Animal Control Officers

Animal Control Officer Duties

Animal control officers are charged with the enforcement of all Virginia state and Tappahannock/Essex county laws pertaining to the welfare, care, and control of all domestic animals. Animal control officers investigate all animal complaints including neglect and cruelty to animals. They also investigate animal bite complaints and implement and release domestic animal quarantines. The Tappahannock/Essex County Animal Shelter telephone number is 804-443-0726.

While the animal control officers are legally authorized to issue citations and take cases to court, the primary focus is on working with community residents to assist them in providing better care for their pets and observing the laws.

Emergencies

Animal control officers respond to animal emergencies in Tappahannock/Essex, Virginia, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The following situation would constitute an emergency:

- Domestic animal threatening bodily harm
- Livestock or poultry kills
- Sick or injured domestic stray animals or livestock
- Animal Bite to a person
- Loose livestock
- Possible rabid animal

*If you have an emergency after regular operating hours, please contact the Sheriff’s Department at 804-443-3346.*

*Dispatch will contact the Animal Control Officer on duty to answer the call.*

We do not respond to:

- Wildlife nuisance, damage to gardens, flower beds, or shrubs and trees
- Wildlife living under decks, storage sheds, or porches
- Wildlife in attics, basements, garages and sheds
- Wildlife in the home
- Wildlife living in populated areas

Information regarding nuisance wildlife can be found on the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries website at: [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov). Or call Region #1 VDGIF 804-829-6580.

*The only Wildlife emergency that an animal control officer will respond to is if there has been physical contact with a human or domestic animal, thereby potentially exposing the person or domestic animal to rabies.*