

Office of the Sheriff  
Somerset County, Maryland

General Order: 01-14-12

Effective Date: September 1, 2014

Revised Date: January 1, 2014

Chapter 20

Section 1

Rabies Control and Animal Bites

1. Policy

- A. The Somerset County Sheriff's Office recognizes the need for guidance in investigating incidents of reported animal bites. Therefore, it is the policy of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office that Deputies shall adhere to the following guidelines in an effort to control the spread of rabies and to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Somerset County.
- B. The Maryland State Department of Health (MD Code Ann. Health Gen.318-312-320) is the lead investigative agency in all reported and confirmed rabies cases.
- C. The "General Health Act, Section 18-316", requires individuals to immediately report to police, if they have knowledge of the following:
  - 1) A dog, cat, or other animal that was bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed an individual to a possible rabies infection or;
  - 2) Suspects that an animal has rabies.

## 2. Definitions

- A. **Passive Form** – the affected animal is lethargic, may appear friendly or tame, and seem oblivious to its surroundings.
- B. **Aggressive Form** – hyperactive, may attack without provocation.
- C. **Paralytic Form** – generally an advanced stage in which the animal exhibits complete or partial paralysis of hindquarters, difficulty in breathing and swallowing.

## 3. Rabies

- A. An animal may exhibit one or all of the above symptoms. Deputies should be aware that any uncharacteristic actions exhibited by wild or domestic animals may indicate a rabies infection.
- B. Deputies may be required to investigate complaints or assist citizens with incidents involving potentially rabid animals. The following procedures may be used as a guide to assist the Deputy.
  - 1) Upon receiving a report regarding a possible rabid animal, the Deputy or dispatcher for Somerset County Emergency Services 911 should advise the complainant to:
    - i. Stay indoors and away from the animal.
    - ii. Keep pets indoors or secured in a pen if possible.
  - 2) Ask the complainant:
    - i. Describe the type of animal
    - ii. Describe the behavior the animal is exhibiting
    - iii. Where the animal is currently located
- C. Contact the Somerset County Health Department, 443-523-1700 during regular business hours.
- D. After the end of regular business hours, Health Department personnel should be contacted the Somerset County Emergency Services 911.
- E. Upon arrival, the Deputy should determine what type of contact, if any has occurred. If direct contact has occurred proceed as follows:
  - 1. Notify the Somerset County Health Department on-call agent.
  - 2. Advise the victim who sustained the bite to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
  - 3. The Deputy shall wear rubber/latex gloves before having contact with the affected animal.

4. The Deputy may use his issued firearm to kill the affected animal.
5. Collect carcass using plastic garbage bags and rubber/latex gloves.
6. The Deputy shall wash his/her hands thoroughly with soap and water.
7. Advise the victim sustaining the bite to contact a physician immediately or have ambulance respond to scene.
8. Transport carcass to the Somerset County Health Department.
9. The Deputy shall clean any contaminated equipment with bleach.

F. An incident that involves a non-bite or indirect contact (such occurs when a pet is bitten and then touched) shall be handled in the same fashion.

#### 4. Patrol Response

- A. On receiving a report of an incident under this section, the Deputy will:
  - 1) The Deputy will complete a Somerset County Health Department Animal Bite Form and a SCSO Incident report.
  - 2) The Incident report and Animal Bite Form will be delivered to the Somerset County Health Department the following tour of duty.

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Section 2

Radioactive and Hazardous Materials

1. General

- A. Hazardous materials are in current use by hospitals, research laboratories, industry, etc., and are transported throughout the State of Maryland by truck, railway, aircraft, and waterborne transportation. The following procedures have been prepared for the guidance of members of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office to assist with any incident involving hazardous materials.

2. Definitions

- A. Hazardous Material Incident – Any incident involving any element, compound, or combination thereof, which is flammable, corrosive, detonable, toxic, radioactive, an oxidizer, an etiological agent, or is highly reactive and which, because of handling, storing, processing and packaging may have detrimental effects upon emergency personnel, the public, equipment, and of the environment. Hazardous Materials also include those compounds or chemicals that, although may pose a limited danger to Deputies and are commonly encountered (i.e. gasoline) are classified as hazardous materials.
- B. Off-gassing – The discharge of harmful toxic vapors from hazardous materials in certain forms, such as liquids, that are at the scene or on victims.

### 3. Considerations

- A. Many accidents and other emergencies involve more than one type of law enforcement and require a cooperative emergency response. It is extremely important that all levels of law enforcement be aware of what actions they should take and their roles are during hazardous material emergencies.
- B. Safety is the first concern. Charging into a dangerous area without first identifying the potential risks serves only to transform first responders into victims that must be attended to and further complicates the situation. Deputies and other first responders must consider that dangers to them may come from several different areas including:
  - 1) Direct contact with liquids, droplets, compounds or substances at the scene, on the ground, on equipment, or on the victim's clothing. Although Deputies may avoid obvious spills, they may accidentally come into contact with contaminated areas, objects or people.
  - 2) Off-gassing of toxic vapors from exposed liquids or compounds which may be present at the scene, on objects or on a victim's clothing.
  - 3) Fire, burning materials, or related smoke that may vaporize toxic substances and pose additional threats.
  - 4) Indirect contact with liquids, toxic materials, gasses and materials that emit toxic vapors. This may pose a respiratory threat to Deputies depending on the type of material, and the direction and velocity of wind in the area.
  - 5) Compounds and materials that react to external substances such as water or air and which, through exposure and reactivity with these substances, increases the potential for explosion, fire, or a change in the chemical properties of the material which may cause it to become more dangerous.
- C. In most cases, the greatest threat to Deputies responding to these incidents is the inhalation of toxic materials. The next greatest threat comes from skin exposure. Deputies should keep this in mind when responding to this type of incident, and when appropriate, consider the use of issued personal protective equipment, and in particular, the use of issued respiratory protection.
- D. It must also be considered that a terrorist attack using chemical weapons, toxic industrial materials, or an intentional release or detonation of these materials may initially appear to be a HAZMAT accident. Although the response to a terrorist attack or criminal release may have some similarities to a HAZMAT incident, or initially appear to be a HAZMAT incident, one very important difference is that it is a crime. Deputies should never dismiss or rule out the fact that the release of toxic materials may have been intentional. In these cases, established policies should be followed regarding criminal investigation and preservation of the scene and evidence.

#### 4. General Safety Precautions

- A. **Approach cautiously from upwind.** Resist the urge to rush in. Others cannot be helped until the situation has been fully assessed and all potential risks and dangers are identified.
- B. **Secure the scene.** Without entering the immediate hazard area, isolate the area and assure the safety of people and the environment. Keep people away from the scene and outside the safety/exclusion zone or perimeter. Allow enough room to move and remove your own equipment if necessary.
- C. **Identify the hazards.** Placards, container labels, shipping documents, material safety data sheets, rail car and road trailer identification charts and or knowledgeable persons at the scene are valuable information sources. Evaluate all information and consult with experts and or the Emergency Response Guidebook to reduce immediate risks.
- D. **Asses the situation.** Consider the following.
  - 1) Is there a fire, spill or leak?
  - 2) What are the weather conditions?
  - 3) What is the terrain like?
  - 4) Who or what is at risk?
  - 5) What actions should be taken is evacuation necessary?
  - 6) What resources (human and equipment) are required?
  - 7) What can be done immediately?
- E. **Obtain help.** Notify responsible agencies and call for assistance from qualified persons or experts.
- F. **Decide on site entry.** Any efforts made to rescue persons, protect property or the environment must be weighed against the possibility that you could become another victim and part of the problem.
- G. **Respond.** Respond in an appropriate manner. Establish a command post in a safe area and establish the National Incident Management System Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS. Rescue casualties where possible and evacuate if necessary. Maintain control of the scene. Continually reassess the situation and modify the response accordingly.
- H. **Use caution.** Do not walk into or touch spilled material. Avoid inhalation of fumes, smoke, vapors, even if no toxic vapors are known to be involved. Do not assume the gases or vapors are harmless because they lack smell. Odorless gases or vapors may be harmful or deadly. Use caution when handling or when around empty containers because they may still present hazards until they are cleaned and purged of all residues.

## 5. General Response Guidelines

- A. Although this section is not intended to provide a specific set of instructions for every scenario, it serves as a general guide for the Deputy faced with these types of incidents.
1. Be aware of hazards that exist with the transportation or storage of hazardous materials.
  2. Keep patrol vehicle and all other vehicles at least 1500 feet from leaking tankers, drums, suspected toxic materials. When possible, position your patrol vehicle upwind from any incident. Chemtrek, the issued Emergency Response Guidebook, or trained members of the Fire Service can provide estimated safe/exclusionary distances from the incident.
  3. Keep fires, open flame, lanterns or flares, lighted cigarettes, cigars, and pipes away from the scene.
  4. Move injured persons only if they are located in a hazardous area and the removal does not present immediate danger to the Deputy.
  5. Set up warning signals on the highway to prevent further accidents, re-route traffic, isolate the scene and protect the public. **Do not use flares at the scene.**
  6. Notify responding units including EMS and the Fire Service of safe approach routes and dangers on the scene so that they are aware prior to their arrival. Ensure that area hospitals are notified of the incident so they may take appropriate measures for receiving potentially contaminated victims.
  7. Keep traffic and spectators moving away from the accident. In all cases, keep all people at a safe distance of at least 1500 feet from the incident. Deputies should use a minimum of 1500 feet as a guide, but should consult with HAZMAT experts to determine if this distance needs to change.
  8. If hazardous or toxic vapors are *i.e.* escaping/blowing from a spill, or fire and smoke area carrying toxic fumes from the area, evacuate people from the area located downwind from the incident until the danger has been eliminated.
  9. Should any of the suspected dangerous material being transported or stored get on the Deputy's skin or clothing, or should the Deputy experience sickness (*i.e.* coughing, difficulty breathing, diminished eyesight etc.) he/she shall immediately report to a fire or medical professional on the scene, making them aware of possible exposure to the substance. The Deputy shall, as soon as possible, report the

possible exposure to his supervisor and complete Somerset County Sheriff's Office Form 100, (Report of Injury). In addition, the supervisor on duty at the time shall ensure the Deputy is transported to a medical facility for treatment. It is of the utmost importance not to take the contaminated clothing into the Sheriff's Office or home, as this clothing may cause serious illness or death to those who come into contact with it.

10. A supervisor should immediately respond to the scene, and should take command as soon as possible.
11. Deputies should ensure that the identified location of the command post is clear of secondary devices, harmful vapors or contaminants from the incident, or other dangers which may threaten the safety of personnel assigned to the command post.
12. The NIMS/ICS should be implemented as soon as possible and assisting or responding office personnel should be integrated into this system to ensure effective communication and control of the incident and available resources.
13. The identification of shipments considered hazardous is important. This is usually accomplished directly or indirectly by descriptive data in shipping documents, on containers, package labels, and vehicle placards. If this information is not readily obtainable, due to an incapacitated driver, destruction of a bill of lading or other shipping papers, or danger which prevents the Deputy from assessing this information, immediately contact the Chemical Transportation Emergency Center, 1-800-424-9300. Chemtrek provides technical expertise in handling hazardous material emergencies. They can also provide additional telephone numbers for emergencies, such as accidental poisoning. When in doubt, immediately contact Chemtrek.

Basic information needed:

- a) Name of caller and call back number.
- b) Location of problem.
- c) Shipper or manufacturer.
- d) Container type.
- e) Rail car or truck number.
- f) Carrier name.
- g) Consignee.
- h) Local conditions.

- B. Should Chemtrek identify a potentially hazardous material, the Deputy will contact Somerset County Emergency Services 911 and request the notifications be made to the appropriate state agencies. Note: Although Chemtrek is highly reliable, deputies should consider that sometimes the substance that is placarded or labeled on a container may not actually be what is in the container or truck. Deputies should rely on positive identification of the material by MDE or Hazmat teams.
- C. Deputies may want to consider restricting airspace above the scene to ensure that helicopters are not endangered or complicate the scene.
- D. It is also important to keep track of everyone at the scene for accountability and safety reasons. This function should be established as soon as possible within the framework of NIMS.

#### 6. Military Weapons

- A. When it is believed that an incident has occurred involving an atomic weapon (or weapon component) radioactive material, or other military weapons that can be identified with a military service, the Deputy will notify Somerset County Emergency Services 911 who will request assistance from the Headquarters, First United States Army at Fort George G. Meade, 410-677-2823 or 410-677-2655.

#### 7. Chapter Revisions

- A. General Order 01-10-13 has been revised.
- B. Effective September 1, 2014, General Order 01-14-12 supersedes General Order 01-10-13.

Robert N. Jones

Sheriff

Somerset County, Maryland