

## CORNERSTONE

MANAGEMENT STUDIES • PERFORMANCE AUDITS • ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT • TRAINING

*March 2008***Animal Control Checklist**

Before a pilot flies an airplane, he/she performs a preflight inspection following a checklist. The checklist is used to make sure nothing important is overlooked. "Mixture rich, check; prop at high speed, check; etc."

In our performance auditing of animal control programs, Citygate Associates, LLC has discovered that many of these programs would benefit from similar attention to detail if they are to operate at a "best practices" level. Presented below is a checklist that you may find helpful in taking a look at your animal control program to see if it is "flight worthy."

**Community Expectations**

The public expects animal control organizations to be service oriented with a rapid and responsive field staff, informed and helpful customer care representatives, and a high standard of care for sheltered animals. In addition, the public frequently expects assistance with wildlife issues, advice on a broad variety of animal matters, resolution of complex investigations, including animal neglect and animal noise complaints, and intervention and prosecution of animal cruelty.

**Is your animal control program meeting community expectations?**

**Legal Mandates**

Animal control programs operate under many state statutes. These laws often dictate requirements for rabies quarantine, rabies vaccination clinics, care of sheltered animals, length of impound, record keeping, spay/neuter of shelter animals before adoption, method of euthanasia, euthanasia training requirements, veterinary care of shelter animals, release of animals to rescue groups, animal licensing, animal cruelty investigations, seizure of animals, hearing procedures, and inspection of circuses and pet stores, etc.

**Is your animal control program complying with all applicable legal mandates?**

**Administration**

A best practices animal control program should have its own mission statement, applicable goals and obtainable objectives, current job descriptions, competitive salaries and benefits, comprehensive animal control-related computer software, an informative and user-friendly web site, and publications

that address animal problems and issues. A comprehensive training program that addresses all aspects of the program and includes vehicle operation, firearms usage, safe animal handling, lifting techniques, accident avoidance, should be in place.

The animal control program should encompass effective public relations, public education, effective cost recovery, an appropriate performance appraisal system, adequate facilities, effective media relations, an up-to-date animal control ordinance and a comprehensive policies and procedures manual. Those managing the animal control program should be thoroughly grounded in animal control matters, supervision, labor relations, human resource management, budgeting, current legislative issues and community needs and expectations. A best practices animal control program will work with animal-related non-profit groups and local veterinarians to maximize the number of animals that are spayed/neutered in the community.

## Is your animal control program an example of best administrative practices?

### Field Service

A best practices animal control field service program is staffed with an appropriate number of dedicated, highly trained animal control officers who must enforce state laws and local ordinances. They must be able to safely and effectively restrain, capture, rescue and transport a wide variety of animals. They must be able to deal effectively, assertively and compassionately with the full spectrum of the community. They must safely operate a public agency vehicle in all weather conditions day and night.

In many jurisdictions, animal control officers must be able to safely utilize firearms to euthanize certain types of animals. They must exercise good judgment and common sense and recognize that in addition to enforcing various laws, they must also educate the public relative to proper animal care, welfare and restraint.

Animal control vehicles should be well maintained and animal enclosures should be appropriately heated and cooled. Radio equipment should be up-to-date and in good repair. Animal control officers should be equipped with the tools and implements needed to perform their tasks and this equipment should be replaced when needed.

## Is your animal control field service program an example of best practices?

### Shelter Service

A best practices sheltering program houses animals in a disease

free environment that minimizes animal, employee and public stress by the reduction of animal noise and odor. The shelter should be cleaned regularly with appropriate disinfecting agents utilizing protocols similar to those promulgated by the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, Shelter Medicine Program.

Animal euthanasia should be reduced to the greatest extent possible through the utilization of in-house and outreach adoption, utilization of web resources, foster care, and partnerships with non-profit animal welfare organizations and rescue groups. Adequate shelter space should exist to allow the holding of adoptable animals beyond legal mandated minimum holding periods.

Animals should be tested relative to behavior before being placed in a new home. The sheltering program should provide adequate veterinary care and animals should be provided with vaccinations and be spayed/neutered before being placed in a new home. The shelter should be viewed positively by the community. Plans should be in place to remodel or replace aging facilities.

## Is your animal control shelter service program an example of best practices?

If you are wondering whether Citygate Associates can help you in this area, please call Mike Ross at (707) 688-1005 or David DeRoos at (916) 458-5100 x101. If we can be of assistance to you, we would like to help.

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Citygate Associates, LLC is a management consulting firm providing services to local and state governments across the Western United States. Headquartered in Folsom, CA, Citygate specializes in:

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