



Suffield Police Department

General Order # 3-5

Chapter: 3 Operation Support
Section: 5 Animal Control Officer

Date: April 4, 2007
Rescinds: n/a

Purpose:

The purpose of this general order is to establish policy and procedure concerning the animal control officer function for the Town of Suffield Police Department.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Suffield Police Department to maintain the position of an Animal Control Officer (ACO) and any assistants to this position, to serve as its primary agents with regard to animal protection, regulation, control, public health and safety as it relates to animal control.

Responsibilities:

1. In order to prevent exposures to rabid or potentially rabid animals, especially among children, the responsibilities of the Animal Control Officer (ACO) shall include public education through *cooperative efforts with the school system, participation in departmental programs, and otherwise* as developed by the ACO and approved by the Chief of Police.
2. In order to prevent cruelty to animals as a result of negligence and or ignorance, the responsibilities of the ACO shall include public education and outreach programs as developed by the ACO with the approval of the Chief of Police.
3. Additional responsibilities of the ACO shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. *preventive patrol to detect roaming, nuisance, or injured animals.*
 - b. response to citizen complaints concerning animals.
 - c. detection and investigation of cruelty to animals.
 - d. record keeping and reporting as required by Department policy, State law, and professional *standards of practice.*
 - e. an annual survey of licensed and unlicensed dogs, and ongoing enforcement of all laws and ordinances pertaining to canines.
 - f. preventive, educational, and enforcement activities designed to prevent the incidence or spread of rabies.
 - g. care and feeding of animals housed in the Town of Suffield animal control facility.
 - h. cleaning and maintaining of Town of Suffield animal control facility.
5. Pursuant to C.G.S. 22-330 the ACO shall exercise within the Town of Suffield the same authority as a sworn Police Officer to arrest any person and issue a written complaint and summons to any person for any violation of the law relating to dogs or to any domestic animal. The ACO shall delay any such enforcement action until such time they are accompanied by a sworn Officer if, in the opinion of the ACO, such action might result in a dangerous or confrontational situation.

Procedure:

A. Animal Control Function Established:

1. A full-time Animal Control Officer (ACO) and such assistants as are deemed necessary shall be appointed by the Board of Police Commissioners. Appointees will be non-sworn members of the police department.
2. Such appointees shall satisfy the qualifications established by the State Commissioner of Agriculture. All such appointments shall be promptly reported to the Commissioner of Agriculture.
3. On a monthly basis the ACO shall retain a performance report within the animal control facility. This report shall be a sworn statement in the form established by the Commissioner of Agriculture reporting services rendered in the performance of official duties. A copy of this statement shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Agriculture.
4. The ACO shall be provided with training reflecting their duties, including at minimum training in recognition of rabies in domestic and wild animals, animal handlings, and State Statutes governing treatment of animals, use of firearms, and policies and procedures relevant to the position of ACO.

B. Dogs:

1. Suffield Police Department ACO's will adhere to State Statutes governing licensing, impoundment, and destruction of dogs.
2. The ACO may take into custody any dog found roaming not on the property of or under the control of its owner, any dog not having a tag, collar, or plate providing certification of compliance with regulations relating to rabies vaccination or not controlled by an attending person, where required by law, or any dog found injured on any roadway, neglected, cruelly treated, or abandoned. The ACO may also, or instead, issue infractions as provided for by State law and municipal ordinance.
3. Excepting expiration of terms of impoundment without redemption, rabies, and exigent circumstances as described in this policy, destruction of a dog shall occur only when a licensed veterinarian renders, in writing, the opinion that a dog is so injured or diseased it should be humanely destroyed. Dogs shall be humanely destroyed by a licensed veterinarian.
4. Following impoundment of any dog, the ACO shall immediately notify the owner or keeper of the dog seized if known.
 - a. If the owner or keeper of any such dog is unknown, the ACO shall promptly cause a description of such dog to be published once in the lost and found column of a newspaper having circulation in the Town of Suffield.
 - b. If such dog is not claimed by and released to the owner within seven (7) days after the publication, the ACO, upon finding such dog to be in satisfactory health, may sell such dog to any person, animal rescue group, or similar organization, who satisfies the ACO that they are purchasing it as a pet and that they can give it a good home and proper care. Such dogs that are sold as pets will be done so in accordance with the State of Connecticut, Department of Agriculture Animal Control Program. Complete details of the circumstances surrounding the purchase of an animal to a person, rescue group, or similar organization, will be documented in an incident report. The ACO may retain possession of impounded dogs, for a period of no longer than (30) days, while efforts are being made to place such dogs as pets. The ACO may extend the time period provided the necessity is documented. If, within such period, such dogs are not claimed by and released to the owner or keeper or purchased as a pet, the ACO may cause such

dog to be turned over to the Connecticut Humane Society or other animal rescue group, or similar organization.

c. No impounded dog shall be sold, given, or transferred to any animal dealer. No impounded dog shall be sold, given, or transferred to any institution conducting research or experimentation on dogs.

5. Any impounded dog may be redeemed by its owner or keeper following proper identification and presentation of a license or tag for the dog to the ACO, payment of the redemption fee established by the Town, payment of the cost of advertising in the lost and found section of one or more papers, and presentation of a rabies vaccination certificate.

a. No dog seized for damage to persons, property, or animals shall be released without the written authorization of the Commissioner of Agriculture or the ACO.

b. When the owner of any dog fails to redeem such dog within twenty-four hours of notification to do so or within twenty-four hours following publication of a description of such dog and its impoundment in one or more local papers, the owner or keeper shall pay in addition to the above fees the entire cost of impoundment and care as determined by the ACO.

c. Failure to redeem any dog within five days of its impoundment shall be an infraction with the penalty established by the Town.

6. Annually the ACO shall conduct a town-wide survey to detect any unlicensed canines. To facilitate this survey, prior to July 1 of each year the Town Clerk shall provide to the ACO a copy of each dog license issued by the Town.

7. The ACO or any Police Officer may destroy by use of deadly force any dog actually in the process of attacking persons or other domestic animals.

a. Following such an attack, or if a dog is suspected of such behavior, the ACO may quarantine or impound such dog to protect public health and facilitate an investigation.

C. Cats:

The ACO may retain possession of an impounded cat for a period of no more than 30 days. The ACO may extend the time period provided the necessity is documented. Town of Suffield Animal Control Officers will impound cats at the Municipal Animal Control Facility under the following circumstances:

1) Seizure of Neglected or Cruelly Treated Animals:

Suffield Animal Control Officers may lawfully take charge of any animal found neglected, cruelly treated, or abandoned, in violation of C.G.S §22-366, §22-415 and §53-247 to §53-252, inclusive, and shall thereupon proceed as provided in subsection (b) of §22-329a., except that if, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian, such animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed immediately, such Officer may humanely destroy or cause such animal to be humanely destroyed.

2) Rabies:

Suffield Animal Control Officers can quarantine any animal that they suspect to be rabid or to have been bitten by or in contact with a rabid animal. If the quarantined animal is presumed rabid, it must be destroyed; notice to its owner or keeper is not required. Healthy animals, other than dogs, which have been quarantined and not claimed by its owner or keeper within the period of such quarantine, and which have not been sold as pets within thirty days of the expiration of such

quarantine may be turned over to the Connecticut Humane Society or other Animal Shelter Facility.

3) Bites:

Following an attack on a person which produces any detectable bite, scratch, or other sign of attack, such cat must be impounded or quarantined. If the attack took place on the premises of the owner, the cat may be quarantined on the premises for a period of fourteen days. If the attack took place off the premises of the owner of the cat, the cat must be impounded at the Municipal Shelter, or the owner or keeper must be ordered to quarantine it in a veterinary hospital, kennel or other building or enclosure approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture for such purpose, and quarantined for fourteen days. (Reference to the State Manual on Rabies Procedures by the State Veterinarian may require longer periods of stay.) At the discretion of the cat's owner, the cat may be euthanized and tested for rabies.

D. Control of Rabies:

1. The ACO may quarantine any animal if, in their determination, such animal is or is suspected of being rabid, or has been bitten or otherwise exposed to a rabid animal. The Director of Health for the State of Connecticut shall be notified of such quarantine.
2. Any suspected or confirmed case of rabies shall be reported to the Commissioner of Agriculture and the Director of Health for the State of Connecticut within twenty-four hours of such determination.
3. Any animal, including dogs and cats, held in quarantine which is clinically diagnosed as rabid by two veterinarians, at least one of whom shall be in private practice, shall be humanely killed immediately without prior notice to its owner.
4. Any animal other than a dog which is not claimed by its owner during the period of quarantine may be sold by the ACO, if it is determined that the animal is in good health. Such animals shall be sold only as pets to persons who satisfy the ACO that the animal will be provided a good home and proper care. Animals excluding dogs not placed or sold within five (5) days following the end of the quarantine period may be humanely destroyed.
5. The ACO or any Police Officer may immediately destroy with deadly force any wild animal displaying behavior which reasonably leads them to believe the animal is rabid.

E. Other Animals:

1. The ACO may take charge of any other animal exhibiting signs that it is sick, injured, or following an attack on a person which produces any detectable bite, scratch, or other sign of attack. NOTE: Animal means any type of animal, including birds and reptiles in accordance with CGS §22-327, 22-359.
2. The Animal Control Division may refer any nuisance wildlife complaint, beyond his/her control, to a Nuisance Wildlife Control Officer (NWCOC) tel. (860) 424-3011.
 - a. It shall be the responsibility of the complainant to have the nuisance wildlife removed in accordance with state statutes.
 - b. The Suffield Police Department and Animal Control Division will not trap any nuisance wildlife, nor will any Department trap devices be loaned to a complainant for trapping nuisance wildlife.
 - c. Any complaint regarding wildlife having contact, either human or domestic, or wildlife that is found to be diseased, shall be referred to an ACO to investigate the complaint. Any wildlife having

contact, either human or domestic, which has been contained at the time of the incident, shall be tested for rabies. Any wildlife having contact, either human or domestic that cannot be contained at the time of incident shall be referred to ACO who shall follow proper rabies procedures.

d. If the ACO is licensed by the Department of Environmental Protection as a Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO), they may investigate and handle nuisance wildlife complaints that involve schools or Town of Suffield facilities.

F. Uniforms:

1. Normally while on duty an ACO will be in the prescribed uniform so that the public may readily identify them. The uniform will consist of the following:

- a. Baseball cap with Suffield Animal Control patch on front.
- b. Khakis and or trousers-Jeans (Black or Blue).
- c. Shirt-Khaki with patches.

(1) Short sleeve-summer and long sleeve-winter. Suffield Animal Control patch on the shoulders. Change from long to short and back shall be the same as for Police Officers.

(2) Off-duty response may be made in the prescribed uniform or in a blue sweatshirt and/or blue t-shirt with 2" white lettering identifying Suffield Animal Control.

G. Use of Force:

1. The Department realizes then when dealing with wild animals unexpected and unpredictable events may occur. Therefore, should an exigent circumstance exist, (i.e., the animal is immediately attacking a person or other animal), the ACO may use deadly force to prevent such an attack. Under normal circumstances, should the need arise to dispatch an animal, the responding Animal Control Officer shall have such authority to dispatch an animal. However, the Animal Control Officer may notify dispatch to have an on duty police officer respond to the scene for such purposes. Firearms for this purpose will not be provided by the Suffield Police Department and any Animal Control Officer engaged in this activity shall use his/her own personal firearm for this purpose. These personal firearms must be approved by the Suffield Police Department's Firearms Instructor and the Chief of Police. Such weapons shall meet all safety regulations deemed appropriate by the Firearms Instructor. In addition, applicable Local, State and Federal laws will govern the possession and or use of these firearms.

2. Firearms Qualifications: Animal Control Officers will be required to train and qualify with their personal weapon. The qualification course shall be designated for Animal Control Officers. Animal Control Officers must attain a passing grade in order to meet department qualification and training standards. The passing grade will be set by the Suffield Police Department's Firearms Training Instructor.