

Somerville Police Department 	TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		POLICY NUMBER: 133	VERSION: 4.10
	Subject: Animal Control			
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Accreditation Standards (6th Edition) 16.4.1		<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Amended		
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the role and responsibilities of the Somerville Police Animal Control Unit (ACU).

Policy

Animal Control Officers enforce animal related state statues and city ordinances and ensure the protection of residents against health and safety risks from domestic and wild animals. Although Animal Control Officers come under the direct supervision of the on-duty patrol commander, all issues not considered immediate in nature shall be directed to the proper chain of command as defined by the Department's Organizational Chart. The Animal Control Office shall be located inside Somerville Police Headquarters.

Definition

ACO - Animal Control Officer

UASI- Urban Areas Security Initiative program is intended to provide financial assistance to address the unique multi-discipline planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density Urban Areas, and to assist these areas in building and sustaining capabilities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats or acts of terrorism using the Whole Community approach.

Procedures

1. Animal Control Officer (ACO)

- A. Authority: Animal Control Officers are non-sworn civilian police department employees. Their powers are limited by the appointing authority or Chief of Police. Animal Control Officers possess no police powers and are not authorized to carry firearms [16.4.1]

- B. Duties and Responsibilities – Animal Control Officers shall: [16.4.1]**
- 1.** Patrol the streets of Somerville in a City owned marked motor vehicle designed for transporting animals. The city owned vehicle shall be parked at the end of their shift in the rear parking lot of the police station at 220 Washington Street.
 - 2.** Be responsible for enforcing State and local laws and regulations related to Animal Control for the City of Somerville; and shall oversee the care and control of domestic animals and, in some instances, wildlife. Animal Control Officers are required to perform all similar or related duties.
 - 3.** Patrol the roads and ways of the city of Somerville, impounding unattended, wandering, domestic/owned animals excluding cats.
 - 4.** Issue citations for City of Somerville Ordinance violation and fines for violations of state and local laws or regulations related to the care and control of animals. ACO will file a monthly report to their direct supervisor, as identified by the Department's Organizational Chart, which summarizes the number of violations issued each month, investigations initiated and status of any kenneled animals.
 - 5.** Assist the City Solicitor's office and the Deputy Chief of Police to prepare complaints with the District Court for unpaid citations.
 - 6.** Investigate complaints from the public.
 - 7.** Respond to injured/sick domestic animals when owner is not located, transporting the animal to a city contracted veterinarian, currently Huron Vet in Somerville, MA and after hours at Blue Pearl Vet in Charlestown, MA.
 - 8.** Responds when needed to reports of injured/sick wildlife and then transports to city contracted veterinarian currently at Huron Vet and after hours facilities humane euthanasia techniques per AVMA. The Animal Control Officer will contact local wildlife rehabber if situation warrants. Animal Control shall only respond to wildlife on private property if animal poses an immediate safety concern.
 - 9.** Assist other agencies (Police, Fire and Rescue) in rescuing, removing, controlling animals involved in emergency situations such as human medical emergencies, fires, accidents, arrests and warrant searches.
 - 10.** Prepare and present dangerous or nuisance dog facts and circumstances to a designated hearing authority, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140 Section 157. The Captain overseeing Animal Control will be the designated hearing authority. The hearing authority will make recommendation, solutions and sanctions for violations. The ACO monitors and enforces post hearing orders.
 - 11.** Respond to all animal bites and the Animal Control Office will place orders of quarantine on domestic animals suspected of having infectious diseases and shall enforce such quarantines.

12. Prepare suspected rabid animals for testing and ensure transport to State laboratory for testing. ACO will include this information in monthly report.
13. Enforce the state and local dog licensing law and issuing fines when appropriate.
14. Animal Control will work with Homeland Security Lieutenant to procure equipment and monies made available by UASI Agreements and maintain an emergency response plan for pet owners coordinating with other authorities on evacuation centers and pet friendly shelters.
15. Inform the public about emergency planning for pets in Somerville.
16. Educate the public on responsible pet ownership and the laws regarding animals in Somerville; educate children and parents about animal safety.
17. Maintain and update records, databases, and files of information for the department.
18. Perform other duties as assigned by the Police Chief.

C. Training: [16.4.1]

1. Animal Control Officers shall receive on the job training in their authorized duties as well as by attending relevant classes and seminars when available.
2. Animal Control Officers shall receive training as required under MGL Chapter 140 Sec 151C.
3. Animal Control Officers shall receive Defensive Tactics training from the MPTC or its equivalent training.
4. Successful completion and graduation from the Animal Control Officers Association of MA Core Competencies training and Animal Control Officers Associations of MA-Academy (ACOAM).
5. Complete 30 educational credits in the first training year and 8 continuing educational credits every year.
6. Certification – Disaster Sheltering for companion animals (American Humane Association)
7. Animal Control Officers shall complete the NIMS ICS-100 Training course.
8. Animal Control Office shall maintain at least one updated copy of the Animal Control Law book.

D. Uniforms: [16.4.1]

1. Uniforms: See Somerville Police Uniform [Policy 409; Uniform and Appearance](#)

E. Kennel Procedures:

1. Any animal in the care and custody of The City of Somerville Animal Control Unit will be relocated and kenneled at the City of Somerville holding facility inside the Department of Public Works yard located at 1 Franey Road.
2. Animal Control Officers ensure the health, nourishment, well-being, and cleanliness of impounded animals located at the City of Somerville holding facility. Maintain a viable in-house adoption program and facilities relationships with fosters/rescue agencies. Ensuring all animals are spayed/neutered, vet checked, and vaccinated before being adopted.
3. If the rightful owner (s) of domestic animals (excluding canines) cannot be located or does not come forward within the first twenty four (24) hours of care and custody, the ACO may request from their immediate supervisor, that the animal be put up for foster, adoption, or be euthanized.
4. Strictly pertaining to canines, when no owner is available after 7 days then the ACO will consult with their immediate supervisor to make the decision on whether to foster, adopt, transfer or euthanize.
5. The Animal Control Unit will strive to establish and maintain relationships that will allow them to foster animals that are to be kenneled for over 7 days. Any animal being kenneled over 7 days will require approval from their immediate supervisor and weekly updates on the animal's status. This information will also be included in the monthly summary provided to the ACO's immediate supervisor.
6. Rightful owners who wish to collect their pets will be referred and instructed to contact Somerville Animal Control at 617-625-6600 extension 2190. Members of the Animal Control Unit will confirm rightful ownership and release the animal to the rightful owner after all costs (veterinary bills, kennel fees) have been reimbursed.

F. On Call Procedure:

1. Animal Control Officer shall be called in for all animal related emergencies; injured or sick animals, bites, found domestic animals (adult cats exempt), cruelty, neglect, abandonment cases, and confiscations due to (arrests, fire, transport to hospital, or sudden deaths where an animal is on premises, etc.), and any other calls not listed at the discretion of the Shift Commander.

G. Animals as evidence in a criminal prosecution:

- 1.** If an animal in ACO custody is the subject of a criminal prosecution, the supervisor of Animal Control will immediately contact the Law Office and/or the Middlesex ADA handling any case of animal cruelty to determine how the animal should be housed in order to preserve the underlying criminal prosecution.

H. ACO should not accept any invoices, in hand, via e-mail or by US Mail. Any invoice received should be delivered to the Departments Financial Officer within 24 hours.