

December 2016

The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from Animal Control Training Services
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Elements of a Training Program



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Elements of a Training Program

By Lauren Malmberg

Even if you don't have the budget to send your new animal control officer to a national or even regional conference, you can still provide the necessary training with your current resources. A valuable training program not only promotes an officer's safety and effectiveness, it also improves your organization's image in the community. A skilled officer enhances his/her and the agency's credibility in the public's eyes.

A successful training program should encompass these essential elements:

- The organization's mission, goals, objectives, policies, and protocols.
- The ordinances, laws, and statutes the ACO is authorized to enforce.
- The safe and humane capture and handling of all types of animals.
- Effective communication techniques.
- Animal husbandry, breed/species identification, and recognition of physical conditions, ailments, and injuries.
- Proper technique and behavior in enforcement – including issuing citations or NTA's, conducting investigations, report writing, courtroom decorum and testimony.

Training new ACOs can be an opportunity to forge relationships with other organizations, professions, and departments. You need not provide all this training in-house. Instead, call upon local law enforcement – police or sheriff's department, the veterinary community, the State's Attorney's Office, and even your human resources department to supplement your program. Use these professionals to increase the breadth and depth of your training.

Of course, the first part of any curriculum should include in-depth orientation to the new position, requirements of the job, the organization's mission and goals, and the general nuts-and-bolts conditions of employment. Most likely, your human resources department will delve into personnel policies and other common concerns. Your instruction will be directly centered on the animal control program's internal processes, customs, policies, and procedures. This is the time you set the tone for the employee's experience – what types of things are not tolerated, how things work in the office, and what expectations you have of every employee.

Your second step would be to begin instruction on what regulations, ordinances, laws and statutes the ACO has authorization and responsibility to enforce. This portion of the training gives the new employee the knowledge necessary

to compel pet owners and the general public to comply. Part of this must include guidance on applying ordinances and laws to unusual or uncommon situations as well as coaching good judgment for discretionary decisions.

Naturally, a sound education will contain information, demonstration, and instruction on how to safely handle different types of animals, appropriately use the equipment issued, and correctly identify species and breeds of animals handled. For their own safety, officers must understand how to correctly use the rabies pole or control stick, leash, snare, trap, and other equipment. The rabies pole or control stick is especially tricky – not so much in its use, but due to the public's perception.

A crucial component of any enforcement program must include effective communication techniques combined with compassion and empathy. Animal control work has intense public interaction – often in confrontational or highly emotional situations – and an ACO must be able to diffuse such situations, perhaps mediate resolutions between neighbors, and influence people to change their behavior.

Since ACOs are often considered animal experts by the public, a professional officer must be able to recognize common dog breeds and know the differences in different species – especially wild animals. To investigate cruelty or neglect reports well, an ACO must be able to spot common conditions, illnesses, or injuries animals may have. And, it's helpful if an officer can give some guidance on proper diet, shelter, or grooming, without giving veterinary advice.

Finally, ACOs need training on investigation techniques including what questions to ask, what photographs to take, how to complete a citation, and other evidence collection methods. An officer needs to know the basics of report writing – what information to include and what not to include. Also, they must understand that they may be testifying in court – everything they say or do during an investigation can be called into question. Advice on how to comport themselves in court – from dress to behavior – can help make a new officer comfortable the first time they appear before a judge.

These components can make a strong training program for that new ACO; they can also be used with even the most experienced officer to refresh their understanding as well as ensure that everyone conducts business the same way. While an in-house program doesn't necessarily replace professional training, properly implemented it will lead to an effective employee.

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In the Spotlight!

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

ACTS would like to thank and recognize ACO Alysha Lenderman with the Los Alamos Police Department for hosting a recent 3-day training program in the state of New Mexico. Alysha started out her career approximately 13 years ago in the veterinary field prior to becoming an ACO. She spent the first 2 years of her law enforcement career in the small town of Estancia before transferring to Los Alamos where she is one of three ACO's within the department. On December 10th of this year, Alysha received a Community Service Award on behalf of her department for her volunteer efforts serving the community.

This March, she will be participating in a unique program sponsored by Helping Paws Across Borders, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing volunteer services to animal shelters, animal control departments and their communities both inside and outside of the U.S. This spring, she and a group of 22 volunteers will be traveling to the island of Roatán. Roatán is an island in the Caribbean, about 65 kilometers off the northern coast of Honduras. It is located between the islands of Útila and Guanaja, and is the largest of the Bay Islands of Honduras with a population nearing 45,000.

The volunteer team consists of veterinarians and technicians, translators, receptionists, exam techs and assistants who will be providing free medical services and education which includes:

- Spay/Neuter surgeries
- Diagnostic and treatment regarding general animal health care.
- Heartworm prevention.
- Flea/tick removal and prevention.
- Collars and leashes.
- Responsible pet ownership.

In addition to the animal health services, the team will be providing training and instruction to nine police officers that perform animal control duties. The training will focus on proper equipment use, safe capture, restraint and transport of animals, as well as safety considerations while working with and sheltering animals. The team is scheduled to depart on March 18 and return on April 1, 2017. If you or anyone you know would like to support Alysha and Helping Paws Across Borders, any donations of new or used equipment would be greatly appreciated. Items such as Ketch-poles, snappy snares, collars and leashes, humane traps, flashlights, gloves etc. would be most helpful. Please help support Alysha

and her team. All donations are tax deductible and can be sent to:

HPAB, 16 Chamisa Road, Placitas, NM 87043.

Please feel free to contact her directly: PSA Alysha Lenderman, Los Alamos Police Department, 505-662-8179.

It's a Turkey by any Other Name

Whether Ben Franklin would have preferred the North American Turkey over the Bald Eagle as our national bird is up to debate. One thing for sure is it has been the icon for Thanksgiving since the early days of the Pilgrims who celebrated the harvest season with great reverence to God for all of his blessings. In 1863, it was adopted as a Federal Holiday and has been observed every year since.

The North American Turkey originally inhabited the eastern portion of the U.S. but now can be found in every state with the exception of possibly Alaska and Hawaii. The current distribution of the turkey is primarily due to Fish and Wildlife Departments that transplanted the birds for the purposes of increasing hunting opportunities. However, the real reason is an economic one due to the required purchase of a hunting license and upland game bird stamp in order to lawfully hunt them. You know the old saying, "follow the money trail." Whatever the case, the widespread distribution of the turkey is not without its problems. Their normal habitat consists of oak and hardwood forests, but they have quickly adapted to more urban environments and have even taken up residency within city limits. The lack of predators and the absence of hunting activity has created a favorable habitat for them. They are an all too common sight, causing traffic problems, roosting on housetops, and causing landscape and other property damage. Although animal control agencies receive calls regarding the birds, there is little they can offer as the birds do not fall under their scope of authority. The best they can do is advise the caller not to do anything that would attract the birds (such as directly or indirectly feeding them) and then refer them to their state natural resource agency. If you are fortunate to live in the country where you can hunt them, I recommend doing so! One year for Thanksgiving, we did a comparison between a wild turkey verses a store bought domestic turkey. In a blind test, the wild bird won in each of the three categories. Hands-down, it was more flavorful, better textured and juicier than its store-bought counterpart! Enjoy and we hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving!



Euthanasia by Injection Workshop Description

Euthanasia means a humane and stress-free end of life for animals in shelter care. The Illinois Animal Welfare Federation created a curriculum for the training of animal control and animal welfare workers in Euthanasia by Injection. This curriculum provides workers who must euthanize animals the proper training in a supportive and compassionate environment. The 12-hour workshop, conducted through lecture, discussion, video presentations, and hands-on demonstrations, teaches students about anesthetics and sedatives, anatomy, safe and effective restraint, injection techniques, equipment, worker safety, legal requirements, and verification of death. The instructor is a Certified Euthanasia Technician in the State of Illinois with years of experience.

To host an EBI workshop, the IAWF requires:

- **Location** – The hosting agency shall provide an animal control facility or animal shelter that euthanizes animals, with a conference or training room that could accommodate students at tables. An LCD projector, supplies and equipment used in euthanasia must be supplied. While animals to be euthanized in the lab portion of the class are not essential, it can be very helpful to have a number of dogs and cats for hands-on practice for novice technicians. It must be explicitly clear, however, that the animals selected for this portion of the class have been designated for euthanasia by the host agency for reasons related to policy and procedure of that organization and have not been selected only to supply this training.
- *For locations outside of Illinois, the IAWF requires the hosting agency provide the instructor with the legal requirements for the euthanasia of animals in that state at least 30 days in advance of the workshop.*
- **Registration** – Registration can be handled by the hosting agency or online through the IAWF, for an additional modest fee.
- **Workshop** – The workshop is scheduled for 10 am - 4 pm on the first day; and 8 am - 1 pm on the second. About 20-30 minutes is allowed for lunch if the hosting agency provides it. If the hosting group doesn't want to provide food, an hour for lunch will be provided in addition to periodic breaks. The first day is lecture and discussion with some demonstration. The second day is lecture, review, testing, and lab. The lab may be short or long - depending on the number of students, the number of people who want to participate, and the number of animals available.
- **Cost** - the cost is \$2,500 for the workshop (plus instructor's travel expenses, including all transportation and lodging costs). The IAWF has the ability to offer on-line registration. If that service is requested by the hosting agency, an additional processing fee will be determined. The workshop fee includes a workbook, materials, and upon passing the workshop exam, a certification of completion.

For information on scheduling an EBI training through the Illinois Animal Welfare Federation, contact training@iawf.net.

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All in a Day's Work - And a Day Off Too

By **Melanie Boehm**

In early September of this year I received a call from Plattsmouth Police Officer Leroy Lewis about a snake outside of a nursing home. Even though I was off duty, I responded to assist. It was outside of the building, minding its own business, in a large bush. However, a resident saw it, was terrified, and got a few other people aboard the panic train. Not a good thing to happen in a nursing home. Keep in mind the threat of the snake was very minimal. So to calm the public (a big part of this job), I responded. Although I grew up on a farm working around livestock and other animals, I am not a huge snake fan. This is where Officer Lewis stepped in. The snake happened to be a Bull snake, approximately 5 feet in length. Bull snakes are native to Kansas and are found throughout the central United States. Adults average between 4-6 feet in length with a few specimens measuring up to 7 feet. This makes them one of the largest species in the U.S. Bull snakes are very powerful constrictors who eat small mammals,

rodents, birds and their eggs, and lizards. Lewis captured it with my Ketch-pole since I do not have snake tongs or a snake hook. Officer Lewis was able to reach inside and get the snake. My job was to assist in holding the branches out of the way. Although Bull snakes are nonvenomous, they can get quite defensive, especially if they feel threatened. The snake was quickly captured and relocated to a safer area, both for the public and for the snake. I have only been an ACO for 8 months and enjoy working with fellow officers and serving the community - snakes included!

*CSO Melanie Boehm,
Community Service Officer,
Plattsmouth (NE) Police
Department.*



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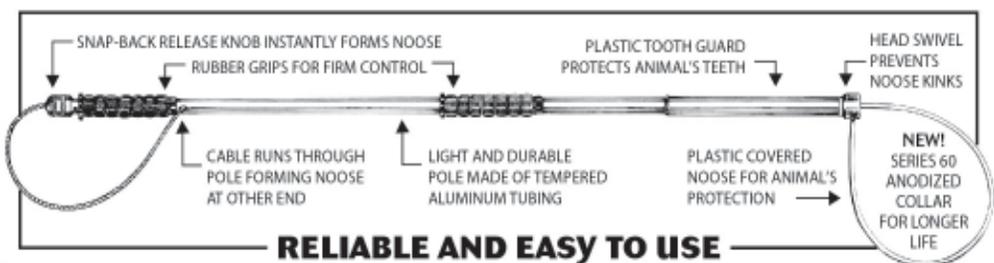
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Retracted, it is used as a longer heavy-duty restraining pole

Signing a Citation May be a Thing of the Past

By Jeffrey Clemens

For most animal control agencies, the enforcement of dogs running at large, rabies vaccinations and licensing is as common as vehicle registration, stop sign and posted speed limit violations. Most agencies address these infractions by issuing a citation, which is punishable by a fine and/or showing proof of correction. For anyone who has ever been on the receiving end, you probably remember the officer presenting you with a ticket coupled with an explanation that you were required to provide your signature "in the box." Although it wasn't an admission of guilt, it was a promise to appear or correct the citation on or before a specific date. It's common knowledge that the goal of all law enforcement is to generate voluntary compliance. From an officer safety standpoint, issuing a citation to someone has always had its challenges. First, resistance might be met upon the initial request for one to produce a driver's license or other form of acceptable identification. Second, when asking a person to sign a ticket, there is plenty of room for refusing to do so as well. Even with the best communication training available, not everyone is compliant.

In an effort reduce conflicts that may arise from a person who hinders, obstructs or otherwise delays an officer in the performance of his/her duties, many agencies have removed their citation process out from underneath the judicial system and placed them directly in line with their departments administrative procedures. Instead of a person promising to appear before a magistrate or paying a fine to the county or city court, the fine now becomes an administrative penalty and processed internally by the issuing department. The benefit of this administrative approach is that one is no longer required to "sign in the box" as a promise to appear. The issuing officer simply records the individual's information and provides them with a copy of the paperwork and departs. It has made issuing citations much quicker and efficient with the added benefit of reducing the opportunity for resistance. To take it one step further, some departments now have the technology to simply swipe a person's driver's license (much like a credit card) and then download the information at a later date. The person is notified via the mail and provided with written instructions on how to clear the citation.

There's no doubt that technology has come along way! Many ACO's and other LEO's can remember the days of actually handwriting their reports! Whatever the case, if the new technology can keep officers safer in the line of duty, it's well worth it!



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ACTS Training Schedule

For a registration form, visit www.aco-acts.com or call 913-515-0080

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by Hutchinson Animal Services

December 5-9, 2016 - Hutchinson, Kansas

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the Los Alamos Police Department

December 12-14, 2016 - Los Alamos, New Mexico

Schedule of Training: Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Evidence Law and Collection; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Salem Animal Control

December 15, 2016 - Salem, Illinois

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by White County Public Safety

January 9-12, 2017 - Helen, Georgia

Schedule of Training: Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Interview and Investigation Techniques; Pepper Spray Certification; Baton/Bitestick Certification

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by the Grass Valley Police Department

January 23-27, 2017 - Grass Valley, California

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by the Palm Springs Police Department

February 13-17, 2017 - Palm Springs, California

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by Hall County Animal Services

March 20-24, 2017 - Gainesville, Georgia

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

ACTS Training Schedule

For a registration form, visit www.aco-acts.com or call 913-515-0080

**Animal Control Protective Equipment Training - Hosted by Oxford Division of Police/Animal Control
March 22-23, 2017 - Oxford, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Chemical Immobilization Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Rio Rancho Animal Control
March 27-31, 2017 - Rio Rancho, New Mexico**

Schedule of Training: Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Baton/Bitestick Certification; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Interview and Investigation Techniques; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

**Chemical Immobilization Certification - Hosted by Alameda County Sheriff's Office Animal Services
March 29 and March 30, 2017 - Dublin, California**

Schedule of Training: Chemical Immobilization Certification (repeated on Day 2)

**Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by the Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers
April 17-21, 2017 - Golden, Colorado**

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Hosting ACTS Training

Want to host an ACTS training program? ACTS would be honored to offer training for your agency and area agencies. We can tailor the training to your local needs. If you haven't already done so, review our training catalog for a list of training topics. Visit www.aco-acts.com and click on the "training" tab.

You can "build" a program based upon what you feel your group would most benefit from. Pick and choose the topics and the number of days for training. We are flexible in our offerings. As the hosting agency, your agency would receive 2 complimentary registrations for every 10 paid. ACTS can also promote the training to area agencies and provide registration forms. All we require from the hosting agency is a meeting room that has an LCD projector and a screen, along with speakers for sound. The meeting room should accommodate at least 20 students. There is no cost to the agency to host training, unless you choose to register your own employees for the training, outside of any comps that you might receive. ACTS welcomes the opportunity to assist with your training needs. Let us know how we can help.