



Waukesha County

Humane Officer's Corner

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Cases We See...and What We Learn

Waukesha County Humane Officers respond to a wide variety of calls. We follow up on nearly 600 bite cases per year, collect West Nile Virus bird and mosquito samples for national research, give educational presentations to groups and respond to hundreds of animal cruelty and neglect calls. Humane shelters take in the animals from these abuse cases. We learned long ago that shelters enhance our ability to make an immediate, positive difference for these animals.

Look no further than the almost 200 cats seized from Ottawa in 2005. Caring for one cat is a sizable responsibility; the feeding, litter box cleaning, grooming and health care. To be able, on extremely short notice, to take in close to 200 cats, and provide them with exemplary care is really extraordinary. And the amazing part is, the animal shelters in Waukesha County are ready to provide these services everyday, for every animal in need.

Waukesha County Humane Officers investigate situations that often require educating animal owners. Ever think about how we learn of the animal situations needing investigation? Almost always the calls come from people like you, people who enjoy animals, and do their part to speak up for ones in unhealthy situations. (You can remain anonymous). Most of the county's animal neglect results from pet owners underestimating the expense and time required to maintain an animal or simply losing interest in caring for the animal. **State and local laws dictate that all domestic animals must be provided with adequate food, shelter, water, and appropriate medical care to maintain the animals' health.** When the neglect cases are addressed, the owners usually improve conditions to acceptable levels, and maintain them there. Sometimes, the owner cannot or will not improve conditions for the animal, and instead choose to get rid of the animal. A very few do nothing, and legal action must then be taken to protect the animals.

What has been learned from animal neglect situations is that education is a very powerful & far-reaching tool. Educating owners of animals during crises can help turn bad situations around. More importantly, ongoing education to the general public can prevent problems from developing. Waukesha County Humane Officers offer free humane education presentations to groups: call to learn more!

Waukesha County Humane Officers stress that those desiring a pet research that animal carefully. Shelter staffs counsel potential adopters on this topic all the time. Be realistic in assessing your time for care, outlay of money and especially for training of a new pet. We rarely see well-trained, well-mannered pets being neglected or abused.

From my “Humane Corner”, I want to **Thank** those of you who are willing to report legitimate animal concerns. We investigate all complaints, and work to improve conditions for animals in Waukesha County.