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"A STATE ACCREDITED POLICE AGENCY"

# INJURED DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND WILDLIFE

*Policy Number: OPS-9.04*  
**REFERENCE:**

*Effective Date: June 1, 2006*  
*Revised Date: March 16, 2007*

*Accreditation Standards:*  
*Mass. Gen. Law:*  
**Other:**

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## **POLICY:**

Members of the department frequently encounter calls for service regarding sick, injured, loose, or dangerous animals.

It is the policy of the Truro Police Department that all such situations shall be handled in the most humane manner possible under the circumstances. The safety of the public shall be the first priority in dealing with such matters.

In dealing with injured animals, members should try to remain in an advisory capacity if the owner of the animal is present. When the owner of the animal is not present or is unknown to the officer, the officer shall follow the procedures as set forth below.

## **PROCEDURES:**

- 1. SICK OR INJURED ANIMALS:** With the incidence of rabies spreading, officer safety is paramount. ALWAYS remember that stray dogs, cats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats carry a special danger of rabies infection. Rabid animals can be aggressive, vicious, and can attack blindly and without warning. **NEVER** pick up or handle any wildlife or suspicious dog or cat even if they appear tame.

- A.** In all cases of sick or injured animals investigated by a member of the department, no action with respect to destruction and/or disposal of the animal shall be taken, without first attempting to contact an Animal Control Officer. If an Animal Control Officer is able to respond, officers shall assume responsibility, and officers shall assist as appropriate. In all cases, no animal shall be shot in the head area if possible. Also, a report shall be submitted.
- B.** If an Animal Control Officer is **not** available, the following procedures shall apply:
- 1.** Domestic Animals:
    - a. The officer shall attempt to identify and contact the owner of the animal and, if this is done, the question of treatment or disposal of the animal shall be left to the discretion of the owner. If the owner requests that the officer destroy the animal for humane purposes, the officer should do so in the most humane manner possible. **If the animal is suspected of being in contact with a rabid animal or exhibits any signs, the owner should be cautioned against exposure, and the animal should be tested at the State Lab. State Animal Control officers shall be notified to take appropriate action, which will include the destruction or transportation of the animal.**
    - b. **Under no circumstances shall cruisers transport a sick, injured, or dead animal. These vehicles are for transportation of humans ONLY.**
    - c. In cases where the domestic animal is a dog, the Truro Animal Control Officer will be called, as he/she will be handling all aspects of the call.
  - 2.** Wild Animals: If an officer is dealing with a wild animal and the Animal Control Officer is not available, the following procedures shall be followed:
    - a. If the animal is uninjured and is not creating a threat or danger, it should be allowed to return to its natural habitat. The decision to destroy an animal should be based on whether the animal is sick or poses a danger.

- b. If the decision is made not to destroy an animal in a residence or business and a problem exists, a property owner should be referred to one of the following:
    1. Animal Control Officer
    2. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (508) 263-4347
    3. Licensed Trapper or Nuisance Control Specialist (Numbers available through Communications)
  - c. If the animal is sick or injured or has been in contact with humans or pets to the extent that humanity requires it be removed from further suffering, the officer shall take appropriate action under department procedures outlined below.
- 2.** **DANGEROUS ANIMALS:** Officers dealing with dangerous animals shall contact the Animal Control Officer if time and circumstances permit. If the Animal Control Officer responds, the officer shall assist as appropriate in a manner consistent with these regulations and law.
- 3.** **DESTROYING AND SECURING OF INJURED, SICK, OR DANGEROUS ANIMALS:** When any animal must be destroyed, and after all previously mentioned procedures have been complied with, officers shall comply with the following:
- A. The Shift Commander must be notified and have given permission prior to the destruction of the animal, unless this is not possible due to emergency circumstances. The Shift Commander shall have final discretion regarding the destruction of animals.
  - B. The killing of the animal shall be done in such a manner that a ricocheting bullet does not endanger the public. Do not shoot the animal in the head.
  - C. If possible, the killing of the animal in the presence of the public, and particularly the presence of children, will be avoided.
  - D. If the animal is a domestic animal a report shall include a full description of the animal, its collar if any, and all information contained on the collar if present. *Such report shall be in accordance with Truro Police Department Manual, Chap. 1, Use of Force, which states necessity and content of report required when discharging a weapon or other means of force.*

- E.** In the event the Animal Control Officer is not available, the responding officer will be responsible for securing and destroying the animal in accordance with the following procedures:
1. After the animal is destroyed, the DPW shall be notified for removal regardless of its location. At **NO** time should a destroyed animal be placed in the cruiser.
  2. If practical, the officer will stand by until the Truro DPW or Mass Highway arrive with proper equipment to remove the animal. The animal will be bagged and disposed. The officer should notify DPW of Mass Highway personnel of the potential hazards associated with a potentially diseased animal.

**4. HUMAN CONTACT SITUATIONS: (ALSO REFER TO TRURO POLICE DEPARTMENT MANUAL "INFECTIOUS DISEASES")**

**HUMAN CONTACT SITUATIONS:** Defined as bites, scratches, including blood or saliva on skin or mucous membranes, or if a pet is bitten by a wild animal and a person has contact with the pet's open wound.

- A. CONTACT AREA:** The contact area should be washed immediately with soap and water, then flushed with clean water for several minutes. Apply disinfectant, if available, and seek medical attention Truro Police Department procedures.
- B. HUMAN CONTACT:** All animal contact will require a report by the officer. The following information **MUST** be in the report:
1. Names
  2. Addresses
  3. Telephone Numbers
  4. Location of contact with animal
  5. Types of animals involved, and
  6. Name of doctor caring for individual
- C. ANIMAL CONTACT:** Bites or scratches to animals from an unknown source must be reported to the Animal Control Officer, and a Veterinarian should treat the animal. Officers should notify the Shift Commander, and make an entry in the log. Humans should take precautionary measures with these animals also.

**5. HANDLING DEER:** In circumstances where a motor vehicle strikes a deer, the officer investigating the accident, may, at his discretion and where prudent, may contact any individual or agency to facilitate speedy removal of the deer.