



Alexandria Police Department

Directive 11.27



Response to Animal-Related Calls

Effective Date: 08-24-2015

Cancels: This is a new directive.

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Section(s):

SME Review Date:

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2018

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Section(s):

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11.27.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

It is the policy of this department to work cooperative with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) to ensure the proper service response to animal emergencies, investigations and prosecution of criminal offenses involving animals.

The purpose of this directive is to define the responsibilities of this department and the AWLA for the handling of animal related calls for service and complaints from the general public. The AWLA employs sworn Animal Control Officers (ACO) and non-sworn Emergency Service Technicians (EST) who are trained to handle animal incidents and emergencies.

11.27.02 AUTHORITY

The Alexandria Police Department and the AWLA have entered into an Interagency Agreement whereby both entities share the responsibility to respond to animal related calls for service, animal emergencies, criminal investigations and enforcement of violations of local, state and federal laws related to domestic animals and wildlife. This Interagency Agreement (Appendix A) is updated as needed.

11.27.03 RESPONSIBILITIES

- A.** ACO/EST have the primary responsibility to handle all incidents involving animals, whether wild or domestic. ACO/EST are generally on duty from 0700-2000 hours Monday through Friday and 0730-1800 hours on Saturday and Sunday.

ACO/EST will respond to animal complaints, to include, but not limited to:

1. Stray dogs running at large;
2. Violations of local animal ordinances, barking dog complaints;
3. Sick/injured animals;
4. Animal bites to humans or domestic animals;
5. Reports of animal neglect and cruelty, which includes pets left inappropriately in vehicles, domestic animals (living outdoors without proper shelter, food or care), and abused animals;
6. Removal of deceased animals on public/city owned property ONLY; and
7. Reports of wildlife within residential (within the living areas) and commercial establishments.

- B.** After hours or when ACO/EST are off duty or not in service, APD officers may be dispatched to the following types of incidents:

1. In-progress calls of cruelty or neglect of an animal;
2. Animal bites (when a domestic animal or wildlife has bitten a human or domestic animal);
3. An animal presents an immediate threat to human life;
4. Violations of noise ordinance-i.e. barking dogs;
5. Reports of a dog running at large creating a hazardous condition (i.e. running in traffic);
6. Suspected rabid animal; and
 - a. When a suspected rabid animal is visually verified by an officer, they shall stay on location until an on-call ACO/EST can arrive.
7. Any other call involving an animal-related matter as authorized by a supervisor.

- C.** Officers on scene may request an ACO/EST to respond to assist when:

1. An injured person must be transported to a hospital or an owner has died, who has an animal in their possession and no family member is present to take control of the animal.
2. An animal is a threat to emergency personnel in the performance of their duties.
3. An animal needs to be transported due to severe injury or illness.
 - a. Transport may be needed if a domestic animal is injured and the owner is unavailable or otherwise incapacitated, or refuses to transport the animal for proper veterinary care.

- b. In certain instances, such as when a stray domestic animal has been seriously injured, but is still alive (i.e. dog/cat or other animal hit by a car), officers may be asked to euthanize the animal depending on the response time of the ACO/EST and the severity of the animal's injury. If such a request is made officers will act in accordance with section 11.27.3G.
 4. There is an arrest or lawful detention of subjects with an animal or animals in their possession.
 5. An animal or animals is currently at large **and** attacking people. The response of ACO/EST will be dependent upon their immediate ability to confine the attacking animal, whether or not the animal is a stray animal.
 6. An animal, whether domestic (dogs or cats) or wild has had physical contact (biting or scratching) with a human or another animal and the animal is still present and able to be immediately captured or confined.
- D.** For safety reasons, officers are not expected to attempt to catch or confine suspected attacking, biting, or rabid animals. Officers **shall** observe the animal until an ACO/EST can arrive or the officer has been notified that an ACO/EST will not be responding to the scene. An animal that runs away and its exact whereabouts are unknown is not considered immediately able to be captured or confined.
- E.** Citizens with questions or complaints involving an animal not in immediate danger or non-emergency animal-related calls should be advised to call the animal shelter at 703-746-4774.
- F. Reporting**
1. Any incident handled by APD officers involving animal cruelty, abuse or neglect, will be documented in an Offense/Incident Report (APD-7). Any evidence supporting the crime or suspected crime must be thoroughly documented and collected for evidentiary purposes.
 2. The Information Services Commander will ensure that copies of all animal related reports are sent to the Animal Services Liaison (ASL) within the Special Operations Division.
 3. When an ACO/EST requires assistance with an investigation, a request will be made through the APD Animal Services Liaison. The Animal Services Liaison will notify the supervisor of the Property Crimes Unit within the Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIS). If necessary, a detective will be assigned to the case.

G. Euthanasia of Animals

1. Officers, when requested will respond and/or assist ACO/EST to destroy animals that are seriously injured, suffering, or dangerous when no other disposition is reasonably practical.
 - a. A supervisor's prior approval should be sought when practical.
 - b. When an officer destroys an animal, the carcass will be turned over to the Animal Shelter. The Animal Shelter is responsible for ensuring that it is tested for rabies and distemper, when appropriate, and notifying the officer of the results.
 - c. Notify Internal Investigations that an animal was destroyed with a firearm, Police Directive 10.32, Use of Force, Section 10.32.04(3).
2. If an animal is euthanatized and an ACO/EST is not on scene, an ACO/EST will be requested to respond to pick up the animal.

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| 11.27.04 RELATED DIRECTIVES |
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Police Directive 10.32, Use of Force

BY AUTHORITY OF:

Earl L. Cook
Chief of Police

badge or other credentials of office, shall have the power to issue summonses or obtain felony warrants as necessary; provided that the execution of such warrant be carried out by any law enforcement officer. Alexandria ACO's are responsible for the investigation and enforcement of provisions listed under Title 5, Chapter 7 of the Alexandria City Code and provisions listed under city ordinance 6-1-2.2.

Alexandria Animal Control Officers are granted authority under Virginia Administrative Code 15-30-50 to capture, temporarily hold or possess, transport, release and when necessary humanely euthanize wildlife when performing official duties related to public health concerns or problem wildlife removal.

General operating hours

The AWLA employs Animal Control Officers during all hours that the animal shelter is open to the public. ACO's are generally on duty from 0800-1900 hours Monday through Friday and 0800-1700 on Saturday and Sunday. An ACO or EST is on call and available to respond to animal related emergencies during all other hours.

Response to calls for service

Animal related calls for service are normally received by the Department of Communications (DEC) and entered into the CAD system. Calls received during regular duty hours that an ACO is on duty and available for calls will be dispatched in the order they are received. In some instances calls can come directly to the animal shelter main line, by internal emails, or generated through city resources such as call, click connect.

Animal Control Officers, when on duty and available for calls, will be dispatched to handle all incidents involving animals, whether wild or domestic. An Alexandria Police Officer may be called to assist with certain animal related calls when requested by an animal control officer or an animal control officer is off duty or not in service. Complete protocols and procedures are listed in the DEC SOP 3.15. A copy of this SOP is attached to this agreement. The Alexandria Police Department and the Animal Welfare League will continue to operate under the current DEC SOP.

After hours calls for service (As listed in the current DEC SOP)

An Alexandria Police Officer shall be dispatched immediately to the following types of calls when an animal control officer is off duty or not in service.

- A. In progress calls of cruelty or neglect of an animal
- B. Animal Bites* (when a domestic animal or wildlife has bitten a human)
- C. An animal presents an immediate threat to human life
- D. Violations of noise ordinance- i.e. barking dogs
- E. Reports of a dog running at large creating a hazardous condition i.e. running in traffic
- F. Suspected rabid animal
- G. Any other call that a Police or DEC supervisor or designee deems necessary

*Alexandria Police officers shall take an initial police report documenting the incident. The report will be sent for follow up by Animal Services.

Animal Control Officers may be called to assist the Alexandria Police Department in the event an animal is captured, confined or otherwise contained. An ACO or EST may be requested to assist APD personnel when an animal must be taken into custody and no family member or custodian is available. These calls include:

- A. Automobile accidents where injured persons must be transported to a hospital and they have an animal in their possession
- B. Instances in which animals prevent entry or rescue or are a threat to emergency personnel in the performance of their duties.
- C. An animal needs to be transported due to severe injury or illness
- D. Arrest or lawful detentions of subjects with animals in their possession
- E. Instances when an owner has died at their residence and no family member is present to take control of the animals

Euthanasia of wildlife in the field

The Alexandria Police Department, when requested shall respond and assist Animal Control Officers with the euthanasia by firearm of injured wildlife in the field. Per Police Directive 10.32, Use of Force, Injury alone is not sufficient justification. The animal must be suffering and injured to the point that death is likely or humanely necessary.

Investigations of Animal Crimes

The Alexandria Police Department and Alexandria Animal Control Officers shall enforce the City's Animal Control laws and issue summonses pursuant to city code.

Alexandria Animal Services shall have the primary responsibility for the response and investigation of all reported offenses or violations involving animals occurring in the City of Alexandria.

The Alexandria Police shall be contacted to document a written police report for all Class 1 and 2 misdemeanor offenses and all felony offenses as identified by Virginia State Code. In these instances these cases shall be worked together jointly with AWLA personnel identified as the lead agency.

When requested, the Alexandria Police Department shall provide assistance and support to AWLA Animal Control Officers for the furtherance of a successful resolution or prosecution of the alleged crimes or offenses being investigated. This support will include assistance with investigations to include documenting, collecting, collating and researching information through all available sources to the Alexandria Police Department, assistance with obtaining statements or otherwise assisting with interviews of victims, witnesses or suspects and documenting and collecting evidence required to be preserved in the interest of a successful prosecution.

The Alexandria Police Department shall identify a specific point of contact in the Investigations Bureau available to access and provide this information in a timely manner when requested. In the event of complex criminal investigations, the Alexandria Police Department shall specifically assign a detective to assist in the case.

City of Alexandria Rabies Control Plan

AWLA, under a memorandum of understanding with the Alexandria Health Department and the City of Alexandria, is responsible for the City's Rabies Control Plan. This plan identifies various agencies roles necessary for the control and response to the risk of rabies exposure to persons and companion animals.

The Alexandria Police Department, when receiving notice or report of a human and/or animal rabies exposure shall notify the AWLA immediately. During normal operating hours, notification to the AWLA shall be made to either an animal control supervisor or Director of the AWLA. After hours notification shall be made using the afterhours emergency call protocol in place with the Department of Emergency Communications.

When requested, the Alexandria Police Department shall provide assistance and support to AWLA Animal Control Officers in the investigation of the exposure incident. This support will include assistance with investigations to include documenting, collecting, collating and researching information through all available sources to the Alexandria Police Department, assistance with obtaining statements, conducting canvasses or otherwise assisting with interviews of victims and witnesses, documenting and collecting evidence required to be preserved in the interest of the rabies control plan. The Alexandria Police Department, when requested shall assist Animal Control Officers with animal confinements and isolations, enforcement and detention of animals and animal seizures. The reporting requirement by owners of any animal which bites a person is referenced in City Code Section 5-7-40.

Access to Information CAD/Reports

The APD when requested shall provide the AWLA and Animal Control Officers all information contained in various data bases available within the department to assist them in the performance of their duties related to their response and investigation of animal complaints occurring in the City or in support of request for information by other City agencies or City officials. The information includes previously documented reports, calls for service and premise hazards occurring at specific addresses or involving specific persons that may be the subject of an active complaint or investigation under the responsibility of the AWLA. Information also includes any statistical data able to be mined or collated from information stored or kept in various data bases maintained or accessed by the Alexandria Police Department.

The Animal Welfare League, when requested shall provide to the Alexandria Police Department information contained within AWLA databases related to the response and

investigation of any complaints or offenses occurring in the City or in support of request for information by other city agencies or city officials.

Training

The Animal Welfare League, when requested shall provide training to the Alexandria Police Department relevant to the handling of domestic animals and wildlife encounters in the field for the purposes of improving officer safety or any other training deemed relevant in support of the Alexandria Police Department.

Credentialing and criminal background checks

The Alexandria Police Department shall provide credentials and criminal background checks for AWLA employees in the positions of Chief Animal Control Officer and Deputy Animal Control Officer. The criminal background check will involve the submission of fingerprints to the FBI. The credentialing will consist of a wallet credential with the employees photograph and statement certifying their employment as an animal control officer employed by the AWLA and authorization to perform all the duties of their office. This action is currently facilitated by the Identification Section of the Alexandria Police Department.

Portable Radios


The Alexandria Police Department currently provides and maintains portable hand held radios for use by the Chief Animal Control Officer, Animal Control Officers and specific shelter personnel. The Alexandria Police shall continue to provide and maintain portable radio equipment for the duration of the AWLA's contract with the City of Alexandria. The radios shall be capable of all communication functions available to APD staff and shall be replaced or updated on a schedule consistent with current replacement protocol.

Periodic Review

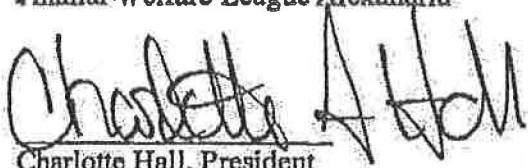
A request to review, discuss and make changes to this agreement may be made by either party at any time. This inter-agency agreement should be reviewed for content and relevancy at a minimum of every two years.

Disputes and Resolutions

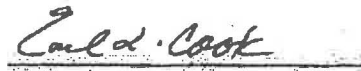
The Alexandria Police Department and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria agree to work towards reasonable solutions in the event issues arise in a timely manner.


Megan Webb, Executive Director
Animal Welfare League Alexandria

5/12/15
Date


Charlotte Hall, President
Board of Directors
Animal Welfare League Alexandria

6/12/15
Date


Earl Cook, Chief of Police
Alexandria Police Department

10/28/14
Date