

## BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

#### DOG BITE/ATTACK INVESTIGATION

Reviewed by: Officer James Hall	Effective Date: July 9, 2003
Authorized by: Chief Daniel Donath	Revision Date: November 14, 2019

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this SOP is to establish specific guidelines for conducting an investigation into a dog bite or attack. The need for a thorough investigation and proper documentation of these incidents has recently become more significant. The increasing popularity of specific breeds of "fighting" dogs, the frequent occurrence and severity of dog bite/attack incidents, the vulnerability of certain groups (i.e., children and senior citizens), and the appeal process accompanying the declaration of a dog as either "vicious" or "dangerous" demand that these cases receive a consistently professional response. Therefore, the following procedure will be used.

#### PROCEDURE

All dog bite/attack reports will be assigned to and investigated by a patrol officer in a timely manner. The assigned officer should ensure that the victim(s) receives proper medical attention and that the dog is not currently a threat to public safety. If running at large, the McLean County Animal Control Warden should be summoned to seize the dog.

Dog bite/attack incidents may be emotionally charged events. Victims and family members, especially if the victim is a child or an elderly person, may be afraid, or even outraged. Similarly, the dog's owner may be emotionally attached to the dog and may appear defensive, may try to minimize the seriousness of the incident, or may blame the victim. Considering the range of possible emotional states, the parties should be interviewed separately, when possible.

The assigned officer will conduct and document interviews with the victim(s) and all witnesses, as well as residents living near where the dog resides (neighborhood canvass). From these interviews, the officer will note information about other prior incidents involving aggressive behavior by the same animal. If the animal has been involved in any reported or unreported attack or bite incidents, the officer should identify any such prior victims and witnesses. This information may be useful in determining whether to declare the animal "dangerous", "vicious" or neither. An actual bite does not have to occur to find that a dog is vicious. If the dog attacked, but did not bite, be very specific when describing the attack. Charging, snarling or growling, and the baring of teeth would be important points to mention. Such information may also be used in a court proceeding if the dog's owner appeals the "vicious" or "dangerous" dog declaration. Determine exactly where the attack or bite occurred; whether on public or private property, or on the premises where the dog resides. Determine whether the attack or bite was provoked or unprovoked. Photographs should be taken of injuries and of the dog when possible. If the dog has escaped from

some type of enclosure such as a fenced yard, or has broken a chain, this should be documented and photographed.

The assigned officer should ensure that the dog's owner is informed of the state statutory requirement to immediately confine the dog for 10 days and to have the animal evaluated by a veterinarian at the beginning and end of the confinement period, if the dog bit a person. (Note: If the incident was dog on dog/cat and no person was bit, no confinement is required) If the dog's rabies vaccination is current, it may be confined in the home. If the rabies vaccination is not current, State statutes require the animal be confined with a veterinarian or Animal Control. The dog's owner should be given the telephone number for McLean County Animal Control: **888-5060**. The officer should inquire about the status of the dog's rabies vaccination, make that information available to the victim, and note it in the report.

Any applicable citations, such as **Permitting Dog to Run At Large** or **Failure to Register a Dog**, should be issued. A canvas of the neighborhood shall be conducted to find out any further history on the dog. The assigned officer shall be responsible for conducting any follow-up interviews and or issuing of any city ordinance violations that may have not been issued at the time of the incident.

The Assistant Chief of Administration may assign a reviewing officer or supervisor to review each dog bite/attack report for a recommendation of a declaration under the city ordinances.

The reviewing officer/supervisor will read over all information provided in each incident. The reviewing officer/supervisor will assign further follow-up investigation to the initial officer. If no other follow-up is needed, the reviewing officer/supervisor will recommend to the Assistant Chief of Administration, in BPD letter form, if any declaration (no declaration, dangerous, vicious, or subject to euthanasia) is to be made against the dog. The reviewing officer/supervisor will also attach the incident report with the recommendation to the Assistant Chief of Administration. The reviewing officer/supervisor will complete a supplemental report showing they have reviewed the case (a synopsis of the incident, reason for the designation) and noted a recommendation has been sent to the Assistant Chief of Administration.

If the reviewing officer/supervisor recommends "no declaration" and receives the same from the Assistant Chief of Administration then nothing further is needed and the case will be closed appropriately.

**Or**

If the reviewing officer/supervisor recommends a "Dangerous Declaration" and receive the same from the Assistant Chief of Administration, the reviewing officer/supervisor will confirm with McLean County Animal Control that the owner of the dog did in fact purchase the "dangerous dog tag". A supplemental report confirming the declaration, the dog tag had been purchased, and the city ordinance guidelines for a dangerous dog has been met shall be completed.

**Or**

If the reviewing officer/supervisor recommends a "Vicious Declaration" and receives the same from the Assistant Chief of Administration, the reviewing officer/supervisor will confirm with McLean County Animal Control that the owner of the dog did in fact purchase the "vicious dog tag" and have complied with the city ordinance guidelines. A supplemental report confirming the

declaration, the dog tag had been purchased, and the city ordinance guidelines for a vicious dog has been met shall be completed.

**Or**

If the reviewing officer/supervisor recommends a "Subject to Euthanasia Declaration" and receives the same from the Assistant Chief of Administration, the reviewing officer/supervisor will follow the city's ordinances and complete a supplemental report of the outcome.

If there is an appeal made by the dog owner that has been declared at any point during this process, it will be the duty of the reviewing officer/supervisor to work with the City Attorney and complete a supplemental report of what the outcome of the case is and follow up with any requirements the dog owner may have to complete.