

# Animal Control Frequently Asked Questions

\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS, ALL BUSINESS AT THE SHELTER IS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE\*\*\* STAFF IS AT THE SHELTER DURING THE LISTED HOURS AND CAN BE REACHED BY LEAVING A MESSAGE AT (770)307-3012.\*\*\*

## Does Animal Control have services 24 hours a day?

An on-call officer is available through 911 for response to the following emergencies on weekends, evenings, and holidays. The Barrow County Animal Control provides assistance with many emergency situations including:

- **Aggressive Animals:** The on-call officer may respond to complaints of highly aggressive or vicious animals creating a public safety threat which have been verified by on-duty law enforcement personnel.
- **Animal Bites:** The on-call officer may respond to bite cases in which the bite from a dog, cat or wildlife rabies vector (raccoon, skunk, fox, etc.) has broken the skin of a human victim. The on-call officer may respond to bite cases in which the bite from a wildlife rabies vector has broken the skin of a pet dog or cat. If the biting animal is no longer running at large, the on-call officer may take the bite report over the phone and enforce the quarantine the following business day.
- **Severe Animal Cruelty Situations:** The on-call officer may respond to backup requested by Law Enforcement for severe animal cruelty situations which cannot wait until 8 a.m. the following business day.
- **Severely sick or injured domestic animals and/or wildlife** that cannot wait until 8 a.m. the following business day. The on-call officer will not assist with owned animals and owners must contact an emergency veterinarian.

## How do I file a complaint about loose animals?

You can call (770)307-3012 and request an Animal Control Officer be dispatched to handle the complaint.

## What do I need to do if I am bitten by an animal or my pet has been bitten by an animal?

Animal Control responds to complaints in which a rabies vector (i.e., dog, cat, fox, raccoon, skunk, etc.) has bitten and broken the skin. Animals are quarantined or euthanized and tested according to department policy and the GA Rabies Guidelines. Persons bitten by a dog, cat or rabies vector wildlife should call animal control or 911 to report the bite.

Animal Control conducts dangerous/vicious dog investigations under the Georgia Responsible Dog Ownership Law. Owners of dangerous dogs are required to abide by the guidelines contained therein which include annual registration, properly enclosing the dog and posting the property with signs.

## **What constitutes a “barking dog”?**

Barrow County Ordinances prohibits the disturbance of the peace by barking animals. A violation shall be known as any animal to cause a disturbance by barking, howling, or other noisemaking for either (a) continuously for a period of at least 30 minutes; or (b) intermittently for a period of at least one (1) hour. Officers may issue warnings and citations to owners of alleged nuisance animals. Barking dog complaints are not handled after-hours or on weekends and holidays.

Caller must provide either two written statements from two different residences who shall have to identify the address of the dog owner, a description of the dog, date and time of the offense or one witness statement and some form of audio and or video recording of the offense.

## **What do I need to do if I suspect an animal is being abused or neglected?**

Animal Control investigates allegations of animal neglect and cruelty. The goal of the department is to change neglectful owners' behavior through education, warning and, in some cases, citation. In order to establish probable cause, callers must provide their information and the exact address of the offense.

Since Animal Control is not fully equipped to conduct thorough equine cruelty investigations, and does not possess an impound facility, equine cruelty investigations are limited. Upon receiving a complaint, officers may be dispatched to assess the validity of the complaint, and refer valid complaints to the GA Department of Agriculture Equine Unit. Callers may also contact the GDA Equine Unit directly at 404-656-3713.

## **Can I tether my dog outside?**

No, the Barrow County Board of Commissioners passed a new ordinance in October 2020 that banned **unattended** tethering. Owners have a grace period until April 2021 to be in compliance with the new ordinance.

## **Does Animal Control pick up dead animals?**

Disposal of dead animals on private property is the responsibility of the property owner. Citizens may call Animal Control for the removal of any dead animal located on a county maintained road. Citizens need to contact City of Winder for any dead animals located within the city limits of Winder and GA D.O.T for any dead animals located on state highways.

Barrow County Roads and Bridges Department, and public works departments of City of Winder may remove large animals from highways, roadways and right-of-ways.

- GA D.O.T (770)532-5500
- City of Winder (770)868-0863
- Roads and Bridges (770)-307-3075

## **Does Animal Control loan out traps?**

Animal Control possesses a limited number of traps for use in **apprehending dogs which are unable to be caught by hand, or run at large outside of regular patrol hours or cats involved in a bite incident.** It is illegal to trap wildlife in Georgia without the proper permits from the GA Department of Natural Resources and traps will not be loaned to citizens for the purpose of trapping wildlife. Citizens may trap and surrender feral cats to Animal Control Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10:00am to 5:00pm and Wednesday from 1:00pm-5:00pm. Please call to set up an appointment before you arrive.

## **What do I need to do about stray cats at my house?**

Due to the large numbers of free roaming cats, animal control responds to cats on a complaint only basis. Warnings and citations may be issued to owners of free-roaming cats that are not spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, and/or causes property damage. For a citation, complainants may be required to provide a written statement detailing the violations and a description of the animal, the address of the cat owner and be willing to appear in court. Citizens with stray cats and kittens may bring the cats to the shelter.

Citizens may trap and surrender feral cats to Animal Control Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10:00am to 5:00pm and Wednesday from 1:00pm-5:00pm.

Animal Control makes every effort to locate barn homes/working homes for unwanted feral cats. However due to the overwhelming number of feral cats, any feral cats that cannot be placed in a working home/barn home will be spayed/neutered, ear-tipped, and vaccinated for rabies and re-released back to the area where the animal was trapped.

## **What do I need to do about keeping feral cats off my property?**

Cover your trash cans tightly or secure lids with bungee cords.

If cats are climbing and walking all over cars, a car cover can be purchased to prevent paw prints.

To keep cats away from gardens, flower beds, or other specific areas of property, scatter fragrant items that don't appeal to a cat's sense of smell, like fresh orange or lemon peels, organic citrus-scented sprays, coffee grounds, vinegar, pipe tobacco, or oil of lavender, lemongrass, citronella, or eucalyptus.

Add the herb rue to gardens to keep cats out, or sprinkle dried rue over gardens or landscaping.

Use plastic carpet runners, spiked-side up and covered lightly in soil, in gardens, flower beds, and other landscaping.

Set chicken wire firmly into the dirt with sharp edges rolled under.

Arrange branches in lattice-type patterns or use actual lattice fencing material over soil, this discourages digging.

Embed wooden chopsticks, pine cones, or sticks with dull points deep into the soil with the tops exposed eight inches apart.

Pick up some Cat Scat™ plastic mats to press into the soil. The mats have flexible plastic spikes that are harmless to cats and other animals, but also discourage digging.

Cover exposed ground in flower beds with large (and attractive) river rocks to keep cats from digging.

Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion-activated water sprinkler like CatStop™ or ScareCrow™.

Physically block or seal locations that cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice. Double-check that no cats or kittens will be trapped inside.

## **Does Animal Control remove wildlife?**

Animal Control's primary function is the control of stray dogs and cats and does not regularly respond to nuisance wildlife requests. Officers generally respond only to wildlife bites to a person or pet, sick and/or injured wildlife, and wildlife within the living area of a residence. Animal Control does not respond to complaints of wildlife or snakes in the:

- Attic
- Chimney
- Crawl space
- Garage
- Out-Buildings
- Yard

Orphaned or injured wildlife should be reported to the GA Department of Natural Resources. Injured deer should be reported to 911 for a law enforcement officer or DNR game warden to dispose of the animal as they see fit. For nuisance wildlife, citizens can call a private wildlife relocater to have the animals removed.

## **What do I do if my animal is missing?**

The best way to locate your missing animal is to come to the Animal Shelter during the shelter's business hours to look for your pet. The shelter is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m, Wednesday 1:00 p.m to 5:00p.m and Saturday from 10:00a.m to 2:00p.m, closed on Sunday and holidays.

When you come to the shelter, bring any pictures of the pet and any vet records. This will help Animal Control employees in the identification of your pet if found in the shelter. If the pet is not found in the shelter, the employees will assist you in filling out a lost report and provide assistance on how to continue your search for your lost pet.

The best way to ensure the safe return of your lost pet is for the pet to wear a collar with an I.D. tag and/or rabies tag or to be microchipped. If the animal can be identified in the field by the Animal Control Officer, it is likely that the pet will be returned to the owner and not taken to the Animal Control Shelter when at all possible. When the animal is turned in to the Animal Control shelter, personnel will also attempt to contact the owner with the information provided on the tag or chip as soon as possible.

Please remember animals will sometimes lose their tags or have them removed by someone.

Even if your animal leaves home wearing a collar and tags, there is always a chance the collar may not be on the animal when it is picked up. Well-meaning citizens may take the collar off to get a better look at the tag, and the animal may escape before they can put the collar back on. Do not rely on the tag to be on the animal when it arrives at the Animal Control Shelter.

**Pawboost.com:** This website is used to generate missing or found posters. These posters will be sent to all subscribers in the area.

**Facebook:** There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party website run by citizens. The Facebook page is called Lost and Found Pets of Barrow County. This page can be useful for many citizens to helping reunite lost pets.

## **What do I have to do to reclaim my animal from Animal Control?**

The owner must go to the Animal Control Shelter during regular business hours to reclaim the pet. You must bring an I.D. (driver's license or Georgia I.D.) and proof of ownership, such as vet records.

## **Where do I go to pay a fine for an animal violation?**

Some violations are payable prior to the court date. Contact Barrow County Magistrate Court to see if the citation you have can be paid prior to the court date.

## **How long do you hold animals?**

Strays are held 72 hours. After that, they are deemed to be property of Barrow County. The animals are then held for an indefinite period of time. If space is available and the animal is healthy and not aggressive.

Animals turned into the shelter by their owner will remain as long as we have space and the animal remains healthy and non-aggressive. Because space must be available for strays who are brought to the shelter, some animals are unfortunately pulled to provide space even if healthy and non-aggressive.

## **Can I bring my animal to Barrow County Animal Control?**

Yes, but we would love to provide you with other options before you resort to bringing your animal to us. Sometimes the issue that is causing you to contemplate getting rid of your pet can be resolved with additional information about your particular animal or assistance from a rescue group. There is a fee for any animal being owner surrendered to the shelter. We are a public intake not a no-kill shelter. Animals turned into the shelter by their owner will remain as long as we have space and the animal remains healthy and non-aggressive. Because space must be available for strays who are brought to the shelter, some animals are unfortunately pulled to

provide space even if healthy and non-aggressive.

## **Is Barrow County Animal Control a no-kill shelter?**

The short answer is no. Barrow County Animal Control is a public intake shelter. The staff tries very hard to find placement for all adoptable animals, however it is always a risk of euthanasia. Barrow County Animal Control works with adopters and rescues to find placement for surrendered and stray animals. We also work very diligently to locate owners for animals that have been impounded as strays.

## **What do I need to do to adopt a pet?**

The shelter is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00pm, Wednesday 1:00 pm to 5:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm, closed on Sunday and holidays. You can view the animals during these times. There is a short application to fill out and the pet can go home with you once the animal has been spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, and microchipped.

## **I found a white card on my door; what does it mean?**

This card is used to advise you that a complaint has been issued against your residence and you are being warned about a possible violation of a certain area of the Animal Control Ordinance. In some cases we leave this card to notify you if we have been able to rectify your issue or give you notice that we may need to contact you for other reasons. You can contact Animal Control to find out more details about the complaint. Warnings do not have to be issued before a citation is given, but when possible we like to educate citizens of a violation and provide resources and ways to correct the violation before further court action is taken.