

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual



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Section 1.0 – General Provisions

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual is to establish clear, consistent, and enforceable guidelines governing the operations of DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES). These procedures provide direction to AES personnel in the performance of their duties and ensure compliance with applicable DeKalb County ordinances, Georgia state law, and departmental expectations.

Although the State of Georgia does not currently issue a comprehensive certification specific to Animal Enforcement or Animal Control Officers, DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) operates in alignment with nationally recognized best practices. AES follows the professional standards, guidance, and principles promoted by the National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA) to support humane animal welfare, officer safety, public safety, and ethical enforcement.

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) operates under the authority of DeKalb County Public Safety and is subject to applicable DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) policies, rules, regulations, and disciplinary guidelines. AES personnel are required to comply with all relevant DKPD directives and standards of conduct. Employees shall reference PowerDMS as the official system of record to remain current on applicable policies, updates, revisions, and disciplinary guidance.

1.2 Scope and Applicability

This SOP applies to all AES employees (3630 Camp Cir. Decatur GA 30032), including sworn and non-sworn personnel, supervisors, and administrative staff, unless otherwise specified. Compliance with this manual is mandatory regardless of assignment, rank, or work location.

This manual supplements, but does not replace, the DeKalb County Employee Manual, the DeKalb County Police Department Policy Manual, or other governing directives. In the event of a conflict, employees shall seek clarification through the chain of command prior to taking action.

1.3 Authority

The authority to establish, modify, and enforce these SOPs is vested by the Director of Animal Enforcement Services under the authority of DeKalb County and the Department of Public Safety pursuant to DeKalb County Code of Ordinances and applicable Georgia laws.

1.4 Definitions

For the purposes of this manual, the terms *policy*, *procedure*, and *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)* may be used interchangeably. Definitions of specialized terms, where necessary, are provided within applicable sections.

1.5 Manual Revisions

This SOP manual is subject to revision as necessary to reflect changes in law, ordinance, operational needs, or departmental policy.

- The Director of Animal Enforcement Services, or designee, is responsible for approving and issuing revisions.
- Employees are responsible for reviewing and complying with all updates upon issuance.
- Employees may be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of revisions.

1.6 Chain of Command

To ensure effective communication and accountability, AES personnel shall adhere to the established chain of command:

1. Administrative, Field Supervisor, or Officer in Charge (OIC)
2. Director of Animal Enforcement Services

Significant incidents, operational issues, or matters of concern shall be promptly reported through the chain of command.

1.7 Severability

If any provision of this SOP is deemed invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 2.0 – Employee Regulations & Professional Conduct

2.1 Professional Conduct

AES employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and courteous manner at all times. Employees are representatives of DeKalb County and shall maintain conduct that promotes public trust and confidence.

2.2 Standards of Behavior

Employees shall:

- Perform duties with honesty, integrity, and impartiality
- Treat members of the public, coworkers, and partner agencies with respect
- Exercise sound judgment and discretion in all interactions
- Avoid conduct that discredits AES or DeKalb County

Unprofessional, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior may result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

2.3 Legal and Policy Compliance

Employees are responsible for maintaining working knowledge of:

- DeKalb County animal-related ordinances
- Applicable Georgia state laws
- AES policies and procedures

Failure to comply with laws or departmental policy may result in disciplinary action.

2.4 Communication and Professionalism

- Employees shall communicate clearly, respectfully, and professionally.
- Gossip, harassment, discriminatory remarks, or unprofessional language is prohibited.
- Employees shall not publicly discuss confidential or sensitive information without authorization.

2.5 Conflicts of Interest and Fraternization

AES Employees shall avoid relationships or activities that create actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

- Romantic or personal relationships within the same chain of command are prohibited.
- Employees shall promptly report potential conflicts to supervision.
- Failure to disclose may result in disciplinary action.

2.6 Substance Use

- Employees shall not report for duty under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or impairing substances.
- Prescription medications that may impair performance must be disclosed in accordance with DeKalb County policy.

- Employees may be subject to random drug testing consistent with County and Department of Public Safety policy.

2.7 Outside Employment

Employees must obtain written approval prior to engaging in outside employment.

- A 'Part-time Job Request' form must be filled out and approved by your chain of command for approval (form found on the intranet).
- Total work hours shall not exceed fourteen (14) hours in a 24-hour period.
- Total weekly hours shall not exceed seventy-six (76) hours, inclusive of overtime, training, court, and secondary employment.

2.8 Timekeeping and Attendance

- All employees shall accurately record time worked using the KRONOS timekeeping system.
- Falsification of time records or clocking in/out for another employee is prohibited.
- Employees shall report to duty on time and notify supervision of absences in accordance with policy.
- The proper form must be utilized for KRONOS missed time clock punches.
- Overtime sheets must be used to record any approved time worked over the required eight (8) hours per shift or on-call time when the AEO was required to go to a scene. The reason must include the case number, CAD number or legitimate County business reason.

2.9 Employee Accountability

Employees are accountable for their actions and performance. Violations of this SOP may result in corrective or disciplinary action consistent with County policy, Department of Public Safety rules, and applicable law.

Section 3.0 – Uniforms and Appearance

3.1 Purpose

This section establishes uniform and appearance standards for all DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) personnel. Professional appearance promotes public trust, officer safety, and consistent identification of AES employees.

3.2 General Appearance Standards

All AES personnel shall maintain a neat, clean, and professional appearance while on duty or representing the department in any official capacity.

- Uniforms shall be clean, serviceable, and worn as issued.
- Uniforms or equipment shall not be altered without authorization.
- Personal appearance shall not compromise safety, effectiveness, or public perception.
- Clothing or accessories that detract from a professional appearance are prohibited.

3.3 Authorized Uniform Components

Only County-issued or Director-approved uniform items may be worn while on duty, including but not limited to:

- Approved AES uniform shirt
- Approved uniform pants
- Duty belt with issued equipment
- County-issued badge and identification
- Approved footwear suitable for field operations
- Approved outerwear appropriate for weather and assignment

Mixing approved uniform items with non-approved clothing or accessories is prohibited.

3.4 Identification and Insignia

- Department-issued identification and badge shall be worn and visible while on duty unless operational circumstances require otherwise.
- Identification and badges shall not be altered, defaced, or used for non-official purposes.
- Lost, stolen, or damaged identification or badges shall be reported immediately to a supervisor.

3.5 Grooming Standards

Personnel shall maintain grooming standards that reflect professionalism, hygiene, and safety.

- Hair shall be clean, neat, and maintained so as not to interfere with assigned duties or equipment.
- Facial hair shall be neatly groomed and must not interfere with the proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Fingernails shall be clean and maintained at a length that does not pose a safety risk.
- Personal hygiene shall be maintained at all times.

3.6 Tattoos and Body Art

- Tattoos or body art that are offensive, discriminatory, extremist, obscene, or otherwise inconsistent with the values of DeKalb County are prohibited.
- Tattoos that detract from a professional appearance may be required to be covered while on duty.
- Determinations regarding tattoo compliance shall be made by the Director of Animal Enforcement Services or designee.

3.7 Jewelry and Accessories

- Jewelry shall be conservative, minimal, and shall not pose a safety hazard.
- Accessories that interfere with animal handling, equipment use, or officer safety are prohibited.
- Smart watches or functional accessories may be permitted provided they do not interfere with duties or safety requirements.

3.8 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Required PPE shall be worn as directed based on assignment, conditions, and operational risk.
- PPE shall be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.
- Failure to wear required PPE may result in corrective action.

3.9 Uniform Inspections and Compliance

- Supervisors shall ensure compliance with uniform and appearance standards during roll call, inspections, and field operations.
- Employees found out of compliance may be directed to correct deficiencies immediately.
- Repeated or willful violations may result in disciplinary action.

3.10 Exceptions and Accommodations

- Requests for uniform or grooming accommodations due to medical, religious, or other legitimate reasons must be submitted in writing and approved by the Director or designee.
- Temporary deviations may be authorized based on assignment, weather conditions, or operational necessity.

Section 4.0 – Training and Certification

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish standardized training, certification, and evaluation requirements for DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) personnel. Training ensures that employees perform their duties safely, lawfully, and professionally in compliance with County policy, Georgia state law, and best practices in animal welfare and public safety.

4.2 Scope

This section applies to all AES personnel, including:

- Newly hired Animal Control Officers (ACOs)
- Field Training Officers (FTOs)
- Supervisors
- Instructors and training staff
- Current Front Office and ACOs

Compliance with training requirements is mandatory prior to independent field assignment and throughout employment.

4.3 Training Authority and Oversight

- The AES Director, or designee, has overall authority for training programs and certification requirements.
 - A designated Training Specialist shall oversee curriculum development, scheduling, records management, and compliance.
 - Supervisors and FTOs share responsibility for monitoring trainee progress and performance.
-

4.4 Training Academy Overview

All newly hired ACOs shall successfully complete the AES Training Academy prior to independent field assignment.

4.4.1 Academy Structure

The Training Academy consists of:

- **Eight (8) weeks** of classroom and practical instruction; followed by
- **Two (2) weeks** of Field Training (Ride-Along Phase)

Successful completion of all training components is required before an officer may operate independently.

4.5 Training Curriculum Overview

The Training Academy curriculum is designed to provide foundational knowledge, technical skills, and professional development.

Week 1 – Introduction to Animal Control and Legal Framework

Focuses on AES mission, organizational structure, and legal authority.

Includes:

- Roles and responsibilities of Animal Enforcement
- Coordination with law enforcement and partner agencies
- County SOPs and chain of command
- State, local, and federal animal laws
- Animal cruelty reporting and seizure protocols
- Ethical and humane treatment standards

Week 2 – Animal Behavior and Handling

Focuses on safe, humane handling techniques.

Includes:

- Animal body language (domestic animals and wildlife)
- Handling aggressive, fearful, or injured animals
- Proper use of catch poles, leads, traps, nets, and PPE
- De-escalation techniques

Week 3 – Animal Health and Disease Management

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services SOP

Focuses on disease prevention and response.

Includes:

- Zoonotic diseases (rabies, parvo, leptospirosis)
- Recognition of illness and injury
- Rabies vaccination laws and quarantine procedures
- Vehicle and equipment sanitization

Week 4 – Cruelty and Neglect Investigations

Focuses on investigative procedures.

Includes:

- Recognizing abuse, neglect, and hoarding
- Body Condition Scoring
- Evidence collection and photography
- Interviewing witnesses and owners
- Courtroom etiquette and case presentation

Week 5 – Trapping, Capture, and Abandonment Response

Focuses on safe capture and transport.

Includes:

- Trap selection and placement
- Monitoring and retrieval procedures
- Transport and intake scanning protocols
- Dangerous animal capture tactics

Week 6 – Field Operations

Focuses on real-world response.

Includes:

- Call prioritization and dispatch coordination
- Safe approach strategies
- Public communication and professionalism
- Coordination with emergency responders

Week 7 – Wildlife and Livestock Response

Focuses on lawful wildlife handling.

Includes:

- Georgia wildlife laws and restrictions
- Livestock response procedures
- Coordination with wildlife rehabilitation partners

Week 8 – Public Relations and Crisis Management

Focuses on communication and resilience.

Includes:

- Media relations
- Disaster and large-scale response
- Officer stress management and wellness

4.6 Field Training Program (FTO Phase)

4.6.1 Field Training Structure

The Field Training Phase transitions trainees into real-world operations.

- **Week 9:** Shadowing and guided fieldwork
- **Week 10:** Independent field response under supervision

4.6.2 Evaluation and Release

- Trainees must receive **two (2) “Ready to Ride Alone” evaluations** to successfully complete the program.
- Failure to meet standards by the end of Week 10 will result in remedial training.
- Upon successful completion of training, ACOs will be sworn in at the DeKalb County Courthouse before a judge.

4.6.3 Remedial Training

- A remedial week may be added to address deficiencies.
- Remedial time does not count toward required evaluations.

- Trainees must successfully complete a final “Ready to Ride Alone” evaluation.
-

4.7 Duties and Responsibilities

4.7.1 Field Training Officers (FTOs)

FTOs are responsible for:

- Mentoring and evaluating trainees
- Completing daily and weekly performance evaluations
- Documenting deficiencies and progress
- Communicating concerns to supervisors
- Recommending continuation, extension, or termination

4.7.2 Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Oversight of training activities
 - Reviewing evaluations and documentation
 - Maintaining training files in SharePoint
 - Providing updates to the Director
 - Making final recommendations regarding trainee status
-

4.8 Compensation and Administrative Pay

- FTOs shall be awarded **one (1) day of leave for every five (5) training days completed**.
 - This leave shall be classified as administrative leave for Fair Labor Standards purposes.
 - Timekeepers shall use **Pay Code 16 – Other Administrative Pay**, subject to Director approval.
-

4.9 Ongoing Training and Certification

- All AES personnel shall complete required annual and refresher training.
- Failure to maintain required certifications may result in suspension of enforcement authority.
- Extended absences may require recertification prior to return to duty.

4.10 Training Records

- Training records shall be maintained in accordance with AES and County record retention policies.
- Supervisors shall review training compliance quarterly.

Section 5.0 – Field Operations

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish standards and procedures for field operations conducted by DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES). Field operations are designed to ensure compliance with applicable laws and ordinances while prioritizing public safety, officer safety, and animal welfare.

5.2 General Field Standards

Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) are the most visible representatives of AES and shall conduct themselves in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner at all times.

Field operations shall be conducted with:

- Sound judgment and discretion
- Adherence to training and departmental SOPs
- Balanced consideration of enforcement, education, and public service

Officers shall respond to calls in a timely manner while delivering quality service to citizens and animals.

5.3 Knowledge and Communication

AEOs shall maintain a working knowledge of:

- Georgia state laws related to animal welfare
- DeKalb County animal ordinances
- AES policies and procedures

Officers shall:

- Communicate clearly and professionally with complainants, witnesses, and animal owners
 - Provide accurate and concise information regarding enforcement actions and available resources
 - Utilize de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques whenever possible to maintain public trust
-

5.4 Animal Welfare Standards

- At no time shall an AEO intentionally subject any animal to neglect, cruelty, or inhumane treatment.
 - All enforcement actions shall prioritize the welfare of the animal involved.
 - Violations of animal welfare standards may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
-

5.5 Officer Safety and Public Safety

- Officer safety, public safety, and animal welfare shall be the primary considerations during all field operations.
 - Required personal protective equipment (PPE) and department-issued tools shall be used in accordance with training and safety guidelines.
 - Assistance from law enforcement shall be requested when situations escalate beyond the scope of animal enforcement authority.
 - Officers shall not place themselves in danger to retrieve or capture an animal.
-

5.6 Animal Identification and Owner Contact

- All animals encountered in the field shall be scanned for a microchip and checked for visible identification prior to impoundment when safe to do so.
 - If identification is located, reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner while in the field unless doing so presents a safety risk.
 - Identification information shall be documented in case notes and, if impounded, on the intake or cage card.
 - Animals may be returned to the owner in the field when lawful, safe, and appropriate.
-

5.7 Documentation and Reporting

- Officers shall complete case notes, incident reports, and related documentation in a timely, accurate, and thorough manner.
 - Documentation shall include:
 - Nature of the call
 - Observations
 - Actions taken
 - Final disposition
 - Photographs, videos, or other evidence shall be collected and attached to the case file when relevant.
 - Failure to maintain proper case files may result in disciplinary action or contempt of court in some cases.
 - Documentation requirements are further governed by **Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management**.
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5.8 Community Engagement

- Officers are encouraged to provide education and outreach when appropriate.
 - Community engagement shall focus on responsible pet ownership, ordinance compliance, and available resources.
 - Building trust and maintaining positive relationships with the community is a core mission of AES.
-

5.9 Field Discretion

- Officers are expected to use discretion and good judgment when responding to calls for service.
 - Enforcement actions may include education, warnings, citations, or impoundment as appropriate.
 - Discretion shall be exercised consistently and in accordance with training and policy.
-

5.10 Interagency Coordination

- AES shall coordinate with law enforcement, emergency responders, public safety agencies, and partner organizations as needed.

- When assisting another agency, AES personnel shall operate within their authority while respecting the requesting agency's command structure.

5.11 Dogs Found / Dogs at Large

5.11.1 Dogs shall be impounded by an Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) when any of the following conditions exist:

- The dog is observed running at large and/or creating a hazardous situation;
- The dog has bitten a person or animal and must be confined for quarantine;
- The dog is found in inhumane, unsafe, or neglectful conditions.

5.11.2 At the AEO's discretion, dogs found loose or running at large may be returned to the owner without issuance of a citation when:

- The violation is a first-time, minor offense and the AEO can verify no prior complaints, warnings, or citations for the same violation;
- The violation appears accidental in nature;
- Impoundment would not be in the best interest of the animal (e.g., elderly, ill, or medically fragile animals);
- The violation involves vaccine or license provisions only, with no restraint violations present.

5.11.3 All enforcement actions and discretionary decisions shall be documented in the case record.

5.12 Cats Found / Cats at Large

- Cats found loose/running at-large will be impounded when trapped and needs medical, bite quarantine, owner unknown/unlocatable and risk.

5.12.1 Cats found loose or running at large may be impounded when:

- The cat has been confined or trapped by a complainant and requires medical attention.
- The cat has bitten a person or animal and requires quarantine.
- The owner is unknown or cannot be located and leaving the animal would place it at risk.

5.12.2 Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) procedures and kitten-specific guidance shall be governed by Appendix A and Appendix B – Found a Kitten Protocol.

5.12.3 All actions taken shall be documented in the case management system.

5.13 Public Safety Assistance

5.13.1 Definition

Public Safety Assistance calls are incidents in which law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, or other public safety agencies determine that assistance from DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) is required.

5.13.2 Classification

Public Safety Assistance calls shall be classified as:

- **Active Police Activity (APA):** Law enforcement is actively assessing an unsecured scene.
- **Inactive Police Activity (IPA):** Law enforcement has secured the scene and authorized entry.
- **Non-Emergency Assistance:** Routine assistance not associated with an active police incident.

5.13.3 Scene Entry and Safety

- AES personnel shall not enter any scene classified as **Active Police Activity** until advised by the requesting agency that the scene has been secured.
- Officer safety and situational awareness shall be maintained at all times.

5.13.4 Priority Response

Public Safety Assistance calls shall take priority over non-emergency calls received from the public.

5.13.5 Officer Responsibilities

When responding to a Public Safety Assistance request, the Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) shall:

- Make direct contact with the requesting officer or agency representative;
- Obtain the agency case number;
- Obtain all available owner or next-of-kin information;
- Observe and assess the scene prior to animal removal;
- Document living conditions and collect photographic evidence when appropriate;
- Ensure completion of required release or impound documentation;
- Complete and post a Door Card when animals are removed;
- Photograph Door Card placement from at least two angles.

5.13.6 Documentation

All actions, observations, and dispositions related to Public Safety Assistance calls shall be documented in the case record.

Section 5.14 – Wildlife Response and Disposition

5.14.1 General Guidance

Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) shall respond to wildlife-related calls in accordance with officer safety, public safety, and animal welfare principles.

5.14.2 Wildlife Release

Healthy wildlife that has **not** bitten a person or pet may be:

- Released immediately at the scene; or
- Released at another nearby suitable location, when appropriate.

5.14.3 Personally Owned Traps

- Wildlife confined in **personally owned traps** shall be the responsibility of the trap owner.
- When wildlife confined by citizens is not injured and does not pose an immediate threat, citizens shall be directed to contact the appropriate entity (e.g., pest control services or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources) for removal.

5.14.4 AES Wildlife Removal or Impoundment

AES shall remove or impound wildlife **only** when:

- The animal is inside the living space of a residence and poses a threat to occupants;
- The animal is involved in a bite case;
- The animal is sick or injured and can be safely handled within AES training, equipment, and operational capacity.

5.14.5 Documentation

All wildlife-related responses and dispositions shall be documented in the case management system

Section 5.15 – Animal Neglect and Cruelty Investigations

5.15.1 Purpose

This section establishes the minimum response and documentation requirements for reports of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect. These calls are high priority and shall be handled in a manner that preserves evidence, supports humane animal welfare, and ensures officer and public safety.

5.15.2 Initial Response and Investigation

- If in plain sight and safe to do so, observe and assess the animal(s) reported for abuse, cruelty, or neglect.
- Meet with the complainant and obtain contact information, witness information, and written or recorded statements when available.
- Meet with the owner/custodian and obtain statements regarding the animal(s), care provided, and circumstances of the complaint. While speaking with the owner/custodian, the officer should discreetly observe the property for conditions consistent with witness statements and the reported allegations.
- Photograph/video relevant conditions and evidence (animal condition, housing, food/water, confinement, injuries, environmental hazards) consistent with training and policy.
- If the animal is found to be in severe distress or has urgent health concerns, the animal may be immediately impounded and transported to a veterinarian or designated facility without delay, consistent with Section 10.0 – Animal Impoundment and Shelter Interface.

5.15.3 Required Checklist and Supervisory Review

- Complete the department Cruelty Checklist and submit it through the chain of command for supervisory review.
- Issue appropriate documents as applicable (e.g., Notice to Comply, copy of applicable ordinance sections, education materials, and compliance deadlines).

5.15.4 Enforcement Actions and Criminal Referrals

- Cite for applicable DeKalb County ordinance violations when supported by the facts and evidence.
- When state criminal charges may be appropriate, the Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) shall notify AES leadership and coordinate with DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) or the appropriate law enforcement authority to pursue state charges, consistent with jurisdiction and policy.
- If law enforcement is requested to pursue state charges, warrants may be sought when probable cause exists. All coordination and outcomes shall be documented in the case record.

5.15.5 Documentation

All abuse, cruelty, or neglect investigations shall be documented in the case management system with clear, factual narrative, supporting photographs/evidence, issued documents, and supervisory actions as

applicable. Related reporting requirements are further governed by Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management.

Section 5.16 – Citations

5.16.1 Authority

Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) are authorized to issue citations for violations of applicable DeKalb County Chapter 5 Animal ordinances and State of Georgia laws within the scope of Animal Enforcement Services.

5.16.2 When Citations May Be Issued

Citations may be issued when:

- A violation of law or Chapter 5 Animal ordinance is observed or substantiated;
 - Compliance cannot be reasonably achieved through education or warning;
 - The violation presents a risk to public safety or animal welfare;
 - The violation is repeat, intentional, or egregious in nature.
-

5.16.3 Officer Discretion

- AEOs shall exercise professional judgment when determining whether to issue a citation.
- Factors to be considered include:
 - Severity of the violation;
 - Prior history of warnings or citations for the same or similar violations;
 - Immediate or potential risk to public safety or animal welfare;
 - Owner cooperation and corrective action taken at the scene.

All discretionary decisions shall be documented in the case record.

5.16.4 Issuance Procedures

When issuing a citation, the AEO shall:

- Clearly explain the nature of the violation to the responsible party;

- Provide citation information, including court date and location, when applicable;
 - Ensure all citation information is accurate, complete, and legible.
-

5.16.5 Documentation

- All citations issued shall be documented in the case management system (PetPoint).
 - Citation numbers, charges, and related court information shall be recorded in the case file in PetPoint or other case files as needed.
 - Supporting documentation, photographs, or other evidence shall be uploaded to the SharePoint folder when applicable.
-

5.16.6 Court Coordination

- Citation cases shall be monitored through final disposition.
 - Updates related to court outcomes, continuances, dismissals, or compliance shall be documented in accordance with Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management.
-

5.16.7 Failure to Appear or Comply

Failure to appear or comply with citation requirements shall be handled in accordance with court procedures and applicable law and documented in the case file.

Section 5.17 – Community Outreach and Education

5.17.1 Purpose

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) promotes responsible pet ownership, public safety, and animal welfare through community outreach and education initiatives.

5.17.2 Outreach Activities

Community outreach and education efforts are organized by the Training Specialist and done in an effort to support compliance, reduce repeat calls, and promote public trust.

Events may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing verbal education during field interactions;
 - Distributing informational materials related to animal care, licensing, vaccinations, and ordinances;
 - Participating in community events, meetings, or educational programs when resources permit;
 - Collaborating with partner agencies, shelters, and organizations to share accurate animal welfare information.
-

5.17.3 Officer Discretion

- Outreach and education may be utilized as a component of progressive enforcement when appropriate.
 - The use of education does not preclude enforcement action when public safety or animal welfare is at risk.
-

5.17.4 Documentation

- When education or outreach is provided during a field interaction, officers may document the outreach in the case record when relevant.

Section 6.0 – Roll Call, Watchlists, and Staffing

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish standardized procedures for roll call, daily staffing accountability, and communication of operational assignments for DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES). These procedures ensure preparedness, safety, and continuity of operations.

6.2 Roll Call Procedures

Roll call is the formal process of accounting for all on-duty AES personnel at the beginning of each shift.

6.2.1 Roll Call Requirements

- All Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) shall report to roll call at the designated time and location.
- AEOs may clock in up to **five (5) minutes prior** to roll call.
- Officers shall be fully prepared for duty, with uniforms, equipment, radios, and vehicles ready for deployment.
- Officers shall be operationally ready within **fifteen (15) minutes** following completion of roll call.

6.2.2 Supervisor Responsibilities

- Supervisors shall arrive prior to roll call to prepare and distribute the daily watchlist.
 - Supervisors shall use roll call to communicate:
 - Daily assignments
 - Operational priorities
 - Safety concerns
 - Special enforcement initiatives
 - Updates from leadership or shelter staff
-

6.3 Equipment and Vehicle Readiness

The period immediately following roll call may be used to:

- Inspect assigned vehicles for cleanliness and operability
- Verify required equipment, traps, paperwork, and supplies are stocked
- Ensure canned food and animal handling tools are available

Deficiencies shall be reported to a supervisor immediately.

6.4 Watchlists

6.4.1 Watchlist Distribution

Daily watchlists shall be distributed via email in PDF format to:

- AES Director
- AES Leadership
- E911 Communications Supervisors
- Shelter Supervisors
- AES Dispatch / Front Office staff

6.4.2 Watchlist Content

Each watchlist shall include, at a minimum:

- Day, date, unit name, and total number of supervisors and units scheduled
- Shift start and end times
- Supervisors and AEOs (badge numbers, unit assignments, territories, County-issued cell numbers)
- Assigned vehicle unit numbers
- Front Office personnel assignments
- Employees in training
- Absent AES staff
- On-call AEO
- Secondary on-call AEO
- On-call and emergency supervisor names and contact numbers

For safety and accountability reasons, ALL information on the watchlist must be up to date and accurate.

6.4.3 Special Designations

- Employees working approved overtime shall be identified with “OT”.
- Officers designated as **Officer in Charge (OIC)** shall be identified accordingly.
- Partial-shift OIC designations shall include applicable times (e.g., *OIC 1300–1800*).
- Additional status indicators (e.g., sick, vacation, half day) shall be clearly noted.

6.5 Officer in Charge (OIC)

When designated, the Officer in Charge shall assume operational oversight responsibilities for the assigned shift and act as the supervisory point of contact in the absence of a Field Supervisor.

6.6 Staffing Accountability

- All staffing changes, absences, or reassignments shall be communicated to supervision and reflected on the watchlist.
 - Accurate staffing documentation is required to support operational readiness, payroll accuracy, and emergency response.
-

6.7 Compliance

Failure to comply with roll call, watchlist, or staffing procedures may result in corrective action.

Section 6.8 – Call Intake and Dispatch Procedures

6.8.1 Call Intake

- Calls for DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) shall be received through the AES public phone line at 404-294-2996, Option 2.
 - Calls received through this number shall be answered by dispatch personnel and entered into the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.
 - AES Employees shall not be signed in to the system outside of their scheduled hours. Observing calls is not a legitimate reason to be signed onto the system and does not pertain to county business.
-

6.8.2 Dispatch to Animal Enforcement Officers

- Upon call entry, the dispatcher shall assign and dispatch the call to an available Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO).
 - Dispatch shall provide the AEO with all available call information necessary for an appropriate response.
-

6.8.3 Officer Responsibilities

- Upon receipt of a dispatched call, the AEO shall respond in accordance with AES policies and procedures.
 - AES personnel are responsible for updating call status, documenting actions taken, and closing out calls in the CAD system upon completion.
-

6.8.4 Dispatcher Assistance

- When an AEO requires assistance updating or closing a call in CAD, the AEO may request assistance from the dispatcher.
 - All updates and closures shall accurately reflect the disposition of the call.
-

6.8.5 After-Hours Dispatch

- After normal business hours, calls for AES shall be routed through the DeKalb County E911 Communications Center.
 - E911 dispatchers shall dispatch calls to on-call or available AEOs in accordance with established on-call procedures.
-

6.8.6 Documentation

- All dispatched calls, updates, and closures shall be documented in CAD and maintained in accordance with **Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management**.

Section 6.9 – Prior Call History and Location Research

6.9.1 Purpose

To enhance officer safety, situational awareness, and effective response, Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) may request prior call history and related information for locations or individuals associated with a dispatched call.

6.9.2 Dispatcher Assistance

- AEOs may request that dispatch search for prior call history, case activity, or relevant notes associated with a call location, address, or involved parties.
 - Dispatch may provide available information from the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, including prior animal-related calls, warnings, citations, or safety notes.
 - AEOs are able to search but office computers sometimes show more thorough information than field laptops.
-

6.9.3 Use of Information

- Information obtained through prior history checks shall be used to inform response strategy, officer safety considerations, and enforcement decisions.
 - Prior history information does not replace on-scene assessment or officer judgment.
-

6.9.4 Documentation

- When prior call history significantly impacts officer safety or enforcement actions, relevant information shall be documented in the case record.

Section 7.0 – On-Call and After-Hours Operations

7.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish procedures for providing 24-hour animal enforcement coverage through an on-call system. These procedures ensure public safety, timely response to emergencies, and continuity of Animal Enforcement Services (AES) operations outside of regular business hours.

7.2 Authority and Coverage

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services provides public safety assistance **twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week** through a scheduled on-call rotation.

- The weekday on-call begins at **2200 hours (10:00 p.m.)** at the conclusion of the evening shift.
 - Saturday & Sunday on-call begins at **2000 hours (8:00 p.m.)**
 - The on-call shift ends at **0700 hours (7:00 a.m.)** at the start of the day shift.
 - An on-call supervisor shall be designated for each on-call period.
-

7.3 On-Call Assignment and Responsibilities

7.3.1 Assignment

- On-call assignments shall be made in rotation.
- Once assigned, the responsibility for coverage rests with the assigned officer unless approved leave, vacation, or FMLA has been authorized.
- Officers may not self-remove from on-call duty without supervisory approval.

7.3.2 Officer Responsibilities

On-call officers shall:

- Remain available and able to respond promptly to dispatched calls
 - Respond using County-issued equipment and vehicles
 - Exercise discretion and sound judgment in situations not explicitly addressed by this SOP
 - Contact a supervisor or Officer in Charge (OIC) for guidance when necessary
-

7.4 Communication Requirements

- All communication with complainants shall be made using County-issued cell phones only.
 - Personal phones shall not be used to contact complainants or witnesses.
 - Officers shall utilize information provided by AES Dispatch or, afterhours, DeKalb County E911 Communications when initiating contact.
-

7.5 Documentation and Overtime Reporting

- On-call officers shall submit an online overtime report documenting:
 - Officer name
 - Date
 - Time worked

- Reason for overtime (CAD or PetPoint number)
- Required reports and case documentation shall be completed within a reasonable time following call completion.
- Failure to properly document on-call activity may result in corrective action.

7.6 On-Call Response Criteria

AES shall respond after hours **only** to calls meeting emergency or public safety criteria. Calls not meeting on-call criteria shall be deferred to the next business day.

7.6.1 Calls Requiring On-Call Response

Call Type	CAD Code(s)	Response Criteria	Notes / Actions
Animal Bite	A24	Any confirmed or reported animal bite	Dispatch / Contact AES
Possible Rabid Animal	A22	Rabies-vector species inside home OR animal attacking person/pet	Dispatch / Contact AES
Wildlife Complaint	A35	Non-domesticated animals inside living area AND imminent danger	Dispatch AES
Sick/Injured or Cruelty	A29 / A23	Hit by car, bleeding, lethargic, broken bones; obvious cruelty	Dispatch AES
Public Safety Assistance	A31 / A39 / A33	Arrest, eviction, deceased person, Fire/EMS access required	Dispatch AES
Dangerous Animal / Threat	A46 / A40	Domestic animal posing immediate threat	Dispatch AES

Rabies-vector species include raccoons, bats, foxes, and coyotes.

All bite cases are subject to mandatory reporting and tracking requirements as outlined in Section 11.13: Bite Case Reporting and Tracking.

When a bite incident results in the classification of an animal as dangerous and vicious, all ongoing documentation, compliance tracking, inspections, and owner requirements shall be managed in accordance with Section 11.11: Dangerous Animal Case Files and Compliance.

7.6.2 Calls Not Requiring On-Call Response

Call Type	CAD Code(s)	Disposition
Patrol / Loose Animal	A21	Deferred to business hours
Healthy Stray Animal	A99	Deferred to business hours
Meet with Complainant / Neighbor Dispute	A19 / A18	Deferred to business hours

For wildlife calls not meeting on-call criteria, complainants shall be referred to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division.

7.7 Supervisor and OIC Responsibilities

- Supervisors or OICs shall be available to provide guidance during on-call periods.
 - Supervisors shall review on-call activity, overtime submissions, and documentation for compliance.
-

7.8 Compliance

Failure to adhere to on-call procedures, response requirements, or documentation standards may result in corrective action.

Section 8.0 – Use of Force Policy

8.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this section is to establish guidelines governing the use of force by DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) personnel. This policy applies to all instances in which physical force or defensive equipment is used by AES personnel while performing official duties.

This policy governs:

- Use of physical force by AES personnel
- Use of department-authorized defensive equipment
- Reporting, review, and accountability requirements

Use of force shall be applied only when objectively reasonable and necessary, consistent with training, departmental policy, and applicable law.

8.2 Use of Force Philosophy

AES personnel shall use the **minimum level of force reasonably necessary** to achieve lawful objectives while protecting:

- Human life
- Officer safety
- Animal welfare
- Public safety

Force is a **last resort** and shall be discontinued immediately once control is achieved or the threat is no longer present. Officers shall evaluate the **totality of the circumstances**, including:

- Severity of the situation
 - Behavior of the animal or individual
 - Environmental factors
 - Availability of alternative control methods
 - Officer and public safety considerations
-

8.3 Authorized Use of Force

AES personnel are authorized to use physical force only when necessary to:

- Protect themselves or others from injury
- Prevent imminent harm to an animal or person
- Lawfully restrain or control an animal or individual
- Effect lawful impoundment or seizure

Force shall **never** be used as punishment, retaliation, or out of frustration.

8.4 Authorized Defensive Equipment

The **ASP Baton** is the **only authorized defensive weapon** for AES personnel.

- Only department-issued or department-approved ASP batons may be carried.
- Unauthorized weapons or modified equipment are prohibited.
- The baton shall be carried in an approved scabbard.

No lethal weapons are authorized for AES personnel unless otherwise approved under exceptional circumstances.

8.5 ASP Baton Policy

8.5.1 Authorization

AES personnel must be trained and certified prior to carrying or using an ASP baton.

Approved baton sizes include:

- 21-inch
- 26-inch

8.5.2 Carry and Handling

- The baton shall be carried in an approved scabbard.
- Batons shall not be altered or modified.
- Personnel shall inspect batons regularly to ensure serviceability.

8.6 Use Criteria and Application

8.6.1 General Guidelines

- Officers shall issue verbal commands or warnings when feasible prior to baton use.
- Baton use shall be directed toward **approved target areas only**.
- Baton use shall cease once the threat is neutralized or control is achieved.

8.6.2 Prohibited Target Areas

The following areas are **prohibited strike zones**:

- Head
- Neck

- Spine
- Groin
- Chest (unless unavoidable to prevent serious injury)

8.6.3 Animals

- Use of force against animals shall be guided by animal behavior, risk assessment, and officer safety.
 - Force shall be applied only when necessary to prevent injury or safely control the animal.
 - Control poles and other approved tools should be utilized when appropriate prior to baton use.
-

8.7 Medical Aid and Post-Incident Care

- Officers shall continuously monitor any person or animal subjected to force.
 - Medical assistance shall be requested immediately when injury is suspected or observed.
 - Animals requiring medical treatment shall be transported directly to a veterinarian or designated facility.
-

8.8 Reporting and Documentation

Any use of force shall be documented prior to the end of the shift unless extenuating circumstances exist.

Required documentation includes:

- Incident report
- Use of Force report
- Photographs or video when available
- Supervisor notification

All use of force incidents will be reviewed by supervision.

8.9 Duty to Intervene

AES personnel have an affirmative duty to intervene when they observe another employee using force that is clearly unreasonable or excessive.

- Intervention may include verbal direction or physical assistance when safe.
- Incidents shall be reported immediately to a supervisor.

Failure to intervene or report may result in disciplinary action.

8.10 Administrative Review and Leave

- Personnel involved in a use of force incident may be placed on administrative leave pending review.
 - Administrative leave is non-punitive.
 - Officers shall remain available for interviews and review processes.
-

8.11 Training and Certification

- Initial and annual ASP baton training is required.
 - Failure to maintain certification may result in suspension of authorization to carry or use the baton.
 - Remedial training may be required following a use of force incident.
-

8.12 Equipment Maintenance

- Personnel are responsible for the proper care and maintenance of issued equipment.
- Batons requiring repair or replacement shall be reported to supervision.
- Personnel shall not attempt self-repair.

Section 9.0 – Equipment and Vehicles

9.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish standards for the issuance, use, care, and accountability of equipment and vehicles assigned to DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) personnel. Proper use and maintenance of equipment and vehicles are essential to officer safety, operational readiness, and animal welfare.

9.2 Issued Equipment

AES personnel shall be issued equipment necessary to perform assigned duties. Issued equipment may include, but is not limited to:

- Animal capture and restraint equipment
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Communication devices
- Defensive equipment authorized under Section 8.0
- Administrative and documentation tools

Only County-issued or Director-approved equipment may be used while performing official duties.

9.3 Equipment Use and Care

- All issued equipment shall be used solely for official purposes.
 - Personnel are responsible for maintaining equipment in a clean, safe, and serviceable condition.
 - Equipment shall not be altered, modified, or repaired by personnel without authorization.
 - Lost, damaged, or malfunctioning equipment shall be reported to a supervisor immediately.
 - A 'Lost and Mislaid' property form must be completed to replace the reported item.
-

9.4 Vehicle Assignment and Use

AES vehicles are assigned for official use only.

- Vehicles shall be operated in accordance with County policy and applicable traffic laws.
 - Vehicles shall not be used for personal business.
 - Only authorized personnel may operate AES vehicles.
 - Officers shall ensure animals are transported safely and humanely.
 - Civilians are not to ride in the AES vehicles unless previously authorized by Leadership.
-

9.5 Vehicle Inspections

- Officers shall inspect assigned vehicles at the start of each shift.
- Inspections shall include:
 - General cleanliness

- Mechanical condition
 - Emergency and safety equipment
 - Animal transport areas
 - Deficiencies shall be reported to supervision prior to deployment when possible.
-

9.6 Vehicle Cleanliness and Sanitation

- Vehicles shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition at all times.
 - Transport compartments and equipment shall be sanitized in accordance with training protocols, particularly following transport of sick, injured, or aggressive animals.
 - Biohazards shall be handled using appropriate PPE and disposal procedures.
-

9.7 Animal Transport Safety

- Animals shall be secured appropriately during transport to prevent injury or escape.
 - Vehicles used for animal transport shall be adequately heated or cooled to protect animals from extreme temperatures.
 - Water shall be provided when necessary based on transport duration and animal condition.
-

9.8 Accidents and Damage

- Any vehicle accident, regardless of severity, shall be reported immediately to a supervisor.
 - The local police shall also be notified for reporting purposes.
 - Required County accident reports shall be completed promptly within the Origami platform found via the County Intranet & police report/case number uploaded as required.
 - Vehicles involved in accidents shall not be operated if unsafe.
 - County employees should report injuries as soon as possible as it relates to the accident.
-

9.9 Fueling and Mileage

- Officers shall fuel vehicles as required to maintain operational readiness.
 - Mileage and usage documentation shall be completed as required by County policy.
-

9.10 Compliance

Failure to comply with equipment or vehicle procedures may result in corrective action.

Section 9.11 – Animals in Traps and Trap Handling

9.11.1 Canines confined in traps shall be removed using a restraint pole. Then a ramp to load the animal onto the transport vehicle with extreme caution to protect both the AEO and the animal.

9.11.2 Felines confined in traps shall be transferred into a transfer cage prior to transport.

9.11.3 Felines shall be transported to the appropriate LifeLine facility for TNR evaluation or medical care as required.

9.11.4 All AES-owned traps shall be cleaned of debris and food prior to being returned to service or storage.

9.11.5 Cleaning of AES-owned traps is the responsibility of the AEO who removed the trap from service.

Section 10.0 – Animal Impoundment and Shelter Interface

10.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish procedures governing the lawful impoundment of animals and the transfer of custody between DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) and shelter or veterinary partners. These procedures ensure animal welfare, officer safety, accurate documentation, and continuity of care.

10.2 General Impoundment Criteria

Animals may be impounded when necessary to protect public safety or animal welfare, including but not limited to animals that are:

- Running at large
- Injured or ill
- In unsafe or hazardous environments
- Subject to lawful seizure
- Requiring rescue or protective custody

Impoundment decisions shall be based on training, applicable law, and officer discretion.

10.3 Intake Documentation

All animals impounded by AES shall be accompanied by appropriate intake documentation.

At a minimum, intake documentation shall include:

- Species, breed (if known), sex, and color
- Identifying items (collar, tags, harness)
- Location, date, and time of impoundment
- Reason for impoundment
- Observed health condition
- Officer name and badge number
- Owner or custodian information, if known

Accurate documentation is required to ensure proper tracking, care, and owner notification.

10.4 Animal Identification

- All impounded animals shall be scanned for a microchip when safe to do so.
 - Animals with identification shall be documented accordingly.
 - Reasonable attempts shall be made to identify and notify owners in accordance with policy.
-

10.5 Transport to Shelter or Veterinary Facility

- Animals requiring immediate medical attention shall be transported directly to a veterinarian or designated facility.
- Animals shall not be transported to a shelter prior to veterinary care unless the shelter is a veterinary facility or otherwise directed.

- Animals shall be secured and transported in a manner that minimizes stress and prevents injury.
 - The Shelter staff or a veterinarian advise against medical treatment, note their name and directive in the case report.
-

10.6 Shelter Drop-Off Procedures

- All animals delivered to the shelter shall be accompanied by a completed intake card.
 - Officers shall clearly note animal temperament (e.g., aggressive, fearful, hesitant) to support staff safety.
 - Officers shall use appropriate tools and techniques, including ramps and control poles, to safely move animals in and out of transport vehicles.
-

10.7 After-Hours Shelter Intake

When animals requiring ongoing care (including juveniles such as kittens or puppies) are delivered after hours:

- Shelter staff shall be notified prior to the officer leaving the animal.
 - Officers shall utilize posted emergency contact numbers to notify shelter personnel.
 - The intake card and PetPoint report shall document:
 - Name of shelter staff notified
 - Time of notification
 - Officers shall receive confirmation from shelter staff before departing.
 - Procedures for kittens and nursing litters are further governed by Appendix B – Found a Kitten Protocol.
-

10.8 Transfer of Custody

- Transfer of custody occurs once the animal is accepted by shelter or veterinary personnel.
 - Officers shall document the name of the individual accepting custody in the PetPoint report.
 - Animals shall not be released to citizens, volunteers, or rescue groups without proper authorization and documentation.
-

10.9 Safety Considerations

- Officer safety is of the utmost importance during all impoundment and transfer activities.
 - Proper PPE and handling equipment shall be used at all times.
 - Officers shall not place themselves at risk to complete an impoundment.
-

10.10 Compliance

Failure to comply with impoundment or shelter interface procedures may result in corrective action.

Section 10.11 – Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) Procedures

10.11.1 AES trapped cats shall be transported to the LifeLine Community Animal Center for participation in the Trap, Neuter, and Return program. Cats trapped by the public can be transported by the person that trapped the cat.

10.11.2 Previously ear-tipped cats, if healthy and not in need of medical attention, may be released or returned to the location of trapping.

10.11.3 Nursing kittens shall not be impounded without consideration of the mother cat's presence.

10.11.4 Officers shall make reasonable efforts to observe for the return of the mother cat and to trap the mother cat when nursing kittens are present.

10.11.5 When possible, nursing mother cats and kittens shall be transported together.

10.11.6 Felines that are too young for surgery, or that are sick or injured, shall be transported to the shelter and staff shall be notified to provide appropriate care.

Section 10.12 – Medical Treatment for Animals

10.12.1 All animals received by, surrendered to, apprehended by, or otherwise remanded to the custody of DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services shall receive immediate medical care for any injury or illness.

10.12.2 Upon entry or pick-up, AEOs shall examine animals for injuries, parasites, pregnancy, signs of illness, or other medical concerns and document observations on the Intake Card.

10.12.3 When veterinary care is required, a veterinary check request shall be documented and intake or shelter staff shall be notified immediately.

10.12.4 If an animal is injured during capture, handling, or as a direct or indirect result of employee action:

- The animal shall be transported immediately to a veterinarian; and
- The incident shall be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor.

Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management

11.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish standards for documentation, case management, and records retention for DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES). Accurate and timely records ensure accountability, transparency, legal compliance, and continuity of operations.

11.2 Documentation Standards

AES personnel shall document all enforcement activities thoroughly, accurately, and in a timely manner within the PetPoint platform.

- All reports, case notes, and related documentation shall be clear, concise, factual, and professional.
 - Documentation shall include sufficient detail to explain observations, actions taken, and outcomes.
 - Reports are official records and may be subject to public records requests, court proceedings, and internal review.
 - It is imperative that all parts of the investigation are properly stored for future use as needed.
-

11.2.1 Report and Memo Writing

Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) shall utilize the PetPoint system to document AES calls requiring a report by entering documentation under the “Memo” tab associated with each assigned/handled call.

Routine calls may be documented using the memo field when the call is basic in nature and the memo space is sufficient to capture the facts, actions taken, and disposition.

Calls requiring more detailed documentation or standardized forms shall be documented using the appropriate Incident Report (e.g., Bite Report, Cruelty Report, Rabies Exposure, or other required report types). When in doubt, the officer should complete a narrative Incident Report that includes all relevant specifics of the incident.

Narrative Template

Begin each report with a sentence similar to the following:

On _____ (date), at approximately _____ (time), I responded to _____ (location), in reference to a _____ (type of call) complaint.

Narrative Example

On January 25, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., I responded to 2845 Candler Road in reference to a stray pit bull complaint. Upon arrival, I canvassed the area and could not locate the stray canine. I attempted to contact the complainant but received no answer. Due to not locating the dog and no contact with the complainant, no further actions were taken.

Writing Standards

- Reports and memos shall be clear, concise, factual, and professional.
- Avoid opinions, sarcasm, or inflammatory language; document only what was observed, learned, and done.
- Recheck spelling, grammar, dates/times, addresses, and identifying information prior to submission.

11.3 Case Reporting Requirements

An Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) shall complete a report when:

- A violation or suspected violation of state law or County ordinance is observed
- An animal is voluntarily or involuntarily impounded
- An incident is deemed worthy of documentation based on officer judgment or supervisory direction

Reports shall include, when applicable:

- Who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Description of the animal(s) involved
- Actions taken and final disposition

11.4 Case Management System

AES personnel shall utilize the department-approved case management system (e.g., PetPoint, SharePoint, etc.) for all reports and case documentation.

- Case notes and memos shall be entered under the assigned call or case record.
- Supporting documentation such as photographs, videos, forms, or citations shall be attached when available.
- Narrative reports shall follow department-approved formats and standards.

11.5 Open Cases

- Case reports shall be completed on the same day the call occurs unless extenuating circumstances are approved by a Field Supervisor.
 - Supervisors shall review submitted reports for accuracy, clarity, and completeness.
 - Open cases shall be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate follow-up and resolution.
-

11.6 Pending Cases

- Pending cases shall be reviewed by supervisors to ensure status updates are timely and accurate.
 - Court updates, compliance actions, or investigative developments shall be documented promptly.
 - Relevant information shall be shared with appropriate parties, including shelter staff, supervisors, or legal partners, as necessary.
-

11.7 Suspended Cases

- Suspended cases shall not remain inactive indefinitely.
 - Supervisors shall periodically review suspended cases to determine whether:
 - Additional investigative steps are required, or
 - The case may be closed due to lack of further leads or resolution.
 - Case closure decisions shall be documented.
-

11.8 Supervisor Review and Oversight

- Supervisors are responsible for ongoing review of case files to ensure compliance with policy.
 - Deficiencies in documentation shall be addressed through coaching, corrective action, or additional training as appropriate.
 - Supervisors ensure case files support enforcement actions, court proceedings, and records requests.
-

11.9 Records Retention

- AES records shall be maintained in accordance with DeKalb County records retention schedules and applicable law.
 - Records shall not be altered, destroyed, or removed except as authorized.
 - Confidential or sensitive information shall be protected from unauthorized disclosure.
-

11.10 Compliance

Failure to comply with documentation or records management requirements may result in corrective action.

11.11.1 Purpose

This section establishes requirements for the management, documentation, and ongoing compliance of Dangerous Animal case files following a bite incident or other qualifying event resulting in a Dangerous Animal classification.

11.11.2 Dangerous Animal Classification

- When an animal is involved in a bite incident or other qualifying event and is classified as a Dangerous Animal under applicable Georgia law, the classification shall be formally documented in the case file.
 - Dangerous Animal classification **follows the animal for its lifetime**, regardless of changes in ownership or location.
-

11.11.3 Owner Compliance Requirements

Owners of animals classified as Dangerous or vicious shall be required to meet all applicable State of Georgia Code Title 4, Chapter 8 and local requirements, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Secure enclosure requirements
- Registration of the animal as Dangerous or vicious
- Posting of warning signage
- Proof of compliance inspections
- Any additional requirements imposed by law or ordinance

AES shall provide owners with written notice of compliance requirements.

11.11.4 Inspections

- AES shall conduct inspections of Dangerous or Vicious Animals **only when the owner resides within DeKalb County, Georgia.**
 - If the animal owner relocates outside DeKalb County:
 - AES shall document the relocation in the case file; and
 - AES shall no longer conduct Dangerous Animal compliance inspections.
 - Dangerous or Vicious Animal classification remains in effect even when the animal is relocated outside of DeKalb County.
-

11.11.5 Fees and Payments

- Owners of Dangerous or Vicious Animals shall be required to pay an annual Dangerous or Vicious Animal fee in the amount of **two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).**
 - Payments shall be submitted to **DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services** in the form of:
 - Check; or
 - Money order.
 - Cash payments shall not be accepted.
 - All payments shall be forwarded to the County Finance Department for processing.
 - Upon confirmation of payment and compliance, AES shall issue a Dangerous Animal certificate valid for **one (1) year from the date of issuance.**
-

11.11.6 Case File Management

- All Dangerous or Vicious Animal cases shall be maintained on the **OpenGov platform.**
- Dangerous or Vicious Animal case files shall include, at a minimum:
 - Bite or incident reports
 - Classification determination
 - Owner notifications
 - Inspection records (when applicable)
 - Proof of compliance documentation
 - Payment records
 - Certificate issuance and expiration dates
- Dangerous or Vicious Animal case files shall be monitored to ensure timely renewal, inspection (when applicable), and continued compliance.

11.11.7 Access and Confidentiality

- Dangerous or Vicious Animal case files maintained on the OpenGov platform are **not accessible to the general public**.
 - Access shall be restricted to authorized personnel only and managed in accordance with County records and confidentiality policies.
-

11.11.8 Failure to Comply

- Failure of an owner to comply with Dangerous or Vicious Animal requirements may result in citations and documented in the case file.
- Non-compliance may result in enforcement action consistent with applicable law and AES procedures.

Section 11.12 – Open Records Requests

11.12.1 Purpose

This section establishes procedures for the receipt, handling, and coordination of Open Records Requests in compliance with the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.).

11.12.2 Authority and Responsibility

- DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) shall comply with all lawful Open Records Requests.
 - Animal Enforcement Officers and supervisory staff shall not independently release records in response to an Open Records Request.
 - All Open Records Requests shall be referred to the designated AES Open Records Coordinator and the Open Records Office within the DeKalb County Police Department.
-

11.12.3 Receipt of Requests

- Open Records Requests are submitted in writing electronically via email at dkpdopenrecords@dekalbcountyga.gov which directs the request to the proper platform within the Open Records Unit.
 - Any AES employee receiving an Open Records Request shall:
 - Document the request; and
 - Immediately forward the request to the appropriate Open Records authority.
 - General complaints directed to the AES office can be submitted to complaints@dekalbcountyga.gov.
-

11.12.4 Records Subject to Disclosure

Records subject to Open Records Requests may include, but are not limited to:

- Case reports
- Citation records
- Intake documentation
- Inspection records
- Photographs and videos

Release of records is subject to applicable exemptions under law. If AES is not the custodian of the requested item, AES cannot release the information (i.e. Court information).

11.12.5 Exemptions and Restrictions

The following records may be exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part, as permitted by law:

- Active or ongoing investigations
- Records involving juvenile victims
- Information that would compromise officer safety
- Personal identifying information
- Veterinary or medical information
- Dangerous or Vicious Animal case files maintained in restricted systems

Exemptions shall be applied in consultation with legal counsel or the Open Records Office paralegals.

11.12.6 Dangerous or Vicious Animal and High-Risk Cases

- Dangerous or Vicious Animal case files maintained on the OpenGov platform are not accessible to the general public.
 - Release of any Dangerous or Vicious Animal related records shall be coordinated through the Open Records Office and reviewed for applicable exemptions prior to disclosure.
-

11.12.7 Timelines

- AES shall acknowledge Open Records Requests within the timeframes required by law.
 - When records cannot be immediately produced, requesters shall be advised of:
 - The reason for delay; and
 - The estimated time and cost for record production, if applicable.
-

11.12.8 Documentation

- All Open Records Requests and responses shall be documented.
 - Copies of released records and correspondence shall be retained in accordance with County records retention policies.
-

11.12.9 Employee Compliance

Failure to follow Open Records procedures may result in disciplinary action and may expose the County and employee to legal liability.

Section 11.13 – Bite Case Reporting and Tracking

11.13.1 Mandatory Disease Reporting

- All animal bite incidents investigated by DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services shall be entered into the **State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SendSS)** in accordance with State of Georgia public health reporting requirements.
- Bite incidents shall be reported in SendSS within the timeframes required by law.

11.13.2 Quarantine Documentation

- For all bite cases requiring quarantine, Animal Enforcement Officers shall document the **start and end dates of the quarantine period** in the PetPoint case record.
 - Quarantine timelines shall be calculated and enforced in accordance with applicable State of Georgia law and Georgia Department of Public Health guidance.
-

11.13.3 Case Tracking

- Bite cases shall be tracked from initiation through final disposition using a centralized tracking spreadsheet or database.
 - The tracking tool shall include, at a minimum:
 - Case number
 - Animal information
 - Bite victim information
 - Quarantine start and end dates
 - SendSS entry confirmation
 - Compliance status
 - Final disposition
-

11.13.4 Oversight and Compliance

- Bite case tracking records shall be maintained to ensure timely follow-up, compliance with quarantine requirements, and completion of all reporting obligations.
- Supervisors shall review bite case tracking records to ensure accuracy, completeness, and compliance with policy and law.

Section 12.0 – Emergency and Disaster Animal Response

12.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish procedures for animal-related response during disasters or emergency events within DeKalb County. These procedures ensure coordinated, lawful, and humane actions that protect animal welfare, public safety, and responder safety.

12.2 Authority and Responsibility

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) is the **primary agency** responsible for emergency animal and animal-industry functions during disasters or emergency events.

- Secondary support may be provided by animal welfare agencies designated by AES and operating under AES direction.
 - No individual or organization identifying as a volunteer or animal welfare group may enter the scene or handle animals without prior authorization from AES.
-

12.3 Priority and Objectives

Disasters and emergencies involving animals are considered **high-priority incidents** and shall be addressed without delay using available resources.

Primary objective:

- Protection and welfare of animals involved

Secondary objectives include:

- Providing temporary housing for animals removed from the scene
 - Supporting pet-friendly sheltering options
 - Reuniting displaced animals with their owners when feasible
-

12.4 Coordination and Oversight

AES shall coordinate emergency animal response activities with the **DeKalb Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)** and other applicable partners.

- The AES Director, or designee, shall serve as the **AES Disaster/Emergency Coordinator**.
 - The Coordinator is responsible for managing animal search, rescue, impoundment, and care operations.
 - Response activities shall be conducted in accordance with the **AES Disaster/Emergency Plan**, which shall be reviewed and updated periodically.
 - Copies of the plan shall be provided to DEMA and participating veterinary partners.
-

12.5 Response Procedures

Upon notification that animals are involved in a disaster or emergency:

- A. The AES Disaster/Emergency Coordinator shall respond to assess the scene.
 - B. The Coordinator shall determine personnel, equipment, and support service needs and activate the Disaster/Emergency Plan as appropriate.
 - C. Temporary procedures or modifications to existing policies may be implemented when necessary to manage conditions safely and effectively.
-

12.6 Emergency Impoundment of Animals

Animals may be impounded during a disaster or emergency when necessary to preserve life or prevent suffering.

- Animals that are severely injured, diseased, or in life-threatening condition shall be impounded without delay and transported directly to an on-site aid station or veterinary facility.
 - Animals requiring immediate medical care shall **not** be transported to a shelter prior to veterinary treatment unless the shelter is a veterinary facility.
 - AES personnel shall exercise sound judgment when determining emergency impoundment.
-

12.7 Disaster-Related Animal Impoundment Procedures

In addition to standard impoundment procedures outlined in **Section 10.0**, the following apply during disaster or emergency events:

- An Animal Intake Card shall be completed at the scene for each impounded animal.
- All impounded animals, including deceased animals, shall:
 - Be assigned a numbered identification band
 - Be photographed
 - Be scanned for microchips when safe to do so
- Deceased animals shall be placed in black plastic bags with a copy of the Intake Card attached.

No animal impounded during a disaster or emergency shall be euthanized without authorization from the Shelter or AES Director or designee.

12.8 Shelter Access and Public Viewing

- Animals impounded during disasters or emergencies shall not be available for public viewing.
 - Individuals identified as potential owners may view animals only with AES approval and after verification procedures are completed.
 - Animals shall not be released at the scene or transferred to citizens, volunteers, or rescue organizations without proper authorization and documentation.
-

12.9 Records Management

Disaster and emergency case files shall be maintained in accordance with **Section 11.0 – Case Files and Records Management**.

Documentation shall include:

- Intake records
 - Medical care documentation
 - Transfer or disposition records
 - Photographs and supporting materials
-

12.10 Compliance

Failure to comply with emergency and disaster response procedures may result in corrective action.

Appendix A – Partner Facilities, Specialized Programs, and After-Hours Procedures

A.1 Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) Program

A.1.1 General Overview

DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) supports Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) as a humane population management strategy for community cats in coordination with approved partner organizations.

A.1.2 Transport and Disposition

- Trapped cats shall be transported to the **LifeLine Community Animal Center** for participation in the TNR program.
- **Previously ear-tipped cats**, if healthy and not in need of medical attention, may be returned to the location of trapping.

A.1.3 Nursing Mothers and Kittens

- Nursing kittens have little chance of survival without their mother.
- When nursing kittens are discovered and no owner is identified:
 - Officers shall observe the area for the return of the mother cat prior to impoundment.
 - Efforts shall be made to trap the mother cat.
 - When possible, the mother cat and nursing kittens shall be transported together.
- If the mother cat is trapped, officers shall search for nursing kittens in the area.

A.2 Partner Animal Care Facilities

A.2.1 LifeLine Community Animal Center

Address:

3180 Presidential Drive
Atlanta, GA 30340

Access Hours:

- Clinic Front Entrance: Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 - Adoption Center Entrance:
 - Monday–Thursday, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 - Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
-

A.2.2 DeKalb / LifeLine Animal Shelter

Address:

3280 Chamblee Dunwoody Road
Chamblee, GA 30341

After-Hours, Weekends, and Holidays:

- Animals requiring intake outside of normal operating hours shall be transported to this facility.
 - Officers shall follow after-hours notification procedures and ensure shelter staff acknowledgment prior to leaving animals.
-

A.3 Animals in Traps

A.3.1 Canines

- Canines confined in traps shall be removed using a restraint pole and loaded onto the transport vehicle via the ramp.
- Extreme caution shall be exercised to protect both the Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) and the animal.

A.3.2 Felines

- Felines confined in traps shall be transferred into a transfer cage.
- Felines shall be transported to the appropriate LifeLine facility for TNR evaluation or medical care as needed.

A.3.3 Trap Maintenance

- All AES-owned traps shall be cleaned of debris and food prior to being placed back into service or storage.
- Cleaning is the responsibility of the AEO who removed the trap from service.

A.4 Medical Treatment for Animals

A.4.1 General Requirement

All animals received by, surrendered to, apprehended by, or otherwise remanded to the custody of DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services shall receive immediate medical care for any injury or illness.

No animal shall be subjected to inhumane treatment due to the denial or delay of medical care.

A.4.2 Intake Examination

Upon entry or pick-up, AEOs shall examine animals for observable signs of:

- Injuries
- Mange
- Fleas or parasites
- Pregnancy
- Signs of illness or animals in heat

Observed conditions shall be documented on the Intake Card.

Note: Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs) are not licensed medical or veterinary professionals. While officers may observe and document visible conditions during the course of their duties, they are not trained or authorized to diagnose medical conditions. AEOs cannot be held responsible for failing to identify or recognize medical illnesses or conditions that are not readily apparent.

A.4.3 Veterinary Care

- When medical treatment is required, a veterinary check request shall be documented on the Intake Card.
 - Intake or shelter staff shall be notified immediately to ensure prompt veterinary care.
 - If an animal is injured during capture or handling, or as a direct or indirect result of employee action:
 - The animal shall be transported immediately to a veterinarian.
 - The incident shall be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor.
-

A.5 Wildlife Response Guidance

A.5.1 Release Criteria

- Healthy wildlife not involved in a bite incident may be released immediately or at a nearby suitable location.

A.5.2 Citizen-Owned Traps

- Wildlife confined in personally owned traps is the responsibility of the trap owner.
- Citizens are responsible for contacting appropriate entities (e.g., pest control services or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources) for wildlife removal when the animal is not injured or posing immediate danger.

A.5.3 AES Wildlife Response

AES will remove or impound wildlife only when:

- The animal is inside the living space of a home and poses a threat to occupants;
 - The animal is involved in a bite case or rabies exposure; or
 - The animal is sick or injured and can be safely handled within AES training, equipment, and operational capacity.
-

A.6 Cross-Reference to SOP

Procedures contained in this appendix supplement, but do not replace, the following SOP sections:

- **Section 5.0 – Field Operations**
- **Section 9.0 – Equipment and Vehicles**
- **Section 10.0 – Animal Impoundment and Shelter Interface**

Appendix B – Found a Kitten Protocol

B.1 Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to DeKalb County Animal Enforcement Services (AES) personnel when responding to calls involving kittens found outdoors. This protocol prioritizes animal welfare, appropriate decision-making, public education, and coordination with shelter partners.

B.2 General Principles

- **Kittens are often not abandoned.** Mother cats frequently leave kittens temporarily to search for food.
 - **Unnecessary removal of kittens may reduce their chances of survival.**
 - Each situation shall be assessed individually based on kitten age, condition, environment, and safety concerns.
-

B.3 Initial Assessment

Upon responding to a “found kitten(s)” call, the Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) shall assess:

- Number of kittens present
 - Approximate age of kittens
 - Physical condition (injured, sick, cold, lethargic)
 - Environmental risks (traffic, flooding, extreme temperatures, predators)
 - Presence or likelihood of a mother cat
 - Whether the kittens are in immediate danger
-

B.4 Determining Kitten Age (Approximate Guidance)

- **Neonatal (0–2 weeks):**
 - Eyes closed or barely open
 - Limited mobility

- Highly dependent on mother
- **Young Kittens (2–5 weeks):**
 - Eyes open
 - Beginning to move and explore
 - Still nursing
- **Weaned Kittens (5+ weeks):**
 - Walking steadily
 - Teeth visible
 - May eat solid food

Age determination assists in deciding whether removal is appropriate.

B.5 Mother Cat Considerations

- When kittens are found outdoors and are not in immediate danger, officers shall:
 - Observe the area for the return of the mother cat.
 - Advise complainants that mother cats often return within several hours.
 - Contact the shelter to inquire whether a mother cat has been brought in from that area.
 - If nursing kittens are present:
 - Officers should make reasonable efforts to locate and trap the mother cat.
 - When possible, the mother cat and kittens shall be transported together.
-

B.6 When Kittens Should NOT Be Removed

Kittens should **not** be removed when:

- They appear healthy and warm
- No immediate environmental danger exists
- The mother cat is likely to return
- Removal would decrease survival likelihood

In these situations, officers should provide education to the complainant and document the interaction.

B.7 When Kittens SHOULD Be Removed

Kittens shall be impounded when:

- They are injured, sick, cold, or lethargic
 - The mother cat is confirmed deceased or cannot be located after reasonable observation
 - The environment poses immediate danger
 - The kittens are located inside structures or hazardous areas
 - The complainant has confined the kittens and release is not safe
-

B.8 Transport and Intake Procedures

- Kittens requiring care shall be transported to the appropriate shelter or veterinary facility.
 - Intake documentation shall include:
 - Estimated age
 - Condition upon discovery
 - Whether a mother cat was observed or trapped
 - After-hours procedures outlined in **Section 10.7** shall be followed when applicable.
-

B.9 Public Education and Communication

Officers are encouraged to educate the public regarding:

- Normal behavior of mother cats
- Risks of premature kitten removal
- Appropriate steps if the mother does not return
- Referral to shelter resources when applicable

Clear communication helps reduce unnecessary impoundment and repeat calls.

B.10 Documentation

- All “found kitten” responses shall be documented in the case management system.
 - Case notes shall include:
 - Assessment findings
 - Actions taken
 - Education provided to the complainant
 - Final disposition
-

B.11 Cross-References

This protocol supplements:

- **Section 5.0 – Field Operations**
- **Section 10.0 – Animal Impoundment and Shelter Interface**
- **Appendix A – Partner Facilities and Specialized Programs**