

# Louisville Metro Police Department

<h2>Standard Operating Procedures</h2>	SOP Number: 8.33
	Effective Date: 09/05/04 Prv. Rev. Date: 09/10/20 Revised Date: 09/07/23
	Accreditation Standards: KACP: 1.3
Chapter: Field Operations	
Subject: Animals	

## 8.33 ANIMALS

### 8.33.1 POLICY

Louisville Metro Animal Services (LMAS) has the primary authority to respond to animal-related incidents within Louisville Metro. LMAS will respond to the following:

- **Aggressive Animal:** Any aggressive loose animal that is stray or owned. Aggressive behavior includes growling, showing teeth, lunging forward, or charging at the person or another animal.
- **Rendering Assistance (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Sheriff, Other Agency):** Any call where police, fire, EMS, or other emergency responders require assistance from an Animal Control Officer (ACO). This includes the removal of deceased animals and owners who are incapacitated, being transported to the hospital, and another responsible adult is unavailable at the location to assume responsibility for the pet.
- **Exposure to Bats:** Any call for a bat in a residence or a possible exposure to a bat.
- **Animal Attack:** Any call for an attack on an animal by another animal.
- **Bite:** Any call for an animal bite to a person.
- **Cruelty/Abuse/Neglect:** A cruelty/abuse/neglect situation where the health and safety of an animal is in jeopardy because of exposure to extreme weather, or other neglect/abuse factors. This includes dog fighting and cockfighting in-progress. Examples include a dog currently suffering from an injury or illness and could die if treatment is not provided, a lack of shelter during extreme temperatures, or an animal is left in a car during extreme temperatures.
- **Stray Sick/Injured:** Any call for a sick/injured animal that is life-threatening (i.e. vomiting or defecating blood, trouble breathing, unable to move, hit by a car, visible wounds, bleeding profusely, unable to stand). This includes sick or injured community cats.
- **Stray Trapped:** Any call for a dog or cat confined in a trap.

The LMAS Intake Center, located at 3516 Newburg Road, is open to the public from 1200-1800 hours, Monday through Saturday. The Intake Center is closed on Sunday; however, they will still take sick, injured, or aggressive dogs or cats from the public.

Should the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) have a stray, sick, injured, or aggressive animal, officers can deliver the animal to the LMAS Intake Center during the above-mentioned hours or contact MetroSafe and they will notify an LMAS ACO. LMAS has ACOs on the street from 0730-2130 hours.

From 2130-0730 hours, LMAS has one (1) ACO who is on-call to respond to emergencies only. The LMPD must respond, confirm the call, and be standing by for the ACO to respond. To contact LMAS during these hours, officers will contact MetroSafe.

### 8.33.2 USE OF FORCE

#### Humane Destruction of Domesticated Animals

When an officer believes a seriously injured, domesticated animal (e.g., dog, cat, etc.) should be destroyed to relieve its pain and suffering, they will first attempt to contact the owner. If the owner can be contacted,

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## 8.33.2 USE OF FORCE (CONTINUED)

they will be instructed to take their pet to a licensed veterinarian for treatment and/or humane euthanasia. If the officer believes the injured domesticated animal may be a danger to its owner, or others, due to its injuries, the officer will contact MetroSafe and have them contact Louisville Metro Animal Services (LMAS) to have an ACO respond to the scene.

If the owner cannot be contacted, the officer will contact MetroSafe and have them contact LMAS and allow its ACOs a reasonable amount of time to remove the animal. If the officer is advised that LMAS cannot respond, or the ACO is taking an unreasonable amount of time to respond, the officer will request that MetroSafe contact an LMAS supervisor.

Officers are prohibited from loaning their weapons to any person for the purpose of destroying an animal.

### Humane Destruction of Wild Animals

When an officer believes a seriously injured, non-domesticated (wild) animal (e.g., deer) should be destroyed to relieve its pain and suffering, they will notify their supervisor that the animal was destroyed. The officer will request that MetroSafe contact the appropriate agency (e.g., Metro Public Works and Assets, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet) for removal on a right-of-way, roadway, or highway.

### Defense of Self, Others, and Property

Force used against animals is authorized in defense/protection of oneself, another, or property. When the officer reasonably believes, based on the facts and circumstances, the animal on which the force is used poses an immediate threat of injury or damage to the officer, another, or property (KACP 1.3b), they will use the minimum amount of force necessary to bring the animal under control (KACP 1.3a). Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEWs) have been found to be effective against aggressive animals. Officers will only use the minimum number of CEW cycles necessary to bring the animal under control (KACP 1.3a).

Deadly force against an animal is authorized in defense of oneself, another, or property when the officer reasonably believes, based on the facts and circumstances, the animal against which the force is used poses an immediate threat of death, serious injury, or substantial damage to property. Justification for the use of deadly force must be limited to what reasonably appears to be the facts known, or perceived, by an officer under the circumstances. Deadly force, as with all uses of force, may not be resorted to unless other reasonable alternatives have been exhausted, would clearly be ineffective, or exigent circumstances exist.

If an officer has to shoot and kill an aggressive domesticated animal (e.g., dog, cat, etc.) during the execution of a search warrant, they will request that MetroSafe contact LMAS for removal, unless the owner elects to take care of the animal (refer to SOP 8.1).

### Documentation

If a domesticated animal is injured as a result of an officer using force in response to a humane act or a defensive situation, a commanding officer will complete an Administrative Incident Report (AIR), via the BlueTeam link, located on the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) Intranet, including when a CEW is

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### 8.33.2 USE OF FORCE (CONTINUED)

used (refer to SOP 3.1). If an officer uses their firearm for the destruction of a wild animal, no report is required.

### 8.33.3 REMOVAL OF ANIMAL CARCASSES

An officer should attempt to remove an animal carcass from the roadway or highway if it constitutes a traffic hazard. If the carcass cannot be moved, the officer should remain on-scene and request that MetroSafe contact the appropriate agency (e.g., Metro Public Works and Assets, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet) for removal. If no hazard exists, the officer does not have to remain on-scene and should request that MetroSafe contact the appropriate agency for removal.

### 8.33.4 ANIMAL BITES

LMAS will respond to animal bite incidents. They will take a report and investigate these incidents. LMAS can be contacted via MetroSafe.

LMAS ACOs will respond to the scene of all animal bite incidents and will complete an incident report. LMPD officers will respond to the scene if the animal is still posing a threat or if the victim was severely injured.

### 8.33.5 WILDLIFE

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), licensed nuisance wildlife control operators, and licensed wildlife rehabilitators are responsible for responding to complaints of non-domesticated (wild) animals.

LMAS will respond to the following:

- An ACO will respond to all animal bites and bat exposures. If a bat has bitten a pet or human in the living quarters of a residence, it is considered an emergency call to which the LMAS will respond. The bat will not be quarantined at LMAS. It will be euthanized and sent to the lab for analysis.

The KDFWR will respond to calls involving large-sized nuisance or injured wildlife (e.g., deer, coyote, etc.) on the exterior/yard of the home. The KDFWR can be contacted at (800) 858-1549. Calls involving large-sized sick or injured birds of prey (e.g., falcons, hawks, vultures, owls, eagles) are referred to Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky. Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky can be contacted at (502) 491-1939.

Licensed nuisance wildlife control operators will respond to calls involving general nuisance wildlife (e.g., raccoons, squirrels, opossums, snakes, etc.) on the exterior/yard of the home, inside of a home, etc. Licensed nuisance wildlife control is provided by permitted operators who charge a fee for their services. A list of licensed nuisance wildlife control operators can be found at <https://app.fw.ky.gov/NuisanceControlNew/>.

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### 8.33.5 WILDLIFE (CONTINUED)

Licensed wildlife rehabilitators will respond to calls involving general sick and/or injured wildlife. A list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators, including the types of animals that they rehabilitate, can be found at <http://app.fw.ky.gov/rehabilitatorNew/>.

Except as noted above, a homeowner or landowner is responsible for the removal of a dead animal found on the exterior/yard of the home or on private property.

If the call involves a deer being struck by a vehicle, an LMPD officer will respond.

If an officer has an issue/question regarding any wildlife call, they should contact the KDFWR at (800) 858-1549.

### 8.33.6 DOMESTICATED ANIMAL COMPLAINTS

LMAS is the primary agency responsible for responding to complaints of domesticated animals (e.g., loud barking, nuisance property offenses, animal fights, habitual roaming, leash/tether offenses, cruelty/neglect/abuse, etc.).

LMPD officers will only be dispatched on complaints that present a threat, or danger, to persons/property or when LMAS ACOs are unavailable or refuse the run.

### 8.33.7 SURRENDERING OWNERSHIP OF PETS

LMPD officers are prohibited from letting citizens surrender ownership of their pet(s) to them. Any citizen who wishes to surrender ownership of their pet(s) should visit the LMAS website at the following link: <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/animal-services/pet-resources>. Citizens can also contact LMAS, via email, at [animals@louisvilleky.gov](mailto:animals@louisvilleky.gov) or by calling (502) 574-5546. Any citizen who wishes to surrender ownership of their pet(s) is required to complete a Pet History form, either in-person at LMAS or at the link provided above.

### 8.33.8 STRAYS

When an officer observes, or is dispatched on a run involving, a stray animal, they should attempt to ascertain the owner's name and notify them. If the animal can be secured, LMAS may be notified for removal. An officer may also deliver the secured stray animal to LMAS, located at 3516 Newburg Road, during normal operating hours. Officers are not allowed to take the stray to any other location or shelter. The LMAS Field Services hours of operation are from 0730-2300 hours, seven (7) days a week.

LMAS will require the following information from the officer:

- The original location of the animal
- The name, address, and phone number of any persons who are involved with the animal or owner, if known

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## 8.33.8 STRAYS (CONTINUED)

- The reason the officer has possession of the animal
- If there is a court case or any other important information pertaining to the animal

If the stray animal is secured outside of the normal operating hours of LMAS the officer will contact MetroSafe and have them contact the on-call LMAS representative to receive instructions on picking up/delivering the stray animal. Before an officer takes an animal to, or drops off an animal at, an overnight animal hospital, they must contact LMAS. The LMAS veterinary team will assist and utilize the on-call process.

## 8.33.9 ANIMAL CRUELTY/NEGLECT/ABUSE

LMAS is the primary agency responsible for responding to complaints of animal cruelty/neglect/abuse. Officers who observe, or are dispatched on a run involving, animal cruelty/neglect/abuse, during the normal operating hours of LMAS (e.g., 0730-2130 hours), may contact MetroSafe to have LMAS send an ACO to the scene to assist. If the case occurs outside of the normal operating hours of LMAS (e.g., 2130-0730 hours), the officer may contact MetroSafe and have them contact the on-call LMAS representative to respond to life-threatening emergencies only. ACOs may assist the officer in determining whether the case meets the criteria to be a felony or a misdemeanor and if the animal needs to be impounded, pursuant to Louisville Metro Code of Ordinances (LMCO) Chapter 91.

In incidents where the animal is in danger/distress (e.g., animal locked in a car in extreme temperatures), the officer will contact MetroSafe and have them contact LMAS to have an ACO respond to the scene. If the ACO is unavailable or is taking an unreasonable amount of time to respond, the officer will have MetroSafe contact an LMAS supervisor for assistance. An LMPD commanding officer may approve an entry into a vehicle using the least intrusive means available. Officers will only attempt to gain entry into a vehicle if LMAS is unavailable or refuses the run **and** the life of the animal is in danger. If there is any property damage while attempting to gain entry, the commanding officer will complete an AIR, via the BlueTeam link, located on the LMPD Intranet (refer to SOP 3.1).