**Job Description**

**ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER**

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**ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER**

**Statement of Duties:**The Animal Control Officer is responsible for enforcement of State and local by-laws, ordinances and/or regulations related to domesticated animals for the Town of Halifax including the impounding, feeding and disposing of animals as needed to maintain public health safety and welfare.  Employee is required to perform all similar or related duties.

**Supervision Required:**Under the general direction of the Police Chief, the employee plans, prioritizes, and carries out the regular work in accordance with standard practices and previous training.  The employee interprets instructions and/or adapts methods to resolve particular problems.  Instructions for new assignments usually consist of statements of desired objectives, deadlines, and priorities.  Technical and policy problems or changes in procedures are discussed with supervisor.  Work is generally reviewed only for technical adequacy, appropriateness of actions or decisions, and conformance with policy, or other requirements.

**Supervisory Responsibility**: The employee, as a regular part of the job, is not required to supervise any department employees.

**Confidentiality**:  In accordance with the State Public Records Law, the employee has regular access to confidential information of the department such as department records, criminal investigations and lawsuits.

**Judgment:**  Work requires the employee to examine, analyze, and evaluate facts and circumstances surrounding individual problems, situations or transactions, and determining actions to be taken within the limits of standard or accepted operating practices and state laws.   Guidelines include a large body of policies, practices, and precedents which may be conflicting, at times.  Independent judgment is used to analyze or evaluate specific situations to determine appropriate actions.

**Complexity:**  The work consists of a variety of duties which generally follow standardized practices, procedures, regulations or guidelines.  The sequence of work and/or the procedures followed vary according to the nature of the transaction and/or the information involved, or sought, in a particular situation.

**Work Environment:**  Work requires agility and physical strength, such as moving in and about rough terrain, or standing, running, or walking for significant periods of the work period.  Employee is exposed to extreme hot, cold or adverse weather, outdoor work, confined spaces and high places, equipment and machinery, traffic, biohazards, emotional stress, and risk of personal injury. The employee is required to work beyond normal business hours in response to natural or man-made emergencies on a 24/7, 365 days per year basis.

**Occupational Risk:**  Duties regularly present potential risk of injuries from exposure to animals or persons that could result in severe personal injury, death and significant loss of time from work.  Examples of personal injury include violence from the dog owner or persons in the home, severe animal bites or scratches, muscular strains from restraining animals, falling from heights of more than three feet and illness from exposure to communicable diseases respiratory damage and adverse weather conditions.  Special safety precautions, training, or protective clothing and equipment, such as bite gloves, control sticks, protective masks, cages, nets, snares microchip gowns, coats, gloves, glasses, hats boots may be required

**Nature and Purpose of Relationships:**  Relationships are constant with co-workers, the public and with groups and/or individuals who have conflicting opinions or objectives, diverse points of view or differences where skillful negotiating and achieving compromise is required to secure support, concurrence and acceptance or compliance; OR one-on-one relationships with a person who may be under severe stress, under the influence of drugs or alcohol where gaining a high degree of persuasion may be required to obtain the desired effect.  The employee may represent to the public the animal control function of the Town on matters of procedures or policy where perceptiveness is required to analyze circumstances in order to act appropriately.

**Accountability:**  Consequences of errors, missed deadlines or poor judgment may include death of a person or animal, danger to the public health and safety, time loss, adverse public relations, jeopardize programs, monetary loss, and legal repercussions.

**Essential Functions:**

1. Patrols the roads and ways of the Town of Halifax to ensure the safety and care of wild and domestic animals. Constantly interacts with citizens in their homes, places of business or on their property.  Returns stray dogs to their owners (if known) or impounds until the owner claims the dog.  Issues appropriate citations and fines for violations of state and local laws or regulations related to the care and control of animals.  Prepares and files complaints with the District court for unpaid citations. Performs euthanasia on suffering animals and transports injured, orphaned and stray animals to appropriate facilities.

1. Investigates complaints from the public regarding reports of cruelty, neglect, abandonment, dog bite incidents and dangerous or aggressive dogs, loose dogs, cruelty or neglect of animals, nuisance or barking dogs; responds to each complaint according to the merit of the situation. Reports basic zoonotic disease and illness to appropriate agencies.

1. Responds to injured domestic animal reports, transporting the animal to the appropriate veterinary facility and locating the owner of the injured animal when possible.  Responds when needed to the report of injured wildlife and transports sick or injured wildlife when needed to an appropriate wildlife facility.

1. Responsible for supplies, maintenance and upkeep of the Town’s dog kennel and surrounding outside kennel area.  Responsible for all equipment: Control Stick, bite gloves, snappy snare, traps, transfer cages, carriers, nets, microchip scanner, digital thermometer, stretcher are in good working order. Responsible for the Animal Control vehicle general maintenance and upkeep.

1. Responds to reports of domestic or wild animals in distress/trapped in unusual places and rescues the animal, returning the animal to the owner, releasing back to the wild, or transporting the animal for further care.

1. Assists other agencies (Police, Fire and Rescue) in rescuing, removing, controlling animals involved in emergency situations such as human medical emergencies, deceased owners, fires, accidents, and warrant searches.
2. Assists Board of Health and Animal Inspector in the investigation of potential rabies exposure in domesticated animals who have come in contact with infected wildlife. Capture, if possible, the potential carrier and assist in transporting the animal for testing if required or needed.

1. Prepares and presents dangerous or nuisance dog hearings for the Board of Selectmen, recommending solutions and sanctions for violations.  Monitors and enforces the Selectmen’s orders.

1. Enforces the state and local dog licensing law, contacting unlicensed dog owners and issuing fines when appropriate.

1. Educates the public on responsible pet ownership and the laws regarding animals in Halifax; educates children and parents about animal safety.

1. Maintains and updates records, database, and files of information for the department and the Regional Old Colony Communications Center (ROCCC).
2. Submit requests to Police Chief for expenditures approval or disapproval.
3. Submit monthly bills to the Police Administrative Assistant for payment and to maintain account balances as related to fiscal budget.
4. Required to attend training seminars or workshops to stay abreast of changes in local, state and/or federal laws or operating practices pertaining to animal control

**Recommended Minimum Qualifications**

**Education and Experience:**High School diploma, Military, Law Enforcement experience, or  an apprentice level of trade knowledge; a minimum of one to three (1-3) years of experience in animal care and control;or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

**Special Requirements:**Valid Class D Motor Vehicle Driver’s License.  Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts (ACOAM) and Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) certifications within six (6) months of appointment is required.  As a condition of employment, the employee must complete a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) examination and a pre-employment physical examination.

**Knowledge, Abilities and Skills**

**Knowledge:**  Working knowledge of state laws and local ordinances pertaining to animal control, animal husbandry practices and procedures, animal first aid, and geographical layout of the Town. Working knowledge of the practices and procedures pertaining to the capture and handling of wildlife in a safe and humane manner. General knowledge of animal behavior. Working knowledge of office software (i.e. word processing, spread sheet applications) and the Internet in support of department operations.

**Abilities:**  Ability to interact effectively and appropriately with the public and other personnel, create accurate and detailed reports of findings, deal with irate citizens and maintain confidential information.  Ability to handle challenging and stressful situations in a positive and professional manner. Ability to use good judgment and to solve problems and establish priorities.  Ability to interact with disgruntled members of the public.  Ability to use department tools and equipment in order to restrain and capture domestic and wild animals in a safe and humane manner. The employee must maintain physical condition to carry out job duties in a safe and efficient manner.

**Skills:** Proficient skill in the care and control of wild and domestic animals, making observations and recording information. Proficient written and oral communication skills, dealing with difficult people.  Proficient skill in using equipment and tools required to restrain and/or capture wild and domestic animals in a safe and humane manner.  Basic hardware and software skills.

**Physical and Mental Requirements**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the position’s essential functions.

**Physical Skills:**Work requires agility and physical strength to move in or about construction sites or over rough terrain; or standing or walking most of the work period.  Work may require the frequent lifting heavy animals and department equipment and carrying them.  The employee is required to stretch and use finger dexterity in order to push, pull or lift department equipment and captured animals.  The work will often require extended physical effort over a significant portion of the workday.

**Motor Skills:**Duties involve assignments requiring application of hand and eye coordination with finger dexterity and motor coordination to operate a motor vehicle, department equipment, using a personal computer, or climbing a ladder.

**Visual/Auditory Skills:**The employee is required to constantly read documents, personal computer screens and written reports for general understanding and routinely for analytical purposes.  The employee must have the auditory ability to listen and comprehend. The employee is regularly required to determine color differences.

*This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and is subject to change by the employer, as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.*