



**POLICY TITLE: ANIMAL HOARDING**

Reviewed by: AWMG

Date: October 13, 2016

Approved by: Management Team

Date: October 13, 2016

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date: October 18, 2016

Animal hoarding is accurately and generally defined as the accumulation of a large number of animals and a failure to provide minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, and veterinary care, and to act on the deteriorating condition of the animals (e.g., disease, starvation, death) and the environment (e.g., severe overcrowding, extremely unsanitary conditions).

Animal hoarding presents not only a significant risk as a result of unsanitary conditions to health, safety and well-being of the animals; but also to the people who hoard the animals and the community in which the hoarding situation is located.

The Animal Rescue League recognizes that the issues arising in response to a hoarding situation are among the most difficult challenges facing shelter and rescue organizations. The intake and subsequent placement and care of the animals from a hoarding case – with its large numbers of animals in ill, emaciated, and poorly socialized conditions – continually represents one of the greatest challenges faced by the Animal Rescue League of Boston. In addition to addressing the most immediate needs of shelter, feeding, and veterinary care, there may also be an immediate need to find appropriate shelter for the person or persons responsible as well as a need to address immediate physical and mental health issues.

The Animal Rescue League believes that behavior, characteristics and motivations of animal hoarding are not, at this time, adequately addressed by the current anti-cruelty statutes; by the judicial system; the correctional system, and other agencies which may interact with the responsible parties.

**As a result, the Animal Rescue League will:**

1. Support the creation of a state-led multidisciplinary team to train and implement an emergency response team to hoarding situation;
2. Support the creation of, and participate in, a multi-disciplinary task force which will focus on the early identification of, and intervention in, hoarding situations;
3. Support and encourage training and education relating to all aspects of animal hoarding for judges, prosecutors, probation officers, and other relevant court personnel;
4. Encourage the mandatory requirement of mental health counseling as part of any disposition of all animal hoarding cases;

5. Encourage the creation of forensic assessment protocol for early intervention, sentencing, treatment, and rehabilitation by the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Corrections.