

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION ABOUT ANIMAL CONTROL

Role of Animal Control in the Community

1. Animal Control vs. humane societies/rescue groups

We are an animal control facility and the primary responsibility is for public safety. We impound stray dogs, sick or injured animals and respond to citizen's complaints. We also adopt healthy and behavioral sound animals to the public and provide animal protection.

We are not a no-kill facility in the sense that we can not house animals for indefinite periods of time or if the animals deteriorate in health or mental well-being. Since we impound stray animals that come in with unknown histories, frequently with little or no training, and sometimes behavioral issues, we try the best we can to figure out the animal and place them in the most appropriate home but there are times when we will euthanize animals for medical or behavioral issues.

Sometimes an animal may be here for awhile and everyone is attached to that animal and then something happens, like they bite someone, that animal may then be euthanized. This goes back to public safety issues and we have a responsibility to not place aggressive animals back into the community. The staff at Animal Control as well as the Town of Trumbull can be held liable if we place animals that are potentially dangerous or have known propensities for aggression. These are sometimes difficult decisions that we have to make and appreciate your understanding when these situations present themselves.

Humane societies and private rescue groups generally are mostly concerned with animal protection and the re-homing of animals. They do not impound stray animals as we do so they can accept or not accept animals of their choosing. Many of them have the resources to provide extensive medical care or training for behavioral issues that Animal Control can not provide. They can also provide housing for their animals for extended periods of time even for the animal's entire life.

2. Animal Control Duties

One of the most important roles animal control plays in a community is rabies control. We investigate animals that have bitten people or other animals. Dogs and cats that are not currently vaccinated for rabies when they bite someone have to be quarantined for 14 days. We will from time to time have animals here for quarantine. These are generally owned pets that will be returned to their owners after the quarantine unless there is a dangerous dog investigation pending. Animals under quarantine are not allowed to be handled by volunteers. The cages for these animals will be clearly marked, as will any animal that may be too aggressive for volunteers to safely handle.

Since our primary duty is to impound stray dogs, we must accept any dog that is found roaming. Here in Trumbull about one half of all the dogs impounded as strays are redeemed by their owners within a matter of hours or a day or two. The others may have been abandoned or dumped in Trumbull. State law mandates that we advertise in the newspaper (CT Post) and hold any strays for 7 days to give the owner a chance to claim their pet. If the animal is not claimed after that time, they may be offered for adoption. We sometimes will

accept owner surrendered pets from Trumbull residents if they are adoptable and we have cage space.

We investigate citizen complaints that range from dogs roaming, barking dogs, injured animals, aggressive animals, animal cruelty or manner of keeping, animal bites and any violations of animal laws. We also enforce violations of animal laws such as failure to vaccinate a dog or cat, failure to license a dog, allowing a dog to roam or to bark excessively and we can issue infractions for these offenses. In addition we prosecute offenders of the animal cruelty laws. Most of the animal laws are state laws but Trumbull has a few ordinances regarding animals which include; a leash law for dogs, a pooper scooper law for pets, a dangerous dog law, and the keeping of noisy animals.

Although Trumbull is over all a nice community that takes good care of their pets, we sometimes do have an animal cruelty case which involves an animal(s) being treated very poorly. These animals may be in a very debilitated condition which could be upsetting to volunteers. Prosecution of animal cruelty cases can sometimes take months, in which case the animal(s) may be at the shelter for extended periods of time. Sometimes animals in these cases may be euthanized due to severe medical conditions or behavioral problems. .

We only respond to calls for sick or injured wildlife or a wildlife species that may have had contact with pet. Generally sick or injured wildlife is euthanized unless it is the type that can be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator. We receive numerous wildlife calls in the spring and summer regarding animals that residents consider a nuisance but we will not remove healthy wildlife from private property. We will offer humane solutions to help people and animals coexist peacefully. Residents wanting wildlife removed from their properties can contact nuisance wildlife operators.

3. Animal Adoptions

As mentioned earlier Animal Control adopts animals that are not claimed by their owners or animals that have been surrendered by their owners provided these animals are medically and behaviorally sound. For several years TAG members have assisted Animal Control with adoptions. When citizens coming to the shelter are interested in adopting a dog, the entire family must meet the dog to ensure everyone will get along. We are very particular with families with young children as some adult dogs do not do well with very young children. If citizens have other dogs at home, the dogs must meet each other as well. In our interview process we look for owners who want the dog to be a member of the family, understand there is an adjustment period when bringing home a new dog, and are aware of their financial responsibility for this pet, among other things.

Trumbull also has a policy that Trumbull residents who provide applications on dogs will get first choice over applicants from other towns.

4. Kennel Policies and Procedures

Volunteers must understand that safety issues are a major concern for animal control as we are sometimes dealing with dogs that have had limited training or socialization and could pose a threat to people or other animals or at the very least are unmannered and difficult to handle. Most of the procedures for volunteers are listed in the Orientation for TAG Animal

Shelter Volunteers Guide but a few bear repeating. Safety is of the utmost concern as we do not want volunteers, members of the public, or the animals here to be injured in any way.

- Every cage should have a cage card with some information about the dog. TAG also sometimes will post the Petfinder.com picture and write up on the dog. Please make sure that dogs are placed back in the original cage.
- All of the cages have a clip (or carabiners and leash clips) to prevent dogs from jumping up and opening the latches on their cages. Please make sure when you put a dog back in its cage to **put all clips/carabiners securely back in place the way you found them**.
- Most of the dogs are very excited when they are coming out of the cages and may try to bolt past the volunteers. So caution is needed to keep the dog under control until the collar and leash have been put on. Also please check that no one else is coming or going with a dog before you attempt to take them out of the cage. All doors to the office and outside should be closed before getting a dog out.
- It is very important that volunteers keep their distance from other volunteers with dogs. While some of the dogs may get along together, some are agitated by each other in the cages and may try to fight with the other dog if they have a chance.
- Trumbull has a pooper scooper law, so all dog walkers must pick up any feces deposited by a dog while on a walk. Plastic bags are provided.
- Please report any injuries or incidents to animal control staff.

This information is a broad overview of Animal Control and if volunteers have any questions regarding this information, please speak with ACO Lynn Dellabianca. We hope your time volunteering at Trumbull Animal Control is rewarding.