



Town of Sharon  
Animal Control Department

# WAYS TO CONTACT ANIMAL CONTROL

- Via Town Website
- Via phone 781-784-1513
- Emergency contact PD
- Via email  
[roles@townofsharon.org](mailto:roles@townofsharon.org)

# Rachel Oles, Animal Control Officer

- 2014 began career in Animal Control
  - 2021 Hired by Town of Sharon
- Graduated ACOAM Academy in 2016  
Wildlife Rehabber Course in 2022  
Companion Animal End-of-Life Care Doula 2022  
Pet and Human CPR certified  
Rabies Educator for GARC 2021



The days of “Dog Catcher” are far behind us



# Animal Control Origins

- Tracing its origins back to the mid-1800s, municipal animal control functions have experienced significant transition and growth. Originally charged with picking up and killing stray dogs to address the spread of rabies, local health departments hired individuals to go out into the cities and round up dogs found roaming the streets. Dubbed “dog catchers,” these men were paid a reward per dog caught and killed. They were considered to be providing strictly a public safety function

- (credit Best Friends Humane Animal Control Manual – S. Giacoppo)

# Essential Functions Today

- Provides Public Education regarding bylaws and regulations, health and safety concerns involving animals
- Investigates all complaints concerning animals. Responds to requests from Police and Fire Department for help in situations involving animals
- Patrols the town by vehicle and on foot to enforce and promote compliance with animal related bylaws and regulations maintains availability on-call to respond to emergencies
- Attends Board of Selectman and Board of health hearings regarding animals, attend court hearings
- Apprehends and impounds loose dogs
- Coordinates the preparation and transport of specimens for rabies testing with the local veterinarian,
- Set up local rabies clinics and education
- Prepares a variety of reports, correspondence and paperwork
- Attends local Animal Control Meetings and Trainings

# What Other Agencies is Animal Control Involved with?

## **State and Federal Level**

- MDAR – Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
- Department of Public Health – Department of Epidemiology
- Mass Animal Fund/Spay/Neuter/Vaccination Assistance Programs
- Massachusetts Environmental Police
- Massachusetts State Police
- Department of Fisheries and Wildlife
- Animal Rescue League
- MSPCA – Law Enforcement
- FEMA
- MEMA

## **Local**

- Department of Public Health
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Council on Aging
- Town Clerk's Office
- Food Pantries
- Veterinary Facilities
- Building Department
- Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding towns
- Department of Conservation
- Search and Rescue Organizations
- Adoption Agencies

# Why would animal control be involved with all those other agencies?

- Homelessness
- Food insecurity
- Domestic Violence
- Disasters
- Animal Fighting Rings
- Euthanasia
- Abandonment
- Neighbor disputes
- Dumping of evasive species
- Licensing
- Enforcement of animal laws
- Stray Animals
- Dangerous Dogs
- Nuisance Animals
- Budgeting and Fees
- Temperament Assessments
- Wellness Checks
- Identifying needs of Town
- Animals in Cars
- Rabies testing



# DOG LICENSING

## NUMBER ONE REASON TO LICENSE YOUR DOG BECAUSE IT'S THE LAW

MGL 140 Section 137

Town of Sharon By-Law Chapter 116-5

2. Prove the dog is yours. In the state of Massachusetts dogs are considered property
3. Ensure that animals receive vaccinations against rabies, which is also the law
4. Helps Animal Control Officers reunite a pet with its family (Law requires tags to be worn around dog's neck)
5. Helps Municipalities keep track of how many pets a person owns in case of emergency situations



# How Licensing Enforcement works

If you are not licensed by June 1 of the licensing year a non-criminal citation is issued.

Unpaid citations are sent to Stoughton District Court. Clerk Magistrate date is set.

If the person fails to appear for their court date – a warrant is issued.

Warrant can lead to being arrested and brought before a judge.

Animal Control makes EVERY attempt to reach dog owners BEFORE the request for criminal complaint is filled.

2073 (+/-) dogs in licensing system

14 (+/-) issued citations/submitted to court system

16 (+/-) Kennels



# Kennel Licenses

## Who needs one?

Kennel licenses require a kennel inspection by Animal Control

Personal (4 or more dogs)  
Commerical

Daycare Training Grooming

Boarding Veterinary

Protection Dogs

Shelter/Rescue

Animals for sale

Breeders



# EDUCATION & RESOURCES

- Rabies Education
- Wildlife Education
- Preventing Bites
- Laws Regarding Animals – both domestic and wild
- Food Pantry
- Spay/Neuter Assistance
- Disaster Preparation
- Preventing Impoundment of animals

# RABIES

- Rabies is a preventable deadly virus that attacks the brain and nerves of human and animals
- It spreads mainly through bites or scratches from an infected animal
- It can be prevented by vaccinating pets and by avoiding contact with wild animals
- Symptoms include fever, headache, confusion, aggressions, hallucinations, seizures and paralysis
- There is no cure once symptoms appear and death usually occurs within days
- Rabies is a global threat, affecting more than 150 countries and killing about 59,000 people every year

# Everything with a mouth bites

- What animals get rabies?
- [Rabies](#) affects only mammals. Mammals are warm-blooded animals with fur. People are also mammals. Birds, snakes, and fish are not mammals, so they can't get rabies and they can't give it to you. But any mammal can get rabies, including people. While rabies is rare in people in the United States, with only 1 to 3 cases reported annually, about 60,000 Americans get [post-exposure prophylaxis \(PEP\)](#) each year to prevent rabies infection after being bitten or scratched by an infected or suspected infected animal.
- In the United States, more than 90% of reported cases of rabies in animals occur in wildlife. The [wild animals that most commonly carry rabies](#) in the United States are raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. **Contact with infected [bats](#) is the leading cause of human rabies deaths in this country; at least 7 out of 10 Americans who die from rabies in the US were infected by bats.** People may not recognize a bat scratch or bite, which can be very small, but these types of contact can still spread rabies.
- [Pets \(like cats and dogs\) and livestock \(like cattle and horses\)](#) can also get rabies. Nearly all the pets and livestock that get rabies had not received vaccination or were not up to date on rabies vaccination. Most pets get rabies from having contact with wildlife.
- Because of laws requiring dogs to be vaccinated for rabies in the United States, dogs make up only about 1% of rabid animals reported each year in this country.

## What is a mammal?

a warm-blooded vertebrate animal of a class that is distinguished by the possession of hair or fur, the secretion of milk by females for the nourishment of the young, and (typically) the birth of live young.



# Wildlife Assistance

## Keep Wildlife Wild

- Animal Control can only remove sick or injured wildlife
- PAC Agents – licensed with the state
- Wild life rehabbers
- State regulates who is allowed to do what – they set the guidelines



Animal control works under the following  
Massachusetts General Laws, Board of Health  
Regulations and Town By-laws  
Ensuring laws are current, cohesive and enforced

# Massachusetts General Laws

- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 272 Crimes against chastity, morality, decency and good order
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 266 Crimes against property (animals including dogs are considered property in the State of Massachusetts)
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 19c Disabled Persons Protection Commission
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 186 Estates for Years and at will
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 244 Foreclosure and redemption of Mortgages
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 131 Inland Fisheries and Game and other Natural Resources
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140 Licenses and Animal Control
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 129 Livestock Disease Control
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 255 Mortgages, Conditional Sales and Pledges of Personal Property Liens thereon
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119 Protection and Care of Children and Proceedings against them
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 112 Registration of Certain Professions and Occupations
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 239 Summary Process and Possession of Land

# Town of Sharon By-Laws

- 116-5 Licensing; Fees
- 116-6 Public Nuisance
- 116-7 Violations and Penalties
- 116-8 Complaint of Nuisance
- 116-9 Tethering
- 116-10 Mandatory Leash Law; impoundment fees
- 116-11 Emergency treatment
- 116-12 Noncriminal disposition of violations; additional remedies

# Board of Health - Chapter 300

- Animal Inspector and Animal Control are two different roles within the Town of Sharon
- Animal Control and the Board of Health work together for the care and keeping of animals within the Town limits – licensing, animal businesses, cruelty and neglect.

# Helping Hand of Animal Control

## Food Pantry

- Beginning Stages
- Food Drives
- Donation Based
- Residents and feed impounded animals

## Spay Neuter Program

- Sponsored by Mass Animal Fund
- Assist Low-Income residents (TAFDC, SSI, VS, SNAP, WIC etc)
- Must Apply through ACO
- Feral cat caregivers can also apply through ACO
- 650 animals currently on waitlist

# Disaster Situations

According to FEMA, in an Disaster Situation, Animal Control “owns” the animals within the town

Animal Control will work with other Emergency Services to assist in the removal of animals during a disaster situation by being proactive with plans and resources

Only when it is safe to do so.



tornado



volcano



earthquake



tsunami



drought



avalanche



dust storm



forest fire



thunderstorm



snowstorm



hurricane



windstorm



Preventing Impoundment of Animals

Owner's having control over  
their animals is the best way to  
prevent an animal from being  
impounded

# What happens to impounded animals?

## **DOGS**

- In Massachusetts, stray dogs are required to be held for 7 days.
- During this 7 day hold, Animal Control's main objective is to reunite dog with its owner.
  - After 7 day hold, a decision between adopting, transferring or euthanasia is made.
  - Adopting healthy dogs into homes is always what Animal Control aims for.
- Adoption Process consists of the animal receiving basic veterinary care and temperament testing.

## **Cats and Other Animals**

Animal Control's main objective is to locate an animals owner.

If there are no specific regulations Sharon Animal Control will hold any domestic animal for at least seven days before making a decision between adopting, transferring or euthanasia is made.



# Five Freedoms

- The five freedoms outline five aspects of animal welfare under human control:
- 1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor
- 2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4. Freedom to express (most) normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- 5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering



I DO WHAT  
I WANT

# “Lost” Stray Dogs

Unless proven otherwise all dogs are a flight risk – keep them leashed

Never Ever Ever chase a dog

Animal Control does not trap or chase loose dogs.

When a dog is lost and in flight mode, its brain does not slow down long enough to recognize that the “scary noise” that it hears belongs to its beloved owner or companion.

It is important to allow the dog to settle down in the area.



# Where do impounded animals go?

Town of Sharon does not have a housing facility for impounded animals within the town.

Town of Sharon utilizes the Town of Canton Municipal Animal Shelter for emergency housing or stray holds.

## Animal Control Officers

We walk a different path than most on this journey as an ACO  
Our hearts are as big as the ocean but only the animals will understand  
We see the tragedies others can't see, we do the things most won't do  
Sitting in court all day waiting on the case we might lose  
Hearing the angry voice of an owner as we ask them to care for their pet  
Patiently waiting in the pouring rain as confidence grows in the scared dog  
Courage through filth and despair as we're greeted by a house full of sick cats  
Watching with hidden tears at the death of an abused animal, helpless to its fate  
Working through the fury of Mother Nature, laughing at the challenge  
Listening as our job is explained by those who've never been in our boots  
We smile knowing it's what we gladly do, making a difference each day.



Rob Leinberger - 2012