



DATE: July 9, 2014

TO: Persons Interested in Animal Control Officer Training Programs

FROM: Michele M. Schalow, DVM, Animal Industry Division

SUBJECT: **Animal Control Officer Pursuant to the Dog Law**

As you are aware, MCL 287.289b states that a county shall not hire a person as an animal control officer unless that person has had 100 hours of training that has been approved by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The exceptions to this are, one, if the person is a police officer, or two, if the person was employed as an animal control officer for at least three years prior to 1973. Pursuant to MCL 287.289c, the same hiring requirements apply to any city, village, or township hiring an animal control officer.

The reason for this law is to help assure that the animal control officer has had at least a minimal amount of training so that public health and safety, and animal welfare are appropriately protected. Recommended areas of training include: laws; policies; law enforcement; investigation techniques; record keeping; design and construction of animal facilities; sanitation of animal facilities; animal behavior; animal handling and restraint; animal diseases including rabies and other zoonotic diseases; animal breed identification and animal description; animal first aid; vehicles and animal transportation; capture techniques; euthanasia techniques including the use of sodium pentobarbital; emergency management; and public relations.

There are a few formal training programs available at this time. In lieu of a formal training program, training can be accomplished by having the applicant spend time with and receive instruction from a variety of professionals and specialists. Such people may include the local prosecuting attorney, an animal control officer in a neighboring area, the sheriff or police chief, a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Field Inspector, and a veterinary practitioner. For suggested areas of training, please see "Suggestions for 100 Hours of Training in Compliance with Act 399, P.A. 1919, Sec. 298". Training can also be sought through the:

1. National Animal Control Association (NACA) Training Academy. The program has two non-consecutive levels of training and is held periodically at different locations around the country. Individuals that successfully complete both levels are eligible for national certification. For more information log onto www.nacanet.org or call 913-768-1319.
2. Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers (MAACO). The association has periodic conferences and trainings at various locations in Michigan. The conferences feature animal control-specific training and continuing education. Log onto www.maacoweb.com for more details.

3. American Humane Association (AHA). The AHA provides training programs in animal welfare in various regional areas. For more information, call 1-800-227-4645 or log onto www.americanhumane.org.
4. The University of Missouri, through their Law Enforcement Training Institute, offers a training program known as the National Cruelty Investigation School. The training consists of three levels of training, each consisting of 5 days of training. The courses are offered at various locations throughout the country. For more information, see <http://letl.missouri.edu/animal3.htm> or call (800) 825-6505."
5. Some local community colleges and high school adult education programs offer courses that would be appropriate for animal control officer training.

If you have specific ideas for training other than those described above or detailed on the attached sheet, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Animal Industry Division, at 1-800-292-3939.

Once training has been completed, the applicant or other appropriate person needs to submit a summary of the training to the department. This summary should include the date training occurred, number of hours spent in training on that date, who did the training, and what was covered in the training. For example:

4-10-2000	Spent half day with current animal control officer, John Doe, reviewing how to identify animals and keep records pursuant to Regulation 151.	4 Hours
4-11-2000	Spent day with Dr. Bill Jones learning to restrain dogs and cats and administer IV injections.	6 Hours
4-12-2000	Rode with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Field Inspector, Jane Doe, to visit other facilities. Discussed kennel construction, how to do inspections, Act 287, and Regulation 151.	8 Hours

The department will review the training summary. If the training is not approved, then a letter of disapproval, along with an explanation, will be sent to the applicant. Typical reasons for disapproval are failure to adequately document training and inappropriate or lacking training. Inappropriate training may include self-study or a request that 20 hours of cleaning kennels count toward the 100 hours of required training. If the training is approved, then an approval letter will be sent to the applicant. This letter should be kept on file.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Animal Industry Division, at 1-800-292-3939.

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