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## **Purpose**

This policy recognizes that law enforcement officers encounter domestic and wild animals. This policy establishes appropriate response and safe handling of these animals while ensuring officers and citizens remain safe. The Bemidji City Code Chapter 6 establishes circumstances in which an animal may be impounded, procedure for redemption by an owner and the authority to euthanize or adopt an unclaimed or dangerous animal.

## **Policy**

It is the policy of the Bemidji Police Department to respond to all animal calls. The sergeant or officer in charge (OIC) may determine officer response for NON-emergency calls based on available information and officer availability.

### **A. ANIMAL IMPOUNDS**

- a. An officer who responds to an animal complaint will complete an incident report detailing the complaint and any action taken
- b. Animals that are impounded upon alleged violations of the Bemidji City Code will be held pursuant to the code in the city pound, clinic or other facility as deemed appropriate by the responding officer.
- c. Officers who impound animals shall treat each animal with care.
- d. During the course of impoundment, officer are authorized to use dog poles, gloves, leashes, collars, kennels and other commonly known domestic pet equipment.
- e. If the animal has identification tags, the officer will make every effort to locate owner information.
- f. Any officer who impounds an animal in which the owner cannot be identified or contacted shall *immediately* photograph the animal and forward those photographs, along with location of impoundment, to the sergeant on duty or PIO who will immediately post the photographs on the department social media platforms.
- g. Officers will include the photographs in the incident report.
- h. The officer will select the appropriate custom attribute to ensure that the Community Service Officer, Crime Analyst and City Hall are notified.
- i. An animal that has bitten, scratched or otherwise caused bodily harm to a human must be quarantined for 10 days, as recommended by the MN Board of Animal Health and Minnesota Administrative Rules part 1721.0580 Subp. 1

### **B. ADOPTION OF IMPOUNDED ANIMALS**

- a. Owners who fail to claim any animal within the time frame specified for impoundment forfeit their rights to the animal, unless prior arrangements have been made with the police department to redeem the animal within a reasonable period of time.

- b. If at the end of the applicable impoundment time the animal remains unclaimed, the animal shall become adoptable if the police department deems that the animal is one that does not pose a threat to the safety or health of the public.
- c. Persons or entities adopting an animal are required to sign an “Agreement for Redemption” or “Adoption of Impounded Animal agreement” which includes a Release of Liability.
- d. Adoptive owners must immunize the animal for rabies and show proof of a city animal license if the animal will reside within the city limits.
- e. MN State Statute 346.47 Sub 2(5) requires the Bemidji Police Department to release, upon request of the original owner, the name of the adoptive owner.

### **C. USE OF WEAPONS ON ANIMALS**

- a. Officers may use any assigned use of force equipment on animals when any personal safety is threatened, there is no means of escape, or, when it is not practicable or safe to retreat. Officers should only use firearms on animals as a means of humane euthanization or to protect humans from injury.
- b. Officers should make every attempt to allow wild animals in the city limits to leave on their own. Should any wild animal be deemed a threat to public safety, the animal may be destroyed. Officers should consult with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources prior to engagement with any dangerous wild game animal.
- c. Officers should effect steps to ensure the safety of all citizens, property and other animals. This may include moving the subject animal to an area of relative safety or out of the public view.
- d. Animals requiring immediate euthanization should be placed on soft ground in order to minimize any potential ricochet. Officers should shoot downward into the animal’s brain to minimize any suffering.
- e. In instances where rabies is a concern, the animal should not be shot in the brain. Every effort should be made to shoot the animal into the chest cavity, behind either front leg.
- f. Upon euthanization of an animal, the animal should be removed without delay. If the possibility of rabies or that the animal has bitten someone, arrangements should be made to preserve the animal’s body for further examination.

### **Reference or Revision Date(s):**

- A.** Bemidji City Code, Chapter 6
- B.** Minnesota State Statutes, Chapter 346, Section 346.47
- C.** Minnesota State Administrative Rules, Chapter 1721, Part 1721.0580
- D.** Minnesota Board of Animal Health: [www.bah.state.mn.us](http://www.bah.state.mn.us)