



Colorado Springs Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1086-01 Animal Situations

Section 1000 – Patrol Functions

Effective Date: 2/4/2026

Supersedes Date: 2/9/2024

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidance in situations involving wild or domesticated animals, **not** including dogs.

.02 Cross Reference

[GO 1086 Interactions Involving Domesticated Dogs](#)

[GO 1620 Enhanced Tactical Communications System](#)

.03 Definitions

Domestic animals: Any variety of animal (such as the horse or sheep) domesticated to live and breed in a tame condition.

Large domestic animals: Cattle, horses, buffalo.

Small game: Game birds and mammals, to include but not limited to grouse, turkey, rabbit, prairie dog, ground squirrel, and raccoon.

Wildlife: Living things and especially mammals, birds, and fish that are neither human nor domesticated.

.04 Procedure

Colorado Springs enjoys a healthy blend of urban and rural environments. This type of environment leads to increased interactions between people and various types of animals, both wild and domesticated. Officers should be prepared for these encounters and able to assess those behaviors that pose a risk to their safety and those around them.

Injured Wildlife or Domestic Animals

The destruction of an injured animal is justified to prevent substantial harm to the officer/another or when the animal is so badly injured that humanity requires its relief from further suffering. The Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) criteria for the destruction of an injured deer is when the deer is unable to get up or fend for itself.

For injured deer, CPW recommends the use of a shotgun with segmented slug. If a shotgun is unavailable or if in the officer's opinion, the shotgun is not the appropriate weapon selection officers certified in the use of an AR-15 may consider using it for animal destruction. Though not preferred given diminished effectiveness with deer, officers may also consider using their issued handgun.

In determining shot placement, officers should aim at the area behind the animal's ear, towards the top of the animal's neck. A second option is if an officer imagines two lines (in the form of an "X") from each eye to the opposite ear of the animal. The area where the imaginary lines cross is an ideal location to shoot.

Large domestic animals

Large domestic animals pose a unique risk to life and property. When encountering loose, large, domesticated animals, officers should make every effort to locate the owner of the animal(s). When the owner has been located and while arrangements are being made to apprehend/remove the animal(s), department members will help maintain public safety.

Absent of exigent circumstances, the owner of the animal(s) should be consulted if it becomes necessary to destroy the animal(s). If necessary and when possible, officers should consider requesting assistance from the Humane Society or CPW, rather than using a department firearm to destroy the animal.

When necessary, the armories at the Gold Hill and Stetson Hills Substations contain special shotgun slugs that will be used when attempting to destroy larger domestic animals such as buffalo. These cases are labeled "Buffalo Shotgun Slug." In addition, these types of shotgun rounds are also kept in each sergeant vehicle for easy deployment if needed. The shotgun shell for these rounds is red in color.

Small Game

Although not a police matter, officers are occasionally dispatched to address community concerns involving small game. While this can be done as a courtesy, citizens should be directed to contact the CPW or the Humane Society.

It should be noted that **neither** the CPW nor the Humane Society respond to complaints involving skunks. Matters involving skunks are undertaken by private pest control services.

Bears & Mountain Lions

Routine sightings of bears or mountain lions will be referred to the CPW. Officers may be dispatched to assist the CPW with problem bears or mountain lions inside a residence or those that jeopardize human safety. When requested, the following steps should be followed:

- Protect life and property
- Prevent crowds and panic
- Provide an escape route for the animal
- Monitor the animal's activity

Dead Wildlife

When encountering dead wildlife, officers should undertake the following steps:

- Move the animal to a location where it is inoffensive and does not present a hazard.
- Advise dispatch of the animal's species, sex, and exact location to it can be removed by the appropriate agency.
 - The CPW will be notified of a dead bear or mountain lion.
 - Citizens are not allowed to take possession of the dead bear or mountain lion without permission and a permit from CPW.
 - The Colorado Department of Transportation will be contacted to remove deer from a state highway.
 - The Colorado Springs Street Department will be contacted to remove deer from any other location within the city.

Vicious/Dangerous Animal Destruction

The destruction of a vicious wild/domestic animal should be guided by one's self-defense and the defense/safety of others. Officers who use or attempt to use a firearm against a vicious animal must be able to articulate an immediate threat of bodily injury to themselves or another.

Officer

The following reporting guidelines will be used when an officer uses or attempts to use a firearm against a dangerous or attacking animal (not including dogs):

- Notify an on-duty supervisor of the event.
- The involved officer will complete an MFR Case Report titled 6.7.108 Dangerous Animals.
 - The report will include details of the on-scene investigation, to include interviews with witnesses and ensuring digital photographs are taken and placed into DIMS.
- Each officer who uses or attempts to use a firearm against a vicious or dangerous animal will complete a BlueTeam entry titled *Firearm Discharge*.
 - This entry will be forwarded to the responding supervisor.

Supervisor

- A supervisor will respond to the scene.
- The supervisor will complete a "NO - Not for Media Release" ETACS before going off shift.
- Notifications will be made through the chain of command to the division commander or staff duty officer and to the Public Information Office.
- Employees are not required to be placed on restricted duty.
- The responding supervisor will review the involved officer(s) BlueTeam and will make recommendations in accordance with standing department BlueTeam protocols.
 - The entry will be reviewed through the deputy chief of the officer's assigned bureau.

For encounters involving vicious or dangerous dogs, refer to [GO 1086 Interactions Involving Domesticated Dogs](#).

Reporting Requirements

Officers are only required to complete a BlueTeam Firearm Discharge report for vicious/dangerous animals or after discharging a firearm to destroy an injured domestic animal. If the situation does not involve a vicious/dangerous animal or domestic animal, an MFR Case Report does not need to be completed. In the case of destroying an injured wild animal, only call screen notes are required.