



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations

Section: 404.6

Subject: Firearms

Topic: Use of a Weapon on Domestic and Non-Domestic Animals

Enacted: 07/30/2015

Last Review: 07/18/2022

Review: 01/01/2024

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy and procedures governing the use of weapons on domestic and non-domestic animals by members of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office that deputies use caution and care when dealing with domestic and non-domestic animals. Performance of the law enforcement function raises the possibility that at some time and under circumstances of necessity, deputies may be called upon to use less-lethal and/or deadly force in the performance of their duties. Therefore, the intent of this General Order is to provide guidelines governing the use of a weapon by sworn members of the agency when dealing with animals and to prohibit the imprudent use of such weapon. Deputies may employ needed and reasonable action to euthanize an animal and to protect citizens where needed.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Domestic Animal: An animal, such as a horse, cow, dog or cat, that has been tamed and kept by humans as a work animal, livestock, or pet, especially a member of those species that have, through selective breeding, become notably different from their wild ancestors.
- B. Non-Domestic Animal: Those animals commonly considered to be naturally wild, and not trained or domesticated, or which are commonly considered to be inherently dangerous to the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Euthanasia of Non-Domestic Animals
 - 1. During the normal course of duty, it may become necessary to euthanize an injured or rabid non-domestic animal with an issued firearm. If euthanizing the animal is necessary, the deputy shall clear the area of bystanders and, after using the utmost caution, accomplish the task. The initiating deputy, using an agency I.B.R. report, shall document this use of his/her firearm and the circumstances

surrounding the incident.

- a. A deputy shall not use the patrol rifle when euthanizing an injured or rabid animal.
- b. A deer may become trapped inside a building or home. If a Game Warden is not available, the deputy may use a bean bag shotgun to shoot and kill the animal. Deployment should be to the animal's head.

B. Domestic Animals

1. Whenever possible, less lethal force should be used to protect against an attacking domestic animal.
2. If a deputy encounters a domestic animal and there is reasonable belief the animal poses an immediate threat of serious physical injury to the deputy or the public, the deputy may employ deadly force in accordance with General Order 403.1.
3. Deputies shall notify a supervisor in any case where force is used against a domestic animal. The supervisor shall complete an Administrative Investigation and document the investigation in BlueTeam.
4. If deadly force is used against a domestic animal, the supervisor shall notify their chain of command.

C. Injured or Sick Domestic Animals

1. If a deputy encounters a sick or injured domestic animal and the owner cannot be located, Animal Control shall be contacted to respond and handle the situation.