

**ANIMAL  
RESCUE  
LEAGUE  
of BOSTON**



**POLICY TITLE: ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL**

Reviewed by: AWMG	Date: October 13, 2016
Approved by: Management Team	Date: October 13, 2016
Approved by: Board of Directors	Date: October 18, 2016

The Animal Rescue League recognizes the importance of effective animal care and control programs. Cities and towns can, and should, run competent and professional animal control programs. The programs should include: attention to public health and safety as it pertains to human-animal issues; the enforcement of state law and local animal ordinances; the provision of humane housing and adoption services for stray or unwanted companion animals; the protection of animals against cruelty and suffering through the investigation of reported animal abuse and neglect and the education of the public on responsible pet ownership, animal overpopulation and resources for solutions.

**The Animal Rescue League recognizes the importance of the local Animal Control Officer (ACO) in the daily management of animal concerns and issues. Duties of the ACO include, but are not limited to:**

- Protecting public safety by preventing animal bites, attacks, and accidents cause by unattended roaming animals;
- Protecting public health by preventing the spread of zoonotic diseases (diseases communicable from animals to humans under natural conditions, such as rabies);
- Educating the public on animal overpopulation issues and encouraging spay/neuter;
- Administering licensing and identification programs, such as identification tags and/or microchips for dogs and cats;
- Protecting animals against unnecessary cruelty and suffering;
- Handling dogs and cats as a primary function but also assisting with other species;
- Promoting responsible pet ownership and implementing fines and penalties to irresponsible owners, and
- Promoting the adoption of health and behaviorally sound animals into good homes.

The Animal Rescue League has determined, through prior experience and frequent interaction that the level of proficiency and experience of animal control officers varies greatly throughout the Commonwealth. In order to address these varying levels and to operate effectively, the Animal Rescue League believes there must be sufficient oversight and accountability of Animal Care and Control Departments, including, but not limited to, consideration of state-wide standards for training and duties; disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest; and a comprehensive and consistent training program.

The Animal Rescue League believes that cities and towns should be involved in, and makes every effort to, evaluate their current ACO function and determine whether the needs of the community are met by current appointments or whether additional assistance is required. Animal Control Officers should receive sufficient resources to be able to conduct their work in a safe and humane manner. Local government should adequately fund animal care and control programs in order to ensure humane and effective outcomes.

**Therefore, the Animal Rescue League of Boston will:**

1. Encourage formation of and imposition of state-wide standards for recruitment and training for Animal Control officers;
2. Encourage regular and robust training and updated programs;
3. Encourage the development of effective and professional municipal animal control programs which adequately protect public safety and animal welfare in their communities;
4. Encourage local governments to adequately fund and manage animal care and control programs for dogs, cat, other companion animals, and wildlife in order to provide maximum benefits and assistance to their respective communities;
5. Encourage the cooperation, enforcement and participation consistent with Chapter 140 between the Animal Rescue League of Boston and the Animal Control Officers with respect to reporting of violations and crimes and responses to all situations involving animals;