

November 2015

The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from Animal Control Training Services
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Winter Weather and Driving Safety



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Winter Weather and Driver Safety

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

As many of you know, last January I moved to a small ranch located in world famous Blachly, Oregon. Blachly is located in the coastal mountain range between Florence on the coastline and Eugene. It is a beautiful area especially this time of the year as fall and winter approach. The autumn leaves with their color change is spectacular. Last week we received our first official rainfall of the year, along with it, the migrating King and Silver Salmon arrived from their 35 mile journey from the ocean only to continue further upstream to spawn. What a beautiful time of year!

With the start of the rainy season I thought an article on driver safety would be appropriate.

Rain Makes the Road Slippery

Rain can make it more difficult to stay on a roadway, to stop, or to avoid colliding with other vehicles. This is especially true when it first starts raining because roads are their most slippery at the beginning of a rainstorm. When the road first gets wet, oil rises to the surface and creates a greasy surface. If you can't stop your vehicle in time, that's when accidents happen. Make sure your animal control vehicle is equipped with proper tires and tread depth.

Rain Decreases Visibility

During rain storms, it can be difficult for drivers to see other vehicles. When rain is combined with dirty water kicked up from the road by other drivers, windshields can quickly become dirty. That is why it is always important to make sure that your vehicle has functional windshield wipers.

Vehicle Accident Prevention Tips For the Rain

1. Drive slower. This is an obvious but important tip, as it allows for better reaction times. Rainwater causes grease and oil built up on the road to surface and tires traction suffers as a result. If you drive slower, your tire traction will improve and you will also have more time to brake.

2. Keep your eyes on the vehicle ahead of you. In the rain, it's often hard to see very far ahead of you. On a clear sunny day, you can see the traffic situation a couple hundred feet down the road and react accordingly. On a rainy day, it helps to watch for the reaction of the driver ahead of you. When they brake, you brake. Still keep a safe following

distance from the vehicle in front because you'll need to brake more slowly on a slippery road to avoid skidding. So stay as far from the vehicle in front of you as possible while also remaining close enough to keep it in clear sight.



3. Do not brake suddenly. Sudden braking may cause a skid. Since the roads are slippery, stopping the wheels too quickly may cause them to lose all traction with the road, and an imminent vehicle accident becomes a distinct possibility. In the case that skidding occurs, however, remain calm and do not make sudden turns because

doing so may make the skidding even more dangerous. Just try to remain calm and steer straight until you feel the vehicle regain traction.

4. Correctly defog your windows. The windows on your vehicle might fog, further limiting your visibility. You try to defog with the heater, but that will only further fog up your windows. To defog, keep your air conditioning blowing at both your windshield and your back window. If your vehicle has a defog function, just press the button, and defogging should start automatically.

5. Avoid standing or flood water. Most roads are built with the middle of the road higher than the sides, so try to stay near the middle of the road where it would be less likely to have a buildup of rainwater. No automobiles can drive through the ocean floor and have firm tire grip in deep water like the sport utility vehicles presented in commercials, so stay away from pools of water. If you do expect to go through standing water, lightly tap the brake pedal beforehand to dry the tire off a little.

Ideally, all rainy vehicle accidents could be prevented if people stopped driving when it rains, but that is an unrealistic assumption. Everyone has things they must attend to, so just keep these tips in mind when driving in the rain. You can always pull over to the side and wait it out if you really think it's raining too hard to drive. Nothing can make up for the loss of a loved one in a fatal accident, so always yield to safety.

Finally, if ever you have an opportunity to attend a driver's safety course, please do so! Most agencies have driver safety programs already in place. If not, check with your local junior college or public safety training centers. Driving an A/C truck is much different than operating a standard vehicle. The additional weight from the box on the back changes the handling and driver's visibility dramatically.

It Could Happen to You

By Cheryl Howard, Chico, California

My friend's life changed in an instance at no fault of her own, so can yours!

My friend was on her way to work dressed in full ACO uniform, including wearing her ballistic vest. At the intersection of her road with a major two lane highway, the southbound traffic was stopped, bumper to bumper for miles due to construction. She couldn't enter the southbound lane as there wasn't any available space and the northbound traffic was flowing at 55 M.P.H. There were no flaggers at the intersection, so instead of turning left as usual, she turned to the right, heading northbound. There was another driver who was trying to merge into the northbound lane from a driveway on the other side of the freeway. A southbound driver who was stopped, waived the driver to merge onto the freeway. The driver accelerated his F250 truck and without checking for oncoming traffic collided into the driver's side of my friend's ACO van causing it to roll two times and land on its roof facing nose-down in a ditch. She had to be extricated from the vehicle and was transferred to the regional trauma hospital. Her ordeal was just beginning.

She had injured all four limbs and suffered a large, open scalp/head wound. Thankfully, no internal injuries, perhaps from wearing her vest! While she was waiting in the E.R., our captain came to the hospital to see her and washed the mud from her face. For the next 8 days my friend was in the intensive care unit waiting for multiple surgeries to repair the damage caused by her injuries. She was on IV's and not able to eat or drink by mouth prior to surgery. The staff had to roll her every two hours to prevent bed sores. She could feel her shattered, broken bones grating together. To make matters worse, her hair was matted with blood and mud. I was there when she asked to have her hair washed, one doctor told her he was not a beauty parlor. A nurse told her she would wash her hair. Instead she awoke to find that her head had been shaved bald! The hospital's version of washing your hair.

After her surgeries, both arms were cast-bound which made the task of eating and drinking impossible. We started a schedule to have someone come and assist her with feeding her at mealtimes. She was finally moved to a skilled nursing facility for care and rehabilitation. After four long months in the hospitals, she was released to go home. She is a single woman who lives alone in the country.

Just when you would think that it couldn't get any worse, she received a letter from the Human Resources Department advising her that her four months of family leave

was over. She was told she needed to return to work full-time with no restrictions or lose her job (after 35 years of employment with the city of Chico). Thankfully, the Chief stepped in and explained to Human Resources that we as a city didn't treat our employees, especially long-term employees in that manner. Past policy allowed up to one year of absence. She also had a full year worth of sick leave accrued.

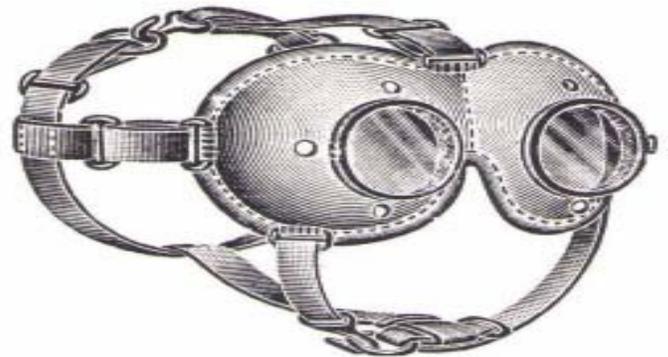
After six months to the day, my friend was released to part time/light duty. She is able to drive to work and now helps answer the phone and dispatch the ACO's to their calls.

In light of the above mentioned story of my friend, here are some things I would like you to think about.

You need a strong patient advocate to stay with you at the hospital. Next, you need to think about who will mow your yard? Feed your animals? Pay your bills? Pick up your mail? All of the day-to-day things that we do? Make sure you have a way of paying for any outside services. Be familiar with your agency's policy regarding the use of sick/family leave. Do you have enough leave time on the books? How long will your job be held for you? Finally - Are you prepared?

Cheryl Howard is an Animal Control Officer for the Chico, California Police Department.

From an
Old Dog Supply Catalog . . .

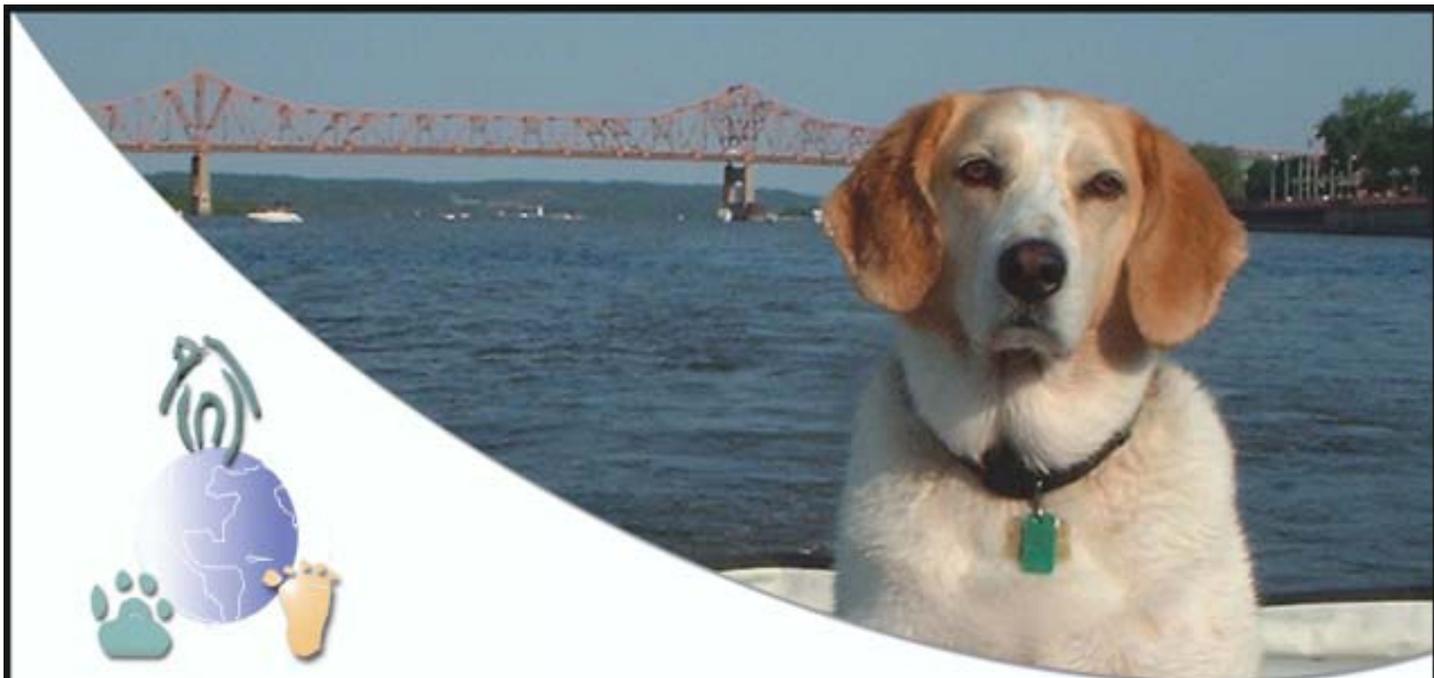


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Before and After

By Alyssa Marlow, Kootenai County, Idaho

Recently, I received a call regarding the welfare condition of a donkey who's hooves were in need of trimming. The call was located in the small town of Post Falls, ID. Upon my arrival, I saw the donkey (a 16-year-old Jenny) and it was obvious that the animal needed immediate attention regarding it's hoof care. I was able to contact the owners and advise them that they needed to get a farrier out immediately or they may be subject to legal action and the impoundment of their animal. Fortunately, they called a farrier and set an appointment to have the hooves trimmed. In this case, the donkey was also fortunate as the hooves were able to be corrected prior to any permanent damage suffered by the animal. If the condition of the animal were to worsen it may have rendered it lame and the only treatment option would have been to euthanize the animal. Not all calls relating to animal control always have a happy ending, but in this case it was the exception to the rule.

Alyssa Marlow is an Animal Control Officer for Kootenai County, Idaho.



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Training in Big Sky Country

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

Kootenai County, Idaho brings training to the Pan Handle and Big Sky Country!

Over the years, it has always been a challenge to provide training to Animal Control departments, especially if you work for a small agency and are located in a remote area in the United States. The challenge becomes more difficult as many agencies do not have an adequate budget set aside for training. In an effort to overcome some of the obstacles that make training hard to accomplish, ACTS has developed a win-win program that allows agencies to host training at their location and extend the invitation to other agencies within their regional area.

Last month, the Kootenai County Sheriff's Department sponsored a one week training program for their ACO's and drew attendance from the neighboring state of Montana. The county was established in 1864 and named after the Kootenai tribe (pronounced Koot-Nee). It is located in what is commonly referred to as the "Pan Handle" of Idaho. The county seat and largest city is Coeur d'Alene.

The County has a total area of 1,316 square miles of

which 71 square miles is water, with Lake Coeur d'Alene being the largest in size and of attraction. The city and lake are named after the Coeur d'Alene People, a tribe of Native Americans who live along the rivers and lakes of the region and were first encountered by French fur traders in the late 18th and early 19th century. The name Coeur d'Alene translated into English means "Heart of an Awl", a reflection of the perception of the tribe's traders as very tough businessmen. The current population of approximately 140,000 makes it the third-most populous county in the state.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office Animal Control section operates under the Field Operations Division and consists of three Animal Control Officers (soon to be four as a vacant position is being filled). They are responsible for the enforcement of Idaho Code Title 25 Chapter 35, Kootenai County Animal Control Ordinances and Incorporated City Animal Control Ordinances. Animal Control works closely with other agencies to ensure the welfare of the public and its domesticated animals. Special thanks to ACO Sandra Osburn and Deputy Dan Smith, Training Coordinator, for all of their efforts to bring training to the great Northwest!

Pictured from left to right: Sandra Osburn, Anthony Ghirarduzzi and Alyssa Marlow





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Treat it Like the Plague

By Tiffany Estrada, Lathrop, California

In the Animal Control/Sheltering world as with any line of work, there are certain safety considerations specific to each occupation. Most people are familiar with the risks associated with the animal control profession while handling domestic animals, wildlife and livestock. It is easy for one to get scratched, bitten or kicked. However, there is another safety consideration that is sometimes overlooked. The area that I am referring to is that of zoonotic diseases.

By definition, a zoonotic disease is a disease that can be passed between animals and humans. Zoonotic diseases can be caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi. These diseases are very common. Scientists estimate that more than 6 out of every 10 infectious diseases in humans are spread from animals. The most serious of Zoonotic diseases is that of the rabies virus. The consequence of which if contracted and not treated properly can result in death. A lesser known zoonotic disease is that of plague. Plague is an infectious, epidemic disease caused by a bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*.

The plague bacteria can be transmitted to humans in the following ways:

Flea Bites: Plague bacteria are most often transmitted by the bite of an infected flea. During plague epizootics, many rodents die, causing hungry fleas to seek other sources of blood. People and animals that visit places where rodents have recently died from plague are at risk of being infected from flea bites. Dogs and cats may also bring plague-infected fleas into the home. Flea bite exposure may result in primary bubonic plague or septicemic plague.

Contact with contaminated fluid or tissue: Humans can become infected when handling tissue or body fluids of a plague-infected animal. For example, a hunter skinning a rabbit or other infected animal without using proper precautions could become infected with plague bacteria. This form of exposure most commonly results in bubonic plague or septicemic plague.

Infectious droplets: When a person has plague pneumonia, they may cough droplets containing the plague bacteria into air. If these bacteria-containing droplets are breathed in by another person they can cause pneumonic plague. Typically this requires direct and close contact with the person with pneumonic plague. Transmission of these

droplets is the only way that plague can spread between people. This type of spread has not been documented in the United States since 1924, but still occurs with some frequency in developing countries. Cats are particularly susceptible to plague, and can be infected by eating infected rodents. Sick cats pose a risk of transmitting infectious plague droplets to their owners or to veterinarians. Several cases of human plague have occurred in the United States in recent decades as a result of contact with infected cats.

In an effort to promote the highest level of safety to prevent exposure to zoonotic diseases, employees are given proper training in the handling of animals and their specimens. Each employee is also provided with an "Occupational Exposure Advisory" card. The card reads as follows:



Bubonic plague



Septicemic plague



Pneumonic plague

The holder of this card, by way of occupation, is likely to be exposed to certain zoonotic diseases not considered routinely in the differential diagnosis of infectious illness: RABIES, ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER, PLAGUE, CAT SCRATCH FEVER, PASTEURILLA, MULTOCIDA, LEPTOSPIROSIS, BRUCellosis, TULEREMIA, TYPHUS, ARBOVIRUS, LYME DISEASE, SPIROCHAETAL RELAPSING FEVER, DYSGONIC FERMENTOR 2, ENCEPHALITUS. (Eastern, Western, St. Louis, California.) For reference on these illnesses: Centers for Disease Control 404-639-3311 (8:00-4:30 ET) 404-639-2888 (EMERG-After Hours)

Tiffany Estrada is a Senior Animal Services Officer and she will be starting her 11th year with the City of Lathrop, California. Prior to becoming an ACO/ASO, she worked for 4 years as a registered vet tech at a veterinary hospital and then 5 years as an Animal Control Assistant for the City of Stockton, California. Thank you Tiffany for sharing your wisdom with your fellow ACO's!

ACTS Training Schedule

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

Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course

November 2-4, 2015 - 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

Field Training Officer Certification for Animal Control Professionals

November 4-5, 2015 - Dublin, California

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

County Animal Controls of Illinois & Kankakee County Risk Management

November 13, 2015 - Kankakee, Illinois

Presented by ACTS: Chemical Capture

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals

December 8-10, 2015 - Phoenix, Arizona

Schedule of Training: Field Reports and Evidence Collection; Dangerous Dog Investigation; Understanding Animal Behavior for LEO's; Understanding the ADA & Service Animals for ACO's/LEO's; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; Chemical Immobilization (certification)

Investigative Techniques for Animal Control Professionals

January 13-14, 2016 - Camarillo, California

Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Evidence Law/Collection; Animals as Evidence

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals

January 18-22, 2016 - Crumpton, Maryland

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification; Chemical Immobilization (certification); Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Pepper Spray (certification)

Training Program for Animal Control Professionals

February 1-5, 2016 - Cullman, Alabama

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification; Multiculturalism in Animal Control; Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Chemical Immobilization (certification)

Field Training Officer Certification for A/C Professionals

March 15-16, 2016 - Bentonville, Arkansas

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

Animal Control Training Services Professional Review of Operations

WHY A REVIEW?

Animal Control/Care agencies are no different than other enforcement organizations as far as their susceptibility to crisis management. They often become so busy with their daily problems that they do not have the time to plan ahead. Or, if they have a plan, they don't have the time to see if they are staying on track.

A thorough review can point out what is working and what needs to be improved. New ideas can be presented for the agency's consideration. A proper review results in a win-win situation for the agency, government, and taxpayer.

WHAT WILL ACTS REVIEW?

The team's report will include, but is not limited to, the following: Service Delivery Area, Administration, Communications, Shelter Operations, Field Operations, Occupational Safety Procedures, Licensing, Employee Attitude Survey, Community/Interagency Relations and the Proposed Implementation Plan.

ACTS BACKGROUND AND CAPABILITIES

Animal Control Training Services is a limited liability company of the State of Kansas. The company was founded to provide for the development of Animal Control Officers and Field Services through training, certification and consultation, with an increased focus on officer safety and professional service.

Team members utilized in the evaluation process are currently engaged in the animal control profession. They have well-earned reputations for managing effective programs and understand government responsibilities and limitations. In view of the staff's practical experience in animal control, as lecturers on a nationwide level and as consultants, ACTS provides a full spectrum of services for nonprofit and government agencies. All ACTS evaluations are confidential with a written report given only to the contracting agency. Media contact, or the release of the report to additional individuals or agencies, is at the discretion of the contracting agency.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

All program evaluations are assessed a minimum charge based upon the size of the agency, plus expenses. Once ACTS appraises the depth of the study, ACTS will submit a detailed, written proposal outlining all commitments required by both the contracting agency and ACTS.

REFERENCES

ACTS lead evaluator has participated in reviews for city and county governments, nonprofit humane organizations, and other entities. For a full list of these references, please visit www.aco-acts.com.

**For a no-obligation information consultation, call 913-515-0080 or
email info@aco-acts.com**