

# Animal Control

## **820.1 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.

## **820.2 ANIMAL SERVICE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY**

The Animal Service Officer (ASO) shall be responsible for enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals, and for appropriately resolving or referring animal problems as outlined in this policy. The ASO shall be under the operational control of the Special Field Services Division. The Animal Service Officers' assigned working hours will be scheduled by the Special Operations Field Services Division Captain or designee.

During hours when the ASO is on duty, requests for animal related services shall be assigned by the Dispatch Center or Watch Commander.

Requests for assistance by the ASO shall be acknowledged and responded to promptly.

### **820.2.1 USE OF BATON**

A baton described in this policy may be carried and used by members of the Animal Services Unit only if the device has been issued by the Department or approved by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. Animal Service Officers shall complete Department approved training prior to carrying a baton in the field. When not in use, the baton shall be carried in its authorized holder on the equipment belt.

The baton may be deployed against a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog, if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective. The need to immediately control an animal must be weighed against the risk of causing serious injury. The head and legs should not be intentionally targeted except when the Animal Service Officer reasonably believes the animal poses an imminent threat to human safety.

Any use of the baton shall be reported to the Animal Service Supervisor. In absence of the Animal Service Supervisor, the incident shall be reported to an on-duty police supervisor.

If a baton is used to strike an animal, the Animal Service Officer shall conduct a cursory examination and determine if the animal is injured. If injured, the Animal Service Officer will ensure the animal is treated by the Riverside County Animal Shelter Veterinarian or the contract Veterinarian.

The use of the baton will be documented in the CAD call card by the Animal Service Officer who used the baton.

# Fontana Police Department

## Fontana PD Policy Manual

### *Animal Control*

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#### **820.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY**

During hours when the Animal Services Officer is off-duty, or if the ASO is otherwise unavailable, the following animal related calls for service will be handled by the appropriate on-duty officer.

Officers may be dispatched to animal related calls and should take appropriate actions to control the situation until the arrival of an ASO. Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper equipment, responding officers generally should not attempt to capture and pick up any animal, but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of the ASO. The following are examples of when an officer may consider acting before the arrival of the ASO:

- (a) When there is a threat to the public safety.
- (b) When animal has bitten someone, officers should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- (c) When an animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- (d) When the owner/handler has been arrested and there is no other alternative placement for the animal.
- (e) When the animal is gravely injured.

#### **820.3.1 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. In an effort to protect the health and safety of dogs, the following procedures will be followed when a dog is taken into custody after hours.

1. Friendly dogs will be taken to the Red Arrow Kennel located at 14737 Arrow Boulevard. **Dogs will no longer be placed in ASO trucks overnight.**

2. Bite Dogs, vicious, injured and/or sick dogs shall NOT be placed at the red Arrow Kennel. In those instances, the on-call ASO should be called in.

3. The entrance to the kennel can be located off of Redwood Street.

4. Locate the lock box attached to the entry gate. The access code for the box is 3066.

5. Enter the Kennel and proceed to row C.

6. Place the dog in kennel runs numbered 1-13.

7. Personnel may use the food stored in kennel 7 to feed the dog if they choose.

8. Update the call card to reflect the kennel number where the dog was placed. Have dispatch print the call card for the ASO's for morning pick up.

9. Return the lock box key before leaving the kennel.

# Fontana Police Department

## Fontana PD Policy Manual

### *Animal Control*

---

A printed copy of the incident call card will be placed in the ASO inbox. Release of impounded dogs requires a fee be paid.

The ASO will transport any animals in the holding pens to the Animal Shelter as soon as he/she comes on duty. Once a dog has been taken into custody, all releases should be handled by the Animal Shelter. In cases where the ASO is not available, the watch commander shall designate an alternate to transport so that any animals are not held in the holding pens unnecessarily for extended periods.

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

In the absence of an ASO, officers shall obtain and forward to the ASO as much information as possible regarding the nature of the complaint, complaining person, owner information (if possible), location of problem, etc. Officers will also document any actions taken, citation(s) issued, related report numbers, etc.

In the event responding officers cannot fulfill urgent requests for service because the animal is difficult or dangerous to handle, an ASO may be called to handle. If the ASO is unavailable, the patrol supervisor may call out the supervising ASO or request the assistance of an animal service officer from an allied agency.

All requests to call in the ASO must be approved by a field supervisor or the Watch Commander.

#### **820.4 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 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.

When handling deceased animals, members should attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.

#### **820.5 INJURED ANIMALS**

When any injured domesticated animal is brought to the attention of a member of this agency, all reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner or responsible handler. When the owner or responsible handler cannot be located and the animal is not an immediate danger to the community, it shall be taken to a doctor of veterinary medicine as described below (Penal Code 597.1).

- (a) During normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary care clinic.
- (b) If after normal business hours, the animal should be taken to the authorized Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Services Clinic.

# Fontana Police Department

## Fontana PD Policy Manual

### *Animal Control*

---

- (c) The only exception to the above is when the animal is an immediate danger to the community or the owner of the animal is identified and takes responsibility for the injured animal.
  - 1. When the need to kill a seriously injured or dangerous animal is necessary, the department Firearms Policy shall be followed. The decision to dispose of a seriously injured animal will rest with the on-duty watch commander.
- (d) If an employee locates injured wildlife such as an injured skunk or bat, an ASO may be called.
- (e) When handling dead or injured animals department employees shall attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.
- (f) Each incident shall be documented and, at minimum, include the name of the reporting party and veterinary hospital and/or person to whom the animal is released. If the ASO is off duty, the information will be forwarded for follow-up.

#### **820.5.1 INJURED WILDLIFE**

Animal Service Officers will respond to calls of injured wildlife animals. Animal Service Officers will pick the animal up and transport it to a local shelter.

#### **820.5.2 RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN VEHICLES**

If an animal left unattended in a vehicle appears to be in distress, members may enter the vehicle for the purpose of rescuing the animal. Members should (Penal Code § 597.7(d)):

- (a) Make a reasonable effort to locate the owner before entering the vehicle.
- (b) Take steps to minimize damage to the vehicle.
- (c) Refrain from searching the vehicle or seizing items except as otherwise permitted by law.
- (d) Leave notice on or in the vehicle identifying the location where the animal has been taken and the name and Department of the member involved in the rescue.
- (e) Make reasonable efforts to contact the owner or secure the vehicle before leaving the scene.
- (f) Take the animal to an animal care facility, a place of safekeeping or, if necessary, a veterinary hospital for treatment.

#### **820.6 POST-ARREST PROCEDURES**

The arresting officer should make a reasonable effort to ensure that animals or pets under a person's care will be provided with adequate care when that person is arrested. This is only required when there is no person to provide care and the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animals.

Relatives or neighbors may be contacted, with the owner's consent, to care for the animals. If no persons can be found or the owner does not consent, the appropriate animal control authority should be notified. If adequate care can not be provided, the animal may be taken to the Red Arrow Kennel.

# Fontana Police Department

Fontana PD Policy Manual

## *Animal Control*

---

### **820.7 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Fontana 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.

### **820.8 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS**

Laws relating to the cruelty to animals should be enforced, including but not limited to Penal Code § 597 et seq. (cruelty to animals, failure to care for animals).

- (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.

### **820.9 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. Officers shall call the on call ASO for any serious bite or in cases where the offending animal was involved in previous biting incidents.

### **820.10 DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

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.

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

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

### **820.12 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS**

When it is necessary to use a firearm to euthanize badly injured livestock or stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to human safety, the Firearms Policy shall be followed. A badly injured animal shall only be euthanized at the contract emergency clinic with the approval of the Watch Commander.