


TOWN OF RICHLANDS		RULES AND REGULATIONS	
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE			
SUBJECT: Animal Complaints		NUMBER: 3-15	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/01/2015		REVIEW DATE: 03/01/2019	
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: Supersedes <u>ALL</u> Previously Issued Orders or Policies		APPROVED: J.W. Gilbert/  Chief of Police	
VLEPSC STANDARDS:			

**NOTE:** This rule or regulation 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.

**I. POLICY:**

Handling animal complaints is a function that all officers of the Richlands Police Department must perform from time to time. Normally, the Richlands Police Department Code Enforcement Officer will handle all animal complainants unless he/she is not available.

**II. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for responding to animal complaints.

**III. PROCEDURE:**

A. Transporting Animals: Unless there are extenuating circumstances, and with the approval of the supervisor animals will not be transported in town vehicles except in the Code Enforcement Truck.

B. Injured/Mistreated/Dead Animals

1. When arriving on a complaint of an injured or mistreated animal and upon the complaint being confirmed, the Animal Control Officer will be notified.
2. If the Richlands Police Department officer chooses to investigate the crime, and a finding of abuse or neglect is made, charges will be made.
3. Dead animals located on town property, where the owner is not located, will be removed by the Sanitation Department after dispatcher notification. On private property, the owner is responsible for disposing the animal.

C. Vicious Animals

1. Complaints of vicious animals, especially running at large, need immediate attention and should be handled immediately.
2. The officer responding to this complaint should take appropriate action as soon as possible to diminish the chance of injury.
  - a) Contact Animal Control, if time permits

- b) Verify the animal is vicious. Gather all information about the incident or animal, and seek medical attention for anyone who may be injured.
  - c) If the owner of the animal is known, verify rabies vaccination (see paragraph 4).
  - d) If a violation has occurred, investigate and obtain charges, if needed.
  - e) If owner of animal is unknown, proceed as in paragraph 4.
  - f) If the situation is such that injury or death may likely occur, destruction of the animal may be necessary. The supervisor will be contacted before the animal is destroyed.
3. When a complaint is received alleging that dogs are attacking livestock, the Animal Control Officer will be contacted.
- If contact cannot be made, the officer will make area safe, and investigate the matter (then a follow-up call will be made to the Animal Control Officer).
4. Suspected Rabid Animals
- a) The officer responding should attempt to identify the owner to determine vaccination status. If the status is unknown, treat the animal as if rabid.
  - b) The officer will notify Animal Control as soon as possible to handle this animal.
  - c) If injury or death is likely to occur, the animal may be destroyed (see 2-f).
5. Barking/Howling Dogs
- a) The officer responding will make contact with the owner of the dog, and give verbal warning.
  - b) The third call to a particular residence by any officer in a 90-day period will be handled with a summons to court for the violation. Complainants **shall** be subpoenaed to court.
6. Nuisance
- a) Complaints concerning dog nuisances should be investigated, and a summons or warning may be given.
  - b) Nuisance violations:
    - 1) Dogs turning over trash cans
    - 2) Dogs using property beyond their premises for bowel/bladder evacuation
    - 3) Aggressively charging or biting people/dogs
  - c) If the owner cannot be located, or if the officer needs assistance, Animal Control can be notified.

**7. Dogs Running at Large**

- a) A dog off the real property of its owner or custodian, not under the owner's control.
- b) Under control: Secured by leash or lead; or penned up; or in the immediate vicinity of a responsible owner, obedient to that person's command and not engaged in destructive/dangerous activity.
- c) A dog observed running at large by an officer, shall notify animal control, or may pursue charges against the owner (if known).

