

Dog Control and Animal Cruelty

806.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

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

Best Practice

It is the policy of the Syracuse 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 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Members who respond to or assist with animal-related calls for service should evaluate the situation to determine appropriate actions to control the situation.

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.
 1. This is only necessary when the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow them 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.

[See procedure for GENERAL PROCEDURES](#)

[See procedure for OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES](#)

[See procedure for SEIZURE PROCEDURES](#)

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806.4 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS

State **MODIFIED**

When a complaint for animal cruelty is received, the following should occur:

- (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 or protection from acts of cruelty.
- (c) Laws relating to the cruelty to animals should be enforced, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Animal fighting (Agriculture and Markets Law § 351)
 - (b) Overdriving, torturing and injuring animals (Agriculture and Markets Law § 353)
 - (c) Aggravated cruelty (Agriculture and Markets Law § 353-a)

[See procedure for HANDLING ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS](#)

[See procedure for ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS – GENERAL INFORMATION](#)

806.5 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS

Best Practice

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.

806.6 STRAY DOGS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

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).

[See procedure for STRAY DOGS](#)

806.7 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

Best Practice

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

806.8 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS

Best Practice

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

806.9 DECEASED ANIMALS

Best Practice MODIFIED

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 should be removed, sealed in a plastic bag and properly disposed of by the responding member.

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

[See procedure for DECEASED ANIMALS](#)

806.10 INJURED ANIMALS

Best Practice MODIFIED

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.

[See procedure for INJURED ANIMALS](#)

806.11 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

State MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 21.1 (B)

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 Firearms Policy shall be followed (Agriculture and Markets Law § 374). A badly injured animal shall only be euthanized with the approval of a supervisor. A report explaining the circumstances should be completed by the member who used the firearm.

A dog, cat or ferret may be destroyed if it is exhibiting the signs of rabies and cannot be safely captured, and the New York State Commissioner of Health has certified the existence of rabies in that county (Public Health Law § 2143).

[See procedure for ANIMALS SUSPECTED OF RABIES EXPOSURE OR INFECTION](#)