

## Animal Control Operations

### 317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Modoc County Sheriff's Office is charged with the management of the County animal control operations. Within the scope of this assignment, the Sheriff's Office employs an Animal Control Officer.

### 317.2 LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE TO THE ANIMAL CONTROL OPERATION

In an effort to keep operating costs at a minimum, the Department staffs this operation with two part time employee. Clearly, no 24-hour a day function can be accomplished with only two part time employee. In an effort to provide the best service to the community, it will be necessary for uniformed patrol personnel from the Modoc County Sheriff's Office, to respond to emergency calls during hours when it is impractical or impossible for animal control personnel to respond.

- (a) Law enforcement units should be dispatched to the following types of calls, when no animal control officer is available:
  - 1. Animal bite cases
  - 2. Vicious animal cases
  - 3. Report of injured or sick animals
  - 4. Report of animal safety
  - 5. Animals running at large
- (b) Law enforcement units should not be dispatched to routine calls that are not emergencies. These types of calls include:
  - 1. Leash law violations
  - 2. Request to surrender pets and stray animals
  - 3. Request for animal adoption

### 317.3 DOCUMENTATION

Law enforcement and animal control personnel who respond to criminal investigations should prepare a crime report. Service calls of non-criminal, informational nature involving animals should prepare an incident report. Law enforcement officers preparing written reports involving animal problems should refer a copy of that report to the Animal Control Officer. The report should specify and veterinary treatment that was required and which veterinarian was used. If desired by the law enforcement officer, the Animal Control Officer can assist with the following investigation if available and the law enforcement officer can not conduct the follow-up investigation due to other higher priority criminal investigations.

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### **317.4 BARKING DOG (PEACE DISTURBANCE) CALLS**

Calls of barking dogs that are disturbing an individual or neighborhood are primarily a criminal problem that may require both Deputies and Animal Control response.

#### **317.4.1 DAYTIME CALLS**

Calls received while the Animal Control Officer is on duty, should be referred to the Animal Control Officer. The responding Animal Control Officer should contact the R/P Victim, and obtain the necessary information. The owner of the involved animal should then be contacted, advised of the complaint and informed of the laws relating to peace disturbance. Penal Code and County Ordinance. The Animal Control Officer should then complete a Modoc County Sheriff's Office incident report and submit for review.

After completion of the call the Animal Control Officer should check the Sheriff's Office records to determine if there have been similar complaints involving the same animal owner. If other such reports exist within the preceding 24-month period, all reports on file will be forwarded to the Modoc County District Attorney with a complaint for charging.

#### **317.4.2 AFTER HOURS CALLS**

Disturbance calls received after the normal working hours of the Animal Control Officer, should be handled by on duty law enforcement personnel. The Modoc County Sheriff's Office deputy shall prepare a crime report on the incident and check to determine past violations. Any past violations by the same animal owner will be noted in the report. All cases will be forwarded to the District Attorney for review.

#### **317.4.3 EMERGENCY VETERINARY TREATMENT**

Should a peace officer be required to handle an injured animal call and the Animal Control Officer is unavailable, the following procedures should be followed. The involved deputy should attempt to evaluate the severity of the injury or illness. If, in the deputy's judgment, the animal's injuries or illness are so severe that death of the animal is probable, the animal is too severely injured to move, or the veterinarian is not available, the deputy may handle the case in the following manner:

- (a) Transport the animal to Veterinarian Clinic. The attending veterinarian can then evaluate the condition of the animal and decide the correct action to take.
- (b) Alleviate the animal's suffering by shooting the animal, ensuring the animal is not disposed of in an inhumane manner. The deputy will make every effort to end the animals suffering with one shot to an area of the animals body that will cease all life immediately. Beating the animal to death with a baton or other painful means to end the animals life are unacceptable and will not be performed. Deputies should attempt to secure permission from a supervisor if available prior to shooting any animal. Injured animals, (with the exception of dogs and cats) may only be destroyed after a reasonable effort / search to locate the owner. The following are factors that the officer should consider before deciding to destroy the animal by shooting:

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1. Does the animal have ownership tags that would enable contact with the owner to decide the animal's condition and fate?
  2. Does the animal appear to be a valuable pet, well-groomed or have a collar?
  3. Would shooting the animal pose a hazard to persons or property in the area?
  4. Would shooting the animal cause a public relations problem, (i.e. are there on-lookers who would be offended)?
- (c) If any of the foregoing conditions exist, taking the animal to the veterinarian would probably be the best solution. However, if the deputy received an emergency call requiring an immediate response, the injured animal detail should be considered of secondary importance. Under emergency conditions, the animal should be destroyed immediately so as not to prolong the animals suffering, so that the emergency can be handled. Animals having only slight injuries or illness that do not appear to be life-threatening should be transported to a veterinarian for treatment.

### 317.4.4 SHOOTING OF ANIMALS THAT ARE VICTIMS, INJURED OR SICK

At times, a deputy will be required to use his/her firearm to destroy animals that pose a danger to persons and other animals, or are so severely injured or sick that it is necessary to put the animal out of its suffering. The following procedures should be followed, when faced with this type of duty:

- (a) **INJURED ANIMALS:** Deputies should attempt to get as close as practical to the head of the injured animal, (but not closer than 24 inches): and using their service sidearm, or issued rifle and with supervisory approval, fire one round into the head of the animal. The deputy will consider the angle of the shot and the trajectory should the shot miss or exit the the animals head.
- (b) **SICK ANIMALS (RABIES):** If an animal is sick and the deputy suspects the animal to be suffering from rabies or has bitten a person and the animal is to be shot, care should be given not to shoot the animal in the head. The brain tissue is tested for rabies and the any damage to the brain will impair testing. An animal suspected of suffering from rabies should be shot in the heart.
- (c) **VICIOUS ANIMALS:** Deputies should take extra precautions when dealing with a vicious animal and not approach any closer than necessary to avoid being attacked and or bitten. The deputy should use his or her issued rifle or shotgun to dispose of any vicious animal and be at least 10 to 12 feet away. The deputy will aim center of mass. If a second shot is required to destroy the animal it will be conducted in a humane manner as if the animal was injured. Deputies will take extreme caution and care not to injure themselves, any other citizens in the area or property when shooting a vicious animal.