



# Colorado Springs Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

## DL-1100-24 Animal Cruelty Investigations

### Section 1100 – Investigative Functions

Active Date: 3/22/2024

Supersedes Date: N/A

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#### **.01 Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to outline procedures for handling calls for service in which Animal Law Enforcement (ALE) requests assistance in conducting felony animal cruelty investigations, executing search warrants or requests an officer be present during a necropsy.

#### **.02 Cross Reference**

[GO 106 Search Warrants](#)

[GO 1100 Investigative Functions](#)

#### **.03 Definitions**

*Livestock:* cattle, swine, sheep, goats and such horses, mules and other animals used in the farm or ranch production of food, fiber or other products defined by the commissioner as agricultural products.

*Necropsy:* post-mortem examination on an animal.

#### **.04 Procedure**

##### **Felony Animal Cruelty Investigations**

ALE is overseen by the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Protection, under CRS § 35-42-105. Per statute, ALE has the legal authority to conduct investigations and issue summonses in reference to misdemeanor animal cruelty cases. They do not have the legal authority to continue an investigation once it reaches felony level. At that point, ALE officers will place a call for service to have an officer continue the investigation which may include completing arrest and search warrants.

##### **Search Warrants**

ALE has the legal authority to write and obtain search warrants for non-felony cases, however, they cannot serve them, hence the need for police presence when ALE is executing their warrants. This includes search warrants at suspects' locations as well as necropsies.

To minimize the staffing impact to Gold Hill patrol and to ensure proper procedures are being followed prior to the execution of search warrants, the following procedures will be followed:

- When ALE needs an officer to assist with the execution of a search warrant, they will contact the duty desk of the division in which the address is located. The supervisor will then arrange for officers to meet with ALE. Officers will complete the search warrant checklist and risk assessment form and have it approved by a Lieutenant prior to the execution of the warrant.
- When executing the search warrant, Officers will assist ALE, who will collect any items of evidence and process items seized. Officers' primary function in these calls is officer safety.
- The officer assisting with the execution of the search warrant will complete an outside agency assist report documenting their involvement in the case.

## **Necropsies**

When ALE requests an officer to assist with a necropsy, they will contact the duty desk at the division in which the original incident occurred. The supervisor at that division will arrange for an officer to be present for the necropsy.

- The officer attending the necropsy will need to sign the execution of the warrant, complete a report for outside agency assist and, if requested, take the notice of execution to the owner of the animal.
  - The case report should include everyone who was present in the room during the necropsy and state that the Forensic Veterinarian's report should be referenced for findings.

ALE will be responsible for returning all Reports of Execution to the Court House.

## **Animal Cruelty Cases Involving Livestock**

Statutorily, Sheriff's Offices are the only entity with the legal authority to conduct animal cruelty investigations involving livestock. ALE officers seeking assistance with investigations involving livestock should be referred to the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.