

Finance Department  
Director's Office

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Michael L. Thurmond

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# Memo

**To:** Wayne Williams, Business Process Consultant

**From:** Xan Rawls, Director of Police Services, Animal Enforcement Division

**cc:** Zachary Williams, Chief Operating Officer  
Dianne McNabb, Interim Chief Financial Officer;  
Preston L. Stephens, Interim Assistant Finance Director

**Date:** 5/4/2018

**Re:** Management Response Update - 2017 Animal Services and Enforcement Compliance Review

In 2017, the County Finance Department's Internal Audit Division conducted a compliance review of the Animal Services and Enforcement (ASE) operations in response to citizen complaints received. The resulting report was issued in August 2017. Within the report, seven (7) specific observations highlighting operational improvement opportunities were noted.

ASE management responded and acted upon these observations by taking significant steps to address each individually with procedures focused on providing continuous improvement going forward. Listed below are the noted observation areas from the review and management actions to address each to date.

August 2017 Review Observation	Management Response and Corrective Measures taken to date
Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	<p>The Animal Services and Enforcement SOP has been updated to include recent adoptions. Updates and changes to the SOP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inclusion of jurisdictional responsibility for complaints;</li> <li>• Creation of an optimized online email complaint management and tracking system;</li> <li>• Editing, consolidation and clarification of redundant SOP sections; and</li> <li>• Procedures for improved color-coded filing system for managing dangerous, neglect and cruelty complaints.</li> </ul>
Training and Knowledge of County Code and State Laws	<p>Animal Services and Enforcement employees consistently attend internal and external training sponsored by multiple organizations locally and nationally including: DeKalb Animal Control Academy; Southeastern Animal Control Association; Georgia Animal Care &amp; Control Association; Georgia Equine Rescue League; National</p>

	<p>Animal Control Association; The Humane Society of the United States; and The National Animal Cruelty Investigation School.</p>
<p>Code Compliance</p>	<p>ASE continues to provide citizens with information regarding which department manages a particular segment of a complaint by providing contact information to those departments including: Code Enforcement, Sanitation, and the Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>To support this effort, ASE management coordinates with web site manager LifeLine Animal Project to ensure the Enforcement section accurately outlines applicable jurisdiction responsibility for each complaint segment as well. The most recent documented coordination of this effort was conducted in August 2017.</p> <p>The ASE SOP notes the reference to complaint segment responsibility within Section 1.5.</p> <p>Refer to the following website link:  <a href="http://www.dekalbanimalservices.com/field-services/request-for-service">http://www.dekalbanimalservices.com/field-services/request-for-service</a></p>
<p>Handling of Complaints</p>	<p>ASE worked with the County Department of Innovation &amp; Technology to set up specific folders for emailed complaints, allowing for more efficient tracking and response. Dually, the acceptance of faxed requests has been eliminated.</p> <p>In conjunction with the implementation of the new complaint focused email folders, ASE management has updated procedures to ensure folders are monitored multiple times a day, Monday through Friday with multiple staff support to ensure redundancy. Once received, emails are responded to by procedurally dispatching Animal Services Officers within 24 hours or less based on complaint severity and priority.</p> <p>This system of response allows for a clear trail of complaint receipt, response and subsequent dispatch.</p> <p>On-Duty and On-Call services are available during non-office hours as noted within the department's voicemail system notification.</p>
<p>Record Maintenance and Documentation</p>	<p>ASE has integrated a color coding system to facilitate its extensive complaint documentation and recording by case type and status. Hard copy files have all relevant case numbers and necessary information visibly noted.</p> <p>Section 2.5 of the ASE SOP states:  <i>"Photographs are encouraged (when practical) of the location, animal, and other noteworthy information. Photographs stand as a record of events that can be used for comparison purposes on return calls or compliance orders."</i>  <b>and</b>  Section 4.16 of the ASE SOP states:  <i>"Photographs will be taken in EVERY cruelty case."</i></p> <p>Officers continue the practice of photographing all cases determined as both required and feasible to do so. Management notes it's continued revision of scenarios where pictures are not taken for a call where no visible on-site evidence is present and/or a "For Follow-up" notification is provided.</p>



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<b>General Operations</b>	As recommended, ASE performed an assessment of its current software systems and notes although not specifically designed for management of field enforcement complaints, the current system functional. Further cost-benefit analysis will be conducted to determine technological upgrade opportunities in the future.
<b>Transparency</b>	ASE hired a dispatcher to ensure that each caller is provided with a unique case number which can be tracked for follow-up inquiry. Complaints received by email are responded to with a case number included as well. The County continues to work towards how to best capture anonymous complaints and calls discontinued by callers prior to case number issuance.

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