Animal Control Officer (ACO) Training Curriculum Guide

For ACOs who are currently law enforcement officers, it is suggested that they still obtain the animal law, animal care, and animal handling training that is part of the traditional 100 minimum hours of training for non-law enforcement officers wishing to become an ACO.

Ways to Obtain Training:

- Study Michigan's animal-related laws, regulations, ordinances, and court cases.
- Spend time with local authorities on cases regarding local animal policies, ordinances, and procedures.
- Participate in a ride-along or other training opportunity offered by MDARD's Animal Industry Division (AID) staff, which includes getting exposure to the animal requirements that MDARD oversees; learning about inspections, livestock programs, disease and pest concerns, and reportable diseases; and reporting animal welfare and safety concerns. Contact **AnimalShelters@Michigan.gov** to request.
- Job-shadow other ACOs (including those in other jurisdictions) as they respond to citizen calls, perform shelter and vehicle biosecurity, follow up on dog and kennel licenses, issue citations, take in owner-surrendered animals, etc.
- Job-shadow staff at an animal-related non-profit organization—including those that operate animal protection shelters, animal rescues, and animal humane societies.
- Spend time with local law enforcement (sheriff, police) and local prosecutors to learn about warrants, prosecutions, chain of custody, case preparation, evidence handling, animal seizure processes, elements needed to establish adequate care/animal neglect/animal cruelty cases, animal hoarding situations, etc.
- Interact with shelter veterinarians and veterinarians who have shelter, animal rescue, or kennel clients. Learn about shelter/rescue/kennel animal concerns and care, shelter medicine, humane euthanasia, sedation, compassion fatigue, capacity for care, issues related to hoarded animals, and biosecurity.
- Attend/complete the training offered by the organizations listed below. If you find a similar training, submit it to **AnimalShelters@Michigan.gov** for approval two weeks ***prior*** to attending.

Core Knowledge of Laws & Regulations

Learning to be an ACO begins with an understanding of the laws and regulations that pertain to the position.

Statute or Regulation Number	Common Title
Act 339 of 1919, as amended	The Dog Law of 1919
Regulation 129	Dog Kennels Rules
Act 287 of 1969, as amended	Pet Shops, Dog Pounds, and Animal Shelters Act
Regulation 151	Pet Shops, Dog Pounds and Animal Shelters Rules
Act 328 of 1931, as amended	The Michigan Penal Code, Chapter IX, Animals
Act 309 of 1939, as amended	Registration and Identification of Dogs
Act 426 of 1988, as amended	Dangerous Animals

Statute or Regulation Number	Common Title
Act 328 of 1976, as amended	Animals Running at Large
Act 246 of 2000, as amended	Wolf-Dog Cross Act
Act 274 of 2000, as amended	Large Carnivore Act
Act 239 of 1982, as amended	Bodies of Dead Animals Act
Regulations for Act 239	Bodies of Dead Animals Rules
Act 368 of 1978, as amended, §7333	Public Health Code Excerpt, Section 7333
Euthanasia and Sedation Rules	Animal Euthanasia and Sedation – Board of Pharmacy

Animal Care (50 hours minimum)

As an ACO, understanding your role regarding animal care in your community is vital. In addition to the core knowledge of laws and regulations outlined above, you need to study and learn at a minimum:

Local Ordinances and Basic Shelter Care:

- Local ordinance requirements including additional requirements for animal care, animal-related businesses, types and numbers of allowable animals, animal hold times, and reporting of stray animals.
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) has guidelines for caring for shelter animals. The organization also has self-assessment tools, which can help shelters and communities improve animal care based on the 5 Freedoms of the Asilomar Accords.

Service Animals:

- Knowledge of the laws and regulations regarding service animals in Michigan.

Animal Health:

- Understand the physical and emotional health effects of fear, anxiety, frustration, and stress on animals—especially the persistent, lifelong problems that may be present with shelter/rescue pets. The Fear Free Shelter program has a free online course. It's critical to understand animal body language as well as the canine ladder of aggression.
- Knowledge of the major pathogenic concerns for various animal groups such as the American Heartworm Society where you will find information on heartworm.
- Familiarity with the animal diseases, pests, and toxicosis that are required by law to be reported to MDARD. Certain companion animal diseases (such as rabies, leptospirosis, and canine brucellosis) are zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted from animals to people. In fact, animal control agencies play a key role regarding the prevention and mitigation of rabies, as shown in this Michigan Rabies Assessment infographic.

Animal Control (60 hours minimum)

There are national and local organizations that have online courses, webinars, and other training opportunities regarding animal care, animal control, and cruelty prevention:

- **Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers (MAACO):** Various training opportunities.
- **National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA):** NACA Guidelines, Humane Animal Control Manual, webinars, and training courses.
- **Code 3 Associates**: Animal Control Officer and Animal Investigation Trainings

- **American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA):** Animal Law Enforcement online courses and webinars.
- **National Animal Cruelty Investigations School:** NACI Trainings.
- **Animal Control and Care Academy:** Various training courses.
- **Michigan Humane Society**: Law Enforcement Training opportunities.
- **FEMA Emergency Management Institute:** Online ICS training (ICS 100, 700, 10, 11, and 111 are strongly advised). Complete a minimum of eight hours of training, which is documented by certificates of completion.

SPECIALITY TRAINING AREA:

Shelter Animal Euthanasia and Field Chemical Capture (additional training hours)

Formal training is required for ACOs who are employees of MDARD-registered animal control shelters to perform euthanasia and field chemical capture of animals running at large.

Since not all ACOs perform these tasks as part of their duties, this training is ***in addition*** to the minimum of 100 instructional hours to become an ACO. The formal training programs for both euthanasia and field chemical capture must be approved by MDARD.

- **Euthanasia Training**: 16 hours of training, including at least 12 hours of content training and four hours of practice training. The training includes the use of ketamine, TELAZOL® (tiletamine and zolazepam), and xylazine to sedate an animal prior to euthanasia.

- **Chemical Capture Training**: 16 hours of training, including at least 12 hours of content training and four hours of practice training.
    - **Prerequisite**: Completion of Euthanasia Training.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

ACOs are encouraged to participate in continuing education opportunities to stay up to date on changes in the laws, regulations, emergency diseases, and public policy issues related to animal control and animal care. Annual conferences, regional trainings, and in-services can provide 16-24 hours of updated training per year at a minimum.