

Animal Control

808.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interacting with animals and responding to calls for service that involve animals or possible animal-related incidents or animal related law violations.

808.2 POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Sahuarita Police Department (SPD) to be responsive to the needs of the community regarding animal-related issues. This includes enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals and appropriately resolving or referring animal-related problems, as outlined in this policy.
 - 1. Town Code - Title 6 outlines our local Town animal codes.

808.3 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Members who respond to or assist with animal-related calls for service should evaluate the situation to determine appropriate actions to control the situation.
- B. Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper training and equipment, responding members generally should not attempt to capture and pick up any animal but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of appropriate assistance.
- C. Members shall consider acting before the arrival of such assistance of an Animal Control Officer (ACO) or other similarly trained official when:
 - 1. There is a threat to the public safety.
 - 2. An animal has bitten someone or another animal. Members shall take any reasonably available measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
 - 3. An animal is creating a traffic or other similar hazard.
 - 4. An animal is seriously injured.
 - 5. The owner/handler of an animal has been arrested or is incapacitated. In such circumstances, the member should find appropriate placement for the animal.
 - (a) This is only necessary when the arrestee or incapacitated person is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animal. The logistics of the arrest or incapacitation (location of animal, arrestee, etc.) may influence this.
 - (b) With the owner's consent, locating appropriate placement may require contacting relatives or neighbors to care for the animal.
 - (c) If no person can be found or the owner/handler does not or cannot give consent, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.

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808.4 TRAINING

- A. An ACO shall successfully complete any required basic and continuing education of animal control courses, investigatory training, or other training associated the duties of their position as approved by the SPD.

808.5 ANIMAL CONTROL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Animal control services and enforcement are generally the primary responsibility of a SPD ACO. Any member that is permanently or temporarily assigned to, or responsible for, any animal control services, call for service, or related enforcement shall adhere to this policy. Generally, ACO responsibilities, include the following:
 - 1. Animal control and related matters during periods when a SPD ACO is available.
 - 2. Ongoing or persistent animal nuisance complaints. Such complaints may be scheduled, if reasonable, for handling during periods that a SPD ACO is available for investigation and resolution. However, members shall take prompt enforcement or educational action when possible in an effort to provide quality service associated with nuisance, noise, or animal-related violations.
 - 3. Follow-up on animal-related calls, such as locating owners of injured animals or animals taken into protective custody.
 - 4. Disposition of animals other than livestock that have been bitten by a rabid or suspected rabid animal or are showing possible symptoms of rabies.
 - 5. Regular management of calls/messages left on the SPD/Town animal control information and complaint telephone line or group email.
 - (a) If an ACO is aware they will be on time off (vacation, training, etc.), they shall advise their supervisor and their supervisor shall check and/or assign another member to check and address animal control phone and email messages or calls for service.
 - (b) Any supervisor that becomes aware of an unplanned day off by an ACO, (sick time, etc.) shall promptly assure that another member is assigned to check and address any animal control phone and email messages or calls for service. These criteria shall also apply to any email or other messaging systems that may be used by the SPD/Town to take or gather information, messages, or possible complaints associated with animal control issues.

808.6 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS

- A. A SPD ACO or member shall conduct a preliminary investigation on all reports of animal cruelty or abuse and document the investigation in an Alpha police report.
 - 1. If a member other than an ACO conducts the investigation, they shall cause the report to be forwarded to an ACO for any possible follow-up.
 - 2. Members shall not hesitate to take any immediate actions deemed necessary.
 - 3. If immediate action is necessary, members or an ACO seizing an animal shall comply with the notice requirements of ARS 13-4281 and Town Code - Title 6.

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- B. The assistance of an ACO may be requested to assist other members with an investigation when appropriate for the purpose of handling the disposition of any animal associated with a case.

808.7 DECEASED ANIMALS

- A. When an ACO or member becomes aware of a deceased animal, all reasonable attempts shall be made to preliminarily determine if the death of the animal is related to criminal activity.
- B. Deceased animals on public property should be removed, and sealed in an appropriate type of deceased animal bag or wrapped in an appropriate tarp.
 - 1. Wild animals which may be placed in a deceased animal bag and/or tarp may need to be moved to State land for disposal/burial.
 - 2. Large wild, ranch, or farm deceased animals found on Town property will most likely need to be moved to State land, or a possible owner's property for disposal or burial. In these cases Public Works personnel may assist in removal of such large animals (cattle, horses, etc.); however, prior to the use of Public Works personnel, member's shall notify a command staff member. Members should strive to have any owner remove their deceased animal.
 - 3. Members who become aware of a deceased domesticated animal (pet) on Town property (residential street, roadway, sidewalk, right-of-way, park, etc.) shall work quickly to identify a possible owner and have the owner remove the animal. If an owner cannot quickly remove the animal, the member will quickly work to place the animal in a deceased animal bag or have it wrapped in a tarp for removal. If it comes to a situation where the owner cannot, isn't, or won't respond to dispose of the animal, members are to contact a member of command staff for direction on disposal efforts.
 - 4. In no case will animals (pets/livestock/etc.) be left on a residential street, roadway, sidewalk, right-of-way, park, etc. whether or not they have been bagged or wrapped in a tarp.
- C. Members shall not climb onto or under any privately owned structure for the purpose of removing a deceased animal.

808.8 INJURED ANIMALS

- A. When a member becomes aware of an injured domesticated animal, all reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner or responsible handler. If an owner or responsible handler cannot be located, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.
- B. Members shall advise the facility that billing should be directed to the owner/handler and supply contact information of the owner/handler when able to do so.
 - 1. If this causes confusion for the care facility, an ACO or assigned member shall conduct prompt, appropriate follow up to assure the SPD/Town is not billed inappropriately.

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808.9 INJURED WILDLIFE

- A. Injured or deceased ranch animals or wildlife should be referred to the appropriate agency as listed by the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, the Bureau of Land Management, or the Animal Services Division of the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

808.10 RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN VEHICLES

- A. Members may use reasonable force to open a vehicle to rescue an animal if the animal is left confined and unattended in a vehicle and physical injury or death of the animal is likely to result (ARS 13-2910). Members shall:
 - 1. Make a reasonable effort to locate the owner before entering the vehicle if the situation allows.
 - 2. Take steps to minimize damage to the vehicle.
 - 3. Refrain from searching the vehicle or seizing items except as otherwise permitted by law.
 - 4. Leave a note on or in the vehicle identifying the location where the animal has been taken and the name of the member involved in the rescue along with an appropriate SPD telephone number that allows the owner timely opportunity to speak with SPD staff.
 - 5. Make reasonable efforts to contact the owner or secure the vehicle before leaving the scene.

808.11 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS

- A. Laws relating to cruelty to or abuse of animals should be enforced, including but not limited to ARS 13-2910 and Town Code - Title 6 (cruelty to animals, animal fighting).
- B. Felony violations associated with cruelty to or abuse of animals shall be enforced via arrest and booking unless significant logistical reasons prevent this. In such cases, felony violations shall be forwarded to the County Attorney for review of violations.
 - 1. An investigation shall be conducted on all reports of animal cruelty or abuse.
 - 2. Legal steps shall be taken to protect an animal that is in need of immediate care or protection from acts of cruelty or abuse.
 - 3. Members who lawfully seize an animal shall comply with the notice requirements of ARS 13-4281 and Town Code - Title 6.

808.12 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS

- A. Members investigating an animal bite shall obtain as much information as possible for follow-up with the appropriate health or animal authorities.
- B. Efforts shall be made, whenever reasonably possible, to capture or otherwise have the animal placed under secure control to prevent other persons or animals from being bitten or injured.

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- C. Members shall follow ARS and Town Code - Title 6 when having to take an animal into protective custody or when securing an animal that is suspected of biting persons or animals. Members should attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.

808.13 STRAY DOGS

- A. If a dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner shall be contacted, if possible. If the owner is contacted, the dog should be released to the owner and a citation may be issued, if appropriate. If a dog is taken into custody, it shall be transported to the appropriate animal care facility.
- B. Members shall provide reasonable treatment to animals in their care (e.g., food, water, shelter). The SPD has two temporary kennels that may be used to temporarily contain dogs when other animal care facilities are not reasonably available.
 - 1. Members shall assure that the kennels are clean, secure, and have appropriate food and water for any dog(s) placed in the kennels. Reasonable efforts shall be taken by a member placing a dog in a temporary SPD kennel to have the dog returned to its owner or transferred to an animal care facility as soon as reasonably possible.

808.14 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

- A. In the event responding members cannot fulfill a request for service because an animal is too difficult or dangerous to handle, a member of command staff shall be contacted and fully briefed on the issue to determine available resources, including requesting the assistance of animal control services from an allied agency.

808.15 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS

- A. Members should diligently address calls related to nuisance animals (e.g., barking dogs), as such calls may involve significant quality of life issues.

808.16 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

- A. When it is necessary to use a firearm to euthanize a badly injured animal or stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to human safety, the SPD Firearms Policy shall be followed, to include safe handling and discharge of the firearm.
- B. A badly injured animal (no longer an immediate threat to persons) shall only be euthanized with the approval of a supervisor.

808.17 POLICY ISSUANCE OR REVIEW

06/13/2024 - Reviewed by Chief John Noland - SP002