



# GENERAL ORDER OPS-59 ANIMAL CONTROL CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

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This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. PROCEDURES: NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS
- III. CALL-OUT CRITERIA
- IV. AFTER HOURS REFERRALS
- V. CANCELLATION

## **I. POLICY**

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) Animal Control Division shall be available to respond to all appropriate calls for service regardless of regular work hours. The Department shall utilize the Animal Control Division after regular work hours according to the guidelines set forth in this General Order.

## **II. PROCEDURES**

- A. Normal business hours for the field operations of Animal Control are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Except for injured deer incidents and situations described in Section II. B, Animal Control Officers (ACO's) respond for all animal-related calls during this time frame.
- B. Animal Control does not respond to nuisance wildlife complaints or to the mere presence of a wild animal either sighted or within a home or other structure.
  - 1. If any member is in doubt about a complaint or if there will be a delay in police response, the on-call ACO shall be contacted to determine if an AC response to the situation is appropriate.
  - 2. A telephone number shall be obtained for the on-call ACO to contact the complainant.
- C. After hours or on holidays and weekends, the procedure outlined in Section III shall be followed.

## **III. CALL-OUT CRITERIA**

- A. Patrol officers will be dispatched to animal-related matters that require a response after normal business hours. If an ACO is needed, the officer will get authorization from his supervisor to have the on-call ACO respond once it is established that one of the following criteria exists.
- B. Sick or injured domestic animals
  - 1. Once the patrol officer arrives and establishes that a sick or injured animal is at that location and the owner is not present, an on-call ACO should be summoned.
  - 2. If the owner is present, Animal Control should not be summoned as the owner is responsible for providing immediate veterinary care through their regular veterinarian or an emergency veterinarian clinic.
  - 3. If the police suspect animal abuse or neglect, they are to notify the on-call Animal Control Officer.
- C. Animal cruelty/neglect in progress
  - 1. Police shall be dispatched to all calls of animal cruelty or neglect.

2. Once the patrol officer has a reasonable belief that cruelty or neglect has occurred and assistance is needed, the on-call ACO should be summoned through the area supervisor. This includes observations made during the service of a search and seizure warrant, domestic violence call for service, or other similar situations.
  3. If the officer has any suspicion that cruelty or neglect is occurring, he should speak directly with the on-call ACO to determine a response while still at the scene.
- D. Police and/or Fire personnel requesting assistance with the restraint or impoundment of animals
1. The ACO should be summoned for assistance.
  2. Examples include owners arrested or hospitalized, including emergency petitions; vehicle impoundment; the execution of a search and seizure warrant; traffic accidents; structure fires containing animals; etc.
- E. Aggressive animals posing an immediate threat to public safety
1. Police should be dispatched to all calls of an animal posing an immediate threat to public safety.
  2. If the animal is on the scene and the officer deems it necessary to have an ACO respond, he shall make the request through his supervisor. The officer is to remain at the scene to keep the animal under observation and keep citizens a safe distance away until the arrival of the ACO.
- F. Nuisance domestic animal complaints
1. Police will be dispatched for barking dogs, animals at large, and other types of complaints that require immediate response.
  2. Incidents that have already occurred can either be reported through the Telephone Reporting Service (TRS), or the complainant can be instructed to contact Animal Control the next business day.
- G. Nuisance wildlife
1. Police will be dispatched if the animal is reported to be threatening or aggressive.
  2. If the wildlife is not considered aggressive, Communications will advise the complainant to contact the Department of Natural Resources, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at 1-877-463-6497, or a private pest control agency.
- H. Wildlife in homes or other buildings
1. Communications will ask complainants to turn off or dim lights in the room and leave doors and/or windows open for the animal to escape. If additional assistance is needed, complainants will be advised to contact a private pest control agency.
  2. If the animal is presenting a public hazard or danger, police will be dispatched.
- I. Sick or injured wildlife handled by the Police Department
1. In most cases it is best for the patrol officer to destroy a severely sick or injured animal by gunshot at the scene. If the location does not allow for the safe discharge of a firearm and the animal needs to be euthanized, the on-call ACO will respond.

2. The Health Department shall be contacted if the animal needs to be tested for rabies. The animal must be suspected to be rabid and have had contact with persons or domestic animals.
3. Officers shall assist the citizen in disposing of the animal carcass. This may include referring them to the Animal Control contractor if the carcass does not need to be tested for rabies.

NOTE: A head shot should be avoided if the animal is to be tested for rabies due to the need to examine the animal's brain.

J. Animal bites

1. Communications will advise the complainant to contact the Health Department if the caller is the owner of the animal.
2. If the owner is unknown, police should be dispatched to take a bite report and notify the Health Department.
3. Officers should request the on-call ACO only if a live animal must be impounded for quarantine in those cases where the owner cannot be located.

K. Confined stray domestic animal

1. Communications will request the complainant to keep the animal overnight and to contact Animal Control during normal business hours. If the caller is unable to keep the animal overnight, the on-call ACO will be contacted for response.
2. Police should not need to become involved unless there are extenuating circumstances.
3. If the complainant is a police officer, they must stand-by with the animal until the arrival of the ACO.
4. The police can transport the animal to the Animal Control facility and place the animal in a secured pen. The ACO should be notified of the animal's location.
5. The ACO will not respond for animals running loose or "semi-confined." Refer to sections D and E above.

**IV. AFTER HOURS REFERRALS**

A. Dead animals

1. Citizens will be advised that domestic animals (i.e. dogs and cats) and deer carcasses will be removed by the Animal Control contractor, Monday through Friday during normal business hours.
2. The County will only remove carcasses from County roadways and/or within 200 feet of an occupied dwelling. If these criteria are met, the citizen should call Animal Control during business hours with a description of the animal, its location, and the caller's telephone number.
3. Police and Animal Control supervisors can approve the removal of animal carcasses during non-business hours and over the minimum 200 feet. When exceptions are approved, the supervisor will page the Animal Control contractor with the location of the carcass.

- B. Lost or found pets: Communications will instruct the complainant to contact Animal Control during normal business hours to file a report.
- C. Referral numbers: Referral telephone numbers shall be included on the monthly Animal Control on-call schedule to aid Communications in providing assistance to the public.

**V. CANCELLATION**

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-59, Animal Control Call-Out Procedures, dated August 18, 2003.

AUTHORITY:



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Chief of Police