DAVIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ANIMAL RELATED CALLS
Policy and Procedure 2.35-A

DEPARTMENT MANUAL

Index as:
Animal Related Calls

I. POLICY

The Davis Police Department has contracted with the Yolo County Sheriff’s Department to handle most animal related calls between 0800 and 1700 hours, Monday through Saturday.

It is the policy of the Davis Police Department to refer citizens to Yolo County Animal Services (YCAS) for most non-emergency calls during the contracted hours. Certain types of calls, as specified below, require an immediate response, which must be authorized by the Watch Commander.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Non-Emergency Animal Calls

Persons who report most non-emergency animal related call should be referred to YCAS during the hours normally covered under the animal services contract.

1. Hours Covered Under Animal Services Contract
   b. Sunday: None
   c. Emergencies: 24/7, as specified below

2. Animal Shelter Public Hours
   a. Tuesday – Friday: 1000-1300 & 1400-1800 hours.
   b. Saturday: 1000-1300 & 1400-1600 hours.

3. Non-emergency calls include:
   a. Lost or found animals.
   b. Non life threatening animal bites. YCAS is the primary notification agency for reports of animal bites. YCAS employees will initiate the bite report and remove the animal if appropriate. If the animal owner is known and has contained their animal, police department personnel should refer the bite victims to YCAS during regular business hours.
   c. Non aggressive stray dogs.

B. Deceased Animals/Pets

   1. The following procedures should be used to handle reports of deceased animals/pets.
a. If the caller is reporting that their own animal/pet died, and it weighs in excess of one pound, they can dispose of the carcass on their own at the Yolo County Animal Shelter during regular shelter hours.

b. Deceased animals weighing less than one pound can be placed in a normal trash receptacle.

c. YCAS will respond to reports of dead bats, skunks, or other animals when there is a reasonable basis to believe it is carrying rabies. Dispatch can call YCAS and they will handle the report as non-emergency call during the contracted hours.

d. If the deceased animal is reported as a traffic hazard, a member should be dispatched to alleviate the immediate traffic hazard. During normal business hours, for domestic animals, YCAS may, at their discretion, respond to remove the carcass. Deceased wildlife reports can be forwarded to the City of Davis Wildlife Resource Specialist at (530) 757-5680. The Wildlife Resource Specialist may choose to leave some deceased animals in place.

C. Emergency Animal Calls Which Require After Hours Response

Request for an after hours emergency or non-emergency response from YCAS may be approved by the on-duty Watch Commander. The Watch Commander shall determine whether an emergency exists and comply with response requirements specified in sections II.C.1. – II.C.5 of this policy. After receiving approval from the Watch Commander, Dispatch will contact Yolo County Communications to request a YCAS response.

The following criteria should be used to determine if an after-hours YCAS response is appropriate:

1. Injured or Seriously Ill Stray Cats or Dogs - When dispatch is notified of injured or seriously ill stray domestic animal, they should contact YCAS who may be required to take the animal to a medical care facility. Dispatch should request that the caller standby with the animal. If the caller is unable to standby, the dispatcher should obtain a call back number and dispatch an officer to determine the animal’s status. If multiple calls are received on the same animal, dispatch may request YCAS respond without sending an officer to verify the circumstances.

   a. With the approval of a supervisor, an officer may euthanize an animal that is so badly injured that human compassion requires its removal from further suffering and where other dispositions are impractical (Penal Code § 597.1(e)). Injured animals (with the exception of dogs and cats) may only be euthanized after a reasonable search to locate the owner has been made (Penal Code § 597.1(b)). Injured dogs and cats found without their owners shall be taken to an appropriate veterinarian for determination of whether they should be treated or humanely destroyed.

2. Animal Bites - Dispatch will send a patrol officer to an animal bite report when paramedics have been dispatched because a serious injury has occurred. Dispatch will contact Yolo County Communications to request a response from YCAS. Animal bite reports shall be reported immediately to YCAS under the following circumstances:

   a. Emergency medical attention is required for purposes of a vicious animal investigation.

   b. The suspect animal is a stray and/or still at large.

   c. The suspect animal is contained by someone other than the animal owner.

   d. The suspect animal is a bat and the bat it is either alive or dead in a residence or other populated building.
3. Skunks, Bats, or Animals Suspected of Carrying Rabies - California Health and Safety Code Section 121595 requires that whenever any case of rabies is reported as existing in any county or city, the department shall make, or cause to be made, a preliminary investigation as to whether the disease exists, and as to the probable area of the state in which the population or animals are endangered.

YCAS will respond to remove bats or skunks for rabies testing whenever a bat or skunk has come into contact with a human or domestic animal. Police Department personnel shall contact YCAS as soon as possible if:

a. The skunk, bat or other animal can be located for capture, or
b. There is a high risk of potential exposure in a public area.

If the animal is no longer on scene, dispatch should advise the caller to contact YCAS who will respond during business hours with a trap.

If there are multiple animals, the reporting party should be referred to either the County Trapper at the Yolo County Agriculture Department, telephone number 530-666-8140, or Capture & Removal Co., telephone number 707-678-8604. Traps are available for rental at YCAS during business hours.

4. Loose vicious or aggressive domestic animals or wildlife - Police personnel should respond to monitor the scene until YCAS arrives.

5. Other Discretionary Responses.

a. Animal owner is arrested.
b. Animal involved in a vehicle accident.
c. Animal located during a search warrant and there are no other reasonable options to deal with it.
d. Loose exotic pets that pose an imminently threat to life or potential injury to citizens.
e. Coroner requested impoundments. If the animal can be fed and watered on scene, YCAS can be contacted to respond during regular response hours.
f. Loose livestock that are causing a traffic hazard and are currently under observation by the caller or a police officer who is requesting assistance.
g. Abandoned or neglected animals. Animals observed as abandoned or neglected for more than two (2) consecutive days and lack adequate food, water and shelter.
h. Abused and neglected animals that are in distress may be immediately removed and transported by YCAS for veterinary care.
i. Livestock kills when the suspect animal is still on scene.

D. Wildlife - Unless the Watch Commander determines that the animal is posing a threat to public safety or welfare, YCAS will not normally respond to after-hours calls which involve wildlife. Dispatch should provide the following information to callers:

1. Non-emergency calls (those that do not involve an immediate threat to persons, other animals, or property) involving nuisance, orphaned, harassment, or habitat destruction should be referred to the City of Davis Wildlife Resource Specialist at (530) 757-5680.
2. YCAS animal services will respond to emergency/threat calls relating to wildlife where there is an immediate threat to public safety. The City of Davis Wildlife Resource Specialist should also be contacted.
3. Small injured or sick wildlife can be transported to the 24-hour UC Davis Small Animal Clinic.
4. Deceased wild animals on the freeway or outside the city limits will be removed by CalTrans. Deceased wildlife in Davis will be handled under the provisions of II, B above.
5. Orphaned birds or wildlife can be referred to the Sacramento Wildlife Care Association by calling 916-965-9453 or the reporting party can bring the animal to YCAS on the next business day.
6. Orphaned hawks, owls, or birds of prey can be referred to the California Raptor Center- UC Davis at 530-752-6091.
7. For injured or orphaned water fowl, the caller should be referred to the International Bird Rescue at 707-207-0380.
8. For all other wildlife the caller should be referred to the Sacramento Wildlife Care Association at 916-965-9453.
9. For endangered fish and game, the caller should be referred to the Department of Fish & Game at 916-653-7664. The fish or game are endangered because of a hazardous materials spill, dispatch can contact the Department of Fish and Game at 916-445-0045.
10. Small deceased animals weighing less than one pound, such as birds or rodents, can be legally disposed of by placing the animal into a plastic bag and depositing it into a waste container.

E. Animal/Wildlife Assessment and Threats

1. The following guidelines should be used to assist personnel in either handling call involving threatening wildlife/animals or for making referrals.
   
a. Sighting or Mere Presence

   A mere sighting or the presence of wildlife involving no imminent threat to public safety can be referred to City of Davis Wildlife Resource Specialist at (530) 757-5680 or to any of the resources listed in II, D above. YCAS will not respond, however, their phone recording has additional resource information that may be helpful.

b. Threat or Bite

   In the event of threat to public safety, personnel responding to a reported public safety incident may take whatever action is deemed necessary within the scope of the employee’s authority to protect public safety. Officers are authorized to use deadly force against an animal in circumstances where the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods to neutralize the threat are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective. When evidence shows that an animal poses an imminent threat to human safety, that animal shall be humanely euthanized (shot, killed, dispatched, destroyed, etc.).

   If the circumstances permit, the following steps should be taken prior to the animal being euthanized:

   1. Locate the animal and isolate it, as much as the circumstances will allow. Isolation may minimize or alleviate the immediate threat.
   2. Notify the Watch Commander and have them respond to the scene.
   3. Have YCAS respond.
4. Notify the City of Davis Wildlife Resource Specialist (after hours telephone number is located in Dispatch).
5. Consider the use of less-lethal options for handling the incident, which includes the use of fire extinguisher, OC, the Taser, or impact munitions, instead of lethal options, if the circumstances allow.

c. In circumstances in which officers have sufficient advanced notice that a potentially dangerous animal (e.g. dog) may be encountered, such as in the serving of a search warrant, officers should develop reasonable contingency plans for dealing with the animal without the use of deadly force (e.g. fire extinguisher, Taser, OC Spray, impact munitions YCAS). Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any officer from resorting to deadly force to control a dangerous animal if circumstances reasonably dictate that a contingency plan has failed or become impractical.

F. Barking Dogs

The Davis Police Department will respond to barking dog complaints. Calls will be handled in accordance with the Davis City Code.

G. Burrowing Owls

Property owners within the city limits are required to obtain a permit with the Planning and Building Department at City Hall in order to disc their property, but not for mowing their property. The Davis Police Department may respond to reports of unlawful discing in accordance with the Davis City Code.

Darren Pytel
Police Chief

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