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Injured Animals

Guideline Statement

Injured animal rescues legitimately fall within the range of animal control activities, particularly since most injured animals become injured as a result of inadequate owner control. All reasonable efforts should be made to contact the owner of the injured animals to determine a course of action and financial responsibility/liability. In all circumstances, the welfare of the animal should take priority.

Basis for Guideline

Injured animals require medical care. Medical care costs money. If the owner can be contacted prior to impoundment, valuable time can be saved. This frequent concern demonstrates the importance of maintaining and comparing lost animal reports even before the rescue begins. Impoundment costs, also, may hinder the owner's ability to financially provide immediate medical attention to the animal.

Guideline Recommendation

When all efforts to locate the owner have been exhausted, animal control agencies should have a plan in place to evaluate injured animal dispositions. Cooperative agreements for emergency services with local veterinarians should be undertaken in communities where no staff or contractual veterinarian is directly responsible to the animal control agency. Predetermine the degree of injuries that cannot be financially or adequately addressed for animals whose owners cannot be identified. Valid licensing may dictate mandatory holding periods for animals, including injured animals. NACA supports such holding periods, but under no circumstances should an animal be allowed to suffer. Detailed documentation by a licensed veterinarian should accompany the decision to destroy a licensed animal prior to expiration of the legal holding period.

Reviewed/Revised by the NACA Corporate Office - 09/17/02

The foregoing Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors.

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