

Dog Complaints

6.07.01 PURPOSE

This order establishes policies regarding the safe and appropriate response to emergency and non-emergency dog-related situations.

6.07.02 DEFINITIONS

- A. Biting Dog** – “Any dog that bites any person or other animal in the City and County of San Francisco, provided, however, that the person or animal bitten was not at the time either provoking or teasing the dog without cause” ([SF Health Code §41.5.1](#)).
- B. Unleashed Dog** – “It shall be unlawful for the owner or guardian of any animal...to permit said animal to run at large [not under restraint by a leash, rope, or chain of not more than eight feet] within the City and County...” ([SF Health Code §41.12\(a\)](#)).
- C. Vicious Dog** – “...any dog that when unprovoked inflicts bites or attacks a human being or domestic animal either on public or private property, or in a vicious or terrorizing manner, approaches any person in apparent attitude of attack upon the streets, sidewalks, or any public grounds or places; or any dog with a known propensity, tendency or disposition to attack unprovoked, to cause injury or to otherwise endanger the safety of human beings or domestic animals; or any dog which engages in, or is found to have been trained to engage in exhibitions of dog fighting; or any dog at large found to attack, menace, chase, display threatening or aggressive behavior or otherwise threaten or endanger the safety of any domestic animal or person” ([SF Health Code §42\(a\)\(1-4\)](#)).

6.07.03 POLICY

The San Francisco Police Department shall effectively and efficiently handle various types of dog complaints, including the investigation and processing of complaints, while ensuring the rights of individuals as defined in the United State Constitution, Federal, State, and local laws are followed.

6.07.04 PROCEDURE

- A. Unleashed Dog** – Members should cite or admonish and educate the owner or guardian of the dog regarding San Francisco leash laws ([SF Health Code §41.12\(a\)](#)).
- B. Barking Dog** – the Department does not respond to calls about barking dogs, unless assistance is requested by Animal Care and Control (ACC). Members of the public may report a barking dog via the 311 Customer Service Center.

C. Biting Dog- When a person has been bitten by a dog, follow these procedures:

1. Arrange for medical treatment. If medical treatment is refused, the member shall complete the Animal Bite Report form (SFPD Form 573).
 - a. In the event of a severe injury or death, members will immediately contact their direct supervisor, the Department Operations Center, and the Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit (VDDU) Officer.
2. Citation/Arrest – Follow DGO 5.04, *Arrest by Private Persons* and DGO 5.06, *Citation Release* as appropriate.
3. Quarantine – Inform the owner that the dog must be quarantined for 10 days, and they must notify ACC if the dog becomes sick, dies, or gets lost.
 - a. If the owner cannot quarantine their dog for any reason, contact ACC or VDDU.
4. Evidence – Take photographs of the injuries and book as evidence.
 - a. Where possible, members should take photos of the dog's owner and look for and obtain surveillance video of the incident.
5. Notify ACC – Members shall contact ACC Dispatch at the scene of all incidents regardless of response.
6. Complete Forms
 - a. Email SFPD Form 573 to ACC (ACCDISPATCH@sfgov.org), if completed by member.
 - b. Complete incident report and note proof of ACC notification.
 - i. Assign and email incident report to VDDU (SFPDdangerousdogs@sfgov.org), regardless of whether there was a puncture wound.

D. Vicious and Dangerous Dog – In addition to the steps for Biting Dog, members will:

1. Immediately impound dog, if necessary, and stay on scene until ACC arrives.
2. Notify VDDU about the incident.
3. Follow the procedure for After-Hours Response and Notification as necessary.

E. After-Hours Response and Notification

1. Possession of Dog
 - a. If the dog can be controlled and safely transported, members shall:
 - i. Take possession of the dog. ACC will retrieve the dog when they have coverage, or members may transport the dog to ACC during their regular business hours (0600-0000 HRS).
 - ii. Transport the dog to SAGE Veterinary Center located at 600 Alabama St. (415) 566-0540.

- b. If the dog cannot be safely transported, attempt to confine the dog in a space where it can do no further harm to the public and alert ACC during regular work hours.

2. Notification

- a. ACC – Leave a message with ACC Dispatch.
- b. VDDU – Members may email VDDU about the incident or call them during regular work hours.

F. Vicious and Dangerous Dog Hearing

1. A hearing may be requested by the victim, owner, SFPD member, Animal Control Officer, or Department of Public Health (DPH) representative by submitting SFPD Form 584 to VDDU ([SF Health Code §42.3](#)).
2. The Hearing Officer, a designated representative of DPH, or the Police Department, will determine if the dog is deemed vicious and dangerous, which could result in restrictions upon the dog and owner.
3. If a member receives a Notice of Hearing via email, the member shall attend and present their observations of the incident to the Hearing Officer.

G. Hearing Order Violation(s)

1. When a member is aware of verified vicious and dangerous dog restrictions, the member shall follow and enforce the terms of the Hearing Order.
2. If a member observes that a vicious dog violates its restrictions, the member shall:
 - a. Cite the owner ([SF Health Code §42.4](#)), and
 - b. Notify VDDU that the dog is in violation. VDDU will notify ACC and request them to seize the dog to protect public safety.

H. Other Complaints – All other dog-related incident reports (e.g. stray dogs, dog or animal fighting, abandonment, animal cruelty, animal poisoning, animal without proper care or attention) should be emailed, but not assigned, to VDDU.

1. Members should direct the public to ACC for all complaints or incidents that do not require a police report.

I. Case Management – VDDU, under the supervision of the Officer in Charge, shall be responsible for the management and oversight of records. VDDU is responsible for ensuring data is entered into the Case File Tracking System and that case assignment criteria are consistent with Department policy.

J. VDDU will continuously communicate and collaborate with Station Platoon Commanders and Commanding Officers.