



**COLONIAL HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**William H. Anspach III, Chief of Police**

<b>Category:</b>	Animal Control	<b>Number:</b>	7-1
<b>Subject:</b>	Animal Control Operations	<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 1, 2025
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<b>Approved:</b>	William H. Anspach III, Chief of Police <i>Colonel William H. Anspach, III.</i>		

**NOTE:** This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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**I. POLICY**

It is the department's policy that all animal control officers and shelter attendants follow the proper procedures in the performance of their duties, both in the enforcement of City and State laws, and in the required maintenance and care of the animal shelter.

**II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for responding to animal complaints and the committing and releasing of animals confined in the animal shelter.

**III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. All animal control officers enforce city ordinances pertaining to animals in accordance with the Colonial Heights City Code and the State Code of Virginia.
- B. All animal control officers will:
  - 1. Work directly under the supervision of the Animal Control Supervisor

who reports to the Captain of Operations or designee.

2. Work designated hours as required by the Animal Control Supervisor.
3. Have the responsibility of catching and confining stray, diseased, unlicensed, or seemingly dangerous animals.
4. Have duties requiring the use of good judgment in public contact and enforcement problems, frequently necessitating the use of tact in any action taken.
5. Have a good knowledge of the geography of the city.
6. Have knowledge of ordinances, laws and regulations related to the capture, custody, and disposition of animals.
7. Have knowledge of safety practices concerning the handling of animals.
8. Have the ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions.
9. Have the ability to establish and maintain satisfactory working relationships with the public and other police personnel.
10. Answer calls to investigate vicious, injured, diseased, or stray animals.
11. Pick up and transport to the shelter, animals running at large or kept in violation of City/State Ordinances.
12. Make a report on all calls answered (either by ACO report or Tyler Records Management System).
13. Responsible for the feeding and care for animals in the shelter, along with the shelter attendant and staff, for cleanliness and maintenance of the shelter, and well-being of all confined animals.
14. Transport animals to the appropriate veterinary hospital for euthanasia or medical treatment, and oversee the disposition of carcasses in accordance with Colonial Heights City Code §98-7.
15. Serve summonses on persons who refuse to comply with animal control ordinances and appear in court as needed.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Transporting unwanted animals at owners request**

1. Unless there are extenuating circumstances present, animal owners will be required to take their pets to the shelter if they are not able to care for the animal.

##### **B. Injured/Mistreated/Dead Animals**

1. Animal Control Officers may respond to all injured animal calls while on duty. After hours, transportation will be requested by complainant if practical and there is no danger to public safety. Injury will be evaluated by the responding unit and a supervisor consulted as to ACO response. If the injured animal requires medical care it may be transported to the nearest animal hospital for treatment. If the owner can be found, he/she will be responsible for all medical bills.
2. An Animal Control Officer will respond to calls of mistreated animals. If the officer's investigation indicates that charges should be placed for mistreatment, they will advise the person of the charges and issue the necessary summons.
3. Dead animals located on city property, where the owner is not located, will normally be removed by the appropriate city department after notification by the dispatcher. On private property, the owner is responsible for the disposition of any dead animal belonging to him/her. Any dead wildlife found on private property can be disposed of by the owner of the property.

##### **C. Vicious Animals**

1. Complaints of vicious animals, especially running at large, need immediate attention and should be dispatched immediately.
2. The dispatcher should obtain as much information as possible from the complainant to include:
  - a. Complainant's name, address, phone number
  - b. Location of animal and owner if known
  - c. Description of the animal

- d. Circumstances that led to the complaint
3. The officer responding to a complaint of a vicious animal shall take appropriate action as soon as possible to diminish the chance of injury to anyone. This may require:
- a. Verifying that the animal is vicious. Who was attacked, where, when, what injuries, etc. Prepare offense report if founded complaint.
  - b. If the situation is such that a citizen is being attacked or an officer is attacked, destruction of the animal may be necessary. Safety of all concerned must be a paramount consideration.
4. Suspected Rabid Animals
- a. Complaints of suspected rabid animals shall be given immediate attention and should be immediately dispatched.
  - b. The officer responding should attempt to identify the owner and to determine the vaccination status. The owner must be able to display vaccination certificate, or the animal should be handled as though it had not been vaccinated.
  - c. Before an animal suspected of having rabies is handled, the officer should take steps to protect against being bitten. Appropriate protective equipment shall be worn and utilized.
  - d. Bite Cases – All bite cases will be fully investigated by an officer, with the following forms filled out:
    - 1). Colonial Heights Police Department Animal Control Report
    - 2). Virginia State Health Department Animal Exposure Report
- All of the information concerning the proper confinement of the animal involved will be explained to the animal owner and the proper form signed by the owner.
- e. In the event that an animal control officer has probable cause to believe that an animal is dangerous, they will follow the provisions of the Colonial Heights City Code §98-8.

5. Barking/Howling Dogs

- a. Citizens reporting habitually barking dogs should be questioned as to the identity of the owner or address at which the animal is kept. Dispatchers should try to obtain the name and address of the complainant. An officer will be sent to advise the animal's owner of the complaint, identify and verify the owner's name and address, and record this on the CAD log. Dispatchers should advise officers of any prior complaints.
- b. If the complaint is aggravated, or one of a repetitive nature, officers should issue a citation for violation of City Code §98-14, Keeping or Harboring Barking or Howling Dogs. Previous/current complainants may be summoned as witnesses.

6. Dogs running at large

a. Definition

- 1. To roam, loiter, walk, run, self-hunt or be off the premises of its owner or custodian without being caged, physically carried, held by leash or otherwise restrained by a person thoroughly capable of controlling the animal.
- 2. Any dog observed running at large by an animal control officer, whether licensed or unlicensed, may be impounded and confined at the animal shelter. If the owner is known and at the discretion of the animal control officer, the animal may be returned to its owner. The animal control officer may issue a summons for the violation.

7. Impoundment of dogs

- a. When an animal is transported to the shelter, it will be placed in an open "run" and given food and water. If the animal is placed into the shelter by a police officer after hours, the officer will note on the ACO report which "run" the animal was placed.
- b. Any animal turned into the shelter by its owner (City residents

only) will not need to be segregated if proof of shots can be verified.

- c. Vicious animals will not be accepted at the shelter. Owners of vicious animals will be instructed to have animal euthanized as the shelter cannot in good faith adopt out animals, of this nature.

8. Releasing Dogs Impounded to Shelter

- a. When the owner requests the release of a dog, the committal form will be retrieved from the file.
- b. Before a dog is released, the releasing officer will check the form to ensure that no restrictions are noted for the release of the animal and check for ownership to his satisfaction.
- c. No animal will be released unless an ACO or shelter attendant is on duty unless authorized by the on-duty supervisor.
- d. All impoundment fees must be paid before animal is released.

9. Control of Wild Animals - See Colonial Heights City Code §98-44

**V. SHELTER ATTENDANT**

The shelter attendant works under the direct supervision of the Animal Control Supervisor and performs all necessary work in maintaining all kennel areas and related areas of the shelter in a clean and sanitary condition. The attendant also feeds, helps adopt animals, and greets walk-in citizen contacts.

The shelter attendant will:

- 1. Receive animals and complete all appropriate forms.
- 2. Properly care for the animals in a considerate and humane way.
- 3. Keep all kennel areas clean and disinfected at all times.
- 4. They will constantly monitor all kennel areas throughout the day.
- 5. When necessary, ensure required animals are given their shots.
- 6. Assist the public adopt, or claiming their animals.

7. Any other related duties as required by the animal control supervisor.
8. Disperse medication to appropriate animals as directed.

**VI. REDEMPTION; ADOPTION AND DISPOSITION OF UNREDEEMED ANIMALS**

See Colonial Heights City Code §98-27

**VII. OBSERVATION AND QUARANTINE ROOM**

- A. The observation room at the animal shelter will be used to house suspected or obviously ill animals until they are well enough for adoption or if too ill, taken to a veterinary hospital for euthanasia.
- B. Extreme care will be taken by animal control officers and shelter attendants to ensure that healthy animals are not infected by sick animals by utilizing the outside entrance/exit to the quarantine room.
- C. The quarantine room at the animal shelter will be used to house animals in accordance with Colonial Heights Animal Control Policy 7-2.

**VIII. IMPOUNDMENT AND DISPOSITION OF UNVACCINATED DOGS AND CATS**

See Colonial Heights City Code §98-35

**IX. DOGS OR CATS SUSPECTED TO BE RABID**

See Colonial Heights City Code §98-36

**X. DISPOSITION OF RABID DOGS OR CATS**

See Colonial Heights City Code §98-37