



POLICE DEPARTMENT

ANIMAL COMPLAINTS

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE #430

Responsible Executive:
Chief of Police
Responsible Office:
Vice President for Public Safety
Approved by:
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Policy Statement

Complaints involving animals, whether they are related to actions taken against animals (e.g., animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect) or acts perpetrated by animals (e.g., attacks, bites), must be taken seriously. Incidents involving animals have the potential to endanger public safety, cause harm and distress to vulnerable animals, or escalate to criminal matters. It is therefore critical that the Johns Hopkins Police Department (JHPD) respond to complaints involving animals within its jurisdiction, appropriately resolve or refer animal-related problems, and enforce all local, state, and federal laws relating to animals.

Who Is Governed by This Policy

All personnel, including sworn, nonsworn, and contractual or voluntary persons in service with JHPD, are governed by this Directive.

Purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to establish uniform procedures for responding to complaints and calls for service involving animals.

Definitions

Animal:	A living creature except a human being. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-601)
Animal Abuse/Neglect:	To overdrive or overload an animal; deprive an animal of necessary sustenance; inflict unnecessary suffering or pain on an animal; or, if the person has charge or custody of an animal (as owner or otherwise), to unnecessarily fail to provide the animal with nutritious food in sufficient quantity, necessary veterinary care, proper drink, proper air, proper space, proper shelter, or proper protection from the weather. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-604)
Animal Cruelty:	The unnecessary or unjustifiable physical pain or suffering caused or allowed by an act, omission, or neglect toward an animal. Includes torturing and tormenting an animal (e.g., mutilating, cruelly beating, or cruelly killing an animal). (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-601)
Attack Dog:	A dog trained to attack on command or to protect persons or property. No person may train or keep an attack dog in Baltimore City.
Dangerous Animal:	Any animal that has bitten or attacked a human being or another animal without provocation; exhibits aggressive or dangerous behavior and is not adequately confined or restrained; is known or suspected to be an animal exposed to rabies and is not adequately confined or restrained; or requires confinement or restraints to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the public.
Domestic Animal:	Any animal of a species that has been bred and raised and is accustomed to living in or about the habitation of humans and is dependent on humans for food or shelter.
Member:	All members of the JHPD, including employees, officers, and volunteers, unless the term is otherwise qualified (e.g., member of the public, member of the Baltimore Police Department, etc.).
Officer:	All sworn police officers, at any rank, as defined by MD Code, Public Safety, § 3-201, in service with the JHPD.
Service Animal:	According to Johns Hopkins policy, a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. On a limited case-by-case basis, a miniature horse that has been similarly trained may also qualify as a service animal. The work or task the service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. (<u>Service and Assistance Animal Policy (GOV021)</u>)
Stray Animal:	An animal whose owner or custodian is unknown and whose identity cannot be ascertained by reasonable effort after 72 hours or whose owner or custodian was notified of the animal's seizure and failed to file a petition to recover the animal within 10 days after the seizure. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-615(e))

Vicious Animal: Any animal that has severely bitten or attacked a human being or another animal; any dog that has bitten or attacked any person or has attempted to bite or attack any person and was prevented from doing so only because it was restrained by a leash, fence, or other means.

NOTE: A vicious dog does not include a dog that has bitten or attacked a person or attempted to bite or attack a person if the injury, damage, or threat was sustained by a person who, at the time, was committing a willful trespass or other tort on the premises occupied by the owner or keeper of the dog; was tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog; tormented, abused, or assaulted the dog; or was committing or attempting to commit a crime.

A vicious dog does not include a dog that has bitten or attacked a person or attempted to attack or bite a person if the dog was protecting or defending its young, protecting another animal, or responding to pain or injury.

Policy

The JHPD shall promptly and humanely respond to all complaints and calls for service involving animals within the JHPD's jurisdiction. This includes complaints and requests regarding animal cruelty and abuse/neglect, animal attacks/bites, dangerous and vicious animals, suspected rabid animals, and stray, sick, injured, or deceased animals. Animal control services are primarily the responsibility of the Office of Animal Control of the Baltimore City Health Department (Animal Control). The JHPD will request assistance from Animal Control and any other authorities as needed and as required by this Directive.

Core Principles

- I. **Animal Welfare:** JHPD will work in concert with Animal Control, the Baltimore City Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), and any other relevant offices or organizations to provide for the protection of animals from abuse, cruelty, and neglect.
- II. **Public Safety:** The JHPD will promptly respond to any incidents involving a person being attacked by an animal. This includes attacks allegedly perpetrated by domestic animals, wild animals, suspected rabid animals, and vicious and dangerous animals. The JHPD will request assistance from Animal Control to ensure that any animals suspected of attacking a person or being rabid are confined, controlled, and/or taken into custody.

Procedures

I. **General**

- A. JHPD officers will respond to animal complaints within its jurisdiction when public safety is endangered; to enforce local, state, and federal laws relating to animals; and to appropriately resolve or refer animal-related problems.

- B.** Animal control services are primarily the responsibility of the Office of Animal Control, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days per week. When responding to animal complaints, the JHPD will request the assistance of Animal Control, as well as BPD, as described in this Directive and in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the JHPD and the Police Department of Baltimore City, dated December 2, 2022.
- Officers may consider acting before the arrival of such assistance when there is a threat to public safety, when the animal's owner/handler has been arrested or is incapacitated, or when an animal has created a traffic hazard, is seriously injured, or has bitten someone.
 - In all cases dealing with animals, all safety precautions will be taken to limit exposure to contagious diseases such as rabies and animal bites, including the wearing of gloves, using a JHPD snare pole, etc.
- C.** When responding to animal complaints, officers will take the following steps as necessary and when appropriate per this Directive:
- Ensure the Johns Hopkins Public Safety (JHPS) Communications Center is aware of the type and number of animals involved, and all other appropriate information,
 - Attempt to locate the animals and their owners,
 - Attempt to determine from animal owners or custodians their wishes with respect to the disposition of their sick or injured animals,
 - Obtain thorough descriptions of the animals if they cannot be located,
 - Take reasonable and prudent efforts to confine or capture the animals or, in the interest of public safety, humanely destroy the animals without endangering themselves or others,
 - Keep nonessential persons out of the vicinity of the animals,
 - Notify and request assistance from Animal Control and BPD as necessary or required,
 - Remain with destroyed or confined vicious, dangerous, sick, or injured animals until appropriate responding authorities arrive, and
 - Complete JHPD reports.
- D.** Officers shall address public nuisance calls related to animals (e.g., barking dogs) by contacting Animal Control.
- E.** Officers shall be aware of existing Johns Hopkins and JHPS policies on animals, including the following:
- While on Johns Hopkins property, dogs must be leashed, licensed, and under the control of their own handlers at all times. Dogs may not be tied

up and left unattended on any campus grounds. ([JHU Policy on Pets \(STU004\)](#))

- No pets of any kind are permitted in Johns Hopkins housing, and dogs are not allowed in the common areas of any Johns Hopkins building except when being taken to and from nonpublic areas. Guide dogs for the visually impaired are permitted in common areas. ([JHU Policy on Pets \(STU004\)](#))
- Service animals assisting people with disabilities are welcome at Johns Hopkins. [Service and Assistance Animal Policy \(GOV021\)](#) governs the use of service animals at Johns Hopkins and provides the following:
 - In determining whether an animal qualifies as a service animal, officers may only ask whether the animal is required due to a disability and what specific work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Officers may not inquire about the nature or extent of the person's disability or require documentation of the animal's certification or training.
 - Examples of tasks that a service animal may perform include but are not limited to guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, reminding a person with mental illness to take a prescribed medication, or assisting someone during a seizure.
 - Johns Hopkins students and employees may request to have service or assistance animals reside with them in Johns Hopkins housing and/or accompany them to Johns Hopkins facilities for classes or work. General rules prohibiting animals in housing or common areas do not apply to service or assistance animals that have been approved by Johns Hopkins.
 - Animals that provide assistance or emotional support to a person with a disability but are not individually trained do not meet the definition of a service animal.
- For information on the use of animals in research, laboratories, and other Johns Hopkins programs, including injuries, incidents, and emergencies related to these animals, see [Animal User Policy \(HSE034\)](#); [Animal Care and Use Program \(GEN001\)](#); and [Health and Safety Information for Animal Users \(HSE806\)](#).

F. This Directive does not apply to animals maintained by the JHPD.

II. **Animal Cruelty & Abuse/Neglect Complaints**

A. The JHPD will enforce all local, state, and federal laws regarding animal cruelty and abuse/neglect. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Abuse or neglect of an animal (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-604)
- Aggravated cruelty to animals (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-606)
- Dogfights (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-607)
- Cockfights (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-608)
- Poisoning a dog (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-618)
- Animals as prizes (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-610)
- Killing a dog or cat by prohibited means (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-611)
- Abandoning a domestic animal (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-612)
- Unattended and restrained dogs outside (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-623)
- Endangering the health or safety of a dog or cat by leaving the animal unattended in a motor vehicle (MD Code, Transportation, § 21-1004.1)
- Violating Baltimore City Regulations of Acceptable Standards for Proper Animal Care (Baltimore City Health Code §§ 2-106, 10-104, 10-303, 10-308, 10-402, 10-409)

B. Receiving an Animal Cruelty or Abuse/Neglect Complaint

- Officers must respond to any calls for service or complaints regarding animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect.

NOTE: Many animal complaints are reported anonymously. Officers must respond to anonymous complaints, as most are legitimate, but are reported anonymously by people who fear reprisal from their neighbors.

- When an animal complaint is received, the Communications Center dispatcher shall gather the following information and relay it to the officer:
 - The type of animal involved and a description of the animal,
 - Whether the animal is acting normally or has bitten anyone, and
 - The last known location of the animal and the direction of travel.
- The officer shall respond to the scene and attempt to contain the animal if possible. The officer shall request the Communications Center to notify Animal Control if the animal:
 - Is in immediate need of aid or removal,
 - Poses an immediate threat, or
 - Is determined to be an attack dog or wild/vicious animal.

C. Investigative Steps

- The responding officer shall conduct a complete preliminary investigation and determine if animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect has occurred and who the person suspected of the crime is, when possible.
- If the officer determines that an animal cruelty incident has occurred, the officer shall request the Communications Center to notify BPD. BPD has primary investigative responsibility for animal cruelty cases per its MOU with the JHPD.
- If BPD or Animal Control is unable to respond in a timely manner, and/or evidence is at risk of being destroyed, the officer shall photograph the scene and the animal with their JHPD mobile device. These photos will be considered evidence and shall be handled in accordance with JHPD Directive #467, Evidence Collection & Preservation.

D. Seizing the Animal

- Officers may seize an animal if necessary to protect an animal that is in need of immediate care or protection from acts of cruelty. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-615(b)(1))
- If an animal is impounded, yarded, or confined without necessary food, water, or proper attention, or is subject to cruelty, or is neglected, the officer may enter the place where the animal is located and supply the animal with necessary food, water, or attention; or seize the animal if necessary for the animal's health. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-615(c)(1))
 - NOTE: Per Maryland law, this section does not allow entry into a private dwelling.
- The JHPD shall notify the animal's owner or custodian, within 24 hours by personal service or certified mail, of:
 - The seizure,
 - Any administrative remedies that may be available, and
 - If an administrative remedy is not available, that they have the right to petition the court for return and instructions for petition.
- Officers may not seize an animal possessed by a medical/scientific research facility except upon a recommendation from the Maryland Department of Health, Center for Veterinary Public Health. (MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-615(b)(2)). Animals maintained and used by Johns Hopkins laboratories, research facilities, etc. are governed by Animal User Policy (HSE034); Animal Care and Use Program (GEN001); and Health and Safety Information for Animal Users (HSE806).

E. Reporting Requirements

The responding officer(s) shall complete an Incident Report that includes the following information:

- The name and contact information of the complainant and witnesses. This includes the owners of the animal, persons at the scene, and police officers and/or Animal Control officers interviewed.
- Details of what the officer sees, including a thorough documentation of any injuries. Officers shall describe the size, color, and location of the injuries on the animal and shall note how long they think the injuries have been present (e.g., fresh, new, old, etc.).
- A description of the animal's living conditions. Officers shall note whether the animal has shelter, food, and water. They should also describe the living shelter of the animal and note excessive filth, excrement, trash, and any dangerous materials and/or substances.
- A specific description of weather conditions (e.g., snowing, raining, hot, or cold). If possible, officers should note the actual temperature and cite where the officer received this information.
- The date/time of the preliminary investigation and contacts with Animal Control and/or BPD, when appropriate.
- The exact address of the animal's location, specifying the place on the property where the animal was located (e.g., backyard, alley, porch, garage).
- A record of all steps taken at the scene, including what the officer observed, whom the officer spoke with and what they said, and whom the officer called for assistance in removing and caring for the animal.
- A description of the animal's behavior and attitude (e.g., afraid, friendly, shaking, aggressive, etc.). Officers should note how the animal reacts to its owner/caregiver.
- The final disposition and location of the animal.

F. Training Requirements

- All officers who respond to reports of animal cruelty shall receive training on the reporting and confidentiality requirements of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 15.14.15, Required Animal Cruelty Reporting.

III. Animal Bites & Attacks

When responding to a scene where a person was bitten or attacked by an animal, officers shall do the following:

- A. Immediately render aid consistent with their training and experience.
- B. Request a medic to respond to the scene.
- C. Notify the Communications Center and request that Animal Control be contacted if:
 - The attack was severe in nature,
 - The attacking animal is determined to be a wild or vicious/dangerous animal,
 - The attacking animal is too dangerous or difficult for the officer to handle, or
 - The attacking animal is not current on its rabies vaccine.
- D. Provide the person who was bitten/attacked and the animal owners/custodians with copies of Animal Bite Instructions included with the Animal Bite Report.
- E. If the officer determines that the attacking animal is domestic and not vicious/dangerous:
 - Allow the owner/custodian to quarantine the animal,
 - Require the owner to sign the 10-day quarantine agreement included on the Animal Bite Report, or
 - Request Animal Control to take custody of the animal if no quarantine facility is available.
- F. If the officer determines that the animal is wild and/or vicious/dangerous, they shall request that Animal Control respond to take custody of the animal.
- G. If the animal is possessed by a medical/scientific research facility, try to contain it, and contact the person responsible for it to respond. See Health and Safety Information for Animal Users (HSE806) for details about injuries caused by animals in Johns Hopkins research or laboratory facilities.
- H. If it is necessary to use deadly force to stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to the safety of a person, follow JHPD Directive #402, Use of Force; JHPD Directive #403, Authorized Defensive Weapons; and any other relevant JHPD directives.
- I. Attempt to identify and notify the animal's owner of the final disposition of the animal.
- J. Complete an Animal Bite Report prior to the end of the officer's shift.
- K. Complete an Incident Report that includes the following information, where applicable:

- Specific description of the person’s injuries, including where on the body the person was bitten and the number of bites,
 - A photograph of any bite-related injuries,
 - Any aid rendered or treatment received, including the name and address of the medical facility where the injured person was taken,
 - Medic unit number and technician’s name, if applicable,
 - Name and address of the owner/custodian of the biting animal,
 - Name of the biting animal,
 - Name and address of the biting animal’s veterinarian, if known,
 - Any attempts to locate the animal if it is not on the scene,
 - Expiration date of rabies vaccine and license number of animal, if available,
 - If the animal is a dog, note if the owner was ordered to keep it confined for 10 days, and
 - Full explanation of the circumstances of the bite/attack.
- L. Make all animal bite reports available within 24 hours to the Baltimore City Health Department and, on request, to the Public Health Veterinarian (COMAR 10.06.02.05; MD Code, Health-General, § 18-316).

IV. Persons Arrested With Animals

- A. When a person in possession or control of an animal is apprehended, arrested, or detained by the JHPD and there is no other individual who will take responsibility for the animal, the officer shall request that Animal Control take custody of the animal.
- The involvement of Animal Control shall be documented in the officer’s Incident Report or other appropriate field report.
- B. The officer shall provide the apprehended, arrested, or otherwise detained person with instructions for recovering their animal, including the address and telephone number of Baltimore City Animal Control.

V. Suspected Rabid Animals

The JHPD’s role in responding to reports of suspected rabid animals is crucial to prevent the spread of rabies.

- A. When responding to reports of suspected rabid animals, officers will make every effort to locate the animal if it is not present when they arrive on the scene.

- B.** Officers confronting a suspected rabid animal should make every attempt, without placing themselves in a position of danger, to prevent the animal from escaping or contacting other persons or animals.
- C.** **All** wild animals suspected of having any physical contact with a human or domestic animal must be confined, or destroyed if they cannot be safely confined.
- D.** In determining whether or not an animal is safely confined, officers must remember that wild animals possess instincts that increase the probability of escape, whereas many domestic animals can be safely confined on the owner's premises or property with only a remote possibility of escape.
- When wild animals are involved, the officer must not hesitate to take definitive action in preventing the animal from escaping or gaining a position of greater threat to human safety.
- E.** When a wild or suspected rabid animal has had **any** physical contact with a human or domestic animal, officers shall do the following:
- Utilize any resources at their disposal to prevent the animal from escaping,
 - Detour people from the area to prevent them from coming into contact with the animal,
 - Notify Animal Control and remain on the scene to assist with the safe removal of the animal, and
 - Notify the Baltimore City Health Department.
- F. Destruction of Rabid Animals**
- When an officer is confronted with a situation involving a possible rabid animal that cannot be safely confined, and there is a possibility that the animal can escape and injure or infect another person or domestic animal, the officer will destroy the animal with lethal/deadly force, in accordance with JHPD Directive #402, Use of Force.
 - If a suspected rabid animal has been killed, the officer will do the following:
 - Neither touch the animal carcass nor allow anyone else to touch it.
 - Cover the carcass to ensure that persons or animals do not contact it.
 - Notify Animal Control to arrange for removal of the carcass and remain with the dead animal until their arrival.
 - If Animal Control will not respond for removal, remove and dispose of the carcass in accordance with instructions they provide.
 - Complete all reports required by JHPD Directive #402, Use of Force.

VI. Stray, Injured, or Deceased Animals

A. Stray Animals

- If an officer responds to a request regarding a stray dog, the officer shall attempt to identify and contact the owner. If the owner is contacted, the officer should release the dog to the owner.
- If an officer takes a stray dog into custody, the dog shall be transported to the appropriate shelter or holding area. Officers must provide reasonable treatment (e.g., water, food, shelter) to any animals in their care.
- Officers shall request Animal Control to respond if the stray animal:
 - Attacked or bit a person
 - Is determined to be vicious/dangerous
 - Is suspected to be rabid

B. Injured Animals

Upon learning of a sick or injured domestic animal, officers shall do the following:

- Make all reasonable attempts to contact the animal's owner/custodian, and to determine from the owner/custodian their wishes with respect to the disposition of the sick or injured animal.
- Take the animal to a designated animal care facility if the owner/custodian cannot be located.
- Notify Animal Control to administer medical care to any animals injured in a traffic accident. (MD Code, Transportation, § 20-106(b))
 - NOTE: Officers should generally not euthanize an animal that is sick or injured and should instead wait for Animal Control to respond.
- When Animal Control is not available to respond quickly, and the animal is so sick or badly injured that humanity requires its relief from further suffering, officers should contact their supervisor.
 - Absent exigent circumstances, a seriously wounded or injured domestic animal may be humanely destroyed with supervisory approval and only after all attempts have been made to request assistance from Animal Control or the agency (humane society, animal rescue, game warden, etc.) with responsibility or specialty in the care or humane disposal of animals.
- An Incident Report and all reports required by JHPD Directive #402, Use of Force, shall be completed and submitted before the end of the officer's shift.

C. Deceased Animals—Notification

When an officer learns of a deceased animal, the officer shall do the following:

- Make all reasonable attempts to preliminarily determine if the death of the animal is related to criminal activity.
- Arrange for removal of deceased animals by notifying:
 - The animal’s owner
 - Animal Control if the deceased animal is located on public grounds
 - Johns Hopkins Facilities if the deceased animal is located on Johns Hopkins grounds/roadways
 - Maryland Highway Administration if the deceased animal is located on Maryland roadways
- Notify Animal Control and the Baltimore City Health Department for immediate removal if the deceased animal is suspected of being infected with rabies, West Nile Virus, or any other infectious disease.
 - When Animal Control and/or the Baltimore City Health Department will **not** respond for removal, officers shall remove and dispose of the carcass in accordance with instructions they provide.
- Refrain from climbing onto or under any privately owned structure for the purpose of removing a deceased animal.

Policy Enforcement

Enforcement	Police Department managers and supervisors are responsible for enforcing this Directive.
Reporting Violations	Suspected violations of this Directive should be reported to the Public Safety Accountability Unit.

Related Resources

University Policies and Documents
Operational Procedure #402, Use of Force
Operational Procedure #403, Authorized Defensive Weapons
Operational Procedure #467, Evidence Collection & Preservation
Johns Hopkins University Policy on Pets (STU004)
Health and Safety Information for Animal Users (HSE806)
Animal User Policy (HSE034)
Service and Assistance Animal Policy (GOV021)
Animal Care and Use Program (GEN001)

External Documentation
<p>Baltimore Police Department Policy 723, Animal Bites, Abuse, Cruelty & Severe Neglect</p> <p>MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-601 et seq. Crimes Relating to Animals</p> <p>MD Code, Transportation, § 21-1004.1</p> <p>COMAR 15.15.15, Required Animal Cruelty Reporting</p> <p>Baltimore City Health Department, Office of Animal Control, Regulations of Acceptable Standards for Proper Animal Care (February 2012)</p> <p>Baltimore City Health Department, Animal Services</p> <p>Maryland Education Article §24-1208</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding Between the Johns Hopkins Police Department & City of Baltimore Police Department, dated December 2, 2022</p>
Police Department Forms and Systems

Contacts

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Policy Management	(667)306-8618	jhpdpolicyinquiry@jh.edu