

# Animal Control

## 806.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interacting with animals and responding to calls for service that involve animals.

## 806.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Weatherford Police Department to be responsive to the needs of the community regarding animal-related issues. This includes enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals and appropriately resolving or referring animal-related problems, as outlined in this policy.

## 806.3 ANIMAL CONTROL RESPONSIBILITIES

Animal control services are generally the primary responsibility of Animal Control and include the following:

- (a) Animal-related matters during periods when Animal Control is available.
- (b) Ongoing or persistent animal nuisance complaints. Such complaints may be scheduled, if reasonable, for handling during periods that Animal Control is available for investigation and resolution.
- (c) Follow-up on animal-related calls, such as locating owners of injured animals.
- (d) The responsibilities of rabies control as outlined in Chapter 826 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

## 806.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members who respond to or assist with animal-related calls for service should evaluate the situation to determine appropriate actions to control the situation. The following guide should be followed unless there is a threat to public safety: [Chart of Animal Calls](#)

Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper training and equipment, responding members generally should not attempt to capture or pick up any animal, but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of appropriate assistance.

Members may consider acting before the arrival of such assistance when:

- (a) There is a threat to public safety.
- (b) An animal has bitten someone. Members should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- (c) An animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- (d) An animal is seriously injured.
- (e) The owner/handler of an animal has been arrested or is incapacitated. In such circumstances, the member should find appropriate placement for the animal.

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1. This is only necessary when the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animal.
2. With the owner's consent, locating appropriate placement may require contacting relatives or neighbors to care for the animal.
3. If no person can be found or the owner does not or cannot give consent, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.

#### **806.5 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS**

Laws relating to the cruelty to animals should be enforced, including but not limited to animal cruelty offenses under Chapter 42, Texas Penal Code.

- (a) An investigation should be conducted on all reports of animal cruelty.
- (b) Legal steps should be taken to protect an animal that is in need of immediate care of protection from acts of cruelty (Tex. Health and Safety Code § 821.022).

#### **806.6 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS**

Members investigating an animal bite should obtain as much information as possible for follow-up with the appropriate health or animal authorities. Efforts should be made to capture or otherwise have the animal placed under control. Members should attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.

#### **806.7 STRAY DOGS**

If the dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner should be contacted, if possible. If the owner is contacted, the dog should be released to the owner and a citation may be issued, if appropriate. If a dog is taken into custody, it shall be transported to the appropriate shelter/holding pen.

Members shall provide reasonable treatment to animals in their care (e.g., food, water, shelter).

#### **806.8 DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

In the event responding members cannot fulfill a request for service because an animal is difficult or dangerous to handle, the shift supervisor will be contacted to determine available resources, including requesting the assistance of animal control services from an allied agency.

#### **806.9 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS**

Members should diligently address calls related to nuisance animals (e.g., barking dogs), because such calls may involve significant quality-of-life issues.

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#### **806.10 DECEASED ANIMALS**

When a member becomes aware of a deceased animal, all reasonable attempts should be made to preliminarily determine if the death of the animal is related to criminal activity.

Deceased animals on public property may be removed, if necessary. If removed, the animal should be sealed in a plastic bag and properly disposed of by the responding member. If the animal is too large to remove, it should be placed in a safe location and animal control called to recover at a later date.

Members should not climb onto or under any privately-owned structure for the purpose of removing a deceased animal.

#### **806.11 INJURED ANIMALS**

When a member becomes aware of an injured domesticated animal, all reasonable attempts should be made to contact an owner or responsible handler. If an owner or responsible handler cannot be located, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.

##### **806.11.1 INJURED WILDLIFE**

Members who encounter injured wildlife should contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to obtain information for the nearest wildlife rehabilitator.

#### **806.12 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS**

When it is necessary to use a firearm to euthanize a badly injured animal or stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to human safety, the Animal Euthanasia Report will be filled out and attached to the officer's report. A badly injured animal shall only be euthanized with the approval of a supervisor. [See attachment: Animal Euthanasia report.pdf](#)

#### **806.13 TRAINING**

This department's animal control officers (ACOs) shall successfully complete the required basic and continuing education animal control courses as approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The basic animal control course shall be completed prior to the ACO's first anniversary. All ACOs shall complete 30 hours of continuing education courses during each three-year period thereafter (Tex. Health and Safety Code § 829.002).

## **Attachments**

## **Chart of Animal Calls.pdf**

## Chart of Calls

Emergency Call	Action	Non-Emergency Call	Action
Injured or Sick Animals	PD Officer verifies issue, contact ACO. Officer needs to wait on-scene to keep eyes on the animal.	Owned animal that is sick or injured.	Owner is required to take that animal to the emergency veterinarian.
Aggressive and Dangerous Animals	PD Officer verifies issue, contact ACO. Officer needs to wait on-scene to keep eyes on the animal.	Stray/Loose animals	Place call/email to animal control for follow up next business day.
Animal bites to Humans	ER contacts Dispatch, Dispatch gathers all victim & owner info and any other info available and relays to ACO.	Animal to Animal Bites	Civil Issue, does not require animal control action. Can place call/email to animal control for follow up next business day.
Snakes posing safety risk (preventing entry or in house)	PD Officer verifies issue, contact ACO. Officer needs to wait on-scene to keep eyes on the animal.	Snake on property but not causing issue.	Place call/email to animal control for follow up next business day.
Animal Cruelty and Neglect	PD Officer verifies issue, contact ACO. PD Officer and ACO determine if immediate response is required.	Barking Dogs	PD Officer <i>can</i> issue a citation. Place call/email to animal control for follow up next business day.
Animal in car needing impoundment due to arrest of owner	PD Officer verifies issue, contact ACO if unable to transport the animal to the shelter.	Trapped animals	Wait for pick up next day or release. Call and leave voicemail on animal control's non-emergency number.
Loose Livestock	<b>CONTACT COUNTY DISPATCH FIRST</b> , if county needs help they can contact us to assist with the call.	Trapping During Inclement Weather	Trapping during bad weather conditions or leaving an animal at risk in inclement weather is a punishable offense. If the animal is at risk, it must be released.

## **Animal Euthanasia report.pdf**

# Weatherford Police Department

## Animal Euthanasia Report



***The supervisor shall see that all parts are completed and forwarded through the chain of command.***

Officer Completing Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of animal euthanized:

☐ Dog

☐ Deer

☐ Bird

☐ Snake

☐ Cat

☐ Cow

☐ Raccoon

☐ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Varmints

☐ Horse

☐ Possum

Person who euthanized the animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Officers witness/involved: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Type of weapon used: \_\_\_\_\_ # of times fired: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of action or injury that required euthanasia:

☐ Vicious actions

☐ public hazard

☐ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Injured

☐ exhibited strange behavior

Report facts and disposition of the animal: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of supervisor conducting review: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the action taken in accordance with department policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are further investigation/statements required ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is a disciplinary review necessary ☐ Yes ☐ No



## Command Review:

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**Sergeant**

Comments:

☐

Concur

☐

Do Not Concur

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Signature

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**Commander**

Comments:

☐

Concur

☐

Do Not Concur

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Signature

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**Deputy Chief**

Comments:

☐

Concur

☐

Do Not Concur

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Signature

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**Chief**

Comments:

☐

Concur

☐

Do Not Concur

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Signature