

City of Hampton  
***Animal Control***  
Administrative Guidelines

<b>Title:</b> Domestic and Feral Cat Policy and Response	<b>Guideline Number:</b> <b>OP-103</b>
<b>References:</b> Hampton City Code – Chapter 5, ASPCA, Alleycat.org	<b>Date Issued:</b> <b>March 18, 2013</b>

## I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for responding to calls regarding domestic and feral cats.

## II. Policy

Hampton Animal Control supports the concept of cat control and licensing, as required in the Hampton City Code. (5-100, 5-51) Many feral cats live in colonies of similar cats and have human caregivers. (5-43) Educational efforts will be conducted to promote proper cat care, cat trapping and to inform the public of the laws regarding cats.

## III. Definitions

### A. Feral Cats/Free Roaming Cats\* (5-43, 5-38.c5)

A cat born and raised in the wild, or who has been abandoned/lost and reverted to wild ways in order to survive is considered a free roaming or feral cat. While some feral cats tolerate a bit of human contact, most are too fearful and wild to be handled. Ferals often live in groups, called colonies, and take refuge wherever they can find food – rodents, small animals and garbage. They will also try to seek out abandoned buildings, deserted cars, even dig holes in the ground to keep warm in winter months and cool during the summer heat. (\*www.ASPCA.org – this is a term that is commonly used throughout various organizations, but not used in city code.)

### B. Stray Cats\* (5-38.b)

A feral cat is primarily wild-raised or has adapted to feral life, while we define a stray cat as someone's pet who has become lost or has been abandoned. Stray cats are usually tame and comfortable around people. They will frequently rub against legs and exhibit behaviors such as purring and meowing. In contrast, feral cats are notably quiet and keep their distance. Stray cats will also often try to make a home near humans – in car garages, front porches or backyards. Most are completely reliant on humans as a food source and are not yet able to cope with life on the streets. (\*www.ASPCA.org)

### C. Nuisance Cats (5-38b2)

Nuisance cat are any cat(s) that are causing a **habitual** problem for a resident, such destroying/damaging property (scratching cars, digging in gardens, etc.), or yowling/fighting at night.

## D. Cat Colony\*(5-43)

A cat colony is an area where a group of free roaming/feral cats cohabitate together. They find shelter and a food source because they are opportunists. Feeding and providing shelter for feral cats allows them to peacefully cohabitate in an area. While some people welcome them for rodent control, providing nutritious food keeps them both from roaming in search of a food source and also less susceptible to disease and parasites. (\*www.alleycat.org)

## IV. Procedures

### A. Responding to Calls for Service

1. **All calls for service regarding cats will be the primary responsibility of the Animal Control Technician. Officers will respond to sick and injured cats in accordance with priority dispatching procedures. Officers will respond to stray/nuisance cat and trapped cat calls for service when a Technician is not available.**
2. **Officers/Technicians responding to calls for service involving stray cats shall:**
  - a) Attempt to locate the cat and attempt to determine if the cat is actually stray or is owned (5-2) by an individual. (5-38b)
  - b) If the cat is stray attempt to capture the cat in accordance with proper procedures. Traps may be deployed in accordance with policy.
  - c) If there is no specific information provided by the caller, such as color of the cat, direction of travel, or a good location (address, block # and street, or an intersection), then the officer receiving the complaint shall clear that complaint as insufficient information for response.
  - d) If the caller indicates that the cat was seen several hours, or days, prior to the actual complaint called in – the complaint will be cleared “keep check in the area”. The complaint will then be forwarded to the Supervisor to determine if a Directed Patrol is necessary.
3. **Responding to a calls for service involving nuisance cat(s). (5-38b2)**
  - a) Obtain information from complainant regarding what **habitual** damage(s) or what is being done to be considered a nuisance
  - b) Attempt identify the cat and attempt to locate the owner
  - c) Issue Notice of Violations, summons or provide information to complainant to obtain summons as appropriate
  - d) Deploy traps in accordance with appropriate trapping procedures if needed

## **B. Directed Patrols**

1. Directed Patrols are used when a complaint of free roaming/feral cats are in a specific area of the city or neighborhood and a response may need to be conducted over several site visits. Directed Patrols are conducted on an as needed basis.
2. An initial investigation will be conducted of the neighborhood/area. A canvass of the neighborhood will be conducted to determine the severity, amount, and type of cats in an area. Animal Control may respond at different times of the day to determine if there is/is not a problem.
3. Animal Control will make every attempt to educate the citizens in the area by passing out flyers on pet overpopulation, proper maintenance of cats and city ordinances.
4. Traps will be deployed in accordance with policy if needed.
5. All directed patrols will be documented on the proper forms. At the minimum the officer/technician will document the following:
  - i. **Name and CAD#**
  - ii. **Location and date of initial investigation/canvass.**
  - iii. **If traps were deployed and at what location**
  - iv. **Results – number of cats trapped or no results obtained.**
  - v. **The education efforts conducted in the neighborhood/area.**
6. All Directed Patrols involving nuisance, feral/free roaming cats will be assigned to the Animal Control Technician for investigation.

## **C. Second Party Calls for Service**

1. A second party call is when a caller that has no direct knowledge or involvement of the nuisance, stray or feral cat, but has received information from another individual. The acceptance of second party calls typically lead to misinformation that can cause the officer/technician to spend valuable time looking in the wrong area, for the wrong cat, or attempting to address issues that do not exist.
2. Second party calls will only be accepted for injured/attacking animals or other emergency situations in which there is a risk of bodily injury.
3. Subjects calling in second party calls for any other issue will be encouraged to have the original complainant contact an Animal Control Officer or Communications so that the most pertinent information can be obtained and the proper response initiated in a timely manner.

## **D. Cat Colonies (5-43)**

Hampton City Code requires any person intentionally providing food, water, or other forms of sustenance to a feral cat or feral cat colony to comply with the following:

1. Annual registration with Hampton Animal Control as a person caring for feral cat(s) or a feral cat colony. There is no cost associated with the registration and the caregiver is exempt from licensing requirements.
2. Caregiver must provide documentation of support by surrounding neighbors of proposed location for feral cat colony.
3. Caregiver is responsible for feeding and providing emergency veterinary treatment as needed.
4. Regular and frequent trapping of cats over the age of eight (8) weeks to have them spayed or neutered. All cats must be spayed or neutered and vaccinated for rabies.
5. Feline leukemia testing is recommended and those that test positive have humanely euthanized or isolated indoors.
6. Identify all sterile cats by tipping their ears and/or microchipping.
7. Any cat known to have an infectious, untreated disease shall not be released back to the colony or any other outdoor environment where the disease can be spread to uninfected animals.
8. Hampton Animal Control shall provide educational information and/or colony registration packets to any resident providing food, water or sustenance to feral cats to gain compliance or enforce the ordinance as deemed necessary.
9. Registered colonies are subject to periodic checks for compliance. Registered colonies which are not in compliance shall be provided a notice of non-compliance that the caregiver has forty-eight (48) hours to provide a written response including how the colony will be brought into compliance within a ninety (90) day time period. The caregiver shall make weekly reports to the animal control office until colony is in compliance.

## **V. Trapping Procedures**

**A. Trapping** – The use of live animal traps serve a valuable purpose in animal control. Animal Control shall provide education and enforcement regarding the humane capture and transport of animals. It is recommended that traps used should capture the animal unharmed.

1. Live animal traps shall be provided only to citizens of Hampton for trapping domestic animals.
2. Hampton Animal Control utilizes only humane traps and strongly opposes leg hold, snare or body gripping traps.
3. Hampton Animal Control will not provide traps for the purpose of trapping wildlife.

4. Citizens found violating trapping regulations will immediately have loaned traps removed and will no longer be allowed to borrow Animal Control Traps. Cruelty charges will be placed as appropriate.
5. Any cat found to have a collar of any type, a microchip or tipped ears, an effort will be made to return it to the appropriate owner. The owner will advise that the cat was trapped. If an owner can not be located, the cat will be removed from the trapping property and released in the same general area it was trapped, unless the animal has been determined by the Technician or Officer to be a “nuisance”. If the cat is found to be a “nuisance” it will returned to the owner, with the appropriate Notice of Violation or transported to the shelter.

**B. Requests for traps** – Upon receiving requests for traps, the following procedures will apply to ensure the safety, preserve the dignity and the humane treatment of any animal trapped.

1. Citizen’s requesting a trap.

- a) Hampton citizens may request a trap to trap on their own property. Citizens must complete a Live Trapping Application and must sign the trapping regulations and waiver.
- b) Animal Control is responsible for explaining the trapping regulations and ensuring the citizen understands the regulations and can operate the trap efficiently.
- c) Animal Control will issue a trap(s) with an assigned number and sign the application. All traps will be numbered. If a trap does not have a number, the employee is responsible to notify a supervisor and replace the identification number on the trap.
- d) A copy of the application, with instructions and other educational materials will be given to the citizen.

2. **Animal Control Trapping on Private Property**

- a) To assure proper monitoring of traps, private property trapping will only be conducted by an Animal Control Technician. Due to calls for service response requirements, Animal Control Officers will not trap on private property unless attempting to capture a sick or injured cat that requires immediate attention.
- b) Management companies and property owners may authorize the City of Hampton Animal Control Division Technician to trap on private property. At no time will authorization be accepted from renters, tenants, or other residents of commercial or rental properties.
- c) Anytime an management company or property owner indicates that they do not want Animal Control to trap on their property or facility, an annotation will be made in CAD indicating who the Technician spoke to, a phone number for contact and the fact that they have declined to allow Hampton Animal Control to

trap on their property.

- d) Prior to any trapping being conducted by the Technician on any private property, a signed authorization permitting such trapping must be on file with Animal Control. Authorizations will be signed each time trapping is performed.
- e) If a request is received when a Technician is not available, the requester will be advised that their request will be forwarded to the Technician who will contact them on the next available date. If the individual does not wish to wait, they will be advised that a trap can be provided to them so that they may conduct the trapping.
- f) At no time will a Technician deploy more traps at one time than they can adequately and safely monitor depending on the current weather conditions.

### 3. **Humane Animal Trapping Guidelines (for officers and/or citizens)**

#### **Setting the Trap**

- a) Traps should be placed in discreet locations, away from sidewalks, front porches, or anywhere there is pedestrian traffic, unless the employee/citizen can monitor the trap. An example of a discreet location would be under a bush, in the shade.
- b) Traps should be set to protect the animal from inclement weather and direct sunlight.
- c) Traps should not be set on concrete, asphalt, bricks or other hard surfaces.
- d) Traps should not be set in severe/inclement weather is forecasted such as thunderstorms/ rain, extreme heat/cold, sleet or snow.
- e) Trapped animals must not be left out in inclement weather.
- f) Use disposable bowls or containers to hold bait food.
- g) Trap must be checked at least once every two hours – more frequently during extreme heat or cold.
- h) Do **not set a trap** if you are unable to monitor it.
- i) Place a light-colored towel or sheet over the back portion of the trap (Do not cover completely so as to restrict air flow.)

#### **When an animal is captured.**

- a) Cover the trap completely with a light-colored towel or sheet to reduce stress.

- b) Citizens may contact Animal Control to pick up the domestic animal OR they may take the domestic animal to the Peninsula SPCA. If trapping for veterinary service, then the animal can be taken to a veterinary hospital, PETA clinic or other location for treatment or service.
- c) If wildlife is trapped, it will be released on site as state law prohibits the relocation of wildlife. State law prohibits transporting any wildlife. The only exception is if the wildlife is sick or injured and then it will be transported according to Hampton Wildlife Policy.
- d) Do **not** transport domestic animals in the closed trunk of a vehicle.

## **VI. Trap-Neuter-Release Program (TNR)**

- A. TNR is a humane, effective approach for feral cats. Cats are humanely trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated and ear-tipped and then returned to their outdoor home. The goal is to stabilize a colony's population and reduce the spread of disease.
- B. Hampton Animal Control supports a multi-faceted approach to assist in reducing the feral cat population. When outside funding opportunities are available, Animal Control may deploy a TNR program in designated areas of the City.

Authorized by:	Revision Date: <b>March 18, 2013</b>
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