

TRACY POLICE DEPARTMENT



ANIMAL SERVICES MANUAL

2015

(Revised ...)

This manual provides guidance for program operation of the Animal Services unit. It is the intent to provide managers, supervisors, and other employees with essential information in order to understand and conduct the program.

The Tracy Animal Services Department's employees will dedicate themselves to aiding animals and society by providing the best service to the citizens and animals of Tracy through professional and courteous service. The Tracy Animal Services Department strives for community compliance of state and local laws relating to the ownership and care of animals. The department shall promote responsible pet ownership.

In order to assist in accomplishing this goal, operating policies and procedures have been set forth in this manual for Animal Services Employees to follow. While not every possible set of circumstances can be addressed, every effort has been made to cover pertinent areas.

Every Animal Services Employee must be familiar with this manual and other referenced manuals, policies, procedures, ordinances, State laws and regulations. Animal Services Employees shall conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines set forth therein. Animal Services Employees should refer to this manual when questions arise and periodically review the material.

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**Chapter 1
Shelter Services**

Shelter Operations

A) Visitors/Citizens:

- 1) Citizens visiting the shelter are to be received in a professional manner and should not be made to wait unnecessarily for assistance. Information given is to be correct and accurate. The impressions that Animal Services Department employees make in carrying out their duties reflect upon themselves, the Department and the City. Kennel staff must interact with the staff, the public and volunteers in a pleasant, courteous and fair manner. They should at all times avoid even a hint of rudeness or indifference.
- 2) Citizens (including children) are to be politely cautioned not to put hands in cages to avoid bites and the transfer of diseases. Shoes must be worn by all citizens entering the shelter.
- 3) Minors must be accompanied by an adult
- 4) Animals will not be adopted to minors
- 5) Requests for boarding service or requests to hold an animal pending a decision to adopt an animal by a citizen should be denied.

B) Employee Conduct

- 1) Employees wishing to adopt an animal shall observe the legal holding period. Employees shall pay the set adoption fee including the spay/neuter fee for unaltered animals.
- 2) Fostered domestic animals remain City property and shall be returned upon reaching adoptable age.
- 3) Employees shall not foster/rehabilitate wildlife, as this requires Fish & Game licensing
- 4) Medications shall be used as intended by the manufacturer and only by properly credentialed personnel.
- 5) Any personal transaction an employee wishes to complete for a City service (dog license, animal adoption, etc.) shall be completed by a second employee.
- 6) Fees shall not be adjusted without the consent of the Animal Services Supervisor.

C) Shelter Safety:

1. Wash hands after handling animals
2. Wear protective gloves when handling sick animals
3. Use protective equipment when handling aggressive animals.
4. Wear eye protection when warranted.
5. Keep cages, kennels, appropriate doors and gates closed and locked at all times. This will prevent the escape of animals and the unauthorized entry of citizens.
6. Dry wet areas and replace hoses in the appropriate areas. If you are aware of a slick surface place a cone in the area or barricade it until it can be properly cleaned of the hazard..
7. In cases of fires not readily controlled with the fire extinguisher, evacuate the shelter and notify the fire department.

D) Impounded Animals:

It is the policy of the Tracy Animal Services to comply with all applicable local, state and federal regulations that govern these topics. It is also the policy of the Tracy Animal Services to make every reasonable effort to re-unite owners with lost animals.

E) Impound Types: Impounds generally into three categories: routine stray, confiscate (protective custody) and owner surrender.

- 1) Routine Stray – Animals which are impounded running at large and unaccompanied.
- 2) Confiscate – Includes biting animals impounded for shelter quarantine, animals under an animal cruelty investigation and animals impounded when the owner is unable to care for it (owner arrested, deceased, hospitalized etc.)
- 3) Owner Surrender – Animals in which the ownership is surrendered to the City of Tracy.

F) Shelter Impounds: When a citizen brings a stray animal to the shelter, the employee shall do the following:

- 1) Check the animal for identification (dog license, I.D. tag etc.)
- 2) Scan the animal for a microchip.

- 3) Conduct a cursory health check on the animal.
- 4) Photograph the animal.
- 5) Place the animal in the proper cage/kennel.
- 6) Owners wishing to surrender animals with severe injuries or for euthanasia shall be referred to local veterinarians.
- 7) Create a kennel record in Chameleon including uploading of photograph.
- 8) An employee impounding an owner surrender animal shall have the owner initiate a "Pet Profile Form", issue the owner a receipt for the relinquishment fee, and initiate the same impoundment procedures as a stray animal.
- 9) It is the duty of the impounding employee to transport, or to arrange for transport, any injured animal to a veterinarian. At no time shall an animal with a threatening or painful condition be left in a kennel. If in doubt of condition, arrange veterinarian treatment.
- 10) When an animal is wearing identification, it is the duty of the impounding employee to attempt to contact the owner as soon as possible after impoundment. If contact upon impoundment is unsuccessful, the kennel aid shall attempt contact daily until the end of the holding period.
- 11) An animal on the verge of death shall be humanely euthanized to prevent suffering.
- 12) Animals surrendered by owner shall be accepted by appointment to help regulate shelter crowding. Animals may be surrendered immediately when special circumstances such as public safety exist.
- 13) In the event a biting animal is brought to the shelter, the employee shall place the animal in the quarantine kennel section (for dogs) or hospital section (for cats) and appropriately note in Chameleon.

G) Adoption Policy

- 1) Animals shall be available for adoption after the mandated 5 day holding period and after they have passed temperament testing.
- 2) All adopted cats and dogs must be surgically sterilized prior to going home with the new owner.
- 3) All dogs adopted to City of Tracy residents shall be licensed prior to going home with the new owner.
- 4) Cats (and dogs adopted to non-residents of Tracy) shall be issued a temporary identification tag prior to going home with the new owner.
- 5) Cats shall be released to their new owners in a proper cat carrying box or cage. The new cat owner may provide his/her own cat carrier or the shelter shall include the cost of such a carrier in the adoption price.

- 6) The employee processing the animal adoption shall complete the Chameleon kennel window and initiate a Chameleon receipt.
- 7) Fees charged shall include: adoption fee, spay/neuter fee (when applicable), rabies vaccination (for dogs – unless proof exists that the dog is currently vaccinated), dog license, temporary collar and identification (when applicable), cat boxes.

H) Animal Redemption:

- 1) When an animal owner comes to redeem an animal, it shall be incumbent on the employees to verify (to whatever extent possible) ownership of the animal. Some examples include identification matching dog license information, pictures of the animal, animal reaction to the person or knowledge of distinguishing features.
- 2) There are several factors that come into play when calculating the impound fee.
- 3) Impound fee- Additional charges for prior impounds
- 4) Dog license - Must be included for unlicensed dogs residing in Tracy
- 5) Intact at large fee – For unaltered dogs picked as strays (not applicable for confiscated dogs or dogs impounded on private property). This fee also increases for prior impounds and is mandated by the State.
- 6) Rabies vaccination: (For dogs) Unless the owner provides proof the dog is currently vaccinated. Chameleon will print out a rabies vaccination voucher which the dog owner will take to the veterinarian for the service.
- 7) Temporary collar and identification: Never send an animal home without some form of identification.
- 8) Cat box – Should be charged when a cat owner cannot provide his/her own. Never allow a cat to go home loose in a car.
- 9) Board and care – Fee is charged for every day the animal is at the shelter.
- 10) Tax – Automatically added for applicable items.
- 11) The employee shall generate a Chameleon receipt including the applicable fees and issue a copy to the animal owner. Chameleon will automatically list the current price and total the fee.

I) Animal Rescue Agencies:

It is the policy of Tracy Animal Services to co-operate with and utilize the services of accredited Animal Rescue Agencies.

- 1) Animals will be made available to rescue agencies 2 days after the expiration of the retention period. In times of extreme shelter crowding, the 2 days may be waived; though at no time shall the mandated retention period be waived or shortened.
- 2) Animals shall be provided free-of-charge to the rescue agency.
- 3) The employee shall initiate an Animal Rescue Contract. The employee shall ensure the form includes the current date, animal ID number, breed, description, age and gender of the animal. The employee shall ensure the agency's name, name of representative, address and telephone number are completed on the form.
- 4) The employee shall have the rescue agency representative sign the contract and issued a copy of the contract.
- 5) The rescue agency shall be responsible to vaccinate and sterilize un-altered animals.
- 6) The employee shall enter the agency information on the Chameleon kennel window.
- 7) Rescue agency activity at the shelter shall be conducted during posted business hours
- 8) It is the responsibility of the rescue agency to ensure the shelter has a 501(c)(3) letter on file as well as a current "pull list" of persons eligible to take animals under their rescue
- 9) Rescue agencies shall take possession of animals within 24 hrs. of noticing shelter staff they will take an animal

J) Volunteer Standards

- 1) Volunteers are expected to work at the direction of shelter staff.
- 2) Volunteers shall complete the City of Tracy Animal Services Volunteer training class prior to their first day of work.
- 3) Volunteers shall at all times treat the public with respect and with a "customer service attitude".

- 4) Volunteers shall wear clothing and footwear appropriate for the conditions. Open-toe shoes, sandals or clothing with vulgar words shall not be worn.
- 5) Volunteers shall treat the animals with kindness.
- 6) Volunteers shall always make safety their top priority. All animals are capable of biting and caution should always be taken. Use of equipment shall only be done under the direction of shelter staff.
- 7) Volunteers shall complete their work day no later than 5:30 P.M.
- 8) Failure to adhere to these standards may result in being asked to leave for the day or removal from the program.

Cleaning Protocol

All inhabited dog kennels and cat cages should be cleaned daily. Uninhabited cages should be cleaned weekly (closed Mondays).

A) Cats

- 1) It is imperative to use low stress methods to clean cat cages. Stress, as much as contagions, contribute to illnesses. Avoid moving the cat out of its cage when possible.
- 2) Separate cat cage by lowering guillotine door.
- 3) Use clean towel/brush and cleaning solution to wipe down all surfaces.
- 4) Replace litter boxes with fresh litter.
- 5) Provide fresh food and water.
- 6) Provide clean bedding material.
- 7) Dry cat cage.
- 8) Ensure a cage card is present.
- 9) Utilize gloves and face mask when handling chemicals.
- 10) Launder soiled bedding.

B) Dogs

- 1) Separate dog into opposite side of kennel to be cleaned
- 2) Remove all debris (toys, food dishes, bedding, etc.).
- 3) Scoop and remove feces.
- 4) Utilize the spraymaster system to water down the floor and walls removing urine and particulates.
- 5) Utilize the chemical feature of the spraymaster system to disinfect the kennel.
- 6) Clean flooring in kennel walkway.

- 7) Use a squeegee or towel to remove excess water.
- 8) Provide fresh food, water and bedding.
- 9) Launder soiled bedding.

C) Laundry protocol

- 1) All laundry should be cleaned on the “hot” setting, (194 degrees) with provided detergent and 1 cup of bleach to ensure proper disinfection.

Chapter 2
Field Services

Field Services

A) Call Priority:

Calls for service from a citizen and incidents observed by ASOs shall be handled on a priority basis depending on the risk to public health and safety. The following list is to be for general guidelines only. Some calls may be deemed higher in priority at the ASO's discretion if unusual conditions exist.

1. Rabid suspect animals
2. Stray "at large" biting animals
3. Livestock on roadways
4. Stray aggressive animals
5. Stray injured animals
6. Priority cruelty complaints (i.e. dog in hot car).
7. Stray animals in roadways
8. Stray "at large" dogs or stray confined dogs on school property
9. Routine stray "at large" dogs
10. Routine animal welfare checks
11. Deceased animals
12. Nuisance barking/rooster complaints, too many pets, etc.

B) Field Impounds:

- 1) Dogs are considered private property and shall not be impounded unless a violation exists that warrants impound. Special care must be taken when impounding an animal off private property.
- 2) In accordance with TMC, ASOs have the right and duty to impound animals (domestic and poultry) observed running "at large". "At large" shall be construed to mean unaccompanied and on any public street or place, or to trespass on the property of another.
- 3) ASOs may impound from any land, private or public, any dog or animal that constitutes a safety threat to any person.
- 4) Dogs may not be impounded for an "at large" violation when the dog has not strayed from private property controlled by the dog's owner or on private property to which the dog owner or person who has a right to control the dog has a right of possession. The Government Code also states that dogs which are observed to be at large, but then return home,

- shall not be impounded if an owner is home. ASOs may issue a citation in these instances. If the dog returns home and no owners are present, the dog may be impounded, provided the ASO leaves a written notice of impound in a conspicuous location.
- 5) Animals may not be immediately impounded from residences where the owner has been evicted. In such cases the landlord must store all property (including animals) for 15 days after posting of eviction notice. After 15 days the animal shall be deemed abandoned and may be impounded at the request of the landlord.
 - 6) ASOs may and shall impound any dog running at large which has been declared “Potentially Dangerous” or “Vicious” under the Tracy Municipal Code or found to be in violation of terms of maintenance as stated in a “Potentially Dangerous” or “Vicious” declaration. The impoundment of these dogs shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Animal Services Supervisor.
 - 7) ASOs may not impound any animal which was delivered to a veterinarian, kennel, grooming parlor or animal care facility in which the animal was brought by its owner for service but fails to pick up. This does not include stray animals that a citizen drops off at such a location.
 - 8) Upon return to the Animal Shelter, it is the duty of the ASO to initiate impound procedures as stated under “Shelter Impounds”.

This section is in compliance with: TMC 5.08.230, P.C. 491, 53074 CGC, 1174 CCP, CG 1834.5

C) Impound Methods

There are several forms of restraint available to the ASO depending on the temperament of the animal you are handling. The rule of thumb is use the least amount of restraint needed to safely handle the animal. Learning the various methods of restraint will require hands-on training, but here is a brief description of 5 methods: Leash, physical, catch pole, net, chemical.

- 1) Leash: The leash is the most common tool used by ASOs. The majority of dogs will lead with a leash, although some may require a bit of coaxing. If an animal refuses to walk on a leash, and is of an appropriate size and temperament, it should be carried.
- 2) Physical: Physical restraint is commonly used in routine treatments and euthanasia of the animals. The least amount of restraint needed to safely control the animal is what should be used.
- 3) Catch Pole: This is a metal pole with a loop on one end. The loop is placed around the neck of the animal, near the base of the head, and tightened just enough to keep it from slipping off. The metal pole serves as protection to the ASO by keeping the animal at a distance from the handler. Great care must be exercised when using a catchpole, because of the risk of causing harm to the animal. Animals will resist the pole, and may bite it, damaging their teeth/mouth. If the loop is tightened too much you could strangle the animal. The catchpole is a very effective tool when used properly.
- 4) Net: The net is an excellent tool for handling feral cats. With the net you can move a feral cat from one place to another without causing the stress that using a catchpole would cause. It requires practice to become proficient at its use, but is well worth the effort.
- 5) Chemical: When it is unsafe for an ASO to handle an animal, or if the other methods will cause extreme stress on the animal, chemicals (tranquilizers) will make the animal more handleable. These chemicals may also be used by ASOs in darting equipment to capture animals.

The following are the procedures for utilizing chemical capture:

Chemical capture should only be used by qualified employees who have:

- 1) completed an accredited chemical capture class
- 2) are familiar with and authorized to use the immobilizing drug
- 3) are familiar with the delivery rifle or pistol

Chemical capture may be considered when conventional means of impoundment have failed, and it is imperative the animal be contained. Just because an animal is difficult to contain or “uncatchable” does not necessarily warrant the use. The following are some situations where the use might be considered:

- 1) aggressive animals creating safety concerns
- 2) rabies suspect animals
- 3) difficult to contain animals creating severe traffic safety concerns
- 4) wild or feral dogs
- 5) sick or injured animals who are suffering

Safety is of paramount concern. A chemical capture rifle or pistol should be treated as any firearm. It should never be pointed at a person and the safety of the area beyond the target always be considered.

Special consideration should be given to the surrounding environment prior to deployment, such as vehicle traffic, bodies of water or cliffs, as the sedated animal may stumble into harm’s way. Except in very severe situations, it should not be used on animals weighing less than 25 pounds as the impact of the dart itself may severely injure or kill the animal.

Utilizing chemical capture alone should be avoided. Have at least one other person on scene to help in case of accidental injury or drug exposure, follow the animal, help with crowd control and monitor dart flight path. All efforts to locate darts from missed shots shall be made as they contain a controlled narcotic.

The preferred target on the animal should be the hindquarters with the shooter at a 90 degree angle to the animal. Shots with the animal directly facing the shooter should be avoided. It can be helpful to have a “distractor” get the animal’s attention and aid in positioning the animal for an appropriate shot.

Post capture animals should be transported to a veterinarian for treatment (if needed), observation while recuperating from the drug and dart removal (if needed). The shooter shall submit a “Chemical Immobilization Field Report Form” to the Animal Services Supervisor.

D) Rescuing Animals From Trees, Roofs, Fences etc:

- 1) ASOs may be assigned to investigate reports of animals in trees etc., but will not attempt rescue if it involves climbing on roofs or up in trees. Animal Services does not have the equipment, training, tools or manpower required to retrieve cats, dogs and other types of animals from telephone poles, trees, roof tops or under buildings. The reporting party should be advised that most animals would come down or free itself if left alone and allowed the opportunity. Animal owners can be referred to a tree service that may be able to assist them in removing their animal. Extreme circumstances should be referred to the Animal Services Supervisor.

E) Animals In Distress:

- 1) Officers should immediately attempt to contact the property owner or reporting party and assess the situation. If unable to immediately locate the property owner or reporting party, and no other information is available, thoroughly check the location for the animal in distress.

Animals that are tangled or their movement is restricted by rope or chain should be freed by:

- 1) Untangling the animal from the anchor point if possible.
- 2) Untangling the animal from a point closest to the animal, but outside of its reach to avoid injury to the ASO.
- 3) Cautiously untangling the animal at the collar, harness, or halter in such a way to avoid injury to the ASO
- 4) If necessary by cutting the rope or chain. Heavy bolt cutters are available at the shelter or police department in non-life threatening circumstances, and can be sent to the requesting ASO's location. In an urgent situation, the supervisor may request assistance from the Tracy Fire Department.
- 5) Plan and prepare for the containment of the animal prior to it being freed.

Animals that are suspended from ropes or chains should be freed by:

- 1) Untangling the animal from the anchor point if possible.
- 2) Untangling the animal from a point closest to the animal, but outside of its reach to avoid injury to the ASO.

- 3) If necessary by cutting the rope or chain. If the animal is in extreme distress and appropriate tools are not immediately available, it may be necessary to push or pull the animal over the obstacle, or dismantle the obstacle to provide immediate relief. When this is not possible, the animal should be supported in such a way to be provided relief and additional assistance should be requested.
- 4) Plan and prepare for the containment of the animal prior to it being freed.

F) Barking Dog Complaint: In accordance with the Tracy Municipal Code, animal care services will respond and investigate complaints of excessive animal noise. For first time complaints, a Chameleon activity shall be generated as well a barking dog letter. When additional complaints are received, the employee shall attempt to ascertain if the animal is currently barking. If the reporting person states that a violation is currently in progress, a call for service shall be initiated for an ASO to respond and investigate. The ASO shall position themselves in a location near the dog owner's house and listen for excessive animal noise. If the ASO is satisfied the level and duration of noise constitute a violation, the ASO may issue a citation to the dog owner, custodian or homeowner. In circumstances where the ASO is unable to make contact at the dog owner's house (no answer at door) a notice of violation shall be posted and an Administrative Citation may be issued.

When a complaint of excessive noise is received that is not in progress, the employee shall request the reporting person call for service when a violation is in progress. The reporting person should be advised to call the Tracy Police Department for violations occurring during Animal Services off-hours.

Quarantine – Rabies Control

A) Domestic Dog or Cat vs. Human

- 1) In accordance with state law, every cat or dog that bites a human shall be quarantined for **10 days** from the date of the bite. For quarantine purposes, the severity of the bite is not relevant. Any puncture, tear or injury caused by an animal's tooth that penetrates a person's skin shall be considered a bite. Topical injuries that do not break the skin (such as bruising) are not considered a bite.
- 2) It is the policy of the Tracy Animal Services to "quarantine upon report". If an ASO has a reasonable belief that an animal has bitten a person, the ASO shall initiate a quarantine.
- 3) An animal under quarantine shall have no direct contact with persons or animals it did not have contact with immediately prior to the bite. The animal shall remain in the quarantine area for the duration of the quarantine period. The animal will not be taken on walks or for rides in a vehicle, etc.
- 4) Tracy Animal Services shall respond to the animal owner's residence and observe the health of the animal. If the animal shows signs of rabies, the animal shall be immediately impounded and transported to a licensed veterinarian.
- 5) Stray biting animals shall be impounded and quarantined at the Tracy Animal Shelter.
- 6) Healthy animals may be quarantined at the owner's residence or the Tracy Animal Shelter. The ASO may impose quarantine at the owner's residence if the owner is willing to abide by the listed restrictions. The animal owner's residence must have a yard with secure fencing of sufficient height to keep the animal contained. Biting dogs that reside at residences with insufficient facilities shall be impounded for quarantine at the Animal Shelter.
- 7) Animals inflicting severe injuries or with a history of prior bites shall be impounded for shelter quarantine. Circumstances of these bites shall be brought to the attention of the Animal Services Supervisor for a possible "Potentially Dangerous" or "Vicious" dog investigation.
- 8) At the completion of the quarantine period, animals will be released from quarantine by an ASO. The ASO will observe

the health of the animal for signs of rabies. Animals showing symptoms of rabies shall be immediately impounded and transported to a licensed veterinarian.

- 9) Biting animals that die after biting or under quarantine shall be taken to the county veterinarian for rabies testing.
- 10) The ASO investigating the bite shall generate an animal bite report and Crime Report face sheet listing the victim, circumstances of the bite, nature of injury, animal owner and location of quarantine. At the conclusion of the quarantine period, a supplemental report will be generated by the ASO stating the observed health of the animal and the release from quarantine.
- 11) In cases which a stray animal has bitten a person and the ASO is unable to locate the animal, a Stray Bite Patrol will be generated in which ASOs shall on a daily basis for 10 days from the date of bite, make an area check in an attempt to locate the animal.

B) Wildlife vs. Human

- 1) When a person is bitten or scratched by wildlife (mammal, non-varmint or lagomorphs), Tracy Animal Services will respond and make every effort to impound the animal. Lagomorphs includes plant-eating mammals such as rabbits, hares or pikas.
- 2) Impounded biting wildlife shall be euthanized and taken to the county veterinarian for rabies testing (F.R.A.).
- 3) In cases where the ASO is unable to impound the animal, the circumstances of the bite and victim information shall be given to the County Health Department for determination of anti-rabies treatment. The ASO will generate a bite report.

C) Wildlife vs Domestic Animal

- 1) When a domestic cat or dog bites, is bitten/scratched, or has intimate contact such as fighting with wildlife (mammals, non-varmint or lagomorphs), Tracy Animal Services shall respond and make every effort to impound the wildlife. The domestic animal and the wild animal shall each be quarantined.
- 2) The domestic animal shall be quarantined for either 30 days (for currently vaccinated animals with vaccine given at least 30 days prior to contact) or 6 months (for unvaccinated animals or animals with vaccinations given within the last 30 days).

- 3) In cases which the circumstances warrant a 30 day quarantine, the ASO shall issue the domestic animal owner a “Veterinarian Agreement” for the animal to be revaccinated within 48 hours. The 30 day quarantine starts after the domestic animal has been revaccinated.
- 4) In cases where the wildlife is impounded, the animal shall be euthanized and transported to the county veterinarian for rabies testing (F.R.A.). If the animal tests negative, the quarantine on the domestic animal can be lifted.
- 5) The ASO shall generate a bite report.

D) Domestic vs. Domestic

Domestic animals (cats & dogs) which bite other domestic animals need not be quarantined (unless the animal is exhibiting signs of rabies). In these cases the ASO shall initiate a report detailing the incident for a possible “Potentially Dangerous” or “Vicious” dog investigation.

Wildlife:

A) The department is frequently requested to handle calls regarding wildlife. Calls may concern sick or injured wildlife, or requests to transport wildlife. The policies of Tracy Animal Services regarding wildlife are intended to protect the health and safety of residents and to provide a high level of service to the public while dealing with wildlife using accepted humane wildlife management methods. Our policy for dealing with wildlife in general is as follows:

B) Investigations should be made if a wild animal identified as a high-risk species subject to rabies:

- 1) Has bitten or had contact with a human
- 2) Has bitten or had contact with a domestic animal.
- 3) Is acting in a manner abnormal to the species.
- 4) Appears sick or injured.

ASOs should regard the above details as a priority and respond accordingly. All animals of a high-risk species subject to rabies that have had contact or possible contact with humans or domestic animals will be euthanized and sent to the county veterinarian for testing.

- C) Investigations will not be made when:**
- 1) The odor of a skunk is reported
 - 2) A wild animal was observed with no known contact between a human or other domestic animal.
 - 3) The animal is under a building or behind stored articles where no known contact has occurred.
- D) Healthy Wildlife –** Per State laws, wildlife is deemed property of the state and should not be re-located, moved or otherwise harassed. In cases where the best interest of an animal dictate it to be moved (such as a gopher snake), an ASO may respond and move the animal to an appropriate area in the same general location from where it was impounded. In the event a citizen traps a healthy wild animal (excluding rattlesnakes & skunks) and is insistent that an ASO respond to release, an ASO will be dispatched and free the animal on site.
- E) Injured Wildlife –** Injured wildlife shall be euthanized or transported to a licensed rehabilitator. Wildlife shall not be harbored at the City of Tracy Animal Shelter.
- F) Poisonous Reptiles –** The Department will investigate calls regarding unidentified snakes if requested. Citizens should be advised that the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake is the only poisonous snake native to California. Identifying characteristics generally include rattles on the tail, broad shaped head when viewed from above, large pits on the side of the face in addition to the nostrils, and vertical pupils. To the uneducated person, the gopher snake may appear similar to a rattlesnake and may mimic the rattlesnake with a faint “buzzing” sound. In addition, immature racers may appear similar to rattlesnakes in color and pattern. Citizens should also be advised that all snakes are beneficial to the area and control rodent populations. Rattlesnakes are not to be impounded, relocated or transported. Rattlesnakes are to be euthanized by decapitation at the scene. The decapitated head shall be buried in a remote location. Special care should be used in handling the decapitated head as the venom is still active for a period of time after death. Live rattlesnakes are not to be transported in Animal Shelter vehicles.
- G) Mountain Lions –** Tracy Animal Services will respond to reports of mountain lions or other large, dangerous predatory animals. ASOs will respond to all calls of a mountain lion sighting or calls when a domestic or

wild animal is believed to have been killed by a mountain lion. These calls will be handled on a priority basis. If such animal is located, California Fish & Game shall be notified as well as the Watch Commander of the Tracy Police Department. It is generally the duty of Fish & Game Wardens to determine the outcome of such situations. If mountain lion is perceived to be an imminent threat to public health or safety, the California Department of Fish & Game may authorize Tracy Police Department to remove or take any mountain lion pursuant to **California Fish & Game Code Section 4801**.

- H) Coyotes/Bobcats – Stray coyote and bobcats are best handled through public education. In the event Tracy Animal Services responds to a citizen complaint of a nuisance coyote or bobcat, the ASO will chase the animal out of the immediate area. If evidence exists that the coyote or bobcat constitutes a hazard to human life, the California Fish & Game shall be notified.

- I) Nuisance Wildlife – Frequently the department receives requests to trap and/or relocate wildlife. Citizens should be advised that we do not trap or relocate wildlife or provide traps for wildlife. Any wildlife that is trapped by a citizen must be released in the immediate area. Relocating wildlife without the prior authorization of the California Department of Fish & Game is against State law, and may spread disease while disrupting the populations of other animals. ASOs should advise inquiring citizens that their use of a firearm to dispatch an animal might be in violation of State law or Tracy Municipal Codes. Citizens with specific questions relative to the laws governing wildlife should be referred to the California Department of Fish & Game at (916) 445-0045. Citizens who have trapped or removed healthy nuisance wildlife from their property, or otherwise trapped or removed healthy “nuisance wildlife” due to conflict, should be advised that the State Code of regulations require the animal to be released in the immediate area or disposed of in accordance to the California Department of Fish & Game Regulations. For the purpose of this section, nuisance wildlife species include, but is not limited to: red foxes, opossums, raccoon and skunks. **California Code of Regulation Section 679(f) (4)** prohibits the Tracy Animal services Department to accept, possess or relocate nuisance wildlife

- J) Trapping of wildlife – Officers investigating complaints regarding the trapping of wildlife should be aware that most laws fall under the California

Code of Regulations, The California Fish & Game Code, and to a lesser extent the California Food & Agricultural Code and the California Business & Professions Code.

- 1) In general, provisions of the California Fish & Game Code allow for destruction of certain animals causing property damage by property owners. Persons inquiring about such provisions should be directed to contact the California Fish & Game.
- 2) In general, pest control operators and similar individuals operating as a business, are required to be licensed by the California Environmental Protection Agency. Such licensing does not exempt them from current laws relative to the trapping of wildlife.
- 3) The California Fish & Game Code and the California Code of Regulations prohibit the use of certain traps, including any leg hold or jaw type trap, and any trap without some form of identification. ASOs encountering these types of traps should seize them pending further investigation.

K) Wild or Exotic Animal Ownership – If an ASO becomes aware of a citizen who may be keeping a wild or exotic animal illegally, that information should be referred to the Animal Services Supervisor for possible referral to the Wildlife Protection Branch of the California Department of Fish & Game. In general, do not impound the animal or take enforcement action, unless the animal is impounded while at large, or impounded for the purposes of rabies control.

- 1) In general, it is illegal to possess native California wildlife, and most naturally occurring animals that have not been domesticated in some form, without a State and/or Federally issued permit.
- 2) If an ASO becomes aware of a questionable species in possession, they should advise the Animal Services Supervisor for further research. Prohibited species will be listed in the most recent enactment of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.
- 3) Citizens who request we euthanize their own exotic or wild animals should be advised to contact a veterinarian.

Inhumane Investigations

Inhumane investigations generally fall into 2 categories: **Routine** or **Emergency**.

A) Routine: A routine inhumane investigation is when there is no immediate threat or danger of the animal suffering or perishing in its present condition. The following are examples of the most common complaints received:

- 1) No food and/or water
- 2) No shelter
- 3) Abandoned animals on owner's premises
- 4) Minor medical treatment required
- 5) Animal entangled in rope or chain
- 6) Unsanitary conditions

The ASO shall contact the owner or custodian of the animal and advise him/her of the complaint. The ASO shall do one of the following:

- a) Give a verbal warning that the violation must be corrected. When appropriate, the ASO can often stand by while water buckets are filled, excessive feces cleaned-up, etc.
- b) Issue a written "Veterinarian Agreement" directing the animal owner to provide veterinarian treatment in a specified time period. There should be a time limit of up to 48 hours imposed (dependent upon condition of the animal) and clearly written on the form.

If an owner or custodian is not available or cannot be located, the ASO shall, in a conspicuous place, post a "Notice of Violation" detailing the corrective actions needed. Follow-up of such calls should be conducted within 48 hours. Should the owner or custodian fail to comply, a "Pre-Seizure" notice and a "Declaration of Ownership" shall be posted. If the animal owner/custodian fails to comply with the "Pre-Seizure" notice after 48 hours, the animal may be impounded. The ASO will initiate a report for cruelty charges.

B) Emergency: An emergency inhumane investigation is a more serious offense in which there is immediate danger of the animal perishing and the situation or environment is such that if immediate action is not taken, the animal will suffer needlessly and possibly result in death. The following are examples of more flagrant violations:

- 1) Animal locked inside a hot car
- 2) Animal beating
- 3) Animal being strangled/hanging from its leash, rope or chain
- 4) Animal shooting

The following is a list of appropriate actions in the above situations:
Request Police Officer assistance

- a) Obtain suspect and vehicle description, including direction of travel.
- b) Attempt to secure the crime scene and protect any pertinent evidence.
- c) When prompt action is required for the welfare of the animal, impound and when needed, arrange for veterinarian treatment.
- d) The veterinarian should be advised of the conditions the animal was found in and be requested to document his/her findings on the animal's condition.
- e) Initiate a detailed crime report.
- f) ASOs should never attempt to physically restrain a subject.

Any time an animal is impounded from private property, for its own welfare or an inhumane investigation, the ASO shall post in a conspicuous location a "Notice of Post-Seizure" and a "Declaration of Ownership".

- **Lawful Seizure of Animals:** Animals should not be impounded off private property for inhumane conditions unless "probable cause" exists, and the animal is in immediate jeopardy and/or requires immediate veterinary medical treatment. Animals impounded off private property for inhumane conditions are to be immediately transported to a veterinarian for evaluation and medical treatment. This would include animals removed from cars because of hot weather. If an animal is seized or impounded without "probable cause", and the owner was denied "due process", the Department could incur civil liabilities.

