




ANIMAL SERVICES OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Subject	Safety and Handling of Dogs that a Cause Life Threatening Injury or the Death of a Person Policy and Procedure	Reference Number N/A
Section	Animal Services	Effective Date February 9, 2017
Applicability	All Departments and Units	Supersedes Policy Dated N/A
Director Approval	 2-14-2017	Signature Date

Purpose:

To provide a standardized method for ensuring the safety of staff when handling dogs that have caused a life threatening injury or the death of a person. The procedures outlined support chain-of-custody rules.

Overview:

The Austin Animal Center (AAC) serves as the impoundment facility for the City of Austin and Travis County. Animals seized as the result of an investigation are held at AAC until the conclusion of their case. Placement is dependent upon an order issued by the court.

For the purpose of this document, shelter leadership shall be comprised of Chief Animal Services Officer, Deputy Chief Animal Services Officer(s), and Manager(s).

Policy:

Any AAC staff member charged with care and oversight of an animal housed at AAC that is alleged to have caused a life threatening injury or death of a person shall abide by the safety procedures and directives given by leadership. For legally seized animals, it is imperative that chain-of-custody rules be followed and any interaction with the seized animal be properly documented.

The Shelter Veterinarian will work with shelter leadership and the lead investigator to develop a monthly care and treatment plan for any animal held past 30 days. The plan shall describe necessary monthly medical care, any known medical history, staff assignments, and a detailed safe handling strategy. The Chief Animal Services Officer, or their designee, will review and approve the plan prior to the administration of routine monthly interaction.

The Animal Care Supervisor, or their designee, will work with shelter leadership and the lead investigator to develop an appropriate daily enrichment schedule for any seized animal held past 30



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days. The plan shall be submitted in writing to the Chief Animal Services Officer, or their designee, for review and approval. The plan must be approved prior to the administration of enrichment activities.

Procedures:

1. Chain-of-custody is the chronological documentation or paper trail, showing the seizure, custody, control, transfer, analysis, and disposition of physical or electronic evidence.
 - a. Transfer and Handling of a Seized Animal - These transactions, and every succeeding transaction between the impoundment of the animal and its appearance in court, should be completely documented chronologically in order to withstand legal challenges to the authenticity of the evidence.
2. A routine medical care plan shall be developed by the Shelter Veterinarian, in concert with shelter leadership and the lead investigator, for any animal held past 30 days.
 - a. Notification – If at any time, planned or unplanned, it becomes necessary for a staff member to physical interact with an animal alleged of the acts described above, the Shelter Veterinarian, or their designee, shall notify the Chief Animal Services Officer and lead investigator prior to that interaction. For non-urgent instances, notification may be sent via email.
 - b. Staffing Requirements – A minimum of four staff shall be assigned to handling. Staff shall include one veterinarian, two veterinary technicians, and one Animal Protection Officer. In the event that an Animal Protection Officer is unavailable, an Animal Care Lead shall be present. Staff shall document their interaction on the Chain-of-Custody Log; a Log Sheet of each interaction shall be provided to the lead investigator to be kept in the case file.
 - c. Handling – All precautions shall be taken when handling an animal that has been alleged to have caused a life threatening injury or death of a person. All routine treatments, to include weighing, shall occur in the confines of the 600 kennels (also referred to as Rabies Observation). The Shelter Veterinarian shall determine the tools necessary to maintain staff safety and successfully provide treatment to the animal. An Animal Protection Officer shall be available to intervene in the event that staff safety becomes compromised. A large dog net and ketch pole must be present and in good working order at the time of the physical interaction with the animal.
3. Urgent care and emergency care situations may arise and require additional handling. An urgent situation is described as one that requires attention within 2-4 hours of reported medical observation. An emergency situation is described as one that requires immediate attention following the reported medical observation.



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- b. **Staffing Requirements** – A minimum of four staff shall be assigned to handling. Staff shall include one veterinarian, two veterinary technicians, and one Animal Protection Officer. In the event that an Animal Protection Officer is unavailable, an Animal Care Lead shall be present. Staff shall document their interaction on the Chain-of-Custody Log; a Log Sheet of each interaction shall be provided to the lead investigator to be kept in the case file.
- c. **Handling** – All precautions shall be taken when handling an animal that has been alleged to have caused a life threatening injury or death of a person. All routine treatments, to include weighing, shall occur in the confines of the 600 kennels (also referred to as Rabies Observation). The Shelter Veterinarian shall determine the tools necessary to maintain staff safety and successfully provide treatment to the animal. An Animal Protection Officer shall be available to intervene in the event that staff safety becomes compromised. A large dog net and ketch pole must be present and in good working order at the time of the physical interaction with the animal.
- d. **Treatment in Vet Services Suite** – In the event that an animal alleged to have caused a life threatening injury or death of a person has a medical condition that requires additional assessment in the vet services suite, the animal shall be moved from the 600s kennels to a secure location in the suite via rolling cage.
- e. **Off-site Treatment** - In the event that an animal alleged to have caused a life threatening injury or death of a person requires off-site medical treatment, the Shelter Veterinarian will work with the shelter leadership and the lead investigator to devise a transportation, treatment, and security plan. A minimum of two Animal Protection Officers shall transport the animal off-site for treatment. It may be necessary to place an Animal Protection Officer at the treatment facility in order to maintain the security of the animal.

Attachments:
Chain-of-Custody Log



ANIMAL SERVICES OFFICE CHAIN OF CUSTODY LOG

Case #:	Date:
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Animal Identification #	Date / Time Removed from Kennel	Reason for Removal of Seized Animal	Date / Time Returned to Kennel	Staff Initials	Signature

Attending Veterinarian	
Veterinarian Technician	
Veterinarian Technician	
Animal Protection Officer / Animal Care Lead	

Submitted to Case File By	Signature	Date / Time

