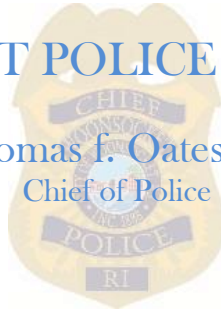


WOONSOCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT

Thomas F. Oates, III
Chief of Police



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	380.01	5/11/2021	5/11/2021
SUBJECT		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Animal Control		4/18/2019	
ACCREDITATION		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA Standards:		4/26/2021	
RIPAC Standards:			
INDEX		DISTRIBUTION	
Animal Control		Sworn Personnel Communications Personnel	

ANIMAL CONTROL

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for handling animal calls for service, domestic or otherwise, by members of the police department, both sworn and civilian and to identify procedures for operating the City of Woonsocket Animal Shelter.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Woonsocket Police Department is to have Animal Control Officers (ACO) and police officers responding to and investigating calls for service involving animals, both domestic and otherwise, and to maintain operating procedures for the Animal Shelter.

III. DEFINITIONS

Animal Control Officer/Assistant Animal Control Officer: The person or persons employed by the City of Woonsocket as its enforcement officer(s) and shall include any police officer of the City. Persons, not being sworn police officers, shall be referred to as Animal Control Officers while employed by the City.

Animal Shelter: Any premises designated by action of the City to impound and care for animals taken into care/custody within the City.

Vicious Dog: Any dog that, when unprovoked, inflicts bites or attacks a human being or other animals either on public or private property or in a vicious or terrorizing manner

approaches any person in an apparent attitude of attack upon the streets, sidewalks, or any public grounds or places. A dog can legally only be determined to be vicious after the finding of a Vicious Dog Hearing.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. AUTHORITY & CONTROL

1. Civilian employees who are employed by the City as Animal Control Officers (ACO) shall work under the direction and supervision of the police department and shall be subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of the police department. There shall be a civilian employee who is assigned as the Animal Control Officer and shall be responsible for all personnel assigned as Assistant Animal Control Officers and civilian employees and/or volunteers assigned to the Animal Shelter.
 - a. Animal Control Officers shall not be armed with any firearm(s).
2. The Uniform Captain or designee is designated as the supervising officer and shall act as the liaison officer between the police department and the ACO. Animal Control personnel shall follow the chain of command on any official matters concerning the operations of the Animal Shelter or any other working condition. The ACO shall be responsible for:
 - a. Coordinating administrative responsibilities via the chain of command;
 - b. Ensuring the proper and efficient operation of the City Animal Shelter;
 - c. Coordinating training, equipment, and supply needs for ACOs and the Animal Shelter with the police department and the City Council when necessary.
3. ACOs have no powers of arrest. They shall be responsible for ensuring that all federal and state laws concerning animals and all municipal ordinances concerning animals are followed. They shall ensure that any situation that arises that is cause for arrest(s) is immediately relayed to an on-duty police officer for review and action.
4. ACOs shall be authorized to issue municipal court summons for violations of ordinances of the City of Woonsocket.
 - a. Animal Control Officers shall be authorized to issue a summons for appearance to scheduled vicious dog hearings.
5. State and Federal violations shall be referred to a police supervisor for determination and preparation of charges; preparation and service of arrest warrants and preparation and service of search warrants.
6. The ACO shall be responsible for assigning all duties and responsibilities of all persons working at the Animal Shelter including, but not limited to:
 - a. Hours of work/shifts of Assistant ACO;
 - b. Coordinate all volunteers, i.e., scheduling, duties, etc.

7. The ACO and Assistant ACO shall be responsible for maintaining accurate and detailed records concerning:
 - a. Impoundment and disposition of all animals coming into custody;
 - b. All animal bite cases reported and the investigation thereof;
 - c. Keep and maintain accurate and detailed records of all monies belonging to the City of Woonsocket and those fees collected by the City of Woonsocket;
 - d. Maintaining all records concerning “Vicious Dog Investigations” including documentation of any hearing(s);
 - e. Maintaining records for all animals that are destroyed;
 - f. All records of the impoundment/adoption of animals according to state law;
 - g. Maintaining an accurate list of all dog licenses issued by the City as provided by the City Clerk’s Office;
 - h. Maintaining a record of all donated items and their disposition;
 - i. Any other records or documents that may be designated by the Chief of Police or law.
8. The ACO shall maintain all Rhode Island State certifications and applicable licensing.
9. Civilian personnel assigned to the Animal Shelter or as assistants to the ACO shall perform all duties assigned by the ACO or in their absence the Assistant ACO.

B. ANIMAL CALLS FOR SERVICE

1. The Woonsocket Police Department shall make every attempt to respond to a citizen’s request for assistance with an animal. The ACO and/or a police officer will respond to every call where the safety or general health of the public is at risk. However, there are some instances where the ACO and/or a police officer may only be able to offer advice and referral. These situations include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Rodents, insects, infestations of private home or business;
 - b. Wildlife not threatening public safety;
 - c. Transportation of animals where no emergency exists.
2. Police officers shall respond to any situation concerning an animal issue where there is an immediate danger to the public, i.e., vicious dog (dog bite), rabid animal, etc. This will be considered a priority response and an officer will be dispatched without fail.
 - a. ACOs should be sent to emergency calls for service concerning animals also. However, they are not authorized to use a **“priority response”** to respond to any call for service.
 - 1) Overhead lights are provided on Animal Control Vehicles as a means to warn on-coming traffic of a road hazard.

- 2) Animal Control Vehicles are not considered “emergency vehicles” to respond to calls for service in violation of any traffic laws of the State of Rhode Island.
- b. Police officers responding to emergency animal calls for service shall take the appropriate action to ensure the safety of the public. They may request the assistance of ACOs for containment, capture, and transportation of any animal causing a threat to public safety.
- c. Vicious and/or biting animals should only be handled by ACOs.
 - 1) In the absence of a second ACO, a police officer will satisfy this requirement
 - 2) Proper equipment must be present to handle the animal to include:
 - a) Gloves
 - b) Leashes
 - c) Loop Collars
 - d) Pole snare
 - e) Bite sleeve
- d. Police Officers responding to a call for a bat inside a residence shall call for an ACO to be dispatched, once verified that a bat is still inside the residence (callback as necessary). The Center for Disease Control recommends that anytime a bat is discovered inside a dwelling where a person has been asleep or a child or pet has been unattended the bat must be trapped and submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Health for rabies testing.

C. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER’S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ACOs should be dispatched to any situation involving a call for service concerning an animal problem. Their delay in response must be prioritized by the nature of the call and the threat the incident poses to public safety. ACOs should respond to the following calls and should be called back to handle these situations as the need arises when they are not on duty:
 - a. Sick or injured animals to include animals struck by vehicles;
 - b. A supervisor believes that an ACO is needed to impound a vicious or biting animal that a police officer is not equipped or trained to handle.
 - c. In any instance where an animal is showing symptoms of rabies and/or was exposed to a person or person's pet.
 - 1) Officers should be cautious in handling any animal where it is believed, the animal may be rabid. Blood and body fluids from the animal could be infectious to the officer or anyone not handling the animal or carcass properly.

- 2) Officers should contain an area where an animal carcass is located when rabies is questioned and contact ACO for disposal.
- e. Any animal attack where there is a quarantine period required.
- f. Tactical entries of dwelling, buildings, etc. where a potentially dangerous animal is present and capture and detainment of the animal are necessary for the operation.
- 1) The ACO should be contacted in these instances and he/she may authorize an Assistant ACO to assist on the capture.
- g. Present all evidence at any Vicious Dog Hearing and will prepare all correspondence and forward copies to the appropriate person(s) according to law.
2. ACOs will issue violations for infractions of Municipal Ordinances.
 - a. Reports will be entered in the police records management system (RMS) for any animal-related call that could result in a Municipal Court Violation.
 - b. If a warning is issued, it will be documented as an incident report in the RMS.
3. The ACO will check the police computer-aided dispatch (CAD) log for any animal control-related calls for service daily during their scheduled work hours. This will take place at the first practical time during the start of the shift.
 - a. **All reports** will require a follow up including a supplemental narrative **as to the action taken.**
4. The ACO will leave a weekly report via department email for the Uniform Captain no later than the second regular workday of the week. The report shall include all activities for the preceding week.

D. VICIOUS DOG HEARINGS

1. **R.I.G.L § 4-13.1-11 Determination of a vicious dog.** – (a) If the dog officer or law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that a dog is vicious, the chief dog officer or his or her immediate supervisor or the chief of police, or his or her designee, is empowered to convene a hearing to determine whether or not the dog in question should be declared vicious. The dog officer or chief of police shall conduct or cause to be conducted an investigation and shall notify the owner or keeper of the dog that a hearing will be held, at which time he or she may have the opportunity to present evidence why the dog should not be declared vicious.
 - a. The hearing shall be held promptly within no less than five (5) nor more than ten (10) days after service of notice upon the owner or keeper of the dog. The hearing shall be informal and shall be open to the public.

- b. The hearing shall be conducted by a panel of three (3) persons, which shall consist of the chief of police or his or her designee, the executive director of the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals (S.P.C.A.), or his or her designee, and a person chosen by the chief of police and the executive director of the S.P.C.A. All members of the panel shall have one vote in deciding whether or not the dog in question is vicious.
2. After the hearing, the owner or keeper of the dog shall be notified in writing of the determination. If a determination is made that the dog is vicious, the owner or keeper shall comply with this chapter following a schedule established by the dog officer or chief of police, but in no case more than thirty (30) days after the date of the determination.
 - a. If the owner or keeper of the dog contests the determination, he or she may, within five (5) days of that determination, bring a petition in the district court within the judicial district where the dog is owned or kept, praying that the court conducts its hearing on whether or not the dog should be declared vicious.
 - b. After service of notice upon the dog officer, the court shall conduct a hearing de novo and make its determination as to viciousness. The hearing shall be conducted within seven (7) days of the service of the notice upon the dog officer or law enforcement officer involved. The issue shall be decided upon the preponderance of the evidence. If the court rules the dog to be vicious, the court may establish a schedule to ensure compliance with this chapter, but in no case more than thirty (30) days after the date of the court's determination.
 - 1) The Animal Control Officer shall forward all copies of reports, statements, etc. to the City of Woonsocket Solicitor's Office and assist in all hearings or appeals to the district court.
3. The court may decide all issues for or against the owner or keeper of the dog even though the owner or keeper fails to appear at the hearing.
4. The determination of the district court shall be final and conclusive upon all parties. The dog officer or any law enforcement officer shall have the right to convene a hearing under this section for any subsequent actions of the dog.
5. If the dog officer or law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that the dog in question is vicious and may pose a threat of serious harm to human beings or other domestic animals, the dog officer or law enforcement officer may seize and impound the dog pending the hearings. The owner or keeper of the dog is liable to the city or town where the dog is impounded for the costs and expenses of keeping the dog. The city or town council may establish by ordinance a schedule of those costs and expenses.

E. DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

1. In any event, it becomes necessary to destroy an animal, for humane reasons or otherwise, the ACO or police officer destroying the animal shall file a police report indicating the reasons for destruction per *General Order 300.01 Response to Resistance Policy* where a firearm is used.
2. The ACO or assistant shall be responsible for the proper removal and reporting to all appropriate agencies of a destroyed animal(s).
3. The ACO or assistant shall coordinate all orders of destruction and ensure that any such order is performed according to law.

F. ANIMAL CONTROL SHELTER

1. The ACO and assistant shall be responsible for the proper and efficient operation of the Animal Control Shelter. The ACO or assistant shall make all final decisions regarding animals in custody at the city shelter.
2. The on-duty ACO will be contacted by Animal Shelter personnel, (volunteer or employee), **whenever an animal appears to require immediate veterinary care.** The on-duty ACO shall make any necessary decisions concerning the emergency care of animals.
 - a. If there is no Assistant ACO on-duty, the ACO, or designee shall be contacted, regardless if they are on-duty or not, and notified of the conditions of the animal. The ACO shall make the necessary decision to ensure emergency veterinary care is provided.
3. The ACO shall maintain a list of volunteers working at the animal shelter. Those persons volunteering to work at the shelter must abide by all policies and procedures established by the Chief of Police, or designee, or the ACO. Policies include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Only those persons authorized by the ACO shall be allowed to handle animals housed at the shelter.
 - b. Vicious and/or biting animals are only to be handled by ACOs.
 - 1) All vicious and/or biting animals should be handled by a minimum of two ACOs whenever practicable.
 - a) In the absence of a second ACO, a police officer may be used.
 - 2) Proper equipment must be present to handle the animal to include:
 - a) Gloves
 - b) Leashes
 - c) Loop Collars
 - d) Pole snare
 - e) Bite sleeve

- f) ACOs shall use such equipment as necessary to ensure their safety, as best as reasonably possible, when handling, transporting, or moving animals either to or from the Animal Control Vehicle, in or about the Animal Shelter or other times when an animal is moved from one secured location to another.

3) A warning sign will be placed on cages designating such animals.

- c. Volunteers will not handle or be in the presence of vicious and/or biting animals for any reason.
- d. All personnel, (volunteers and employees) shall wear protective gloves while cleaning cages.
- e. All personnel, (volunteers and employees) shall wear protective gloves while handling dead animals.
- f. In the event of the Parvovirus in the shelter, the only persons who will be allowed in the building are the ACOs.
- g. At least one ACO will be present at the shelter when two are on duty. Exceptions will be for animal calls that are emergency in nature requiring two ACOs to control the animal.

1) Animal Control Officers should utilize police officers if they feel their safety is threatened.

- h. Animal cages are to be cleaned at the beginning of the shift in the morning before the public is allowed into the Animal Shelter. Animal cages are also to be cleaned before the end of the shift and checked periodically during the day for cleaning on an as-needed basis.
- i. Water and food are to be changed every day.
- j. Empty cages will be designated and a food supply left for animals that are taken into the shelter after hours by the police.
- k. ACOs will make every effort to keep deceased animals (including road kill) taken into the Animal Shelter lot away from public view. Such animals will be immediately brought to the far Northerly side of the building for storage in the freezer.
- l. No smoking will be permitted in the building. ACOs will only smoke during break time, outside of the building, and away from the public view.
- m. Cash is not to be handled at the Animal Shelter. Animal Control Officers will determine the fine/fee. Acceptable forms of payment shall be personal/bank checks or money orders.
- n. ACOs on weekend duty will remain at the Animal Shelter unless called upon by the shift supervisor for an emergency. Cleaning of cages and feeding will be completed before departure.
- o. ACOs will adhere to the hours outlined in the Local 670 Contract. Any deviation must be approved by the Uniform Captain or designee.
- p. ACOs are required to punch their time card in and out each workday including Saturday and Sunday for weekend duty at the police station.

G. INJURIES (BITES & SCRATCHES)

1. All personnel (volunteer or employee), who is bit or scratched by any animal in the custody of the Animal Shelter shall immediately report the incident to an ACO.
 - a. The ACO shall prepare a police report on any incident involving an injury to anyone while working, visiting, or volunteering at the Animal Shelter.
 - b. The Uniform Captain shall be notified whenever such a report is prepared.
2. ACOs shall ensure any injured personnel receive proper medical treatment. The Woonsocket Fire/Rescue should be contacted where a civilian is injured to document medical attention was provided.

H. ANIMAL SHELTER PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ACO on-duty shall be notified of any complaints that are reported to the Animal Shelter.
 - a. The ACO shall ensure that personnel working at or volunteering at the Animal Shelter are instructed to contact the police Communications Center of any animal complaint requiring a response by an ACO or police officer.
2. The ACO or Assistant shall be notified immediately if a dog becomes loose in its run. If the dog has been identified as **“VICIOUS”** or known to be a **“BITER,”** all personnel will immediately exit the shelter and call the police department from an outside telephone.
3. All posted adoption procedures and policies must be followed at all times. The ACO shall ensure that these policies are posted in a visible place and that all personnel authorized to approve or deliver adopted animals to prospective owners are familiar with all procedures.
4. All personnel assigned to the Animal Control Shelter, including ACOs and other civilian employees, must notify the police Communications Center before transporting an animal outside of the City.
5. All personnel assigned to the Animal Shelter, operating a city vehicle outside the City, who become involved in a traffic crash, shall report the accident immediately to the police of the jurisdiction the accident occurred. The Uniform Captain will be notified of the incident as soon as possible.

I. DONATED ITEMS

1. The ACO is responsible for the initial review and screening of all items donated to the Animal Control Shelter or otherwise donated to the City of Woonsocket.
2. Materials that upon receipt are found to have too deteriorated for use will be discarded immediately.

5. All donated items remain the property of the City of Woonsocket until they are exhausted, discarded, or given to a charity.
6. The ACO selects items to be distributed or loaned with the adoption of a pet from the Animal Control Center following the shelter's adoption procedures.
7. Upon request, the ACO may also authorize Woonsocket residents, agencies, or institutions for a charitable purpose, to receive materials at no cost. A record of all donated items shall be maintained to include their final disposition whether consumed, donated, or discarded.

Per order,

Thomas F. Oates, III

Chief of Police

Written directives published within PowerDMS are in full force and effect on the referenced dates and have been approved by the Chief of Police