

**Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Animal and Food Industry Services
Office of Veterinary Services
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Guidelines Governing the Approval of Additional Training for Animal Control Officers

I. Statutory Authority: Code of Virginia §§ 3.2-6555 through 3.2-6556

a. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6555, each animal control officer and deputy animal control officer is required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of approved training in animal control and protection every three (3) years.

b. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6556, this training must be approved by the State Veterinarian.

II. Criteria for Approval of Training Courses

a. The State Veterinarian will approve training courses that relate to the animal control topics included in the Animal Control Officer Basic Training core curriculum or are otherwise clearly related to animal control and protection.

III. Requirements for Requesting Course Approval

a. Prior to the training event, the training provider, or any individual seeking training approval, should complete and submit the Animal Control Officer Training Approval Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11). The request will be reviewed, and the status of approval will be indicated on the request form and sent to the individual. If the State Veterinarian has already approved the course, a copy of the approved form will be sent to that individual.

b. For approved training courses repeating throughout a calendar year, any changes to the course require approval by resubmitting an Animal Control Officer Training Approval Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11) that reflects those changes.

c. All course approvals apply only to course dates listed on the Animal Control Officer Training Approval Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11), and expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

e. Formal field training or in-service training required by an employer may be eligible for approval, but the training must be approved by the State Veterinarian in advance.

IV. Annual Animal Control Officer Status Report

a. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6555, every locality employing an animal control officer shall submit a completed "Animal Control Officer Status Report" to the State Veterinarian (Form VDACS AC-12) upon request. The report shall contain the employment and training status of each animal control officer and deputy animal control officer employed by the locality.

b. As required in Code of Virginia § 3.2-6556(A)(2), the State Veterinarian will maintain the Animal Control Officer Status Report in order to document and ensure that the animal control officer and deputy animal control officers for each locality are in compliance with the training requirements prescribed in § 3.2-6556(A)(2).

c. Localities that fail to submit a report, or submit a report that indicates a failure to comply with the training requirements for the animal control officer and any deputy animal control officer(s) in their employ, may be subject to a civil penalty assessed pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546(K) and the

Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services “Virginia Animal Shelter Civil Penalty Matrix” (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/Civil-Penalty-Matrix.pdf>).

d. In an effort to satisfy the requirements of § 3.2-6556, the State Veterinarian may request further documentation of training completion at any time.

V. Tracking and Ensuring Animal Control Officer Training Compliance

a. Documentation of training completion may include copies of course attendance rosters (sign-in sheets), course certificates, or other similar documents.

b. Individual animal control officers and deputy animal control officers are expected to maintain documentation of course completion.

c. Training requirements will start the calendar year following the date of completion of the approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course. *Example: An animal control officer or deputy animal control officer who completes basic training on March 31, 2017 (or any other date during the calendar year 2017) is required to complete 15 hours of additional training before December 31, 2020.*

e. For extenuating circumstances, the State Veterinarian may grant an extension for the completion of additional training requirements. A written request must be made to the State Veterinarian as soon as possible after an extenuating circumstance places training compliance in jeopardy. The State Veterinarian or his representative will provide a written response indicating whether the extension is granted or denied.