



NATIONAL ANIMAL
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

NACA GUIDELINES

NACA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The National Animal Care & Control Association supports finding local solutions and presents these guidelines with this perspective in mind. We believe all agencies providing animal care and control services should strive toward utilization of these guidelines as they identify their goals and define the policies that guide their actions.

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NATIONAL ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

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Code of Conduct

An Animal Care & Control professional acts as an official representative of government with rights, powers, duties and authority conferred by statute and is obligated and trusted to abide by, work within, and enforce the laws of the state and their respective jurisdiction. The fundamental duties of an Animal Care & Control professional include serving the community, providing protection for the public and animals, and enforcing laws in that regard.

An Animal Care & Control professional shall perform all duties incumbent upon the position without fear or favor and with impartial consideration and respect for every individual's status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspirations. Animal Care & Control professionals must conduct themselves in a manner above reproach that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves. An Animal Care & Control professional's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which he or she lives and serves.

Animal Care & Control professionals will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, Animal Care & Control professionals will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. Animal Care & Control professionals will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

An Animal Care & Control professional will use responsibly the discretion vested in his or her position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the Animal Care & Control professional's determinations. The Animal Care & Control professional will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken.

Animal Care & Control professionals must exercise a consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional animal control competence, to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. When difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action arises, it is important to remember that education or advice, rather than enforcement action or arrest, (which may be correct in appropriate circumstances), can be a more effective means of achieving a desired outcome.

An Animal Care & Control professional will never employ unnecessary force or violence, only using such force as is necessary and reasonable in the discharge of duty to protect the public, animals or the Animal Care & Control professional. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every Animal Care & Control professional will refrain from unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhumane treatment of any person or animal.



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Animal Care & Control professionals may see, hear, or learn confidential information in the performance of their duties. Individuals have a reasonable right and expectation to privacy and confidentiality. Such information shall remain and be kept confidential excepting where legal, ethical or performance of duty obligations require otherwise.

An Animal Care & Control professional will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other Animal Care & Control professionals. The public demands that the integrity of all public servants to be above reproach. Animal Care & Control professionals must, therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and that undercut the public confidence in an agency. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.

An Animal Care & Control professional or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that an Animal Care & Control professional assist colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

Animal Care & Control professionals will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence. Through study and experience, an Animal Care & Control professional can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.



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Animal Care & Control Capture Methods – Chemical Immobilization

Guideline Statement

Chemical immobilization of an animal has value under certain circumstances, but should only be used after the animal care and control personnel have received proper training, and then only as a last resort when all other methods of capture have failed. Chemical immobilization should be used only when the animal or the community is at risk if the animal remains at large.

Basis for Guideline

Chemical immobilization, through the use of tranquilizing equipment and the drugs received for immobilization, present risks to the animal, the animal care and control personnel or bystanders. A variety of factors, such as the weather and the physical condition of the animal, can vary the success rate and should be taken into consideration.

Guideline Recommendation

When chemical immobilization must be used, it may be necessary to contact appropriate agencies to maintain crowd or traffic control such as police, sheriff, or department of transportation. Capture of an animal through the use of chemical immobilization should involve consultation with a veterinarian whenever possible. Complete documentation pertaining to the procedure should be kept, including, but not limited to, medical observations before, during, and after chemical immobilization. Adequate personnel should be on hand to maintain visual contact with the animal until immobilization takes effect.

Animal care and control personnel should receive appropriate initial training in chemical immobilization as well continuing training to maintain competency and any certification requirements. A written protocol should be maintained by agencies utilizing chemical capture. The protocol should include, but not be limited to, the following components: drug and drug administering equipment; animal handling and post capture care; anesthetic monitoring; human health and safety. In addition, the agency should have a plan or policy in place requiring regularly scheduled maintenance of the tranquilizing equipment.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

George W. Harding, IV MBA CAWA
Executive Director
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Animal Care & Control Capture Methods – Mace

Guideline Statement

CS or CN derivative deterrent sprays commonly known as MACE should not be used on any animal for any reason.

Basis for Guideline

CS or CN sprays do not affect animals in the same way they affect humans. These sprays cause permanent, serious medical problems including death to animals. These sprays do not deter aggressive behavior and may increase aggression by eliciting pain-based responses.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that no animal care and control personnel use any CS or CN derivative deterrent sprays, commonly known as MACE, on any animal for any reason.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Animal Care & Control Capture Methods – Traps

Guideline Statement

The use of live humane traps serves a valuable purpose in animal care and control. NACA strongly opposes the use of traps that capture the animal by the leg or snaring of the animal. Both traps are commonly referred to as leg hold or snare traps.

Basis for Guideline

The humane capture of animals and the routine use of only humane types of equipment should set an example for the community as to the animal control agency's dedication to promoting positive animal welfare. Leg hold traps and snare traps can cause significant harm and even death to an animal in a cruel and inhumane manner.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that traps used should capture the animal unharmed. Agencies should develop and employ procedures and guidelines governing trap usage whether the agency maintains or rents the traps. These procedures should ensure the safety and the humane treatment of the target or any animal trapped.

NACA also recommends that agencies work to eliminate laws that allow the use of inhumane leg holds or snares.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Animal Facility Capacity Limitations

Guideline Statement

The National Animal Care and Control Association recognizes that population management practices shift because of changes in management, philosophy, or national trends based on 'long term housing'. Policies for population management should progressively and compassionately consider the capacity of the animal housing facility and manage the population within that predetermined capacity.

According to the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters "operating beyond an organizations capacity for care is an unacceptable practice" and "increasing the number of animals housed beyond an organizations capacity for care" is also an unacceptable practice.

Basis for Guideline

Animals housed should be free of overcrowding, disease and injury that may mentally or physically be detrimental to the animal's welfare caused by overcrowding and operation of an animal holding facility in excess of its capacity.

Guideline Recommendation

The National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA) recommends that each animal holding facility evaluate and determine its capacity and manage the population through adoption, transfer, foster or euthanasia in order to maintain a humane, healthy and safe population within this predetermined capacity. NACA recommends that facilities draft and maintain euthanasia practices in order to control overcrowding problems including disease transmission, behavior degeneration, and overall population health problems in conjunction with progressive adoption, transfer and foster programs.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Animal Identification Guideline

Guideline Statement

All Animal care and control agencies and Humane Societies/Rescue Non-Profit Agencies that shelter lost or abandoned animals should diligently attempt to locate the owner of any lost animal.

Basis for Guideline

Each year millions of lost, found, and abandoned animal enter animal care and control shelters. Animals with identification tags or microchips with the owner's correct information can easily be reunited with their owners which in turn results in less stress for the animal and owner and lower sheltering costs to the local government.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that all dogs and cats wear at least an identification tag and current rabies vaccination tag on their collar. In addition, all pets should be micro-chipped as a form of permanent identification. Owners should be reminded to update their information with both the micro-chip registries and ID tags whenever necessary.

All animal care and control personnel that impound and/or care for animals should have access to a universal microchip scanner and be trained in the proper technique in scanning for a micro-chip.

Animal care and control personnel should also check impounded animals for a tattoo – although NACA does not recommend tattoos as a form of identification.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Animal Identification – Dog Licenses

Guideline Statement

State and or local statutes should require all dogs to be licensed, and require licenses to be worn at all times. Licenses should be considered as permits which shall mandate specified responsibility and privileges of ownership. Licenses should be issued only upon proof of necessary immunizations.

Basis for Guideline

Licenses provide for the proper identification of dogs and their owners. It has been proven that licensing programs, adequately enforced, greatly reduce the numbers of surplus animals impounded unnecessarily, and encourage owner responsibility. Licenses provide owners with proof of legal ownership. Licensing fees can provide a necessary revenue base for animal control services. Fines for licensing violations also help offset the tax burden to the general public for such services.

Guideline Recommendation

Licensing laws should be fully enforceable by animal care and control personnel and police officers, and should prescribe progressive penalties for repeat violations. Licenses considered as permits may be revoked for specific violations. NACA recommends that licensing programs be designed to provide a fast, efficient means of identifying dogs and their owners. Licensing records can be easily maintained via a central, local registry. Annual registration may help keep licensing records current and accurate, as circumstances frequently change in the lives of people and their pets. At the minimum, NACA recommends that licenses include complete owner contact information, and a complete description of the licensed dog. It is also helpful to include whether the dog has been spayed/neutered.

Licensing should be required as a condition for owning, harboring, or keeping a dog.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Companion Animal Housing

Guideline Statement

Local governments should routinely review their animal shelter facilities and include them in capital improvement budgets & long term facility planning utilizing architects and designers specializing in animal shelter facilities. New construction or renovations should insure that shelters have species appropriate, state of the art, compassionate housing for dogs, cats and other companion animals designed to limit disease transmission and stress. The facility should be located in an area with high visibility and easy access and include citizen and animal friendly adoption areas.

Basis for Guideline

The basis of the policy recognizes that many animal shelters are reaching the end of their operational life spans and will require extensive renovations or rehabilitation to provide adequate housing for dogs, cats and other companion animals. Previous housing designs (cage over cage, direct contact) did not minimize disease transmission. This resulted in facilities that were difficult to clean and keep free from disease. Adoptions were not emphasized leaving little or no room designed for this practice. Shelters were traditionally located in areas not conducive to public visits such as landfills, waste transfer stations, or maintenance shops in industrial areas.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that local governments consider animal shelters as an important community facility and offer them equal consideration when reviewing capital improvement budgets, and long term facility needs planning.

NACA recommends that any animal housing be state of the art, compassionate housing for dogs, cats, and other companion animals that provides for a high quality of life and prevents disease transmission.

NACA recommends that shelter designs include public adoption areas, training/education areas, sufficient staff office space, enclosed vehicle loading & unloading areas, sick/isolation areas, separate housing for animals by species & age, as well as veterinary medical areas for onsite spay/neuter surgery.

NACA recommends that facilities be located in high visibility areas with easy access for citizens, located away from locations such as landfills or industrial areas.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Cruelty/Neglect

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control agencies should be empowered to enforce local and State animal cruelty and neglect laws. Animal care and control agencies should be empowered to issue citations and make arrests for cruelty and neglect violations that occur in their jurisdictions. Cruelty and neglect investigations should be part of an animal care and control agencies' regular activities. In those communities where both animal care and control agencies and humane societies are empowered to investigate and prosecute cruelty violations, the National Animal Care and Control Association believes that the cooperation among these groups will best provide for the protection of animals and the prosecution of offenders.

Basis for Guideline

In the course of performing other duties, animal care and control personnel are often the first to uncover instances of animal cruelty or neglect. Immediate action is often necessary to insure the safety of the animal and/or to protect the integrity of the investigation, which may lead to any subsequent legal charges. Multi-agency involvement will increase the probability of improving the animal's condition. A cooperative stance with humane groups will serve to build a better court case.

Guideline Recommendation

Joint training among all agencies would prove beneficial, as would requiring animal care and control personnel to receive individual cruelty investigations training. Cruelty and neglect to animal laws should include at least the very basics of pet ownership responsibility - adequate housing, adequate supply of fresh food and water, prohibition against abandonment, sanitary living conditions, and physical/emotional abuse. Additional considerations should include, but not limited to, appropriate veterinary care and protection from extreme weather conditions. Laws should provide for investigators to issue citations or make arrests, and allow for immediate removal of the animal from harmful situations.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on April 20, 2017.

George W. Harding, IV MBA CAWA
Executive Director
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Cruelty/Neglect – Animal Hoarding

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control agencies should implement comprehensive policies for the investigation, seizure, care and disposition of animals resulting from animal hoarding cases. Such policies should address care, housing, evaluation, treatment and disposition utilizing all available resources in cooperation with animal care and control agencies, animal welfare organizations, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. If necessary, legislative changes to existing laws are encouraged to facilitate such policies. Such policies should include provisions for the evaluation, care and assistance to the persons engaging in these acts considering that some may suffer from medical conditions.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel routinely seize or receive animals as the result of cruelty cases related to animal hoarding. Frequently, these cases involve large numbers of animals that exceed the ability of the owner or caregiver to provide adequate humane care and treatment. Animal hoarding cases attract significant community concern from neighbors, animal welfare groups, elected officials and the media. These animals may have medical conditions, physical injuries and behavioral issues that present challenges to care, housing and disposition resulting in substantial costs to agencies. Animal care and control agencies, animal welfare organizations, medical providers, public safety departments, the judicial system and appropriate government or non-governmental agencies should form cooperative working agreements to facilitate timely, positive outcomes that benefit the individuals and the animals involved in animal hoarding situations.

Guideline Recommendations

Animal care and control agencies should:

Work with law enforcement, judicial, and medical providers to insure that all aspects related to the person or persons engaged in animal hoarding are addressed;

Seek positive outcomes for both the persons and animals involved in animal hoarding cases;

Seek legislation that incorporates the authority for mandatory mental health evaluations of persons involved in animal hoarding cases at the direction of the court;



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Seek legislation that incorporates progressive penalties that may limit or prohibit the ownership or custody of animals by persons found to have engaged in animal neglect or animal cruelty related to animal hoarding recognizing that in certain cases, limited numbers of animals may be returned to such persons with appropriate monitoring and inspections subject to court enforcement;

Establish a disposition protocol that provides the appropriate transfer, adoption or alternative placement of the animals in accordance with the NACA Guideline for Disposition of Animals from Cruelty Cases.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Dead Animals

Guideline Statement

Living animals should take priority over dead animals. Animal care and control agencies should avoid transporting living animals with dead animals in the same compartment. Additionally, the disposal of dead animals should meet public health standards, codes, or statutes.

Basis for Guideline

The general lack of sanitation associated with transporting dead animals poses a threat to living animals. Disease contamination is of primary concern. The professionalism of animal care and control agencies would be rightfully questioned.

Guideline Recommendation

The National Animal Care and Control Association recommends that agencies provide dead animal disposal services of stray or un-owned animals in their municipality. Owned dead animals should be transported by their owners. Laboratory sample animals should be transported by an animal care and control personnel in a designated compartment that is isolated from other compartments. Dead animal disposal can include cremation facilities, landfill burial, or rendering.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disaster Planning/Response

Guideline Statement

It is not a question of “if” a disaster will strike a local community, but rather “when” and any disaster which impacts the people in a community will also impact those people’s animals. All animal care and control agencies should have a plan in place to prepare and respond in the case of a local disaster. This plan should also account for a disaster that directly impacts the animal shelter and requires the evacuation of animals from the shelter.

Basis for Guideline

The time to prepare for a disaster is not when the disaster strikes. A well thought out and practiced plan is crucial to an efficient response to a disaster and will help to ensure the safety of the animal care and control personnel who respond.

Guideline Recommendation

A disaster plan should be an all-risk plan that covers everything from natural disasters, man-made disasters and shelter evacuations.

The plan should encompass all types of animals ranging from domestic pets (dogs and cats), to livestock, exotic animals, and wildlife. The animal care and control agency should work with agencies or organizations that have experience with these types of animals to create the plan. As a successful evacuation of people is a function of human and animal planners integrating their plans, the local law enforcement must also be included in the plan.

There is a variety of disaster response training available not only from NACA but also the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC) and animal care and control personnel should be encouraged to attend these trainings.

Above and beyond the proper training, animal care and control personnel must also have the proper equipment to respond to a disaster. Under no circumstances should a responder be placed in a situation where their safety is at risk.

On occasion, a disaster may impact the local animal shelter and the animal care and control agency should have a plan in place to safely evacuate the animals from the shelter and an alternate location to house those animals.

Any plan must be practiced and, if issues are found, revised to resolve those issues.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Adoption

Guideline Statement

A professional animal care and control agency is one that moves beyond enforcement to also provide education and adoptions. A successful adoption program focuses on placing impounded animals, that agencies rescue and protect, into caring homes.

Basis for Guideline

Adoption is the opportunity for animal care and control agencies to make a difference in the future life of an animal. The objective is not to "sell" the animal but to encourage the community to join the agency in its mission of protecting animals and people through adoption. Agencies can elevate the level of animal care throughout their service area by providing new pet owner education during the adoption process. The ultimate goal in an adoption program is to find an appropriate home for each animal and the success of an adoption program is measured by the improvement to the animal's life - going from stray, neglected or homeless to living in a caring environment, licensed, spayed or neutered, and vaccinated.

Guideline Recommendation

Shelter adoptions should include some form of required sterilization, preferably prior to adoption. NACA supports the practice of pediatric (8-16 weeks of age) spaying and neutering. In the event that animals are too old, ill, infirm or too young (and pediatric spay/neuter is not available) alternatives may include enforceable contractual obligations which require sterilization within specified time periods following adoption, or placing the animal in foster care with the adopter and refraining from transferring ownership until surgery is performed. Incentives for sterilization may include reduced license fees, discounted sterilization costs, or prepayment of all or part of sterilization costs.

Animal care and control agencies should evaluate each animal's behavior by using observations and information gathering to make sure they are suitably safe for placement. Information sources can include animal control officers who handled the animal in the field, a previous owner, the person who found the animal as a stray, medical, and other shelter staff or volunteers. While standardized behavior assessments are available and can be useful tools, they are not proven to accurately predictor behavior in a home. Even when assessments are used, decisions about adoptability should always be made with information from multiple sources, environments and interactions.

An adoption questionnaire can be useful tools in determining a prospective adopter's past pet owning experience levels, and their ability to provide for the animals basic and extended needs. Established periodic follow-ups are recommended during the first year of the animal's placement to assist in problem solving and through that pet owner education process, reinforces the agency's position as the trusted source of information about pet care. These follow-ups, advice, and continued education may help prevent the animal from being rehomed or returned to the shelter

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on October 9, 2019.

John W Thompson, Executive Director
National Animal Care & Control Association

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Disposition of Animals – Animal Transfer Programs

Guideline Statement

The transfer of a group of animals from one geographic area to another does not reduce the problem of pet overpopulation. However, the result of animal transfer programs may increase overall adoption placements of healthy animals and reduce environmental stress in overcrowded source shelters.

Basis for Guideline

Animal transfer programs have recently been identified as one of the key strategies to achieving increased adoption placements and reduced euthanasia rates. Issues surrounding transfer programs include possible spread of diseases from one locality to another, compliance with interstate animal transport requirements, community misconceptions of overpopulation problems, and exhaustion of limited resources to help all homeless animals.

Guideline Recommendation

A thorough plan should be put in place for the initiation and utilization of an animal transfer program that will benefit the community and the animal care and control facility it serves. The plan should not over extend the available resources of the entities involved, and be developed with animal health, sterilization, and education as principle elements invoked in procedures. Finding the right partnering agency is critical. Key elements of the plan should include public health and safety concerns; partnering agencies should be registered 501c3's or a municipality; partners must be committed to abiding by all local, state and federal regulations; and the recognized humane standards of care should be afforded to every animal being transported. The partnership should also work together to improve the source shelter standards while also addressing community overpopulation issues, effectively striving to eliminate the need for continued transfers.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Cruelty/Neglect Cases

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control agencies should implement comprehensive policies based on State and local laws for the seizure, care and disposition of animals involved in cruelty or neglect cases. These types of cases include, but are not limited to abuse, neglect, hoarding and animal fighting. It is important for animal care and control agencies to recognize these animals as victims of a crime. Such policies should address care, housing, evaluation, treatment and disposition utilizing all available resources. It is important that these policies include cooperation with animal care, animal control agencies, animal welfare organizations, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. If necessary, legislative changes to existing laws are encouraged to facilitate such policies.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel routinely seize or receive animals as the result of cruelty or neglect cases. These animals have medical conditions, physical injuries and behavioral issues that present challenges to care, housing and disposition resulting in substantial costs to agencies. Often court cases and legal proceedings lead to lengthy holding periods further challenging agencies resources. Actual animals are almost never physically presented as “evidence” in legal proceedings. Unlike inanimate physical evidence, forensic evidence or documented evidence, animals require considerable care and treatment pending any criminal case outcome and can suffer from prolonged confinement despite exemplary care. Each animal should be considered individually as a victim of criminal conduct regardless of breed or the charges involved. NACA recognizes that state statutes regarding holding periods & animal dispositions vary widely; therefore, animal care and control agencies should carefully review appropriate laws accordingly. NACA recommends changes to laws that require lengthy animal hold periods for court cases and also recommends setting up legislation that requires owners to pay a bond to maintain ownership of the animal. Animal care and control agencies, animal welfare organizations, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system should form cooperative working agreements to facilitate timely, positive outcomes that benefit the community and the animals.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control agencies should:

Establish procedures for evidence collection, animal identification & documentation and forensic reporting at the scene of any seizure designed to reduce or alleviate the need to hold animals as “evidence” pending any final legal proceeding;

Provide immediate and ongoing veterinary evaluation & care for each animal seized as needed for any medical condition, physical injury or behavioral issue through disposition;



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Provide suitable, humane housing for each animal according to its age, condition and size that supports the physical and psychological health of each animal through animal best-practices including diet, environmental enrichment and adequate exercise (when possible outside the standard kennel enclosure);

Work with law enforcement, judicial, and legislative bodies to establish a bond or similar legal provision that provides for a prompt legal seizure hearing in addition to the posting of bond and medical charges incurred in the care of the animals prior to disposition;

Provide or allow for a behavioral evaluation of each animal to determine appropriate disposition;

Work with law enforcement, judicial and legislative bodies to establish an effective and expeditious legal process for bringing cases to trial in order to minimize animal holding periods after any bond or seizure hearing;

Establish a disposition protocol that seeks the appropriate transfer, adoption or alternative placement of the animals according to their medical, behavioral and legal status recognizing that euthanasia may result if no appropriate placement is available

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Euthanasia

Guideline Statement

NACA considers the lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital, administered by competent, trained personnel, to be the only method of choice utilized for humane euthanasia of animal shelter dogs and cats. NACA acknowledges that there are agencies legally restricted in their ability to obtain sodium pentobarbital. In such cases the alternative must be to seek out local veterinarians to provide euthanasia services utilizing sodium pentobarbital. NACA condemns the use of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, nitrous oxide, argon, or anesthetic gases as well as physical methods such as electrocution, gunshot, and blunt force trauma for animal shelter euthanasia of dogs and cats.

Basis for Guideline

Sodium pentobarbital meets more of the criteria set by the American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia than any other method of euthanasia. Until a more sophisticated method meeting all the criteria are met, it is the responsibility of those performing euthanasia to use the best method now available and to use it with skill, compassion, and consistency.

Guideline Recommendation

Euthanasia should be performed by a minimum of two persons and only by persons who are trained in humane euthanasia procedures and can demonstrate their ability in accordance with methods put forth in training approved by the National Animal Care and Control Association, the Humane Society of the United States, the American Humane Association, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, The American Veterinary Medical Association, or an accredited educational institution. NACA very strongly urges agencies that are unable to legally obtain sodium pentobarbital, to work diligently towards passing legislation which would allow direct purchase of euthanasia drugs by licensed shelters, and require training and certification of staff.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Limited Access Shelters/Rescue Groups

Guideline Statement

Limited access shelters/rescue groups can serve a valuable purpose within a community by providing long-term adoption prospects for a limited number of animals while meeting all state and local codes.

Basis for Guideline

In an effort to find homes for as many animals as possible and reduce euthanasia rates, all organizations that shelter animals must work together to provide the greatest opportunity for adoption without prejudice towards organizations that euthanize animals.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recognizes a community cooperative approach to reducing pet overpopulation. This collaborative and proactive approach should include animal care and control agencies and rescue groups working together to place all healthy, adoptable animals with families in their community. NACA recommends that all localities have a full service shelter that accepts stray, unwanted, homeless, or feral animals regardless of prospective adoption potential and provides them with humane care and treatment, including euthanasia, if necessary. All appropriate state and local codes with regards to the care, treatment, and housing of animals must be followed.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Pound Seizure

Guideline Statement

The National Animal Care and Control Association opposes pound seizure laws (which mandates of the transfer of live animals from animal care and control agencies to research).

Basis for Guideline

Pound seizure laws infringe upon the rights of animal care and control agencies to determine the fate of animals in their care. In addition, such laws hinder the efforts of progressive animal care and control agencies to promote animal welfare in a collective atmosphere of public trust. Lastly, animal research is clearly a personal decision which should be decided by individual animal owners without involvement of animal care and control agencies.

Guideline Recommendation

The National Animal Care and Control Association encourages repeal of existing pound seizure laws. Owners who wish to relinquish their animals to research facilities should do so directly to the research facility.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Disposition of Animals – Release of Sheltered Animals

Guideline Statement

All animals should be neutered/spayed prior to the adoptive owner taking possession of an animal.

Nuisance animals (those impounded for multiple offenses) should be spayed/neutered as above.

No live animals should be released from an animal care and control agency for laboratory purposes.

Basis for Guideline

To reduce the number of stray and unwanted animals in the community.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control agencies should have broad powers to require spaying/neutering of animals in compliance with state laws or local ordinances.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns - Animal Care & Control Personnel – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of Dependent Persons

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control personnel respond frequently to situations where children, elders or disabled persons are involved or are simply present. NACA supports the requirement that animal care and control personnel be mandatory reporters of suspected abuse of these dependent persons.

Basis for Guideline

1. It is not necessary for animal care and control personnel to be experts in preventing abuse of dependent persons or that are they certain that such abuse exists. Rather, an informed, well-intentioned suspicion that a situation may involve at-risk or abused individuals should compel a call to the appropriate authorities who will then take such action as is necessary. These organizational systems are much like animal cruelty investigators determining whether enough information is available and evidence valid to be actionable.
2. Extensive training materials are available from the federal and state governments and local adult or child abuse prevention organizations. Such materials and trainers can provide individual agency staffs and participants at state animal control training conferences with materials and procedures addressing the recognition and reporting of suspected abuse.
3. Such cross-reporting would have no budgetary impact and minimal workload impact beyond including findings in existing reports and making a call to the state's 24-hour adult or child abuse hotline.
4. Most, if not all, cross-reporting statutes accord reporters full immunity from civil and criminal liability for making a report in good faith.
5. In many states, all citizens are designated as mandated reporters of child or elder/dependent adult abuse. Animal care and control personnel, while not specifically identified in such statutes, should be familiar with these provisions and be prepared to respond accordingly.



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Guideline Recommendation

NACA supports and encourages legislation that includes animal care and control personnel on the list of mandated reporters of suspected abuse of dependent persons where they are not already included. NACA suggests animal care and control personnel receive education regarding the recognition of and response to suspected abuse of dependent persons. Additionally, NACA recommends agencies develop protocols and procedures to achieve this.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on March 31, 2016.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Community Cat Management

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control personnel should be empowered to manage all feral, community, stray, and unowned cats within the community. Management may include but is not limited to enactment and enforcement of cat-related laws, education, targeted Trap-Neuter-Return programs, low income and free spay/neuter programs and assisting local grassroots groups in TRN related activities.

Basis for Guideline

The basis of the policy is to protect the public and the community to minimize the potential for a rabies outbreak. A community cat, sometimes referred to as a feral cat, is defined as a cat that has been born in the wild or has lived outdoors for an extended period of and is likely unsocialized and unadoptable. A stray cat is one that is at large or escaped from an owner. An owned cat has been claimed by a person who provides the essentials including food, water, shelter, and veterinary care.

Guideline Recommendation

To protect community, stray, and owned cats, all local and state governments should pass laws requiring the vaccination of all cats in their community. The law should also require that all owned cats be identified with a microchip, tattoo or identification tag so as to distinguish them from community cats.

NACA recognizes that methods such as “trap and remove” have proven to be ineffective at reducing community cat populations and nuisance complaints and recommends, humane management programs, including Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). Furthermore animal care and control personnel should be trained in effective conflict resolution techniques to help mitigate nuisance complaints by residents.

NACA advocates for effective public education related to cats, active, cost-effective spay and neutering initiatives for cats and responsible care for all cats.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on November 21, 2018.

John W. Thompson, Executive Director
National Animal Care & Control Association



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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Dangerous/Vicious Animals

Guideline Statement

Dangerous and/or vicious animals should be labeled as such as a result of their actions or behavior and not because of their breed.

Basis for Guideline

Any animal may exhibit aggressive behavior regardless of breed. Accurately identifying a specific animal's lineage for prosecution purposes may be extremely difficult. Additionally, breed specific legislation may create an undue burden to owners who otherwise have demonstrated proper pet management and responsibility.

Guideline Recommendation

An animal care and control agency is encouraged to have a dangerous/vicious dog ordinance. Mandatory micro-chipping for identification purposes should be a part of the ordinances.

Animal care and control agencies should encourage enactment and stringent enforcement of dangerous/vicious dog laws. When applicable, the agencies should not hesitate to prosecute owners for murder, manslaughter, or similar violations resulting from their animal's actions, and their owner's lack of responsibility. Laws should clearly define "dangerous" or "vicious", and provide for established penalties. Penalties may include fines, imprisonment, and/or the relinquishing of total privileges to pet ownership.

If a dangerous/vicious animal is allowed to be kept, laws should specify methods of secure confinement and control. A dangerous/vicious animal when kept outside should be confined in an escape-proof enclosure which is locked and secured on all six sides. Signs should be posted at property entrances and be visible from the nearest sidewalk or street. The licensing record could include a notation which will immediately identify an animal which has been deemed dangerous or vicious. Records should be kept on all dogs deemed dangerous/vicious. These records can include but not limited to: owner information, animal information, offense information and a recent picture of the animal.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns - Dangerous/Vicious Dogs - Resource Document

The National Animal Care & Control Association recommends that municipalities have ordinances and policies to address dangerous or vicious dogs in their jurisdictions in an effort to protect the community. This resource document can serve as a general tool for dangerous/vicious dog panels or committees, attorneys, animal control officers, judges, law enforcement, and any other interested individual or group. However, this document does not supersede state or local law.

1. What is the act(s) that led to an allegation of dangerous/vicious dog?
 - a. Date of occurrence
 - b. Location of occurrence
 - c. Detailed description of occurrence
2. Who is the owner/custodian of the dog(s)? If under 18, who is the parent(s)?
 - a. Full name
 - b. Complete address
 - c. Phone number(s)
3. Description of the dog(s)
 - a. Age, weight/size, breed, sex, spayed/neutered, color(s), microchip/tattoo or other identification
4. Victim information (animal or person)
 - a. If person: Name, address, telephone (if under 18, parent/guardian information)
 - b. If animal: Name, address, telephone of owner
 - i. Description of animal: species, age, weight, breed, sex, color(s)
 - c. Severity of incident/injuries
 - i. Minor/moderate/major bite(s)
 - ii. Death of victim (animal or person)
 - iii. What, if any, medical treatment was obtained? Emergency or regular visit?
5. Previous history (if known)
 - a. Attacked other animals/people?
 - b. Declared potentially dangerous, dangerous or vicious in this state or another?
 - c. Veterinary history?
6. Evidence
 - a. Testimony from, but not limited to:



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- i. Witness
- ii. Owner
- iii. Victim
- iv. Veterinarian or physician
- v. Animal Control Officer
- vi. Police or Sheriff
- b. Written statements
 - i. Signed and dated
 - ii. Notarized if possible
- c. Medical or veterinary bills (medical information may be subject to the HIPAA Privacy Rule)
- d. Photographs
- e. Police or animal control reports
7. Summary

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on February 23, 2016.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Exotics

Guideline Statement

NACA opposes the keeping, sale, or breeding of exotic or nontraditional animals as pets.

Basis for Guideline

Exotic animals are becoming more accessible. The general public lacks the ability to properly house and care for exotic animals, which places the public and the animals at undue risk. This creates the risk of zoonotic diseases and a risk to public health and safety.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA urges state, city and county animal care and control agencies to pass laws or ordinances banning the selling or keeping of exotic or nontraditional animals as pets. Additionally, NACA recommends that any owner of exotics have the necessary permits required by law and that they have a disaster plan in place and on file with the local animal care and control agency.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Law Enforcement / Canine Training

Guideline Statement

Law enforcement officers should receive training in canine behavior to better provide those officers with all of the training and tools available to safely respond to a call involving a dog and to use the least amount of force necessary to protect the public, the officer, and the dog.

Basis for Guideline

Recent video of dogs being shot by law enforcement officers have made local and national headlines and have raised the public's interest in ensuring that law enforcement is properly trained in canine behavior and handling. Given the proper training and tools, law enforcement should be able to quickly assess a dog's behavior and respond accordingly.

Guideline Recommendation

Law enforcement officers are often the first personnel to respond to a citizen's complaint of a loose and possibly aggressive dog, or to simply respond to a scene where there is a dog on the property. While animal care and control personnel have come to learn, through training and experience, how a dog is likely to respond in any given situation, those local law enforcement officers have not been provided any such training and, when confronted by a dog, may react differently than would an animal control officer. In many such situations, the dog is shot when other less drastic means of force could have and should have been attempted. This is not the fault of the law enforcement officer, as they used the level of force they felt was necessary given the situation and the training and experience they have had to-date.

The intent of any canine behavior training for law enforcement is to provide those officers with the necessary tools to quickly assess a dog and its behavior, and to determine if the dog does actually pose a threat to the officer. Several states are now starting to mandate such training and law enforcement is able to receive training through their academy or continuing education. The training should emphasize canine behavior recognition, how to diffuse a situation with a dog, and alternatives to lethal force. Collaboration between the animal care and control personnel and law enforcement will ensure that both parties have an understanding of each group's experiences, and the training developed as a result of this collaboration should be beneficial to all parties.



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It must be understood by all of the parties involved that, in certain circumstances, the amount of force necessary may still be lethal force. In such circumstances, however, the law enforcement will be better able to describe what they observed and their rationale for using lethal force.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 15, 2015.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Nuisance Livestock and Wildlife

Guideline Statement

It is a logical extension of an animal care and control agency's responsibilities to provide a reasonable response to nuisance livestock and nuisance wildlife complaints, providing it is budgeted properly for such duties. Agencies providing such services should have their personnel attend proper training for such duties.

Basis for Guideline

The public served will most often contact animal care and control agencies for assistance and/or referral on livestock or wildlife problems. The agency's ability to respond will serve to enhance its value in the community and provide a safe alternative to public involvement concerning this type of call.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control agencies should establish programs with appropriate agencies to determine respective responsibility in handling particular nuisance complaints. Such programs will require sometimes costly, specialized equipment. Housing responsibility, if any, should be established. Animal care and control personnel should receive adequate training in the proper capture and handling of such animals.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Policy and Procedure Manuals

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control agencies and organizations must have policies and procedures in place for the efficient operation of their facilities. These policies and procedures detail how the agency accomplishes its Mission Statement and provides guidance to the personnel. Employees should sign an acknowledgment that they have received these policies and procedures and agree to abide by them.

Basis for Guideline

Clear, well-thought out policies and procedures provide guidance to the animal care and control personnel as to how to perform their duties, and to ensure that duties and animal care are performed in a consistent manner. Absent these policies and procedures, employees are likely to create their own procedures to accomplish a task. An employee's failure to adhere to these policies and procedures may result in the discipline of the employee.

Guideline Recommendations

A policy and procedure manual should include the topics listed below, but this list is not all-inclusive. Agencies should include additional policies or procedures as they deem necessary. These policies and procedures should be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as needed.

Administration

- Administrative Hearings
- Assisting the Public
- Cash Handling
- Citizen Complaints
- Computer Use
- Controlled Substances
- Hazard Communication Program
- Hours of Operation



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- Media Relations/Communication
- Policy and Procedure Manual Review
- Report of Missing or Damaged Property
- Vehicle Accident Reporting Procedures
- Waiver/Adjustment and Billing of Fees

Animal Sheltering

- Adoption Policy
- Animal Handling Restraint/Safety
- Animal Intake Procedure
- Biomedical Waste Disposal
- Disposition of Animals
- Feeding Protocols
- Fostering Animals
- Life Saving Initiatives/Euthanasia Reduction
- Lost/Found Reporting
- Medical Protocol for Incoming Animals
- Rabies Quarantine Procedures
- Transfers to Partner Shelters/Rescue Groups
- Treatment Protocol for Sick/Injured Animals

Euthanasia

- Euthanasia Certification
- Euthanasia in the Field

Field Operations

- Chemical Immobilization
- Emergency Operations Procedures
- Field Training Officer Program
- Firearms
- General Investigations and Complaints
- Mandated Reporter (Child Abuse/Elder Abuse) Requirements
- Officer Safety/Training Requirements

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- Patrol Activity Priorities
- Radio Communications
- Report Writing
- Return of Impounded Animals in the Field
- Use of Force

Personnel

- Chain of Command
- Employee Performance Appraisals
- Injury and illness prevention program
- Light Duty Program (for injured employees)
- Progressive Discipline
- Reporting Absences from Work
- Rules of Conduct
- Uniform and General Appearance
- Volunteers

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 29, 2015.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Training Collars

Guideline Statement

There are a variety of collars available for use on dogs and certain types of collars may be necessary in certain situations. Training collars, such as choke chains, pinch collars and shock collars should only be used on dogs if all other methods of training have been unsuccessful.

Basis for Guideline

Every dog should wear a collar, most importantly to hold the dog's license, rabies and microchip tags as well as to attach to a leash. Collars may also be used in training a dog. While there are a variety of collars available to dog owners, care should be given to ensure that the proper collar is used to maintain control of the dog while minimizing the stress, pain and discomfort to the dog.

Guideline Recommendations

Choke chain

As the name implies, this collar is made of metal links and is designed to control your dog by tightening around your dog's neck. It is supposed to sit high up on the dog's neck just behind her ears.

Unfortunately, there is no way to control how much the choke chain tightens, so it's possible to choke or strangle your dog. A choke chain may also cause other problems, such as injuries to the trachea and esophagus, injuries to blood vessels in the eyes, neck sprains, nerve damage, fainting, transient paralysis, and even death.

If a person insists on using a choke chain, they should consult an experienced trainer to learn how to properly size, fit, and use it. A dog should never be left unsupervised while wearing a choke chain as the chain could catch on something and choke the dog.

Prong or pinch

A prong or pinch collar is comprised of a control loop of chain attached to a series of fang-shaped metal links, or prongs, with blunted points. When the control loop is pulled, the prongs pinch the loose skin of your dog's neck.

Like the choke chain, the prong collar must be properly fitted. The size of the prong links should be appropriate for the size of the dog. The collar should sit

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high up on the dog's neck, just behind his ears. The fit should be snug, so the prong links can't shift to the front of the dog's neck where they might pinch the dog's trachea.

Shock collars

Shock collars use electric current passing through metal contact points on a collar to give a dog a signal. This electric signal can range from a mild tickling sensation to a painful shock.

Shock collars are sold as training devices and to stop barking. They are also used with pet containment (electronic fencing) systems.

The least humane and most controversial use of the shock collar is as a training device. The trainer can administer a shock to a dog at a distance through a remote control. There is a greater chance for abuse (delivery of shocks as punishment) or misuse (poor timing of shocks). A dog also may associate the painful shock with people or other experiences, leading to fearful or aggressive behavior.

Electronic fencing uses shock collars to deliver a shock when the dog approaches the boundaries of the "fenced" area. Typically, the shock is preceded by a tone to warn the dog that it is about to get shocked.

Caution! Shock collars can irritate and inflame a dog's neck. Take these steps to avoid problems:

- Don't leave the electronic collar on for an extended length of time.
- Clean your dog's neck and the contact points that touch your dog's neck regularly.

Bark control

Though several types of collars are available to control excessive or unwanted barking, none of them address the root cause of the barking. Dogs can bark for several reasons, such as fear or territorial behavior. Though some bark collars may reduce barking, they will not reduce the stress that causes a dog to bark.

- **Spray:** Barking causes these collars to emit a burst of citronella or air, which interrupts and deters a dog from barking. Spray collars sometimes don't react to high-pitched barks, making them ineffective. **Tip:** Don't use a spray collar when the dog is with another dog as the other dog's bark may trigger the dog's collar.

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- **Ultrasonic:** When a dog barks, the ultrasonic collar interrupts the dog by emitting a sound only the dog can hear. As with the spray collar, this should only be used when only one dog is present.
- **Shock:** The least humane is the shock collar which delivers an electrical shock to your dog when he barks.

Aversive Collars

NACA discourages the use of choke chains, pinch collars or electric shock collars as these are aversive in nature and use pain to try and correct a dog's behavior. A dog that is corrected by the use of such a device may not be able to associate the pain with the behavior and thus the dog may, instead, become fearful of being taken for a walk or being around strangers. If a dog owner is having problems controlling their dog, NACA recommends that the dog owner first try positive reinforcement to correct the behavior and, if that fails, seek out the expertise of a dog trainer that uses positive reinforcement training for additional assistance.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 15, 2015.

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Extended Animal Care & Control Concerns – Wildlife/Hybrids as Pets

Guideline Statement

NACA opposes the keeping, sale, or breeding of wildlife and wildlife hybrids as pets.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control agencies commonly receive complaints concerning this matter. Common complaints include inadequate housing, insufficient medical attention, removal of natural defenses, and confinement related stress. The high mortality rates associated with the capture and transport of wild animals and the serious depletion of wild populations are important factors. NACA feels that the breeding of hybrids instills a false impression of security to the public and creates a danger to public health and safety. In addition the effectiveness of rabies vaccinations in hybrids is unknown and, as such, puts the public at risk in cases of bites or exposures.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA urges animal care and control agencies to take steps to make the selling, keeping, or breeding of wild or hybrid animals as prohibitive as possible.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Humane Education

Guideline Statement

The National Animal Care and Control Association recognizes the long term value to an agency, the community and the pets within a community when there are active Humane Education Programs in place. The correlation between child abuse, animal abuse and violence against humans has become ever more evident in recent times.

Basis for Guideline

Teaching compassion, kindness and empathy towards both domestic animals and wildlife, leads to the acceptance and foresight of responsible animal interactions to community members of any age.

Guide Line Recommendation

Establishing active education programs in schools with youth groups and community groups encourages participation in raising the overall unspoken awareness of the importance of responsible pet ownership. Programs that create awareness of spay/neuter programs, vaccination clinics, and other pet related community events gets the pet owning population involved. Presentations at school assemblies, in classrooms, and projects with teachers and youth group leaders can create a rapport with school age children that can last a lifetime. Creating partnerships and becoming involved with local law enforcement outreach activities can build a positive perception with citizens. Youth groups, senior groups, and special needs groups are all excellent targets for education programs. Outreach programs such as those involving prisons have been very successful in teaching inmates that it is ok to have feelings, and to show empathy.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 15, 2015.

George W. Harding, IV MBA CAWA
Executive Director
National Animal Care & Control Association



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Injured Animals

Guideline Statement

Injured animal rescues legitimately fall within the range of animal care and 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 and that medical care costs money. The animal owner should be responsible for those costs so, if an 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/impoundment begins. In addition, impoundment costs may hinder the owner's ability to financially provide immediate medical attention to the animal, thus every effort should be made to identify an owner prior to the impoundment.

Guideline Recommendation

If an owner can be located prior to the rescue/impoundment of the animal, the owner should be given the opportunity to transport their own animal for veterinary care. If the owner cannot provide the transportation, then it will depend upon the animal care and control agency's policies as to whether the animal care and control personnel can transport the animal on behalf of the owner.

When all efforts to locate the owner have been exhausted, animal care and control agencies should have a plan in place to provide for veterinary care. 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 care and control agency. Each agency shall predetermine the degree of injuries that cannot be financially or adequately addressed for animals whose owners cannot be identified, taking into consideration any mandated holding periods. NACA supports such holding periods, but under no circumstances should an injured animal be allowed to suffer. Detailed documentation by a licensed veterinarian should accompany the decision to euthanize a licensed animal prior to expiration of the legal holding period.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Leash/Restraint Laws

Guideline Statement

There can be no justification for allowing pets to roam. State and/or local statutes should prohibit owners from allowing their pets to go uncontrolled on or off the owner's premises.

Basis for Guideline

Free-roaming cats and dogs contribute enormously to the numbers of surplus, unwanted animals found in animal care and control agency shelters everywhere. A free-roaming animal is exposed to such hazards as disease from other animals, injury or death from traffic, retaliation by irate property owners, or poisoning from the ingestion of garbage. Many of these animals are responsible for causing injury or death in traffic accidents, bites, or by indirect means. Free-roaming animals may attack livestock, other pet animals, or wildlife. Pet overpopulation is directly related to the free-roaming of cats and dogs. This results in the need for shelters to collectively destroy millions of these animals yearly.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control personnel should receive local or state powers to issue citations for violations. Progressive penalties should be clearly defined in the statutes, and should include provisions for totally striking all ownership privileges for specific violations or repetitive violations. Animals are not the violators, owners are. All efforts to return the animal to the proper owner in lieu of impoundments should be utilized, unless it is in the animal's best interest or other circumstances dictate. NACA recommends that laws clearly define "restraint/control", to include adequate physical confinement on the premises of the owner.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Lost Animals

Guideline Statement

All local animal care and control agencies should make every effort to maintain reports of lost animals.

Basis for Guideline

Each year thousands of dogs and cats are reported as lost to local animal care and control agencies. Of those reported lost, occasionally an animal may be impounded, legally held, and euthanized. Lost animal reports can help to prevent this tragedy, if such reports are compared with impounded, injured, or dead animals.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recognizes that animal care and control agencies charged with handling large volumes of animals on a daily basis may not realistically be able to compare every animal against every lost/found animal report, but if such reports are kept, they can be organized to provide a valuable source for possible owners of impounded animals. Owners of lost animals should be encouraged to complete a lost form or report the loss personally, as well as provide a recent photo of the lost pet.

Lost forms should be filled out completely with detailed information describing the animal. If the owner is uncertain of their pet's breed, animal care and control agencies should provide a chart depicting the most common dog or cat breeds to help the owner determine the breed the animal most resembles. Mixed breed files could be categorized by the most predominate breed. Ultimately, large volume shelters must stress to owners the vital importance of personal visits to the shelter for the purpose of looking for lost pets. Visits should fall within the legal holding periods, and even beyond. Without exception, all injured and dead animals should be compared against lost reports. Reports should be updated daily.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Patrol/Sentry/Rescue Dogs

Guideline Statement

Dogs trained for sentry, patrol, and rescue purposes serve a need in today's society. NACA recognizes the use of dogs trained for drug enforcement, police work, and military operations providing that humane methods of training are utilized. Adoptions for such purposes only to recognized police, military, or disaster rescue operations should be considered.

Basis for Guideline

A dog trained for such duties by knowledgeable, qualified trainers or handlers generally receives extensive socialization training, as well, making the animal an asset to society, rather than a liability.

Guideline Recommendation

Police and military trainers generally possess the necessary knowledge and training to adequately engage in this specialized training. NACA recommends that these dogs be kept in the same manner or confinement as dogs deemed as dangerous or vicious, when kept by the handler in the home environment; except that disaster rescue dogs or drug enforcement dogs may carry less stringent confinement specifications. These dogs should be licensed by their immediate, designated handlers. Except when engaged in "on duty" operations or activities, law enforcement patrol or assistance dogs and their owners should be subject to existing leash/restraint laws.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Ballistic Protective Vests

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control personnel should be offered ballistic protective vests (commonly referred to as "bullet proof vests") as part of their standard equipment. Each ballistic vest should properly fit the individual employee, inspected and replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended standards. Policies, procedures and guidelines for the use of ballistic vests should mirror local law enforcement agency standard operating procedures.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel encounter individuals with the same or greater frequency than regular law enforcement officers. Some of these individuals engage in criminal activity, are armed and can present an immediate threat to officer safety.

The basis of the policy recognizes that many animal care and control personnel now deal with the same violent felons and armed criminals as other law enforcement officers. The number of assaults on animal care and control personnel has increased and officers have been shot and killed in the course of their duties.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control personnel should be offered adequate personal protection gear that provides protection from the dangers and threats to their personal safety that they may encounter in their daily duties.

Animal care and control personnel should not be given old, re-issued or re-used ballistic vests that are no longer certified to provide ballistic protection or do not provide ballistic protection due to improper fit.

Animal care and control personnel should receive proper training and instruction on the care, maintenance and use of ballistic vests.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Bite Stick

Guideline Statement

Bite sticks may be used as a defensive tool to provide animal care and control personnel with non-lethal force for dealing with aggressive animals. Use of a bite stick for personal protection from humans should be in accordance with agency training, policies, and procedures.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel frequently encounter hostile or aggressive animals and people. Those employees must be able to defend themselves in order to retreat to call for assistance without placing their life in imminent danger.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that no animal care and control personnel be permitted to carry or use a bite stick without proper animal related training. NACA further recommends that any agency approving the use of this item must have a written policy regarding their use and insure proper training.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Minimum Kennel Staffing Needs

Guideline Statement

The National Animal Care and Control Association recommends that each animal care and control shelter be staffed each day with the appropriate number of kennel personnel to ensure that the facility, and every animal within, is maintained at, or in excess of, minimum care standards. Animal housing facilities should be operated so that each animal is properly cared for in a safe and humane manner and a safe working environment for employees is maintained.

Basis for Guideline

Every animal housing facility should strive to meet, or exceed, the minimum care standards for animal shelter facilities. It is the responsibility of the facility to maintain a staffing level that insures that the standards are met on a daily basis and that every animal housed within is provided the highest level of care.

Formula for Determining Kennel Staffing Needs

_____		_____
(Human Population)	Multiplied by 7% =	(Incoming Animal Population Per Year)
_____		_____
(Incoming Animals Per Year)	Divided by 365 (days per year)	(Incoming Animals Per Day)
_____		_____
(Incoming Animals Per Day)	Times Four* Day Holding Period =	(Animals in Shelter Per Day)
_____		_____
(Animals in Shelter Per Day)	Times fifteen minutes** per animal =	(Number of Minutes Needed)
_____		_____
(Minutes Needed)	Divided by 60 (minutes) =	(Number of Hours Needed)
_____		_____
(Number of Hours Needed)	Divided by 3*** (hours for cleaning/feeding) =	(Staff Needed Per Day)

This formula is intended as a guideline. Any individual facility may require more or less kennel personnel to meet, or exceed, minimum care standards.



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* The HSUS is using the average holding period of four days as a basis for this study. Some animals may be held for a much shorter period; however, many animals may be held for a period exceeding the four day requirement.

** This formula is based on a per-animal time of nine minutes for cleaning and six minutes for feeding.

*** These three hours are solely for the performance of these two tasks, but allowing for further time in the day to perform routine maintenance tasks such as laundry, dishes, lost and found checks, etc.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Pepper Spray/Citronella

Guideline Statement

Pepper Spray and Citronella may be used as non-lethal deterrents to deal with aggressive dogs, wildlife, or hostile people in accordance with specific training. Pepper Spray or Citronella should never be used on cats.

Basis for Guideline

Chemical deterrent sprays are viable alternatives to lethal force when dealing with some aggressive animals and may provide a level of protection against hostile people. NACA recognizes that these chemicals do not work on all species of animals or people in all situations.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that no animal care and control personnel be permitted to carry or use Pepper Spray or Citronella Spray without proper animal related training. NACA further recommends that any agency approving the use of these items must have a written policy regarding their use and insure proper training.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Portable Radios

Guideline Statement

All local agencies should provide all animal care and control personnel with portable radios/cellular telephones/direct personal communication devices in addition to vehicle radios.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel spend a great deal of their day outside of their patrol vehicle. They may be pursuing a stray animal on foot or, while away from their vehicle, encounter an aggressive animal or a hostile animal owner. This equipment allows those employees to call for help or backup in case of emergency.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recognizes that some agencies' budgets are limited and raising funds can be very challenging. That being said, the safety of the animal care and control personnel and liability concerns should be first and foremost when deciding how to spend funds available to that agency. Also, employees should be required to carry any issued radio at ALL times while on duty. Inherent in this guideline is the assumption that another employee, be it a supervisor or dispatcher, will also have a radio to monitor the communications.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Pre-exposure Rabies Immunizations

Guideline Statement

All personnel working in the field of animal care and control that routinely handle wild animals, should be protected from the possibility of the exposure of rabies.

Basis for Guideline

The rise of rabies in wild animal populations combined with the increased frequency of animal care and control personnel handling wildlife, places those personnel at a higher risk to exposure than the average citizen.

Guideline Recommendation

Agencies should provide their animal care and control personnel with pre-exposure rabies immunization programs. Failure to do so could result in increased liability for the agency.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Safety and Wellness

Guideline Statement

The field of animal care and control is a difficult and sometimes dangerous profession. Animal care and control personnel should be provided the necessary training and equipment to fulfill their duties and also to ensure their safety on the job. In addition, those personnel should be encouraged to maintain an optimum level of physical fitness so as to minimize their risk of being injured while on the job.

Basis for Guideline

Personnel in the animal care and control profession face a variety of risks while conducting their jobs, some of which are within their control and some of which are not. The most obvious risks are those that are encountered on a daily basis, specifically dealing with animals and/or people. Fearful, un-socialized or aggressive animals and combative, uncooperative people put animal care and control personnel at risk every day. Other, less obvious risk factors, however, may also threaten the safety and wellness of the employee. In order to minimize the risks to the animal care and control personnel, training and the proper equipment must be provided.

While training and equipment may help to reduce the risk of injury or harm to an animal care and control employee, that employee also has an obligation to maintain their physical and mental health and well-being. A healthy diet, the elimination of smoking and alcohol, and a physical fitness regimen will help to ensure the employee stays on the job for years to come. Agencies should also ensure that their personnel have access to confidential counselling to help deal with the stress of the profession.

Guideline Recommendations

Animal care and control staff should be provided with training in the areas detailed below. In addition, in order to ensure the continued safety and well-being of the employees, these trainings should be provided on a regular basis to the animal care and control personnel. They should also be encouraged to pursue Continuing Education (C.E.) courses in these areas or in other areas applicable to their job description and duties.

- AED (Automated external defibrillator)
- Animal behavior (on all species)
- Animal handling/restraint (on all species)

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- Back safety/lifting techniques
- Baton/Asp/Bite stick
- Compassion fatigue
- Confined spaces
- CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- Defensive driving
- Disaster response
- Distracted driving
- Ergonomics
- First aid (Human and Pet)
- Hazardous materials
- Livestock/large animal handling
- Officer safety
- PPE (Personal protective equipment)
- Radio usage
- Scene assessment
- Self-defense
- Slackwater safety
- Stress management
- Swiftwater safety
- Tactical Operations (Search warrants/hoarding cases)
- Technical rescues
- Vehicle and equipment maintenance/safety
- Verbal judo
- Wildland fire safety
- Wildlife
- Zoonotics

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 29, 2015.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Training Certification and Minimum Training Requirements

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control personnel should receive comprehensive training in all aspects of their duties and should seek, and be provided, certification for the completion of such training.

Basis for Guideline

Comprehensive and standardized training provides animal care and control personnel with the basic and advanced skills to professionally and effectively perform the functions of their position.

Guideline Recommendation

A standardized training certification program should be developed for all personnel. The training should be comprehensive and, at minimum, include professional standards, administrative functions and operational functions to allow the personnel to be prepared, trained and capable to appropriately resolve any issue presented to them in the capacity of animal care and control personnel. The training should be inclusive of all functions and expectations of personnel. Beyond initial training, animal care and control personnel should be provided opportunities for continuing education, both refresher courses and new and/or advanced topics regularly throughout their career. The National Animal Care and Control Association Training Manual can serve as a guide in developing appropriate training programs.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Personnel Training and Safety – Use of Electro Muscular Disruption Device (EMDD) on Animals

Guideline Statement

The use of any Electro-Muscular Disruptive Devices (EMDD) (more commonly known by the trade name "Taser") is not recommended by NACA for use on animals for routine capture or restraint. NACA, however, acknowledges there are situations when an EMDD may be used as a last course of restraint, or stopping tool, to protect the life and safety of the animal control officer, the public and other animals. Departments may issue EMDDs as a defensive tool to provide animal care and control personnel with non-lethal force in response to aggressive animals (excluding cats or smaller animals) in accordance with agency training, policies and procedures. EMDD's should never be used on domestic cats or other small animals.

Basis for Guideline

NACA recognizes the use of certain weapons may cause serious injury or death to animals in situations of normal use. NACA does not support the use of EMDD's in the normal course of animal care and control activities but supports the use of force for the prevention of injury and protection of life only. The use of such equipment can lead to serious liability

Guideline Recommendations

NACA does not recommend the use of any EMDD for the routine capture or restraint of animals. NACA recommends that animal care and control personnel may be permitted to carry an EMDD to provide animal care and control personnel with non-lethal force to protect the life and safety of humans and animals. NACA further recommends that any agency approving the use of this device for animals must have a written policy which includes a deployment protocol, training, humane veterinary care treatment provisions, reporting and review of use after deployment, and a prohibition on use against domestic cats or other small animals..

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on October 9, 2019.

John W. Thompson, Executive Director
National Animal Care & Control Association



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Personnel Training and Safety – Vehicle Safety

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control personnel should receive driver safety training appropriate to their profession and be provided vehicles equipped with appropriate safety equipment and lighting.

Basis for Guideline

Animal care and control personnel should be familiar with the vehicles that they operate on a daily basis as these vehicles have certain characteristics that present unique operational limitations relating to vehicle safety. A complete vehicle safety check should be completed prior to each shift, including but not limited to: checking tires (both tread and air pressure), headlights, tail lights, flashers, turning signals, brake lights, all fluid levels, wiper blades, filters, belts and hoses.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal care and control personnel should be provided with defensive driving training using the animal control transport vehicle that they will be operating while on patrol. Special emphasis should be given to backing and turning as well as slow operation of vehicles following animals in residential settings. In addition, animal care and control personnel should receive training regarding general maintenance requirements in order to spot potential safety hazards.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Pet Protective Orders

Guideline Statement

NACA recognizes the link between animal abuse and domestic violence. Pets should be included in Protective orders.

Basis for Guideline

There is a well-documented connection between domestic violence and animal abuse. Many victims of domestic abuse have reported that their pet has also be threatened, injured or killed by their abuser. Victims of abuse are less likely to leave their abuser if they cannot bring their pet(s) along to ensure their safety. For victims of abuse (both adults and children), their pet(s) may be one of the only positive connections in their life.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA encourages states to pass laws to include pets in protective orders and to encourage human shelters for victims of domestic violence to have a policy that includes housing for pets.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on May 15, 2015.

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Promotion of Proper Pet Responsibility – Pet Management Training

Guideline Statement

Animal care and control agencies have a responsibility to promote and encourage owners to receive proper pet management training. Lack of, inadequate, or improper training is a common reason for owners to surrender their pets to animal care and control agencies, or, even worse, to abandon the uncontrollable pet.

Basis for Guideline

Pet management training, when done correctly, teaches owner responsibility, enhances the bond between owner and pet, helps to ensure the pet's place in the home, and benefits the community as a whole.

Guideline Recommendation

Local animal care and control agencies should keep a list of qualified animal behaviorists and obedience instructors/programs to give out to owners, prospective owners, or citizens who request such information. Agencies may wish to encourage legislation which might require owners to attend training classes in lieu of first time offense fines or court costs.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Promotion of Proper Pet Responsibility – Spaying/Neutering

Guideline Statement

Spaying/neutering education programs must be a vital part of any animal care and control agency's efforts to reduce animal overpopulation.

Basis for Guideline

Animal overpopulation is considered the number one killer of animals due to the increased need for euthanasia of unwanted animals.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA supports the concept of early (8-16 weeks) spay/neutering. All animals adopted from the shelter or animal control agency should be spayed or neutered prior to adoption. Owners of unaltered stray animals should be educated on the benefits of spaying and neutering prior to reclaim of the unaltered animal. Altering may be encouraged by establishing higher license fees, impoundment charges, and running-at-large for intact animals.

Agencies should offer high quality and low-cost spay and neuter services for the community they serve. If an agency is unable to offer these services, they should provide a comprehensive list of qualified veterinarians in the community that can offer spay and neuter services.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Rabies Vaccinations

Guideline Statement

All dogs and cats should be immunized against rabies and other communicable diseases deemed necessary by national, state, or local health departments. Strict rabies quarantine and/or laboratory analysis of rabies-suspect animals should be mandatory, and enforceable by health codes or statutes.

Basis for Guideline

The National Animal Care and Control Association believes that confirmed cases of rabies in domestic pets and humans has greatly diminished primarily due to successful rabies immunization programs. However, the depletion of natural wildlife areas places common wildlife rabies carriers in closer proximity to domestic pets. This fact makes it more important than ever to consistently expand immunization programs.

Guideline Recommendation

NACA recommends that animal care and control agencies work closely with local health departments to educate the public on this important health concern. The prompt, accurate reporting of animal bites, in spite of proof of rabies vaccinations, will provide for thorough observation and/or laboratory testing of the animal involved.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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Service Animals

Guideline Statement

Local animal care and control agencies should understand exactly what constitutes a service animal and make every effort to assist these animals and their owners whenever possible. NACA supports qualified training programs which seek placement of such animals in homes where they are undoubtedly needed.

Basis for Guideline

The training of dogs to assist the blind, deaf, or disabled, is representative of man's lengthy relationship with our canine companions.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III Regulations, defines a Service Animal as "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of works or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individual who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition."

Note: The ADA also does recognize the miniature horse as a service animal.

Guideline Recommendation

Laws which reduce or eliminate licensing fees for owners whose animals serve this purpose can be a consideration, providing documented proof or training has been completed. The adoption of dogs to be trained for these purposes is recommended to qualified agencies/individuals.

The aforementioned Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors on September 03, 2014.

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