

Handling Wildlife Calls

821.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy will establish guidelines for dealing with wildlife calls, primarily bears, mountain lions and coyotes. The primary concerns when dealing with wildlife will be the safety of citizens and personnel, followed by the safety of the animal. Although these calls are infrequent, they do occur and it is important that our personnel are informed and prepared to take appropriate measures and/or refer citizens to the appropriate agencies for assistance. Due to the unique and infrequent nature of these calls, the Fontana Animal Services Team is not equipped to deal with these animals long term, nor is the San Bernardino Animal Shelter able to house them.

821.2 ANIMAL SIGHTING

If we receive a call of an animal sighting in the mountains or hills outside of a residential area we do not need to respond, but the RP should be directed to the appropriate allied agency. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (951-443-2968) should be notified in the event we receive reports for bears or mountain lions, also frequently referred to as bobcats. Callers should be advised that they may or may not respond, depending on their assessment of the situation; these animals are indigenous to the area and will occasionally be seen by residents bordering the hills. If they take action, their preferred approach will be to tranquilize the animal and relocate it to an area further away from human population. For coyotes, refer callers to the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (800-472-5609). Because they carry a variety of diseases and hunt in packs, depending on the circumstances, they may respond and trap or euthanize the coyotes.

If we receive a call of a wildlife animal sighting, such as a mountain lion or bear, within a residential area, any on-duty ASO's should be dispatched along with a minimum of 2 units. If there are no ASO's on duty, the on-call ASO should be called in to assist. The appropriate agency, as identified above, should also be contacted immediately and requested to respond. If they have a reasonable ETA, personnel should try to maintain visual observation of the animal until they arrive. Once they arrive on-scene personnel shall assist them as needed.

821.3 POLICE OFFICER CONSIDERATIONS

In the event the allied agency has an extended ETA, Fontana Police Department personnel are authorized to take the following actions, as they deem necessary:

- (a) The first, best option is to try and scare the animal into leaving the area; the nature of the animals in this area is to avoid human contact, so if out in the open, ASO's and officers should follow the animal, using sirens and air horns in an attempt to scare the animal into leaving.
- (b) If the opportunity to safely deploy less lethal or "bear scare" rounds at the animal arises, officers or ASO's should take such action.
- (c) If this tactic is used, it is imperative that another officer be prepared with a shotgun; the shotgun should be loaded with slugs when dealing with a bear. In the event the animal is hit with less lethal options and stands its ground or displays any form of aggression,

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officers are authorized to utilize lethal force. This is a last resort to be used if the officer feels the animal is a threat to on scene personnel or residents in the surrounding area.