

May 2016

The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from Animal Control Training Services
The Only National Monthly Magazine Dedicated to Animal Control

Turnover Should be for Pies



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Turnover Should be for Pies

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

In the past few months, I received correspondence from 3 ACO's informing me of their decision to leave the ACO profession. Each one shared sadness in their decision as well as the reasons for their departure. At first you would think it was motivated by financial concerns. We all know that the salary of an ACO is far behind what they should actually earn based upon the responsibility for what they have been tasked with (the protection of public safety, private property and animal welfare, three important, essential human services provided by a government agency). Surprisingly, their salary wasn't the main consideration! What influenced their decision was the lack of professional, personal and positional growth within their agency. Each ACO was hired at an entry-level position and after several years of service to their community, they found themselves operating at the same basic level as when they started. Unfortunately, within their departments there was either little or no room at all for advancement. No wonder the "turnover" rate is so high.

In the research that John Mays and I have conducted, we found that most agencies operate under a generalized operations model. That is, as a generalist, ACO's are assigned to a wide variety of tasks and continue in these positions throughout the span of their careers. They are required to handle all the different types of calls relating to animal control. They are not able to develop expert-level skills in one specific area. Generalists may be very good at

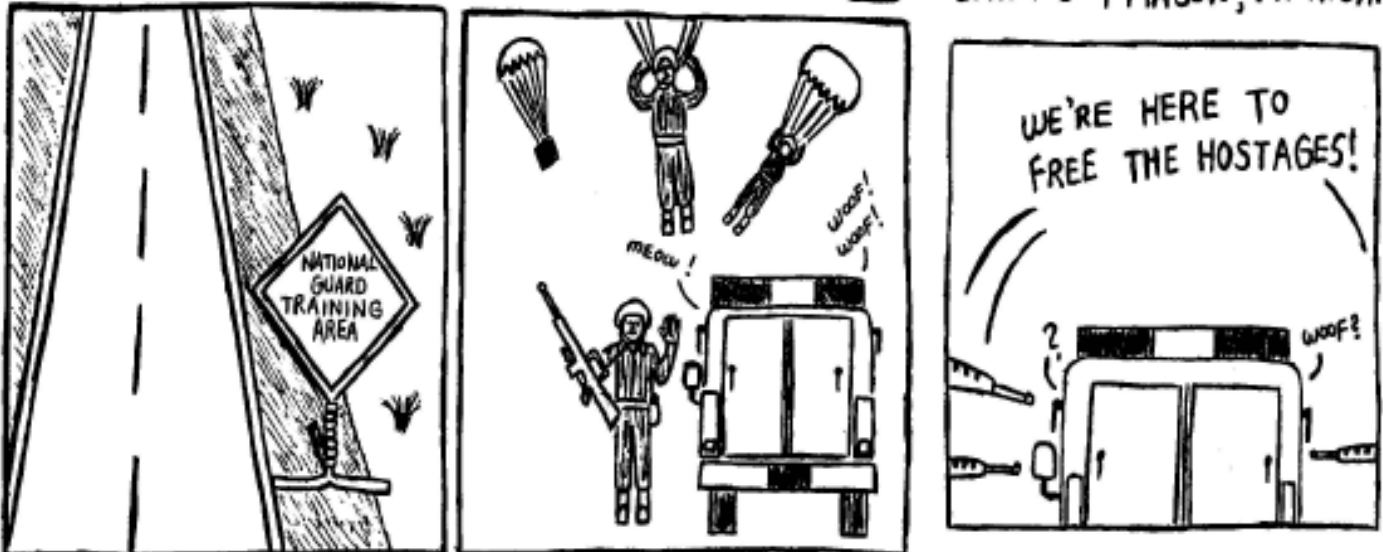
doing many things, but typically are not at the same expert level as "specialists" at any one service such as becoming a Field Training Officer, conducting animal welfare and cruelty investigations, or dangerous dog declarations. By operating under the generalized model, the ACO is kept in a state of arrested development. To use an analogy, it's like having the greatest hound dog in the world, but keeping him in a kennel not allowing him to hunt!

The alternative is to design a position within a department which allows for the specialization of more advanced skills, education and experience. This allows the ACO to operate under a "specialized model" that provides the professional, personal and positional growth that is so desired within the individual. The ACO becomes an expert in their specialty, they know the work inside and out, and their work process is streamlined. Calls for service are handled more quickly, professionally and completely.

When this design is implemented, there is a lesser chance of recidivism on behalf of the owners of said animals. Agencies would greatly benefit from adopting this business model. Most all other public safety agencies operate under this design. It is a win-win relationship between the employer and the employee. As one ACO put it, they felt as if they were no longer productive for the department, and the department was no longer productive toward them. The end result, a high turnover rate.

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Understanding National Certification

By John Mays, ACTS

As of late, ACTS has received several inquiries related to “national certification,” a term that has been used to identify some trainings related to the Animal Control profession. While “national certification” may look good on paper, everyone needs to understand the true meaning of the term.

For the most part, “national certification” is a voluntary form of self-regulation that affirms that a person has the knowledge and skill to perform essential tasks in a given field, used by nongovernmental agencies or associations with predetermined qualifications. In some cases, the word “national” is sometimes gleaned from the association’s name, hence making that association’s training “national certification.” Many folks entering the animal control profession have become nationally certified, only to then realize that the certification has little to no value at the state or local level. In some cases, the pre-employment training these folks received is not even recognized by the hiring agency.

At the state level, a similar situation exists. As an example, if you graduated from a Missouri law enforcement academy, you will be Missouri certified, which means that you are qualified to be a Missouri law enforcement officer. You would normally be expected to be hired by a Missouri law enforcement agency (police or sheriff’s) and they would commission you (swear you in as an officer/deputy in their agency). Your training covers Missouri statutes, not those of other states and that is why your training would not typically transfer to other states. When you are eligible to transfer to another state, you would frequently either attend an academy or take a test for certification in the state you attended (or both). Depending on the state, you typically have to work 1 to 2 years as a sworn (commissioned) officer before you can transfer to another state.

Some states allow lateral transfers within law enforcement. Under those states’ civil service rules, you must be a full-time LEO for 2 continuous years to qualify as a “lateral.” If you lateral from another state, most agencies will send you to the state equivalency academy. In some states, the “equivalency” academy is two weeks long, while the hiring agency is left to perform the remaining training.

For those folks considering an animal control career, they are under the assumption that a “national certificate” is recognized by every state, and every local jurisdiction. This could not be further from the truth. It is simply a voluntary form of self-regulation. ACTS receives hundreds of inquiries a year from folks seeking employment in the animal control

profession and we attempt to help folks understand how our profession works.

Recently, “Anna” contacted ACTS about entering the animal control profession. She is a high school graduate, part-time college student, working full-time and accumulating college debt. Anna wants to select a career path better suited for her current skillset, without the need to incur more crushing, college debt. After a lengthy phone conversation, I e-mailed Anna the following response:

“Good morning, Anna. I hope that the following information helps with your career search.

Animal control officers are employed by city and county governments to ensure the health and safety of both humans and animals while enforcing animal-related laws. Often, officers work for the police or sheriff’s department. An animal control officer uses enforcement, education and intervention to promote the well-being of humans and animals alike.

If you are interested in becoming an animal control officer, each city or county has its own requirements. A college degree in a related field is generally not required. You generally must have a clean criminal history, and candidates are usually subjected to drug screening, criminal background check and a polygraph. To find animal control agencies in your area, “Google” animal control departments or shelters.

While we would gladly accept your tuition money to attend our training, your hard-earned money should be spent wisely. Before you invest in any training program, you need to find out first what the prerequisites are for the position that you are applying for. Each jurisdiction has their own requirements, so you need to find out in advance what training you will need before applying for the position. Don’t waste your money on training that the hiring agency doesn’t require. In addition, be aware that most agencies will pay for your training once you are hired, as their training may be specific to the state or the agency and provided in-house. So, do your research regarding your potential employers before investing in any training.

There are a number of organizations that employ Animal Control Officers, including government and nonprofit (humane societies) agencies. Anyone interested in this career should contact several organizations to find out what options might be available. In some cases, a prospective officer is first hired by an agency and then undergoes the required training, which

Continued on Page 7

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is paid for by the employer. In other cases, a prospective officer pays for their own training in hopes of finding employment afterward. This person must then seek out an organization that employs animal control officers. If a job is not immediately available, a prospective officer should consider working or volunteering in an animal shelter in another job position (kennel or office) until further opportunities are available. Such opportunities allow workers to “move up” into officer positions when such positions become available.

If you ever need some sample interview questions that might be thrown at you during an officer interview, let me know and I will send you some in order to help you prepare.

If you determine that you want to obtain training before your job search, I would recommend attending our Basic Animal Control Officer Certification program. This program is designed to prepare entry-level individuals with the rudimentary skills needed to become an Animal Control Officer.

The course is comprised of 8 separate blocks of instruction to include: 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; and Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment.

The program has been carefully researched and offers the most current animal control-related information available. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are awarded a certificate of Basic Animal Control Officer Certification. Successful completion shall include a minimum passing score of 80% on the written examination and mandatory attendance during all training.

Good luck, Anna!”

If any of you have any questions or comments about this article, I would welcome your perspective. Please email me at jmaysanimalcontrol@gmail.com



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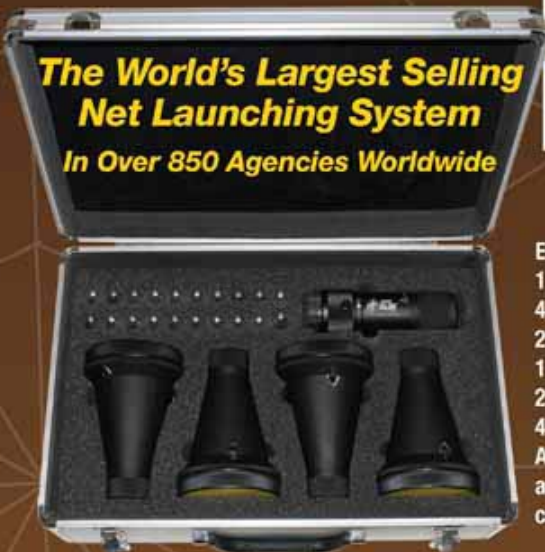
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The Wonder of Animal Control

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

Earlier this year, John and I shared with our ACO friends and family that we were starting our fourth year providing training and instruction throughout the United States. We were pleased to announce that we had taught over 1,000 ACO's during this time period. On the average, most businesses get started and fail within the first year or two. We are very grateful for the success of ACTS, it would not be possible if it weren't for the men and women that are committed to their positions and dedicated to the ACO profession. Our goal has always been a commitment toward the professional development of ACO's and field services through training, certification and consultation.

For anyone who has been in the business, even for a short while, sometimes you wonder if the animal control profession will ever get out of the negative stereotype, muck and mire and finally be among the ranks of other professionally recognized public safety agencies such as Fire, Police, EMS, etc. In all honesty, I have found myself questioning the possibility and sometimes doubting if the goal will ever be accomplished! You might ask yourself what is the cause for the doubt and concern? A fair question. It in large part has nothing to do with the individual ACO's that make up the profession, rather it has to do with administrators, board of supervisors, county or city commissioners that have very little, if any knowledge of what ACO's truly do! If a person is not familiar with the responsibilities and services provided by their animal control agencies, they get placed on the back-burner, sometimes completely ignored. Each year when monies are allocated to county and city departments, animal control has to beg for the scraps that fall from the table. Having a proper budget allows for the hiring and retention of qualified staff, providing training, uniforms and equipment, and compensating ACO's for what they are worth.

Over the past few years, John and I have been involved in the teaching and training of ACO's and we are seeing a higher level of qualified individuals entering into the industry. This trend allows ACTS to focus our programs specifically to the individual's and department's needs. We recently evaluated the most frequently requested programs and were able to develop a 40-hour Basic ACO Certification course. We wanted to share this information with you so you can see what other departments are doing in an effort to create uniformed standards of training! We hope this trend continues. Thank you folks for all the work that you do and your commitment to the ACO profession!

ACTS Basic Animal Control Officer Certification

Day 1

State Laws/County Ordinances/City Codes – 8 hours

Day 2

Tactical/Interpersonal Communication – 8 hours

Day 3

Officer Safety and Self Defense – 8 hours

Day 4

Basic ACO Investigations – 4 hours

Evidence Law and Collection – 2 hours

Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing – 2 hours

Day 5

Safe Handling of Aggressive/Dangerous Dogs – 4 hours

Safe Animal Handling/Capture/Restraint – 4 hours

Hosting Information

The ACTS Basic Animal Control Officer Certification Course costs just \$550 per student for the complete 40-hour course. 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. Questions? Contact ACTS at 913-515-0080 or via e-mail at info@aco-acts.com.



Celebrate the Life of Michael Burgwin

Celebrate the Life of Michael Burgwin

(Aug 8, 1929 – Mar 23, 2016)

Saturday, May 21, 2016 at 1:00 PM

Community Room, Mason County Fire District #18, 240 N. Standstill Dr. S., Hoodspport, WA 98548

We'll offer a light lunch of some of Mike's favorite foods. Help us celebrate Mike's full and robust life by sharing your stories and remembrances.

Mike, you were loved beyond words, and you will be missed beyond measure.

If you plan to stay in or around Hoodspport/Lake Cushman area, here a few suggestions of places to stay. Please call if you need further help or information. Contact Lorna at 360-877-9853 or e-mail: mburgwin@msn.com

Area Lodging Information

Glen Ayr Motel and RV Park – 866-877-9522

On Hood Canal, slightly north of Hoodspport (glenayr@hctc.com) or www.GlenAyr.com

The Waterfront at Potlatch – 360-877-6657

Cabins, Motel & RV sites, slightly south of Hoodspport (www.thewaterfrontatpotlatch.com)

Sunrise Motel – 360-877-5301 in Hoodspport on the Canal (sunrise@hctc.com)

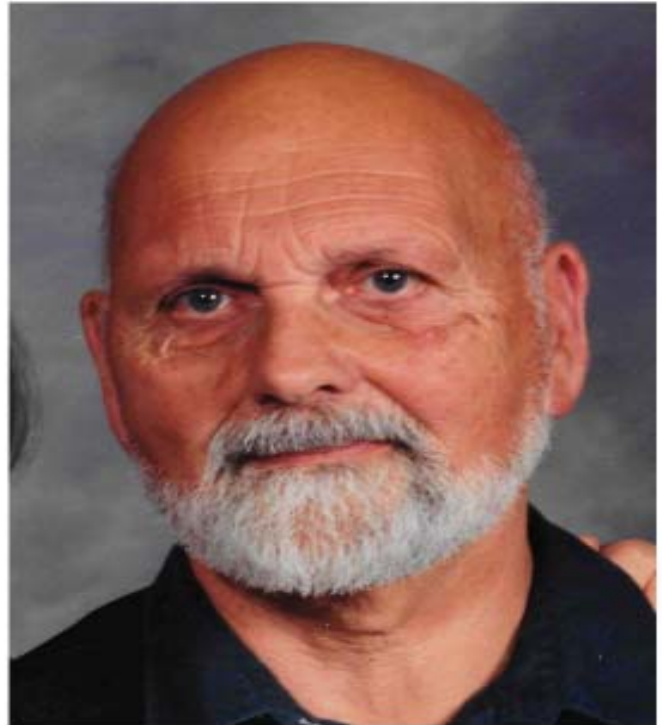
Creekside Inn – 360-877-9686 in Hoodspport on the Canal (cmorand@msn.com)

Lake Cushman Resort – 360-877-9630 on Lake Cushman (www.lakecushman.com)

Camp Cushman – 360-877-6770 on Lake Cushman

Little Creek Casino/Resort – 360-358-8349 (www.little-creek.com)

Alderbrook Resort & Spa – 360-898-2200 (www.alderbrookresort.com)



Let's Talk Dog!

By Andy Lloyd

Below is an article that was written by Andy Lloyd who teaches for the Yavapai College, Canine Behavior Program. The article is written from the perspective of being safe around animals as it relates social and family interaction. There are some key points that we thought would be helpful for ACO's and their efforts in promoting responsible animal ownership. Thank you, Andy. Enjoy!

One of the most exciting experiences we can have may be to learn to speak a different language than our primary one. A close second may be learning to immerse into a different culture in order to understand an entirely different way of life than we are used to.

Imagine learning to speak the language of a different species and to understand the cultural ways of that species. Consider that experience with your own dog, the one laying in front of your very own fireplace.

For many years our canine companions have been so familiar to and with us we may have never considered how they came to adapt so well with human beings. That adaptation has in recent years become of scientific interest.

Science now tells us that canines are one of the only species that learn to follow the pointing finger of a human. Even chimpanzees do not learn to do that. They also make eye contact with us in a way they do not with their own species and appear to be the only species other than humans to do that.

It is common knowledge now that this exceptional creature evolved from the grey wolf alongside the evolution of human. Perhaps wolves followed the trash heaps of humans and gentler ones stayed closer and bred with one another thus creating domestication.

So what does this have to do with communicating with a canine? It is their adaptive ability to watch us, to learn from us that has everything to do with our communication. Perhaps it is past time for us to return the effort.

Simply being mindful of how we look to our dogs is an important place to begin. Often changing a tense mouth into a soft smile (bringing the corners of the mouth back) and turning slightly sideways will calm an anxious dog immediately. That is the body presentation of a stable neutral dog. Would if learning a few simple postural presentations could deepen your bond and relationship with your canine pal? It would be richer and more fulfilling for each of you.

Dogs communicate with their bodies much more than with sound. Ear position, facial tension around mouth and

forehead, position of tail, weight distribution, pupil dilatation and other body presentations reveal a canine's state of mind and possible forthcoming behavior. They see that and quickly react to what they see.

Humans communicate mostly by talking without giving much notice to our body language. Inadvertently we often say one thing to our dogs while demonstrating another with our bodies. "What we say verses what our dogs see." They then come to ignore us or lack respect for our guidance.

As you learn to read canine body language, you will be able to adapt your own to better represent yourself as a leader worthy of respect. Thus enhance a bond between you and your furry pal more deeply than you can imagine.

It is important to break down behaviors into small observable parts which help disengage personal feelings and descriptions. Rather than saying the dog scared me, a clearer statement would be the dog presented a hard stare, froze, made full frontal forward alignment with me. These things are easy to see and can prevent a bite if read and responded to properly.

Dogs represent aggression by staring, stiff posture, raised hair, ears back, curled lip and weight distribution toward front. They represent stress by panting, tail down, tongue flicks, whites of eyes showing, rapid hair loss and dandruff. Dogs attempt to calm themselves and others by yawning, sniffing, extending paw, turning head, squinting and blinking. Happy dogs wag their whole bodies and play bow with soft open mouths and soft ears which differ from prey bow. These are only a few of the behavior presentations you will see in dogs.

Dogs like people are keenly aware of their space. Some need more than others and some don't respect the requests of others. I encourage you to pay attention to the feelings which arise when you encounter dogs and notice their presentations in relationship to the above information. Note also that human facial expressions and a canine's are not too far different. Respect what you see.

Learning to speak dog is easier than teaching a dog to speak English and learning to present yourself better will quickly earn your dog's respect. Enjoy watching your canine pals, you'll learn a lot.

*Andy Lloyd's Dandy Dawgs
www.dandydawgs.com*

ACTS Training Schedule

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

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the City of Socorro

May 23-27, 2016 - Socorro, New Mexico

Schedule of Training: Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Stress Management for Animal Control Professionals

Animal Control Protective Equipment Training - Hosted by Rio Rancho Animal Control

May 27, 2016 - Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick (certification)

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Olive Branch Animal Control

June 6-10, 2016 - Olive Branch, Mississippi

Schedule of Training: Basic ACO Investigations; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; Baton/Bitestick (certification); Chemical Immobilization (certification)

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Cobb County Animal Control

June 13-16, 2016 - Marietta, Georgia

Schedule of Training: Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Dog Fighting Investigation; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense

Animal Control Protective Equipment Certification - Hosted by San Francisco Animal Care and Control

June 20-23, 2016 - San Francisco, California

Schedule of Training: Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Handcuffs – Arrest and Control (certification); Baton/Bitestick (certification)

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by Jefferson County Animal Control

June 27 - July 1, 2016 - Hillsboro, Missouri

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

Chemical Immobilization Certification - Hosted by the Elgin Police Department - Animal Control Division

July 7, 2016 - Elgin, Illinois

Schedule of Training: Chemical Immobilization Certification

Chemical Immobilization Certification - Hosted by the Westminster Police Department

July 11, 2016 - Westminster, California

Schedule of Training: Chemical Immobilization Certification

ACTS Training Schedule

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

Field Training Officer Certification - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Department

July 14-15, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by West Memphis Animal Services

July 18-22, 2016 - West Memphis, Arkansas

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

Field Training Officer Certifications - Hosted by the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center

July 28-29, 2016 - Dayton, Ohio

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the City of Abbeville

August 1-5, 2016 - Abbeville, Alabama

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Pepper Spray Certification; ACO Firearms Training/Field Euthanasia; Evidence Law and Collection; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Training Course for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by LaGrange Animal Control

August 8-10, 2016 - LaGrange, Georgia

Schedule of Training: Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Multiculturalism in Animal Control

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification - Hosted by Greene County Animal Control

August 8-12, 2016 - Xenia, Ohio

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 White County Public Safety

August 22-26, 2016 - Helen, 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

Field Training Officer Certification - Hosted by the Wisconsin Animal Control Association

September 8-9, 2016 - Green Bay, Wisconsin

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

ACTS Training Schedule

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

**Animal Control Officer Safety Training Course - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Department
September 12-15, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Pepper Spray Certification; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Baton/Bitestick Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the City of Turlock Police Department
September 19-23, 2016 - Turlock, California**

Schedule of Training: State Laws, County Ordinances and City Codes; Interview and Investigation Techniques; Evidence Law and Collection; Illegal Animal Fighting; Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Officer Safety and Self Defense

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the SPCA for Monterey County
September 26-30, 2016 - Monterey, California**

Schedule of Training: Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Pepper Spray Certification; Baton/Bitestick Certification; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Stress Management for Animal Control Professionals

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Cobb County Animal Control
October 3-5, 2016 - Marietta, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Multiculturalism in Animal Control; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Illegal Animal Fighting

**Animal Control Protective Equipment Certification - Hosted by the Montgomery County ARC
October 17-20, 2016 - Dayton, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Pepper Spray Certification; Handcuffs - Arrest and Control Certification; Taser Certification; Chemical Immobilization Certification

**Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Dept.
November 7-9, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Multiculturalism in Animal Control; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Interview and Investigation Techniques; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

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.