

BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TRAPPED SKUNK ELIMINATION

Reviewed by: Lt. Timothy Stanesa	Effective Date: November 10, 2008
Authorized by: Asst. Chief Clay Wheeler	Revision Date: July 29, 2019

PURPOSE

The Bloomington Police Department has the responsibility to respond and assist McLean County Animal Control in the elimination of trapped skunks. This SOP is provided for guidance in this process. We are authorized to do this under Title 17 Illinois Administrative Code 525.30 (see attached).

GENERAL INFORMATION

In the Midwest, the striped skunk will primarily be encountered. Most skunks are house cat-sized and have a distinctive black and white striped pattern that makes them easily identifiable. The animal has short stocky legs and large feet that possess large claws.

Skunks are a primary carrier of rabies. It is this issue that leads to our need to eliminate trapped skunks. Use caution around aggressive animals that show no fear around humans, as this could be an indication of an animal that is infected with the rabies virus. Symptoms of rabies can also include daytime movement, as skunks are primarily nocturnal.

The skunk can spray its oily liquid musk approximately 10 feet (3 meters) with accuracy. The musk can cause the eyes to burn and temporary blindness for 15 minutes or longer. If contaminated rinse the eyes with water.

SKUNK SPRAY WARNING

Before discharging its musk, the skunk will warn the pending victim. They will generally stomp the ground with their feet, then raise their tail. If the threat to the skunk does not retreat, the animal will look, aim and spray. Be aware of these signals when assisting animal control.

SHOOTING A SKUNK

If assigned to shoot a skunk, it is important that the officer ensure that any fired rounds will be directed into the ground. If this is not possible, the trap shall be moved so that the shot can be taken in a safe manner.

It is preferred that an officer, trained and qualified with the Department's Ruger 1022 rifle, dispatch the skunk. If no such qualified officer is available then the assigned officer may utilize his departmental pistol. All skunk shootings must be approved over the radio with an on-duty supervisor.

There is no sure way to shoot a skunk and guarantee no musk is released. Since skunks often release their musk when shot, avoid shooting them in areas where their odor may be a problem. If rabies testing is not needed, aim for the brain, slightly above and behind the ear. Otherwise, aim for the heart-lung area.

After dispatching a skunk, a letter to the Police Administration must be completed, documenting the discharge of a weapon.

ANIMAL REMOVAL

All dispatched skunks will be turned over to McLean County Animal Control for disposal.

Title 17 ILL. ADM. CODE CH. I, SEC. 525.30

i) All fur-bearing mammals [520 ILCS 5/1.2 g] and game mammals [520 ILCS 5/1.2h] that are not endangered or threatened (17 Ill. Adm. Code 1010) and are taken under authority of this Part must be released alive or euthanized except that:

- 1) Striped skunks must be euthanized; and
- 2) Raccoons must be euthanized or released on the same property and within 100 yards of where they were captured, or surrendered to a licensed veterinarian who is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for euthanasia or treatment and release. Release may only be after an observation period of at least 45 days. During observation, raccoons may be housed at any properly licensed rehabilitator. Violation is a petty offense (see 520 ILCS 5/2.37).

All other Protected Species must be released alive or surrendered to a licensed rehabilitator. Violation is a Class B misdemeanor (see 520 ILCS 5/2.33).

j) Methods of euthanizing animals must be approved by the Department and include such methods as:

- 1) Captive bolt, gunshot, drowning, and stunning (mechanical only);
- 2) Inhalants, including halothane, isoflurane, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide; and
- 3) Non-inhalants including Secobarbital/dibucaine.

k) All dead animals must be transferred to a licensed renderer or disposed of in accordance with the Illinois Dead Animal Disposal Act [225 ILCS 610]. Violation is a Class C misdemeanor (see 225 ILCS 610/19).