
	<b>Ithaca Police Department</b> <b>120 East Clinton Street</b> <b>Ithaca, New York 14850</b>	
	<b>General Order Number: 513</b>	<b>Animal Complaints</b>
<b>Issuing Authority: Chief Pete Tyler</b> 		<b>Effective Date: February 15, 2018</b>
<b>Rescinds/Supersedes: All previously issued directives</b>		<b>Review Date: February 15, 2020</b>
<b>Applicable NYSLEA Standards:</b> <b>8.1</b>		<b>Number of Pages: 6</b>

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this written directive is to provide members with guidelines for investigating animal bites, handling sick, injured or nuisance animals, removing dead animals, disposing of lost or found animals and responding to barking/nuisance dog complaints when the SPCA is unavailable.

## II. Policy

It is the policy of the Ithaca Police Department to respond to animal related complaints, recognizing the need to provide care for sick, injured, nuisance, lost and found animals. The department shall protect the health and safety of department members and the public by handling animal complaints in accordance with this written directive.

## III. Definition

- A. Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of animals and humans. It is usually transmitted by an infected animal's bite. The period between exposure to the disease and onset of symptoms (incubation period) ranges from two weeks to many months.
- B. Like many viral infections, rabies does not respond to antibiotic treatment. It is almost always fatal once the symptoms occur. Prompt vaccinations (within 24 hours) following an animal bite/exposure to suspect rabies may prevent rabies in humans.

## IV. Procedures

- A. The signs of a rabid animal can vary. Some animals exhibit aggressive, attack-like behavior. Some demonstrate a fearless, tame, or lethargic behavior and may be seen during daytime hours. Others may just stagger and have a jittery walk.

- B. Raccoons, skunks and foxes are at high risk of contracting rabies.
- C. Wildlife that has bitten or has had contact with a human or domestic animal must be destroyed if it may escape or possesses a threat to others. Domestic animals should be destroyed only if they possess a threat to human life. Do not damage the animal's head.
1. If a suspect rabid animal is destroyed, contact the SPCA to transport the animal for examination. If there was no human or domestic animal bite or exposure then it is not necessary to transport the animal for examination.
  2. If the animal is to be examined, do not seal or place the bag in the sun. Body heat must escape for about ½ hour before sealing. If transportation of the animal must be delayed, preserve the dead animal by refrigeration as soon as possible.
  3. If examination of the animal is not necessary (no bite or exposure involved), seal the bag. The bag can be disposed of by:
    - a) Double-bagging and placing it in the trash.
    - b) Burying it at least three (3) feet deep.
    - c) Submitting it to a local animal shelter or veterinarian
  4. To remove a deceased animal, latex gloves must be worn. Pick up the animal by the tail or rear legs and slide it into a plastic bag. If latex gloves are not available, place hands inside a plastic bag. Grab the animal by the tail or hind legs and then turn the bag inside out.
- D. The following guideline shall apply to anyone who is bitten or scratched by an animal, or gets saliva from a suspect-rabid animal in an open wound or on a mucus membrane:
1. Department member victim shall:
    - a) Wash their wound thoroughly with soap and water.
    - b) Seek medical attention immediately.
    - c) Prepare an employee injury report and incident report documenting the circumstances.
    - d) Disinfect any surface contaminated with tissues or fluid from the suspected rabid animal with a 5% solution of household chlorine bleach and water (6 ½ oz. Bleach to 1 gallon of water).

2. Citizen victims should be advised to:
  - a) Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water immediately.
  - b) Contact their physician immediately for advice regarding medical treatment.
  - c) In the event a physician cannot be contacted they should be advised to contact the Tompkins County Health Department, Communicable Disease Center.
  - d) Proceed to a hospital emergency room for treatment.
  
3. Owners of domestic animals who have sustained a bite or other wound from contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal should be advised to:
  - a) Contact their veterinarian immediately for advice on medical treatment for their pet.
  - b) Do not touch the saliva-contaminated hide of the animal for at least two (2) hours.

#### E. Use of Firearms against animals

1. Officer may use firearms against an animal when:
  - a) The officer or another person is being attacked and the use of firearms is necessary to terminate the attack. The animal must pose a threat to human life; or
  - b) A wildlife animal had bitten or had contact (fight, scratch, or saliva in an open wound) with a human or domestic animal victim. Domestic animals should be destroyed only if they pose a threat to human life; or
  - c) The animal is seriously injured or obviously sick and no other means are reasonably available to end its suffering.
  
2. When discharging a firearm against an animal, officers shall use due care to ensure the safety of citizens and other officers.
  
3. Animals suspected as being rabid and are going to be submitted for testing should never be shot in the head. The head is needed for testing.
  
4. Officers should indicate the use of a firearm in the Spillman Incident Report

#### F. Animal bite investigations

1. Provide first aid or request emergency medical assistance for the victim when necessary.
2. Locate the animal, if possible. Destroy wildlife if it may escape or pose a threat to others. Domestic animals should be destroyed only if they pose a threat to human life.
  - a) If the animal is destroyed, contact the SPCA in accordance with Article IV paragraph a-i, of this written directive.
  - b) The health department will determine if animals that were not destroyed should be quarantined or destroyed for testing purposes.
3. Identify all persons and/or animal owners involved and specify how they may be contacted.
4. Obtain the immunization status of all animals involved (were the animals vaccinated for rabies?).
5. Note the location of the bite wound (ask).
6. Note the circumstances of the exposure (provoked or unprovoked bites).
7. Complete a suspect rabies report for forwarding to the Tompkins County Health Department.

#### G. Sick or injured wild animals

1. Officers investigating complaints of sick or injured wild animals shall use caution when dealing with such animals. Officers should:
  - a) Interview the complainant and/or witnesses regarding the animal's symptoms and behavior.
  - b) Observe the animal from a position of safety, noting the symptoms and behavior exhibited.
  - c) Make no attempt to handle the animal without appropriate equipment.
  - d) Contact a licensed wildlife nuisance control person when appropriate.

- e) Destroy the animal when necessary for humane or health reasons.

#### H. Sick of injured domestic animals

1. Officers investigating complaints of sick or injured domestic animals shall use caution when dealing with such animals. Officers should:
  - a) Attempt to locate and notify the owner of the animal.
  - b) When appropriate, contact an area veterinarian to transport the animal for treatment (or for treatment at the scene in the case of large animals).

#### I. Removal of dead animals

1. Whenever animals are killed on public highways, officers shall contact the appropriate highway department for removal.
2. Officers shall wear disposable latex gloves when handling dead animals to prevent the possibility of exposure to rabies or other diseases. Refer to IV -C of this written directive for further guidelines regarding the disposal of suspected rabid animals.

#### J. Lost or found animals

1. During normal office hours, officers responding to calls shall notify the dispatchers of all pertinent information which shall be recorded in a Spillman Incident Report with a Spillman message being sent to our agency and contact the SPCA, if applicable.
2. After normal office hours, the responding patrol unit shall ascertain and record all pertinent information in. The officer shall arrange to notify the SPCA, if applicable.
3. Members investigating a lost or found animal shall check prior entries in Spillman and their message center in an attempt to match lost or found animals with their respective owners.

#### K. Nuisance wildlife

1. Wildlife that has not bitten or come into contact with a human or domestic animal or is not destroyed for humane or health reasons shall be deemed to be a nuisance if it causes trouble, annoyance or inconvenience to a complainant.

2. Department members are authorized to obtain the services of a wildlife nuisance control person, if necessary, to trap or remove an animal. In the event of repetitious sightings of animals at risk of having rabies (raccoons, skunks, foxes, woodchuck, opossum, bats, etc.) wandering around the City, would also be the basis for obtaining the services of a wildlife nuisance animal control person.
  
3. Removal of Nuisance animals on private property are at the expense of the property owner.
  
4. Removal of Nuisance animals on public property are at the expense of the City of Ithaca Police Department with the approval of the Shift Commander. A list of Nuisance Wildlife Control Officers are available by contacting the Tompkins County Health Department at 607-274-6688.

SEE ATTACHMENT 513-A

L. Habitual barking and nuisance dog complaints

1. The department will respond to calls for service regarding barking, nuisance or other dog control complaints.
  
2. Officers will attempt to interview all parties involved to determine if a Local Law violation has occurred and charges are necessary.
  - a) In the event of multiple/repeat complaints, offenders should be charged.