

Waltham Police Department
CHAPTER 94
INJURED DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND WILDLIFE

General Order Number: GO-01 2009

Effective Date: 01/2009, 02/2024

POLICY:

Members of the department frequently encounter calls for service regarding sick, injured, or dangerous animals. It is the policy of the Waltham Police Department that all such situations shall be handled in the most humane manner possible under the circumstances. The safety of the public shall be the first priority in dealing with such matters.

In dealing with injured animals, members should try to remain in an advisory capacity if the owner of the animal is present. When the owner of the animal is not present or is unknown to the officer, the officer shall follow the procedures as set forth below.

PROCEDURES:

1. SICK OR INJURED ANIMALS:

With the incidence of rabies spreading, officer safety is paramount. ALWAYS remember that stray dogs, cats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats carry a special danger of rabies infection. Rabid animals can be aggressive, vicious, and can attack blindly and without warning. NEVER pick up or handle any wildlife or suspicious dog or cat even if they appear tame.

In all cases of sick or injured animals investigated by a member of the department, no action with respect to destruction and/or disposal of the animal shall be taken, without first attempting to contact an Animal Control Officer (a copy of Animal Control Officer's work hours shall be maintained in Operations). If an Animal Control Officer is able to respond, they shall assume responsibility, and officers shall assist as appropriate. In all cases, a report shall be submitted.

If an Animal Control Officer is not available, the following procedures shall apply:

a. DOMESTIC ANIMALS:

1. The officer shall attempt to identify and contact the owner of the animal and, if this is done, the question of treatment or disposal of

the animal shall be left to the discretion of the owner. If the owner requests that the officer destroy the animal for humane purposes, the officer shall advise the owner to bring their animal to the MSPCA or Blue Pearl Facility, both of which are located on Bear Hill Road in Waltham. **If the owner's animal is suspected of being in contact with a rabid animal or exhibits any adverse signs, the owner should be cautioned against exposure. The owner shall take the animal/pet to their veterinarian for a booster or quarantine. If testing is warranted, the owner is responsible for the veterinarian taking the appropriate action. Animal Control shall be notified to take appropriate action, which will include the destruction or transportation of the animal.**

2. If the department is unable to contact the owner, the Commanding Officer - Platoon on Duty shall contact the Veterinarian authorized by the city to advise and act in such matters. If the vet requests that the animal be transported to the clinic for treatment, his request shall be honored. The Animal Control Officer shall be contacted for appropriate transportation. **Under no circumstances shall a sick, injured, or dead animal be transported by cruiser or patrol wagon. These vehicles are for transportation of humans ONLY.**
3. If a sick or injured domestic animal requires transportation and Animal Control is not available have an officer transport the animal in the ACO van to the MSPCA.
4. If neither the owner nor the veterinarian can be contacted, the officer shall advise the Commanding Officer - Platoon on Duty of all the circumstances and be guided by his instructions.

b. WILD ANIMALS:

If an officer is dealing with a wild animal and the Animal Control Officer is not available, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. If the animal is uninjured and is not creating a threat or danger, it should be allowed to return to its natural habitat. The decision to destroy an animal should be based on whether the animal is sick or poses a danger.
2. If the decision is made not to destroy an animal in a residence or business and a problem exists, a property owner should be referred to one of the following:

a. Animal Control Officer.

- c. If possible, the killing of the animal in the presence of the public, and particularly the presence of children, will be avoided.
- d. A full report shall be submitted. If the animal, is a domestic animal the report shall include a full description of the animal, its collar if any, and all information contained on the collar if present. Such report shall be in accordance with Waltham Police Department Manual, Chap. 1, Use of Force, which states necessity and content of report required when discharging a weapon or other means of force.
- e. In the event the Animal Control Officer is not available, the responding officer will be responsible for securing and destroying the animal in accordance with the following procedures:
 - 1. After the animal is destroyed, the Street Department shall be notified for removal. At **NO** time should a destroyed animal be placed in the cruiser trunk.
 - 2. The officer will stand by until Street Department Personnel arrive with proper equipment to remove the animal. The animal will be bagged and the area of disposal disinfected by the Street Department. The officer is to assure that the bag is tagged with the case number (Department Incident Number), location, and type of animal.
 - 3. The officer is to ensure the animal is transported to the proper location.
 - a. If the animal **IS** to be tested for rabies, the animal should be placed in the rabies specimen refrigerator in the sally port.
 - b. If the animal does **NOT** need to be tested, the Street Department shall place the animal in their freezer and no further action required.

5. HUMAN CONTACT SITUATIONS: (ALSO REFER TO WALTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT MANUAL CHAPTER 92 "INFECTIOUS DISEASES")

Defined as bites, scratches, including blood or saliva on skin or mucous membranes, or if a pet is bitten by a wild animal, and a person has contact with the pet's open wound.

- a. **CONTACT AREA:** The contact area should be washed immediately with soap and water, then flushed with clean water for several minutes. Apply disinfectant, if available, and seek medical attention in accordance with Waltham Police Department procedures. (See Infectious Diseases, Chapter 92, of the Waltham Police Department Manual.)

- b. **HUMAN CONTACT:** All animal contact will require a report by the officer. The following information **MUST** be in the report:
 - 1. Names.
 - 2. Addresses.
 - 3. Telephone Numbers.
 - 4. Location of contact with animal.
 - 5. Types of animals involved.
 - 6. Name of doctor caring for individual.

- c. **ANIMAL CONTACT:** Bites or scratches to animals from an unknown source must be reported to the Animal Control Officer, and the animal should be treated by a veterinarian. Humans should take precautionary measures with these animals also.