch it to the appropriate unit. If it is not handled by animal control, you will determine what public agency or private company handles the situation and refer the caller to them. When making referrals, you should give the caller the exact telephone number or sufficient information. Referrals should also be documented on the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center dispatch Google document.

EMERGENCIES

When a person calls the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center to report an emergency there are many things to take into account. The dispatcher should be attentive to every word, the caller's demeanor, and background noises which may give important clues as to what is happening. If the caller seems agitated you should pass this on to the responding officer.

If the caller has an emergency situation, you will complete the information in the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center Google document and forward the call to the appropriate officer, investigator, or HLE. If the call is not animal related you should forward the person to the police or fire department (911). In cases where another public safety agency has jurisdiction, such as MPD, Transit Police, University Police, or the Secret Service, you will transfer the caller or give them the proper telephone number.

In many cases the caller doesn't know the whole picture of what is happening or what to do. They simply know certain facts. In these cases it's up to you to determine if they are reporting an animal related emergency or need some other assistance. Never let the caller decide if Animal Control, HLE the police or fire department is needed, judge based on the facts as described by the caller. If the caller doesn't ask for an officer or sounds like they're only asking for advice, and yet the circumstances indicate that an officer should respond, send one.

Take charge of the conversation at the beginning; don't simply listen to what the person is saying. Ask them questions to obtain the most useful information. While you should not echo everything they say, do repeat the address or location information so there is no misunderstanding. Ask them the following questions:

- What happened?
- When did it occur?
- Where did it happen?
- Animal species and description
- Direction of travel
- Reporting person name and phone number

Write down everything significant that they are saying; don't rely on your memory. If necessary tell them to slow down, to take a deep breath, and to continue telling their story.

While it is never a requirement that a caller identify themselves in order to request Animal Control it is important to know who is calling and where they are. Ask the caller for their name. Tell them that you need a named person to report the situation and provide a proper response. Attempt to assure the person that they will not be identified in the field, but never tell them "You won't have to go to court." If they are reporting a crime in progress, ask them to stay where they are so that HLE or the police may contact them.

Telephone numbers are an important tool. They permit citizens to be located if the officer cannot locate the address, to be re-contacted for more information, and may prove valuable to investigators (ACI and HLE) following up on the case. Always get the caller's telephone number. Ask for their home number in all cases. If they are not at home, ask for the number where they are, too.

Locations are important to Animal Control, as well. A precise location also means that an officer will know where to go immediately or where the animal might be. When you talk to a caller, find out where the incident occurred including any nearby landmarks. And remember to ask if there's an apartment. Many callers don't volunteer that information.

In all cases, repeat the locations for the caller to verify. "You're at 123 Main Street, number 3?" or "The dog is in front of the yellow house on the corner?"

Never assume that the incident has been previously reported; document the information on the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center Google document with complete information. Even if the incident has been reported, you may be able to gain more information from a different caller. So always try to obtain the caller's name, address and telephone number for every call that you handle.

CALL DISPOSITIONS

After hearing the caller's situation, you must determine how to handle it. Perhaps you will refer them to HLE, police or fire department. Perhaps it is a civil problem and you'll suggest they consult an attorney. Or you may decide that Animal Control can help and you'll forward the radio incident to an officer or investigator.

In every case, the caller should be certain of what response, if any, Animal Control is going to make. If the situation is not handled by Animal Control, inform the caller and tell them who does handle it and give them the telephone number if you know it. If the situation is handled by another city department, give them the extension number and attempt to transfer them, such as:

"That's something handled by Humane Law Enforcement. Hold on while I transfer you to that number."

If the situation is handled by Animal Control, tell them "We'll send an officer out to you."

If a caller asks when the officer will respond, you should tell them only "As soon as an officer is available" Never tell the caller "An officer will be there in 5 minutes." Too many events can occur which will change that estimate. A citizen's satisfaction with response times is related less to the actual time, than it is to the time estimated by the dispatcher. Short estimates will disappoint the caller and cause them to telephone every 15 minutes for a reason why an officer hasn't arrived.

If the caller wants to know why the response time is so indefinite, explain that several calls are pending, that priorities are constantly changing and emergency calls are dispatched first. In most cases, citizens will understand the delay if it's explained to them and they won't mind waiting.

If they decide that they want to postpone Animal Control service because they cannot wait or that they want to think about it, the dispatcher will document the information in the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center Google document. Ask the caller to call Animal Control back if they would like an officer to respond. Do not take a reservation for an officer to respond later. Make sure the caller realizes that they must initiate

another call to obtain service. If the caller postpones service because they cannot wait for an officer now, explain that a delay is common and they should call back when they are going to be at one location for an extended period of time.

CANCELLATIONS

Many times citizens will call back to say that they no longer need Animal Control service. When this occurs, it's important to determine the nature of the original call and that the person calling is the same as the person who called.

For all cancellations, locate the original incident on the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center Google document, and confirm it's the same location and incident mentioned by the caller. Then enter comments to indicate who cancelled the call and why. Update the incident and notify the responding officer to cancel the call.

REQUEST FOR OFFICERS' TELEPHONE NUMBERS

By policy, Animal Control Field Services employee telephone numbers are given out only to other employees of the Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA). When someone calls requesting an officer's telephone number, they should identify themselves. If they do not, ask them who they are. If you do not recognize the voice, do not hesitate to ask them politely.

You may ask another dispatcher if they know the caller and have them identify the voice. You may ask the caller his/her telephone number and then compare it with the current HRA phone list.

Law enforcement requesting an officer's phone number, you may ask the caller their badge number and/or work unit, Service Division, Warrant Bureau, etc. Members of the Police department understand this procedure and will not mind being questioned politely.

If you cannot verify the caller's identity, tell them that you will have the officer call them back with the information, and then obtain a telephone number where the caller can be reached.

ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION

If you determine that the caller does not have an emergency, explain that Animal Control only responds for sick or injured animals and, "From what you describe, this isn't the type of situation Animal Control responds to." Dispatchers can offer a veterinarian or suggest alternate transportation, such as...

- Taxi (with proper animal carrier)
- Bus (with proper animal carrier)
- friend or relative with car
- Pet Taxi service

MONITORING THE RADIO

While taking telephone calls, the dispatcher should also be monitoring the radio at all times. Officers calling on the radio take precedence. If the dispatcher is on the phone politely ask the caller to hold and answer the calling officer on the radio.

OFFICER NEEDS HELP

Occasionally a citizen will call and say that an officer needs help or assistance. You should immediately determine the location and if the officer is asking a citizen to call for help or the citizen is only observing an incident. All such incidents are considered emergencies.

If the officer requested that the citizen call the police, you should immediately broadcast "All units, officer requests assistance, and provide the location." The dispatcher will then take over co-ordination of responding officers. If the citizen is on scene viewing an officer involved fight or other disturbance, you should broadcast "All units, officer needs assistance, and provide the location." The dispatcher will then attempt to identify the officer, obtain a status check from him/her and will co-ordinate further response.

You should immediately notify your supervisor after handling request of assistance from any officer.

ALL CALLS

When an “ALL CALL” is announced all **on duty Field Services Officers** (ACO, ACI, and HLE) will be dispatched to respond. Dispatch will make the following broadcast over the radio:

“Attention all officers at Chain Bridge Road and Arizona Ave NW we have a deer that has been hit by car.
Attention all officers at Chain Bridge Road and Arizona Ave NW we have a deer that has been hit by car.”

All officers should respond to dispatch with one of the following:

- Officers will respond with their call sign and an ETA to the scene of the “ALL CALL”.
- If an officer is already on a call, they will advise dispatch they are unable to respond.
- All on duty Officers who are **not** on assignment will immediately begin to respond to the scene of the “ALL CALL”.
- Officers will continue to the scene of the “ALL CALL” until they receive a cancelation from the first officer who arrives on scene or Dispatch cancels the “ALL CALL”.
- Dispatch will call any on duty officer that does not respond (by radio) to the “ALL CALL,” to confirm that they have received the “ALL CALL” or update them of the “ALL CALL” in progress (**If Dispatch is already aware that the officer is on a call this step can be skipped**).

Dispatch will follow up with a text message of the “All Call” detailing the following:

Nature of the “All Call”

Location of the “All Call”

Time Call was received

Closest Officer and ETA

LOSS OF CONTACT OF AN OFFICER IN FIELD / OFFICER NEEDS ASSISTANCE (THREAT OF HARM)

When you are already in contact with an officer in field and the contact is lost or you are unable to contact officer at all:

1. Once three attempts have been made using the RADIO dispatch will attempt to reach officer by calling their work phone directly. **NOT RADIO**
2. Once 3 attempts have been made to contact the officer on their work cell direct line (3 attempts made with 2 minute breaks in between each call) dispatch will call the officer's alternative phone number listed in the dispatch contact list. **If no contact is made go to step 3**
3. Make 3 attempts to contact the officer on their alternative phone number (3 attempts made with 2 minute break in between each call). **Dispatch will go to step 4**
4. Dispatch will do an "All Call" for the officer out of contact with previous known location using the following format:
 - a. Attention all officers dispatch is unable to contact ACO (insert number) last known location was 123 Blue St NE. **(This will be repeated 2 times)**
 - b. All on duty officers respond to the last known address and search the area for the officer whom dispatch has lost contact with
 - c. On duty Supervisor is to notify Animal Control Field Services Director if he/she did not respond to the "All Call" announcement. If Animal Control Field Services Director is not reachable then the Chief of Field Services should be notified
 - d. Dispatch will call the Metropolitan Police Department 911 communications Center is to be notified of the situation and request assistance.
5. Dispatch will do an "All Call" for an officer requesting assistance where officer safety is at risk using the following format:
 - a. Attention all officers, attention all officers ACO (insert number) is requesting assistance at 123 Blue St NE. shortly dictate the problem **(This will be repeated 2 times)**
 - b. All on duty officers respond to the location to assist
 - c. On duty Supervisor is to notify Animal Control Field Services Director if he/she does not respond to the "All Call" announcement. If Animal Control Field Services Director is not reachable then the Chief of Field Services should be notified
 - d. The Metropolitan Police Department 911 communications Center is to be notified of the situation and assistance requested
6. Once contact has been made with the officer dispatch has lost contact with, or responding officer locates that officer an "All Call" will be made by dispatch to cancel all other responding officers. Dispatch will also contact The Metropolitan Police Department 911 communications Center to stand down. The same procedure will be followed when responding to a call for assistance from an officer. Upon the arrival of another officer or MPD and the threat has been adjudicated.
7. The on duty Supervisor or Dispatch will update the Animal Control Director or Chief of Field Services

OTHER CITY AGENCIES

Citizens may call the Animal Control Field Services Operations Center for service when they are unable to reach other city agencies.

If a citizen calls during the week, refer them to the proper city agency. After 1700 on weekdays, and on weekends and holidays, you should first determine if the situation is an emergency or urgent problem. If so, refer them to fire or police departments for their response. If the problem is non-urgent, you should give the citizen the city's answering service telephone number, 311, and ask them to call.

EMERGENCY VS NON-EMERGENCY

Situations in which ACOs (and ACIs, as necessary) are to respond immediately are those in which:

1. **Dangerous Animals.** Dangerous domestic or wild animals who are attacking or threatening humans (this includes, but is not limited to dogs that have been declared dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs);
2. **Rabies Potential.** Animals are suspected of carrying rabies;
3. **Sick or Injured Animals.** Wild animals that are sick or injured, stray domestic animals that are sick or injured, and owned domestic animals that are sick or injured where the owner prefers to surrender rather than providing veterinary care.
4. **Animal Bites.** Domestic or wild animals that have bitten humans, patrolling for un-located biting animals;
5. **Wild Animals.** Wild animals that are trapped in the living space of residences, confined baby wildlife;
6. **Trapped Animals.** Wild or domestic animals that have been trapped;
7. **Stray Animals.** Stray animals that have been confined or restrained by citizens, dogs running at large, and animals in danger due to surroundings (e.g. cat on roof during inclement weather).
8. **Law Enforcement Requests.** Request from any law enforcement agency for assistance with animal control issues.
9. **Deadline Calls.** Notices/court papers that must be delivered by a specific time, picking DCACC animals up from veterinarian, picking up carcasses for rabies testing.

Non-emergency situations may include cats in trees in good weather and other nuisance-related calls. These types of situations are not always non emergencies; it is important for staff to fully determine whether animals are at risk of being injured or are posing any degree of danger to Public Safety.

10. **Animals in distress.** All sick or injured domestic animals must be transported immediately to DCACC or to a licensed veterinarian for evaluation. A manager, on duty or on call, shall make a decision regarding veterinary care. Injured or sick wildlife are to be promptly transported to the DCACC for evaluation. Animal Control Officers shall promptly notify the Humane Rescue Alliance HLE of animals in distress due to apparent cruelty and/or neglect.
11. **Animals in unattended vehicles.** Reports of animals in owned vehicles are investigated by the Humane Rescue Alliance HLE. Any calls regarding animals in vehicles should be immediately

referred to HLE; however, ACOs or ACIs may also respond to these calls to prevent unnecessary suffering or death of an animal (All Call).

If other law enforcement agencies call because they are towing an un-owned or stolen vehicles and need an animal removed, ACOs should respond to the call, and leave an impound notice with the law enforcement officer.

12. **Domestic animals at large.** Domestic animals, excluding feral cats running at large pose a substantial risk of injury to themselves or to citizens.
13. **Cats in trees.** Citizens requiring assistance to retrieve cats from trees should be advised to leave food at the base of the tree and keep dogs out of the area. If these methods fail after 24 hours, and it appears that the cat will not remove itself, DCACC personnel will respond and assist with retrieval. While the fire department will provide the necessary equipment if needed, it is left to the discretion of the ACO on the scene if retrieval can be safely attempted. Animal Control Field Service supervisor may exercise his/her discretion in dispatching an officer out prior to the 24 hour limited if it is believed to be in the best interest of the animal.
14. **Found animals.** A citizen who finds a domestic animal and does not wish to keep it until the owner is located will be asked to bring the animal to the DCACC. If this is not possible, an ACO will pick up the animal as promptly as possible and a detailed found report shall be written. If the citizen does wish to keep it until the owner is located, a detailed found report shall be written.
15. **Wildlife.** Because wild animals are unpredictable and may pose a degree of danger to personnel, all wildlife are to be handled in as safe and humane manner as possible.
 - a. **Wildlife in living area.** DCACC personnel are to respond promptly to citizens reporting wild animals in the living space of their residences. Once the animal is removed, the individual should be advised to close any obvious openings to prevent other animals from entering the building.
 - b. **Wildlife in non-living area.** Animal Control Officers are to respond to locations where citizens are reporting wild animals in chimneys, attics, and crawlspaces. ACOs should evaluate the situation to determine if the animal is in distress, and provide the public with information on deterrent methods, wildlife proofing, and humane trapping services. In extenuating circumstances, ACOs may remove the animal or leave traps if in/out access cannot be found. These types of situations should be referred to the Wildlife Specialist for follow up assistance.
 - c. **Exposure.** If there is a possibility of exposure (bite or scratch), the animal must be held for rabies testing. Wild animals must be euthanized, and a virology sheet completed. The victim's

information must be clearly written on the virology sheet for follow up. An ACO shall complete a bite report.

- d. **Bats.** Bats may not be returned to the wild without permission from DOH. Upon capture, all bats must be euthanized and held for rabies testing.
 - e. **Migratory Birds.** The DCACC has the authority to pick up migratory birds through a federal permit. Any migratory bird that enters the facility or has been handled in the field by an ACO must be logged in the migratory bird log. If a migratory bird is severely sick or injured, ACOs or Wildlife Specialist must immediately contact a licensed rehabilitator for permission to euthanize. The name of the rehabilitator providing the permission must be noted in the migratory bird book and in the bird's electronic database record. Under federal law a licensed veterinarian may also authorize euthanasia provided that the veterinarian themselves perform the procedure.
16. **Back-up assistance.** ACOs and ACIs can request the assistance of the police department when they are being threatened or when citizens are uncooperative or disorderly.
17. **Dead Animals.** In most cases, ACOs are not required to transport dead animals. Callers should be advised to contact the Mayor's Citywide Call Center and request Dead Animal Pick up. In some cases, DOH will request that ACOs pick up dead rabies vector species for rabies testing.

Priority levels

- 3-Star Priorities :
 - HBC animal, still alive (wildlife, stray, or PUGU)
 - Confined animal with possible life-threatening injury/illness, or potentially dangerous
 - Animal in the process of attacking another animal or human
 - Stray (or wild) animal who has bitten a person or another animal
 - Any law enforcement agency on the scene with a sick, injured, or dangerous animal
 - Animal in life-threatening danger due to surroundings (i.e. MPD officer threatening to shoot dog, RAL dog on 295, etc.)

- 2-Star Priorities :
 - Unconfined stray (or wild) animal who appears to be sick, injured, or dangerous
 - Any law enforcement agency requesting assistance with a NSOI animal (evictions, RAL, etc.)
 - PUGU euthanasia requests for severely sick/injured animals
 - Animal in trap outdoors
 - Bat inside a living area

- 1-Star Priorities :
 - Wild animal in a living area (including animal in a trap indoors)
 - Healthy confined baby wildlife
 - Stray or owned animal in tree, on roof, etc. during inclement weather
 - Pick up stray animal from vet, or pick up body for BTL
 - Confined stray animal, not sick or injured
 - Post deadline notice (must be posted on day call was dispatched for legal reasons)
 - 1st health-check/issue quarantine for bite case (must be attempted/posted daily)
 - PUGU non-life-threatening sick or injured animal,
 - 2nd health-check for bite cases (must be attempted/posted daily beginning on final day of quarantine)
 - Check-area for bite case animal (must be done twice daily)
 - Healthy running at large domestic animals, excluding feral cats, that are not actively threatening the public

DANGEROUS AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOGS

1. **General.** DC Official Code § 8-1901 *et seq.* provides for dogs to be declared dangerous or potentially dangerous by the DC Government and for a registration process for dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs.

2. **Jurisdiction.** All dog bites that occur in the District of Columbia involving a human or domesticated animal victim may be considered for dangerous dog investigations. Dogs may be found to be potentially dangerous after being impounded three or more times in a twelve month period or for approaching a person or domesticated animal in a menacing manner. Dogs that bite in the District but live elsewhere may be deemed dangerous or potentially dangerous in the District of Columbia. Dogs that live in the District but bite in another jurisdiction cannot be investigated for dangerousness in DC.

3. **Biting or Menacing Dog Investigations.** Animal Control will investigate all bites to determine if the dog should be referred for a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog determination.
 - a. **When to Investigate.** Any dog bite where the victim is a person or domestic animal can be investigated to see if the dog should be declared dangerous or potentially dangerous. Investigators must carefully consider each case to determine if it is appropriate to investigate the case. Factors could be, but are not limited to: the age of the incident, age of the key parties (were puppies or children involved), location of the incident (did the bite happen in a veterinary facility, dog park, or commercial animal facility), key parties (did the dog bite an owner), repeat violations (does the dog or owner have a history with animal control), severity of the bite (serious bites should be given priority), status of victim (was the victim feral or breaking the law).

 - b. **Provocation.** In all investigations, provocation is key. Any dog that bites in an unprovoked manner or approaches as if to bite in an unprovoked manner can be declared dangerous or potentially dangerous. Provocation is determined by four standards in the Dangerous Dog Act: dogs that bite while a person is committing willful trespass, dogs that bite a person who was provoking, tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog, or a person who has a history of doing such things to the dog, dogs who bite a person or domestic animal because the dog was responding to injury or was protecting itself or its offspring, and dogs who attack a person or domestic animal while the dog was protecting or defending a human being from attack or assault.

 - c. **Severity of Injuries.** The severity of injuries is to be noted. Serious injuries, or those involving broken bones or lacerations requiring multiple sutures or cosmetic surgery may result in a dangerous determination. Less-than-serious injuries or no injuries may result in a potentially dangerous determination. Sometimes victims say that the injury would have required sutures, but that the doctor or

veterinarian decided not to suture the laceration because the risk of infection was high. In these situations, the determination will be dangerous if there is sufficient evidence to back up this claim.

- d. **Burden of Proof.** The Dangerous Dog Act places the burden of proof on the owner of the dog. The incident is assumed to be unprovoked unless the owner of the dog can, by preponderance of evidence, prove that the bite meets the criteria in the law for a provoked bite. Animal Control Investigators must; however, prove that the incident actually occurred and that the suspect dog is the responsible animal.
- e. **Impoundment.** Animal Control Investigators may impound dogs to protect public safety if there is probable cause to believe that the dog's presence in the neighborhood presents an ongoing risk to the public. Probable cause may include a variety of factors, such as the animal's history, the owner's level of responsibility, or the severity of injuries.
- f. **Administrative Search Warrants.** If the owner is unwilling to voluntarily surrender the animal into temporary DCACC custody, Animal Control Investigators may apply for an administrative search warrant through DC Superior Court. Prior to seeking the warrant, Animal Control must provide a copy of the application and affidavit to DOH for review and approval.
- g. **Notification.** Owners of dogs under investigation must be given notice in writing that their pet is under investigation and must be provided with no less than five business days to provide the Investigator with a defense. Dangerous and potentially dangerous dog investigations are not criminal, so it is not necessary to Mirandize owners; however, it is a good idea to remind them that documents and statements made will be part of the official government record. Owners must also be notified that if a determination of dangerousness or potential dangerousness is made they are responsible for payment of all fees incurred by their dog while in impoundment regardless of whether or not the dog is returned and owners should be given the opportunity to relinquish ownership of the animal immediately.
- h. **Evidence.** Evidence in a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog investigation may include: witness statements or affidavits, pictures (before and after treatment, of the location where the bite occurred, and of the animal's yard, if applicable), medical or veterinary records, reports from other agencies, Investigator notes from conversations with various parties, recordings of conversations, or physical evidence, such as bloodied clothing or collars. Any and all documents collected during the course of the investigation must be submitted to DOH for consideration.
- i. **Communication with DOH.** It is important that Investigators maintain an open line of communication with DOH during the investigation process. DOH is available to answer questions and assist as necessary. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator will prepare an evidence packet explaining each piece of evidence and making a recommendation to DOH.

- j. **Determination.** Upon receipt of the evidence packet DOH will issue a determination regarding the dog's dangerousness or potential dangerousness. DOH will provide the determination to Animal Control for service.

 - k. **Appeal/Registration/Abandon.** The owner has fifteen business days from the date the determination is served to appeal the decision to the Office of Administrative Hearing or register the dog as dangerous. If the owner does neither, the dog is considered abandoned and DOH will authorize euthanasia. Registration is done through DOH; however, Investigators may be asked to assist in the registration process, including property inspections.
4. **Third Time Running at Large Investigations.** Dogs are determined to be potentially dangerous upon the 3rd impoundment for running at large during a twelve month period. Dogs impounded while running at large should be held at the facility pending a determination. The Evidence packet should include information on each impoundment including: the date of impoundment, the circumstances of impoundment, and the name of the person impounding the dog or, in the case of a good Samaritan impound, the name of the private citizen dropping the dog off at the facility. DOH will issue a determination only if the owner claims the dog a third time.
5. **Dangerous Determination for Potentially Dangerous dogs.** If a potentially dangerous dog is involved in another biting or menacing incident, even if there injuries are less-than-serious or there are no injuries, it must be investigated.
6. **Enforcement.** Currently DOH is unable to issue citations for violations of the dangerous dog act. If an owner refuses to register their dog as dangerous after their appeals are exhausted, Investigators may seek an administrative search warrant to impound the dog. Upon impoundment, the dog can be euthanized. DOH is working on drafting legislation that will allow for more effective enforcement, and will issue procedures upon approval.

ASSISTANCE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

1. **General.** District and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies often rely on DC Animal Care and Control for assistance with animal issues they encounter during their daily duties. ACOs may be dispatched to calls involving owner arrests or deaths, or situations involving raids, search warrants, accidents, fires, and evictions where animals are present. All requests for assistance from other law enforcement agencies, including HRA HLE department, will be responded to promptly.
2. **Direction from Law Enforcement Agencies.** While assisting law enforcement agencies, ACOs/ACI's will follow all lawful commands and directions provided to them by the lead agency.
3. **Raids/Search Warrants.** Upon receiving a request to participate in a raid/search warrant, the ACO shall notify the Field Services Director to be taken out of the normal dispatch procedure. If proper notice was given by the law enforcement agency, the ACO shall attend the officer briefing and proceed to the scene in concert with the raid team. In cases where the law enforcement agency notifies animal control after the briefing has occurred, the ACO shall meet the team at the scene or staging location and asked to be briefed there. ACOs shall wear body armor and be clearly identified as Animal Control at the time of entry and throughout the duration of the raid.
4. **Securing of the Scene.** It is the responsibility of the lead law enforcement agency to secure the scene of a raid, search warrant, arrest, death, accident, fire, eviction, etc. In cases where animals are present, particularly dogs, the ACO will secure any animals present so law enforcement officers can complete their job functions.
5. **Seizure.** Animals will only be impounded if the owner is arrested and no responsible party is present to take custody of the animal. In rare cases, a law enforcement agency may request that the DCACC impound a live animal and hold it as evidence. In these cases, the ACO must discuss the situation with the Field Services Director prior to impounding the animal. The Field Services Director should notify the Department of Health for authorization if an animal is to be held alive as evidence for another agency.
6. **Notice to Owner.** The DC Animal Care and Control Agency is required to provide reasonable notice to the owner that their animal has been impounded. The notice must include where the animal will be held, how long it will be held (including the date and time of the deadline), and a statement indicating that if the animal is not claimed by the deadline ownership of the animal will revert to the DC Animal Care and Control Agency.

- a. **Personal Delivery:** The best and first choice for making notice shall be personal hand delivery.
- b. **Conspicuous Posting:** In the case where a current or last known address is available (house fires, evictions, etc.) and the owner is not on scene, the ACO may leave a notice conspicuously posted on the door of the address.
- c. **Notice to arrestees/detainees:** Animal Control Officers must make every attempt to personally hand deliver the notice directly to the owner during an arrest or detention. If the Law Enforcement Agent will not allow the ACO to make personal notice, the ACO must indicate on the notice that it was served to the Law Enforcement Agent, including the name of the agency and the agent's badge number or other identifier. The ACO should then ask that the Agent serve the notice to the owner in the ACO's presence. If the Agent will not do that, or if the arrestee/detainee has already been transported, the ACO shall ask the Agent where the owner will be processed so that notice can be made to the owner at that location. If the Agent will not provide that information, the ACO may leave the notice with the Agent with the directive that the Agent must provide notice to the owner. This information must be recorded in the ACO's case notes.
- d. **Notice during emergency transport of a patient:** If the owner has been transported for emergency medical care, the ACO should find out where the owner has been transported to and provide notice at that location. If hospital staff will not allow the ACO access to the owner, the ACO should make notice to the doctor or nurse and record their name and the reason why they were denied access. In the case of a medical emergency, notice should also be provided at the owner's last known address.
- e. **Notice to Next of Kin:** In the case of an owner death, the ACO should attempt to serve notice to the owner's next of kin. If next of kin information is unavailable, the ACO will leave notice posted at the deceased home or with the Agent conducting the death investigation (in the case of a death off the premises of the owner).
- f. **Other Situations:** If an ACO is unsure how to provide notice, the ACO should contact the Field Services Director, who will in turn contact the Department of Health for advice to ensure that the method of service will be legal.

IN FIELD CONVIENCE SURRENDER OF OWNED, UNWANTED ANIMALS

1. **General.** Residents of the District of Columbia often contact the DCACC to request that an Animal Control Officer visit their home to pick up their unwanted pet(s). Care of a pet is the responsibility of the owner, including rehoming the animal in the event that they cannot keep it.
2. **Rehoming.** To rehome an unwanted animal, residents may either find a new owner for the pet, place the animal in a private shelter or rescue group, or take the animal to the DC Animal Care and Control Agency. DCACC accepts owner surrendered pets at no charge to the owner.
3. **In-field Surrenders.** Because rehoming pets is the owner's responsibility, DCACC does not send Animal Control Officers to pick up owned, unwanted animals. Staff shall professionally remind owners of the responsibility, and encourage them to bring the animal to the facility.
4. **Exceptions.** In certain cases where a legitimate need can be established, such as an elderly resident or a person with a disability, staff may, at their discretion, agree to send an ACO to pick up the animal. When extenuating circumstances arise the Field Services Director should be contacted for approval.

WILDLIFE TRAPPING PROCEDURES

1. **General.** It is the goal of the agency that all community residents are educated about the need to live in harmony with wildlife. In most situations deterrent methods will be more effective in solving wildlife problems than trapping. Some animal nuisance complaints may require the borrowing of a humane trap from the DCACC.
2. **Guidelines.** To provide for the humane removal of a wild animal, guidelines and deterrent methods have been established and are set forth in the Trap Loan Agreement.
3. **Borrowing a trap.** Traps can only be borrowed by residents of the jurisdiction and are loaned for one-week periods. Prior to loaning a trap, an ACO may visit the location to determine if trapping is the most appropriate course of action. A deposit for a trap is required.

Staff will complete a trap loan agreement form for every transaction involving the borrowing of a trap. This form asks for the name and address of the borrower, home and work telephone numbers, trap type, and loan and return dates, as well as specifying trapping rules, baiting recommendations and deterrent methods. The original agreement is given to the individual, and a copy is retained at the DCACC. The agreement will also be tracked in the Trap Loan Agreement Google doc.

4. **Accepting a deposit.** Residents borrowing a trap from DCACC are required to pay a deposit. The method of the deposit, in cash or by check, is specified on the trap loan agreement form. All deposits are attached to the DCACC copy of the trap loan agreement and kept in the safe.
5. **Returning a trap.** Office staff will ensure that traps are returned within one week or in as timely a manner as possible. Extensions can be granted providing that an adequate supply of traps is available at the DCACC; the trap loan agreement form should be updated to reflect the new return date.

Once the trap has been returned to DCACC, the deposit is refunded to the individual; the office copy of the agreement form is pulled and placed in the folder for returned Trap forms.

6. **DCACC monitoring of traps.** Under extenuating circumstances, DCACC personnel, with a resident's permission and agreement to accept responsibility for the device, may set a trap on an individual's property.

DCACC personnel will check the trap. Depending on the nature of the work after normal business hours, the trap may be pulled in the evening and re-set by animal control personnel during the first shift of the following day. It is the responsibility of ACOs to advise the property owner of the status of trapping nuisance animals.

FERAL CAT AND ANIMAL TRAPPING PROCEDURES

1. **General:** Feral and stray cats sometimes referred to as “alley cats,” reside in many parts of the District of Columbia. Feral cat colonies are a product of human mistreatment—owned cats that are abandoned and survive to produce multiple litters of untamable kittens. Law in the District requires that the Department of Health promote Trap-Neuter-Return as the primary means of feral cat control.

2. **Complaints:** Citizens contact DCACC to raise concerns over feral cats in their community. Residents may call out of concern for the cats or because the cats are creating what is viewed as an unacceptable nuisance. To mitigate problems with feral cats in the District, DC Animal Care and Control works closely with the Humane Rescue Alliance’s Cat Neighborhood Partnership Program (CatNiPP). In some cases, DCACC also works with other groups, such as Alley Cat Allies or Metro Ferals.

3. **Call Taking Procedures:** Dispatch will take all the caller’s information and complaint. Dispatch will make a determination whether or not to dispatch an officer. Cases where kittens are present, only one cat has been reported, or cats are injured should be dispatched immediately. All other calls should be recorded on the CatNipp Google doc for the appropriate zip code.

4. **Exceptions:**
 - A. Under no circumstances shall a call involving any sick or injured animal be referred out. Calls of this nature will be dispatched to an ACO for immediate attention.

 - B. Kittens that can be socialized shall not be part of a TNR program. Citizens should be encouraged to bring kittens into the shelter to be entered into the adoption/foster program. If a citizen cannot bring the kittens to the facility an ACO shall be dispatched to the scene to collect the kittens.

CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS

1. **General.** Protection of animals from acts of cruelty, abandonment, and neglect is provided for by the Humane Rescue Alliance. Calls regarding cruelty, abandonment, and neglect of animals shall be immediately forwarded to HLE. ACOs may not conduct cruelty investigations. Animals housed at DCACC may not be held pending the outcome of a cruelty case. If ACOs discover locations in the field that may warrant a cruelty investigation, a preliminary report shall be forwarded to the Humane Rescue Alliance HLE. Complaints of animal cruelty violations at the DCACC facility must be conducted in accordance with the law, and not treated as internal HRA matters.
2. **Animal Control Documents.** All documents and electronic records generated by DCACC are government property. They may not be forwarded to HLE or other law enforcement agencies without approval from the DOH.
3. **Seizure from DCACC.** In certain cases, HLE may seize animals from DCACC. In these cases, proper DOH approved seizure forms must be presented prior to transferring the animal (including carcasses) from government custody. In extenuating circumstances, such as the animal’s life depends on transfer to the HLE, the animal may be transferred without government permission.
4. **Providing assistance to Humane Officers.** In certain cases where an animal is in distress due to cruelty and neglect an ACO may respond and assist Humane Law Officers with securing scenes and aiding in animal rescue.

NOTICES AND CITATIONS

1. **General.** Animal Control Officers may issue Animal Control Notices and citations in an attempt to bring residents into compliance with the Animal Control Act. If compliance is not obtained by the end of the deadline given on the notices, the owner of the animal shall be issued a citation.
2. **Animal control complaint.** Calls from residents complaining about Animal Control related problems should be responded to by DCACC personnel in as timely a manner as possible. Dispatch staff shall record such calls into the Animal Control Dispatch Google document and dispatch an ACO.
3. **Animal control notices.** Upon arrival at the respondent’s address and in situations where the owner or caretaker is not at home, the officer will post an animal control notice to the door of the residence. If the owner is home, the ACO shall record the owner’s name and phone number, and leave a notice with them. The notice shall include the nature of the violation, corrective measures to be taken, and a time frame, if appropriate, for compliance.

4. **Issuance of Citations.** At their discretion, animal control officers and managers may issue citations for a violation of codes. In most situations, an animal control notice is issued before a citation. ACOs must observe the violation in order for a summons to be issued. Repeat violations are typical cases for which citations are issued. If the animal control officer does not observe a violation but, in the course of the investigation, feels the complaint is valid, the officer should discuss the case with the field services supervisor to decide if the citation can be issued. Citations forms shall be completely filled out prior to issuance. Certificates of service should be completed for every citation issued.
5. **Fees for Citations.** Initial citations carry a fee of \$33. If a second offense occurs within 24 months, the fee is \$65, a third and subsequent offenses within 24 months carry a fee of \$130.

Offenses are accrued by the owner, not by the animal. For example, an owner cited for failure to vaccinate within 24 months would be liable for a \$33 fine for the first animal, and a \$65 fine for the second animal. Additionally, each violation of a different code is counted separately. For example, an owner being cited for failure to vaccinate and failure to license would receive two \$33 dollar citations rather than a \$33 citation and a \$65 dollar citation.

6. **Specific Types of Citations.**
 - a. **Failure to Vaccinate.** Per DC Official Code DC Official Code §8-1803(a), dogs must be vaccinated against rabies and distemper when over four (4) months of age, and cats must be vaccinated against rabies when over four (4) months of age. Owners must be able to provide proof that their animals have been vaccinated per their veterinarian’s recommendations or that the vaccine has been waived by the veterinarian (in cases of geriatric animals, or animals with certain medical conditions). If the owner cannot provide documentation, citations for these violations shall be issued. Citations for failure to vaccinate may be issued immediately at bite cases if the owner cannot verify that the animal is current on vaccinations while the ACO is on the scene. If the owner can later show that the animal was current at the time of the bite, a request for DOH to waive the citation may be filed.
 - b. **Failure to License.** Per DC Official Code §8-1804(a), dogs must be licensed when the dogs is four (4) months of age or within ten (10) days of acquiring the dog. A DC Dog License may not be issued until all pending citations are paid in full.
 - c. **Failure to Wear a License.** Per DC Official Code §8-1804(b), dogs must display their license on their collars.

- d. **Animal Running at Large.** It is illegal to allow domestic animals to run at large per DC Official Code §8-1808(a). However, per DC Official Code §8-1802(a) citations for this violation may only be issued on the premises of DCACC unless the citation is issued by the Metropolitan Police Department.

Citations for running at large (RAL) shall be issued to the owner of any animal who was impounded (either by an ACO or turned in to the office staff).

When ACOs witness an animal running at large in the field, and have obtained sufficient information about the owner to write an RAL citation, as well as photographic proof that the animal was off the owner’s property, the officer should discuss the case with the field services supervisor to decide if a citation should be issued. Once a decision has been made, the citation should be sent via first-class mail. Typically, this would only be done if the owner has previously been issued an Animal Control Notice.

- e. **Unleashed dogs on School Grounds and Public Recreation Areas.** Citations for unleashed dogs on public recreation areas and school grounds (when school is in session) may be written per DC Official Code §8-1808(e). These citations should be written under the same protocols as RAL citations, and should be written concurrently with RAL citations, so the owner receives both the RAL and the unleashed dog citation at the same time.
- f. **Prohibited Animals.** Citations may be issued for prohibited animals per DC Official Code §8-1808(h)(1). These citations typically would only be given after an Animal Control Notice, advising the owner to remove the animal from the District has gone unanswered. A separate citation may be issued for each illegal animal kept on the premises.
- g. **Failure to Obtain a Hobby Permit.** Per DC Official Code §8-1809(a), persons owning seven (7) or more mammals larger than a guinea pig must obtain a hobby permit. Because DC Office Code §8-1805(a) allows for impound of animals when the owner obtains more than four (4) mammals, a hobby permit must be obtained when the owner acquires the fifth mammal; however, citations should not be issued unless the owner has seven (7) or more animals.

- 7. **Citations Issued at Release to Owner.** Many times, citations may be issued to owners when they claim their impounded animal from DCACC. These citations may be issued regardless of the circumstances surrounding the impoundment; however, DC Official Code §8-1806(c) specifies that these citations shall not apply the first time the animal has been impounded.

8. **Payment of Citations.** Citations may be paid via mail or in person at DCACC. Should the party wish to contest the citation, they may request a hearing at DCACC (in writing). These requests should be forwarded to DOH. Citations may be paid via check or money order, payable to DC Treasurer.

9. **Non-payment of Citations.** If the owner fails to respond to a citation within the specified time (15 days, with an additional 5 days if served via first-class mail), subsequent citations with increasing fees shall be issued.

10. **Cancellation of Citations.** In the event that a citation that has already been issued needs to be canceled, the following procedure should be observed:
 - a. In the event that a citation has been issued mistakenly and no violation of law in fact occurred (e.g. the violator is not the owner of a dog), the field services manager shall request that DOH rescind the citation. The manager shall note the reason for rescinding the citation, and forward the request to DOH so a determination can be made. DOH will send a written notice to the violator indicating the determination.

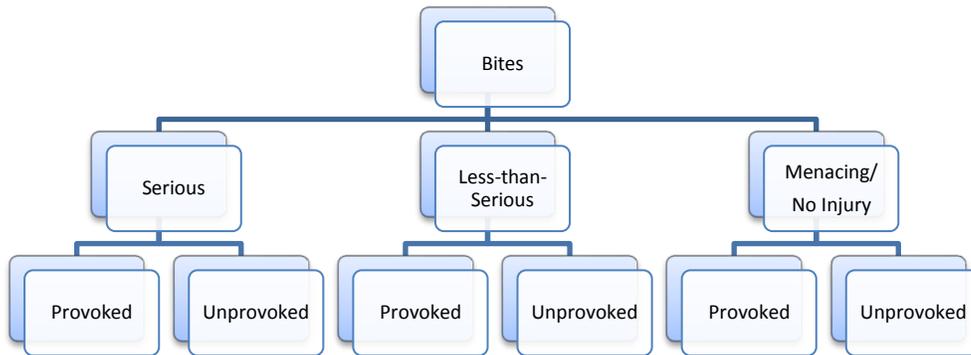
 - b. In the event that a citation has been issued correctly but the field services department believes that enforcement is not warranted due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., the violator is cited for failure to license but obtains a license the day after the citation is issued), the field services manager may request that DOH waive the citation, note the reason why they feel the notice should not be enforced, and send the request to DOH so a determination can be made. DOH will send a written notice to the violator indicating the determination.

SAFEKEEPING

1. **General.** In special cases, animals are held in a safekeeping status at DCACC. These situations include evictions, fires, and other situations in which the owner is homeless, incarcerated, or hospitalized. At the time of animal impound ACOs shall make every reasonable effort to provide the owner, their representative, conspicuous posting at last known address or law enforcement official in charge with a notice indicating where the animal will be held, contact information for the shelter and deadline for holding the animal.
2. **Length of time.** The amount of time an animal will be held in safekeeping will vary from case to case. Animals are initially held for seven days, but the length of time for holding an animal in a safekeeping situation may vary based on the circumstances.
 - a. **Contact with owner.** In cases where an owner is hospitalized or made homeless through an emergency (building condemnation, fire, etc.) and the situation lasts more than seven days, the ACI staff will work to keep contact with the owner and attempt to find alternative housing for the animal or surrender of the animal.
 - b. **Health of animal.** Since long-term confinement of animals causes depression and depresses animals' immune systems, each animal's return potential must be evaluated after seven days and every day thereafter. In addition, provisions must be made for animals held for long periods to spend time outside their cage/kennel, and have more space/opportunity for exercise and socialization to ensure their physical and mental health.
3. **In-taking safekeeping animals.** The intake process for safekeeping animals is similar to that of all animals entering DCACC. An animal is recorded at intake and a physical examination is performed. The animal record should reflect the animal's safekeeping status and details about the reason the animal is being held.
4. **Returning a safekeeping animal.** Animals held in safekeeping because the owner is incarcerated or hospitalized may be returned when the individual is released. In cases where the individual will not be available, the individual can appoint a custodian for the animal. DCACC shall release the animal to the appointed custodian. Fees will be assessed as with any other return.

PROCEDURES FOR ANIMAL BITES

1. **General.** Accurately reporting and investigating animal bites is a critical component to rabies control and public safety in the District of Columbia. Because every bite case is unique and cases are complex, it is extremely important to dispatch bite cases in a timely manner and provide the responding officer or investigator with as much information as possible prior to dispatching them to the scene or health check location.
2. **Receiving Bites Complaints.** Dispatchers will field initial calls regarding animal bite complaints. They will record all information initially available for all bite cases and complete the Initial Bite Intake Sheet Form with relevant information and circumstances. Dispatchers use the below guidelines to make the initial determination regarding severity of injuries and provocation.



3. **Serious:** a bite that causes a physical injury that results in broken bones or lacerations requiring multiple sutures or cosmetic surgery. Sometimes doctors or veterinarians do not suture wounds because of a high risk of infection. These bites are also considered serious. Any time a veterinarian uses a drain to treat an injury it is considered serious because multiple sutures are required to hold the drain in place.
4. **Less-than-serious:** a bite that causes physical injury, but does not involve broken bones or lacerations requiring multiple sutures or cosmetic surgery. This includes bites that cause multiple puncture wounds and bites that cause bruising, even if the skin is not broken.
5. **Menacing/No Injury:** a situation where a dog chases or threatens, but either does not bite or the bite is so minor that no injuries of any kind are present.
6. **Provoked Bites:** situation where the bite involves:
 - a. A **person** who was willfully trespassing on the premises lawfully occupied by the dog’s owner. (Although it is not in the law, DOH generally counts this for domestic animals that are trespassing).

- b. A **person** who was provoking, tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog, or has done so in the past.
 - c. A **person or domestic animal** that was attacked because the dog was protecting or defending a human being within the immediate vicinity from an attack or assault.
 - d. A **person or domestic animal** that was attacked because the dog was protecting itself or its dependent offspring from injury.
7. **Unprovoked Bites:** Any bite or menacing incident that does not fit into one of the above described categories.
8. **Procedure for Dog-Non Domesticated Animal Bites, Cat Bites**
- a. Dispatcher begins initial DOH Bite Report and assigns to an ACO/ACI
 - b. Dispatcher records initial information into Pet Point
 - c. ACO/ACI handles all follow-up, provides additional information, places the animal(s) under quarantine, and completes the 1st health check and 2nd health checks per rabies control protocols.
 - d. The Dispatcher will record the 1st health check and 2nd health check dates into the shared calendar. *This calendar, in Dispatch email, will be used for notifications of upcoming health checks. Dispatcher, ACO's and ACIs will have access to the calendar. The calendar will send reminders to Dispatchers, ACO's and ACIs when a pending 2nd Health Check is due.*
 - e. Dispatchers will document all relevant case information including vaccination status and license status of animal(s) into Pet Point and complete the report for submission to DOH within 24 hours of the initial bite report being filed to include completed DOH Bite Report.
 - f. If all information is not available within 24 hours, Dispatchers will submit the incomplete record to DOH and provide updates as they become available.
9. **Procedure for Dog-Human or Dog-Domesticated Animal Bites (less-than-serious)**
- a. Dispatcher begins initial DOH Bite Report and assigns to an ACO/ACI.
 - b. Dispatcher records initial information into Pet Point
 - c. ACI review the initial bite report to determine if the case meets criteria for a potentially dangerous dog investigation (see Dangerous and Potentially Dangerous Dog Protocols). If the ACI takes the case, he or she handles all follow-up, provides additional information, places the animal(s) under quarantine, and completes the 1st health check and 2nd health checks per rabies control protocols, and conducts the investigation.

- d. If the ACI determines that a potentially dangerous dog investigation is not appropriate, they will notify dispatch. The Dispatcher will reassign the case to an ACO and proceed under the procedures for Dog-Non Domesticated Animal Bites, Cat Bites.
- e. The Dispatcher will record the 1st health check and 2nd health check dates into the shared calendar. *This calendar, in Dispatch email, will be used for notifications of upcoming health checks. Dispatcher, ACO's and ACIs will have access to the calendar. The calendar will send reminders to Dispatchers, ACO's and ACIs when a pending 2nd Health Check is due.*
- f. Dispatchers will document all relevant case information including vaccination status and license status of animal(s) into Pet Point and complete the report for submission to DOH within 24 hours of the initial bite report being filed to include completed DOH Bite Report.
- g. If all information is not available within 24 hours, Dispatchers will submit the incomplete record to DOH and provide updates as they become available.

10. **Procedure for Serious Bites (Dog-Human or Dog-Domesticated Animal)**

- a. The Dispatcher will complete Initial Bite Intake Sheet Form and e-mail it to the ACI.
- b. The Dispatcher will begin the initial DOH bite report, put information into Pet Point and give the ACI the case number.
- c. The Dispatcher will immediately notify DOH via e-mail of case
- d. The assigned ACI will review the information and do all follow-up to determine if a dangerous dog investigation is appropriate (see Dangerous and Potentially Dangerous Dog Protocols). If the ACI takes the case, he or she handles all follow-up, provides additional information, places the animal(s) under quarantine, and completes the 1st health check and 2nd health checks per rabies control protocols, and conducts the investigation.
- e. If the ACI determines that a dangerous dog investigation is not appropriate, they will notify dispatch. The Dispatcher will reassign the case to an ACO and proceed under the procedures for Less-than-Serious Bite, and Dog-Non Domesticated Animal Bites, Cat Bites.
- f. Dispatcher will put 1st health check and 2nd health check dates into a shared calendar *The calendar in Dispatch email will be used for notifications of upcoming health checks. Both Dispatchers and ACIs will have access to the*

calendar. The calendar will send reminders to both Dispatch and ACIs when a pending 2nd Health Check is due.

- g. ACI will complete the bite report, document all relevant case information (including vaccination status and license status of animals) into Pet Point and complete case for submission to DOH to include completed DOH Bite Report, within 24 hours of the initial report being filed.
 - h. If all information is not available within 24 hours, ACIs will submit the incomplete record to DOH and provide updates as they become available.
11. **When ACIs and Dispatchers are not on duty:** Animal Control Investigators and Dispatchers are not on duty at all times, particularly on weekends, overnight, and late in the evenings. During these times, the initial reporting and dispatching duties will be handled by Customer Care Staff. Customer Care Staff will complete Initial Bite Intake Sheet Form and provide information to on duty ACO. The On-duty ACO will utilize the information provided by the Front Desk to make determinations regarding severity and provocation.
- a. **Procedure for Less-than-Serious bites, Dog-non Domesticated bites, Cat bites (Overnight Shift/No ACI/Dispatcher on duty)**
 - i. Customer Care Staff will complete Initial Bite Intake Sheet Form and email the report to oncoming Dispatcher, and notify the on duty ACO
 - ii. Customer Care Staff will put the initial information into Pet Point and notify the oncoming Dispatcher of the case number
 - iii. The on duty ACO will respond to bite in person or by phone and will follow normal bite case and rabies control protocols.
 - iv. When a dispatcher comes back on duty, he or she will utilize the information gathered by Customer Care Staff and the on duty ACO to follow the above describe procedures for less-than-serious bites or bites involving dogs-non domesticated animals or cat bites.
 - B. **Procedure for Serious Dog-Domesticated and Dog-Human bites (Overnight Shift/No ACI/Dispatcher on duty)**
 - i. Customer Care Staff will complete Initial Bite Intake Sheet Form and email the report to oncoming Dispatcher, and notify the on duty ACO
 - ii. Customer Care Staff will put the initial information into Pet Point and notify the oncoming Dispatcher of the case number
 - iii. The On-duty ACO will respond to bite in person or by phone (by phone only if the report indicates that the bite happened in the past) and will follow normal bite case and rabies control protocols. The ACO will notify the oncoming ACI and Dispatcher immediately via e-mail and follow up before going off duty.
 - iv. Should the on duty ACO believe that the biting dog must be impounded to

protect public health and safety, the ACO will contact the on call ACI for authorization (authorization should be provided by telephone – the on call ACI does not need to respond to the situation in person)

- v. On Coming Dispatcher and assigned ACI will follow procedures regarding serious bite upon coming on duty.