

# Boulder Police Department Policy and Procedure

	<b>Subject:</b> Animal Response		<b>General Order:</b> 244
	<b>Effective:</b> October 22, 2024 <b>Reviewed:</b> October 17, 2024	<b>Replaces:</b> GO 244 September 17, 2018	<b>Approved by:</b>  Chief Stephen Redfearn
<b>General Order Topic(s):</b> 244-1 Procedures 242-2 Supervisor Responsibility 242-3 Response to Aggressive Dog 242-4 Self-Defense and Defense of Others 242-5 Supervisor Notification 242-6 Reporting Requirement 242-7 Detective Response 242-8 Humane Procedures 242-9 Dog Protection Act Compliance		<b>Accreditation Standard(s):</b> N/A <b>Statutory References:</b> C.R.S B.R.C <b>Related General Orders:</b>	

## **POLICY**

The Boulder Police Department acknowledges and appreciates the significance of domestic pets. It is recognized that officers have different levels of experience when interacting with animals. By standardizing training and policies, officers will be better equipped to handle encounters with animals. The department also provides training for canine encounters in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes.

Additionally, the department supports the vision and goals of the Urban Wildlife Management Plan (see GO 244 attachment). The Boulder Police Department recognizes and values the urban and wildlife interface in Boulder. This interface sometimes creates situations involving serious injury to animals or raises concern for public safety. At times it may be necessary to humanely euthanize wildlife that has non-recoverable injuries or through their behavior present a clear danger to humans. The department adheres to the following procedures when responding to calls involving both domestic and wild animals not otherwise covered by General Order 241, Animal Protection.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **244-1 Procedures**

Animal Protection Officers (APOs) will adhere to General Order 241, Animal Protection, when responding to calls for service. All other procedures outlined in this policy apply equally to APOs unless otherwise noted.

#### A. Domestic animals

1. Members never euthanize domestic animals (dogs, cats or other pets). Police officers call for assistance from Animal Protection (AP) when dealing with injured

domestic animals. When available, it is the guardian's responsibility to care for an injured pet.

2. When a guardian or APO is not available, officers transport the animal to a designated emergency animal clinics. If the animal cannot be transported safely, the animal is to be left alone until a guardian can be located or an APO is available.
3. When impounding a domestic animal for any reason, an impound form is completed at the Humane Society and a copy is provided to AP.

#### B. Wildlife animals

1. When dealing with wildlife in the city of Boulder, officers may only euthanize severely injured wildlife in a humane manner. APOs will document all dispositions on impounded or euthanized wildlife. The records are maintained in an electronic log accessible to supervisors, the Chief's Administrative Assistant and the Public Information Officer. In making the decision to euthanize an animal, officers consider the following factors:
  - a. Severity of obvious injury or disease and pain to the animal (for example, compound leg fractures, spinal fractures, severe bleeding, sounds of distress, etc.). Note: Broken antlers are NOT a cause for euthanizing an animal.
  - b. Emaciated or starved animals that are too weak to move. This is commonly seen in animals suffering from end-stage wasting disease.
  - c. Obvious severe trauma including partial evisceration, large deep gashes with arterial bleeding or severe disfiguring injuries.
  - d. Whether the animal is still mobile (many injured animals who are will survive). Simple leg fractures are not sufficient grounds to euthanize an animal unless it obviously prevents the animal from being mobile.
  - e. Ability to safely euthanize the animal given surroundings, backdrop, other people present, etc.
  - f. Inability to protect itself from further harm is not grounds to euthanize an animal.
  - g. Normal animal behavior such as being leery of people or getting people to back away is not aggressive behavior or grounds for euthanizing an animal.
2. Police officers do not euthanize a wild animal without prior authorization from either an AP or patrol supervisor. APOs may euthanize small animals such as birds, bats, squirrels, raccoons, etc. without first obtaining supervisory approval, based on their training, experience and alternative methods for euthanizing.
3. When determining whether to euthanize larger animals (other than a deer) such as coyote, elk, moose, lions, bobcats, other large wild cats, bighorn sheep, bear, or other large game, members first contact the Colorado Parks and Wildlife for assistance or guidance.
4. Prior to euthanizing any large animal, including deer, members obtain authorization from an AP or a patrol supervisor. Members then notify dispatch via the primary radio channel being used. After the animal is euthanized, members notify dispatch of the disposition and ask dispatch to advise the proper authority for picking up the carcass.
5. In cases where AP is not available and officers respond to a wild animal bite from a

small animal (bat, skunk, raccoon, etc.) or coyote to a human or domestic pet, the wild animal is to be euthanized to determine whether it has rabies (see 244-8C). If the animal is still on scene, officers may euthanize and impound it for AP by placing it in a plastic bag and storing it in an AP van. Officers must notify AP that the animal is in the van for testing.

6. Under no circumstances do department members give the carcass or allow the carcass to be taken by another department member, family member or friend.

#### **244-2 Supervisor Responsibility**

- A. Prior to giving authorization to euthanize a large wild animal such as an elk, moose, deer, coyote, lion, other wild cat, bighorn sheep, or bear, supervisors respond to the scene whenever practical. Supervisors must first determine the following:
  1. Necessity for euthanizing the animal;
  2. Whether it can be done humanely;
  3. Whether it can be done safely; and
  4. In the case of anything other than a deer, whether Colorado Parks and Wildlife have been consulted and if they are responding to take control.

#### **244-3 Response to Aggressive Dog**

- A. Police officers call for assistance from an on-duty APO when dealing with an aggressive dog or when responding to a report of an aggressive dog. If a guardian or APO is present, the officer will allow the guardian or APO to contain, control or remove the dog from the immediate area.
- B. If an APO or guardian is not available, officers use their training in K-9 encounters, as mandated by Colorado Revised Statutes and other training provided by the department.

#### **244-4 Self Defense and Defense of Others**

- A. Members are allowed to use reasonable force against dangerous animals to prevent imminent injury to themselves or another. Use of force used is in relation to the threat imposed by the animal. When reasonable, members retreat from a dangerous animal rather than choosing to use force.
- B. Officers should consider the following continuum of force as it relates to animals:
  1. Physical presence;
  2. Verbal commands, including making a loud noise or shouting at the animal;
  2. Using an object to keep the animal at bay;
  3. Pepper spray;
  4. Baton; and
  5. An electronic control device (ECD).
- C. Factors to consider prior to using any force include:
  1. Size of animal;
  2. Breed of animal;
  3. Whether a guardian is present to help control the animal;
  4. Ability to retreat from the animal; and
  5. Whether the animal is actively charging or just standing its ground.

- D. Officers are authorized to use lethal force to stop an animal in circumstances where the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternate methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective. Use of a firearm should always be the last resort.

#### **244-5 Supervisor Notification**

Any time a member uses force against an animal in self-defense a supervisor is immediately notified.

#### **244-6 Reporting Requirement**

- A. An "Animal Incident" report with its own case number is completed under the following circumstances:
1. An officer euthanizes an animal;
  2. An officer or APO uses force in self-defense;
  3. An officer or APO uses lethal force in self-defense; or
  4. An officer or APO discharges a firearm or ECD at an animal for any reason (excludes tranquilizer guns and less-lethal munitions used for hazing wildlife).

#### **244-7 Detective Response**

In the event any member uses lethal force on a domestic animal in self-defense or defense of others, a supervisor must notify a detective supervisor. This is a mandatory response for detectives.

The animal will be collected as evidence and submitted for a necropsy.

#### **244-8 Humane Procedures**

Officers may at times have to euthanize wildlife such as a deer or a smaller animal (raccoon) that has been seriously injured, most likely from an accident with a motor vehicle. Officers do not have access or training to use drugs to euthanize the animal. When using a firearm, officers attempt to use the most humane method available to minimize suffering. It is recommended that animals be shot through the brain, as this will usually instantly kill the animal and stop further suffering.

- A. For large animals, the preferable target is through the front of the skull, between the eyes and slightly above them. Urban Wildlife Management suggests envisioning two lines intersecting from each eye to the opposite ear, creating a target for the shot. If it is not possible to shoot through the front of the skull, the next best head shot is immediately below the ear to penetrate the brain and spinal column.
- B. If a body shot is unavoidable, the bullet should enter the lower and rear one third of the rib cage immediately posterior to the shoulder blade.
- C. When euthanizing a small animal to test for rabies after a bite incident, members DO NOT shoot the animal through the brain. The brain is used to test for rabies.
- D. It may take 4 to 5 minutes for an animal to die. During that time, there could be some thrashing. Do not approach until you are sure the animal is dead. Never touch wildlife without a gloved hand. Wash hands thoroughly after handling dead animals.

- E. If you receive a bite or scratch from an animal seek treatment and advice from a doctor and report the incident to AP.

In all cases, officers must consider backdrop, surroundings, and potential danger to others before using a firearm to euthanize an animal. If it cannot be done safely, contact the Colorado Department of Wildlife for further guidance.

#### **244-9 Dog Protection Act Compliance**

Officers must complete the training course mandated by the Dog Protection Act in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes.

## **Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals of the Urban Wildlife Management Plan**

### **Vision Statement**

In Boulder's urban areas, the city will endeavor to provide for diverse, self-sustaining, native wildlife populations in numbers compatible with basic human needs, social and economic values, and long-term ecological sustainability, while proactively reducing conflicts between humans and wildlife.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. The city will emphasize humane, non-lethal control of wildlife when consistent with guiding principles 2-6 and the vision statement.
2. The urban area is primarily intended for the development and support of human land uses and services as described in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.
3. The city will balance environmental, economic, and social sustainability principles in managing urban wildlife.
4. The community values and supports the protection of wildlife habitat and biological diversity. Urban wildlife management should be compatible with anecosystem approach to land management.
5. The city will strive to use the best science in understanding and managing urban wildlife.
6. The city will develop clear and easily understood standards, protocols and regulatory processes for managing situations where conflicts arise between wildlife and urban land uses.

### **Goals**

The Urban Wildlife Management Plan will:

- provide a clear and easily understood framework for balancing environmental, social, and economic goals when managing wildlife on public and private lands;
- prioritize effective strategies and assess the costs for sustainable, long-term management of urban wildlife and its habitat;

- establish wildlife management policies and practices that proactively reduce human/wildlife conflicts, reflect overall community values and sustain ecological integrity;
- set up a decision-making hierarchy to address wildlife conflict situations in urban areas;
- outline a set of strategies for providing on-going education and keeping the public informed about current practices and policies;
- integrate urban wildlife management across city departments and coordinate management with other public jurisdictions and agencies; and
- assess and inventory areas in the city with the greatest potential for conflict and areas that provide the best opportunity for conservation.