

# Palmer Township Police Department

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<b>General Order:</b>  6-1	<b>Subject:</b>  Stray or Lost Dog Apprehension, Care and Disposition		
<b>Date of Issue:</b> May 15, 2013	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 15, 2013	<b>Review Date:</b> May 15, 2014	<b>Distribution:</b> All PPD & PPW Personnel
<b>Rescinds:</b> All Previous Orders Relative to Subject			<b>Amends:</b> N/A
<b>References:</b> Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 3, Chapter 8, Dogs and Cats, "Dog Law", Article 3, Quarantines, Dogs at Large, Confinement, Section 459-206, 302, 401, 901-911. Township of Palmer, PA Ordinances, Chapter 67 1-8.			

**By Order Of:**

Lawrence R. Palmer

Chief of Police

## 6.01.01      **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures for the handling of stray dogs within Palmer Township to ensure the public's safety and the animal's welfare.

## 6.01.02      **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Palmer Township Police Department to provide the citizens of Palmer Township with courteous, professional, and effective dog control by enforcing all applicable township ordinances and state statutes.

## 6.01.03      **PROCEDURES**

- A. The Palmer Township Police Department will be responsible for handling stray, lost dogs and dogs running at-large complaints or reports.
  - 1. The Northampton County E911 Center will dispatch officers to such calls for service for stray, lost dogs and dogs running at-large.

2. Officers responding to stray dog complaints will attempt to evaluate the dog's demeanor to determine its level of aggressiveness.
3. Officers should first attempt to locate the owner of the animal either through Northampton County's stray dogs list, neighbors and pedestrians, dog tags, **dog chip reader** or the CODY computer system.
4. If the owner cannot be located on scene the officer will take possession of the dog or can either use the department snare or the tranquilizer gun if the dog is aggressive in nature.
5. **The tranquilizer gun will only be used by trained officers and supervisors.** Officers and Supervisors can retrieve the gun from the safe in the Ready Room. The Palmer Township Police Department currently uses Dexdomitor as its tranquilizer. Extra care should be used after an animal has been tranquilized for the dog's safety.
6. After any dog, passive or aggressive, has been secured it is to be transported to the Public Works Building located at 2828 Hartley Avenue, Palmer, PA 18045.
7. Upon arriving at the PW building officers should place the animal in one of the temporary holding kennels. Only one dog should be placed in each kennel unless exigent circumstances arise (non-aggressive dogs only). Officers will be responsible for supplying the dog with food and water prior to leaving the facility. Officers will check on any dog that was tranquilized every hour until the dog appears normal.
8. Officers will complete the PPD Dog Log located on the desktop on the PPD computers.
9. Officers will then notify Northampton County E911 Center that a dog has been placed at the facility and they can add it to their stray or lost dog list.
10. Officers will note in their CODY reports the time the animal was placed at the facility and that it was fed and provided water.

11. Care and feeding of the dog in the kennel will be handled by members of the Palmer Township Public Works Department.

#### **6.01.04 Holding Period and Disposition**

- A. Palmer Township will hold and maintain care for each dog for a minimum period of seven days during which the dog will be photographed and placed on the Palmer Township Police Department Facebook page linked from the Palmer Township website.
- B. After the seven days has elapsed and all attempts to locate the owner have been unsuccessful the Palmer Township Police Department can commence the adoption procedure. Any interested and prospective Primary Adopter must fill out a Palmer Township Police Department Canine Adoption Application. Primary Adopters must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and must agree to all of the stipulations, terms and caveats of the application. The application process shall be open for five business days.
- C. A committee comprised of two members of the Palmer Township Police Department, one member of the community (resident or employed within the township) and one member of the Palmer Township Public Works Department will meet after the close of the application acceptance period to discuss and determine which of the applicants will be offered the adoption of the dog. The committee shall be tasked with determining their methodology and set of criteria for qualification and selection of the most appropriate candidate to offer adoption of the dog. The Chief of Police or his/her designee must sign off on the chosen applicant.
- D. The successful candidate who becomes the Primary Adopter of the dog must read, understand and sign the Palmer Township Canine Adoption Contract and fulfill the sterilization of the animal as per Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law.
- E. In instances where non-aggressive, passive dogs cannot be placed (adoption, rescue, foster home, etc...) it will be determined by the police administration and the Palmer Township, Township Manager whether or not the dog is to be euthanized by a licensed veterinarian.
- F. In cases where the dog is aggressive and vicious in nature and cannot be placed the dog will be euthanized by a licensed veterinarian.

**6.01.05 Animal Owner Fees and Responsibilities**

- A. If the owner is located, the owner of the animal will be assessed a twenty dollar (\$20.00) handling fee and a ten dollar (\$10.00) per day care and feeding fee payable Monday through Friday at the police headquarters located at 5 Weller Place, Palmer, PA 18045. The dog will not be released until the fee is paid in full. If the owner claims the dog within twelve (12) hours of apprehension no fee is to be charged.
- B. We **will not accept** dogs from owners simply due to their desire to relinquish ownership of the animal. We can refer them to The Center for Animal Health and Welfare or they can go online to obtain information regarding other avenues of giving the animal away.
- C. Officers are encouraged to issue citations for violations to dog owners who are habitual offenders of the **“Running at large prohibited”** ordinance of Palmer Township:

**Chapter 67. DOGS**

**§ 67-1. Running at large prohibited.**

**[Amended 4-9-1974 by Ord. No. 150]**

**It shall be unlawful for the owner, custodian or keeper of any dog to allow such dog to run at large at any time, either upon any of the streets, alleys or public grounds in the Township of Palmer or upon the property of any person other than the owner, custodian or keeper of such dog, unless accompanied by and under the immediate control of such owner, custodian or keeper.**

**6.01.06 Stray Cats and Other Animals**

- A. It is the Palmer Township Police Department’s policy that we do not apprehend or accept stray cats or other animals. We will attempt to assist the public with any animal problems by referring them to facilities, groups or individuals who may be able to give relief to such problems.