



ANIMAL BEHAVIOR, CAPTURE & SAFE HANDLING

Training Guide page 15

MDAR
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



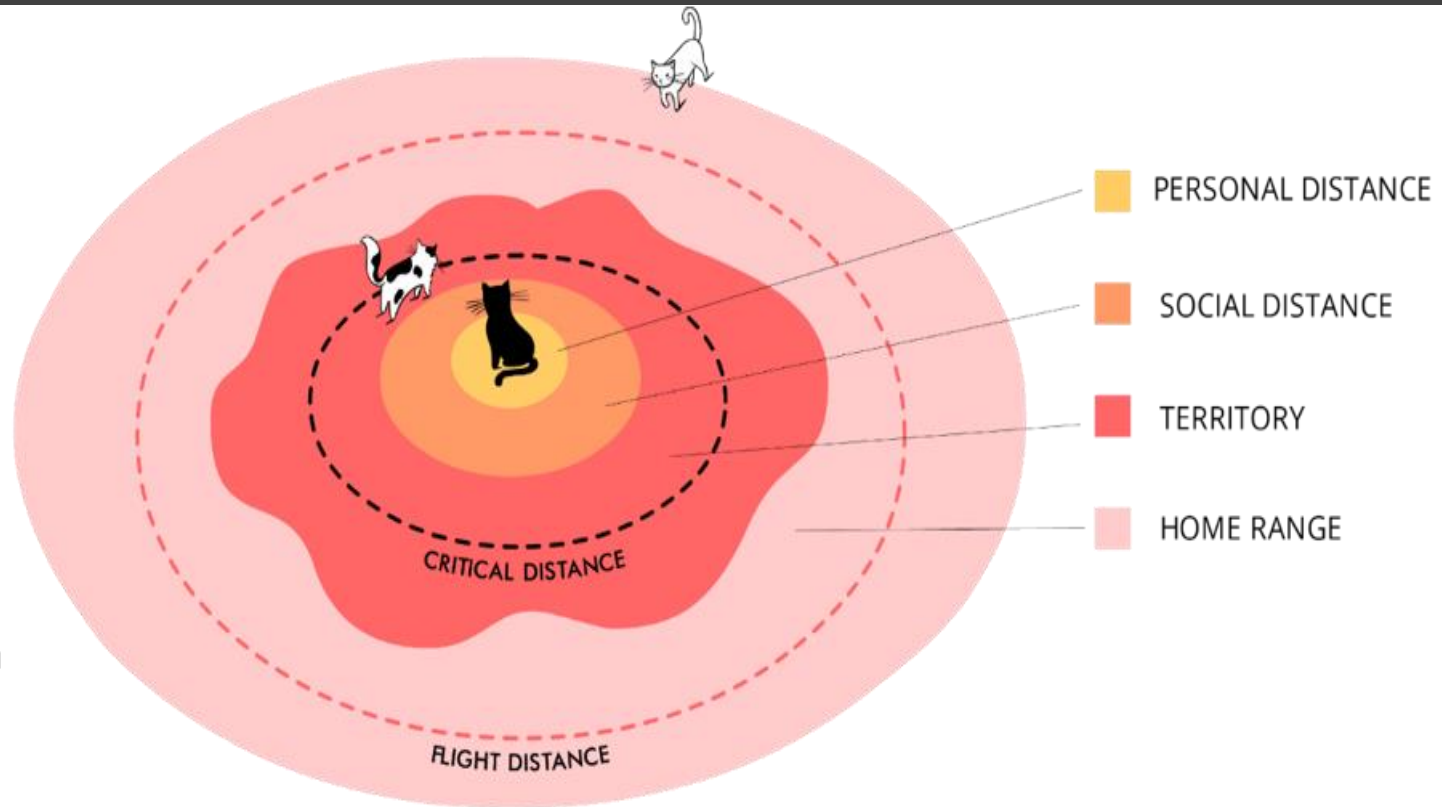
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ANIMAL TERRITORIES & RESPONSES

Animal Territories

All animals, even pets, have home ranges and territories in which they travel. When you know those areas, you will have a better chance of capturing the animal.



Animal Territories

Home Range

- The largest area in which the animal will usually roam

Territory

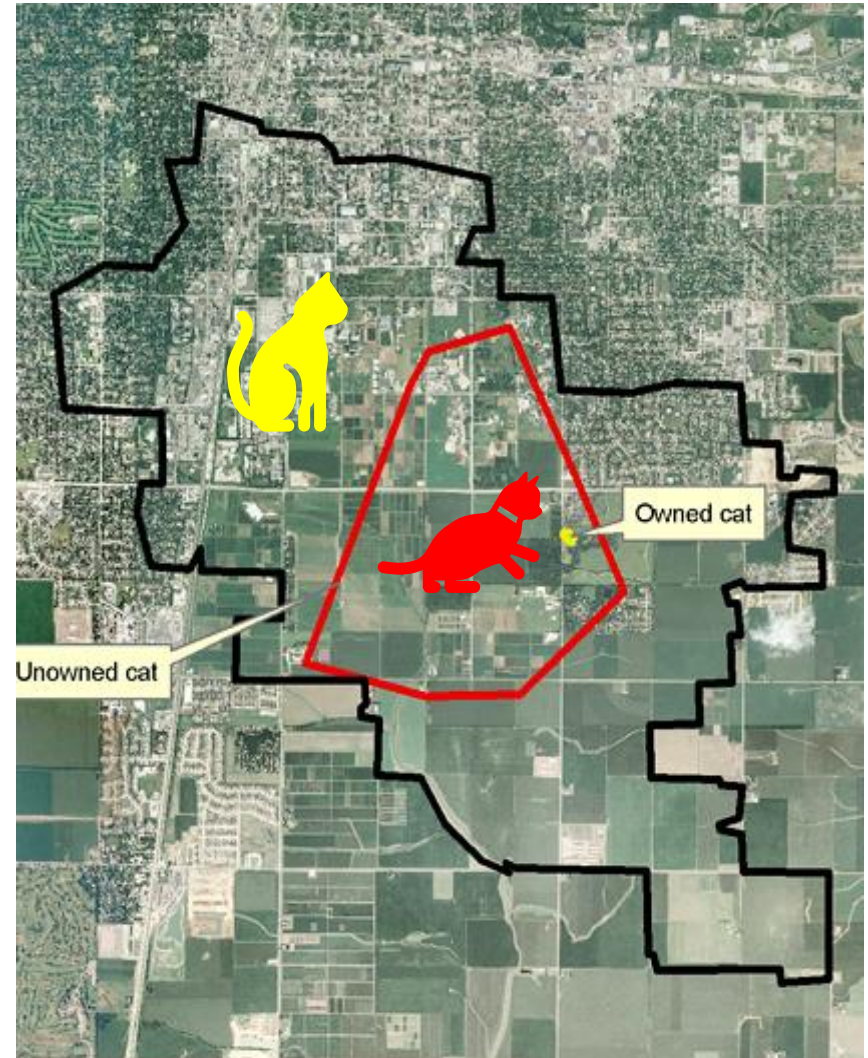
- A smaller area within the home range
- The animal will usually defend it against intruders

Social Space

- A smaller area, approximately 4 – 12 feet, within the territory
- When you approach an animal in this space, it may either fight or run from you

Personal Space

- The smallest area, approximately 0 – 4 feet, and the area nearest the animal
- When you approach an animal in this space it will usually either fight or submit





Behavior, Territories, Pursuit, & Transport

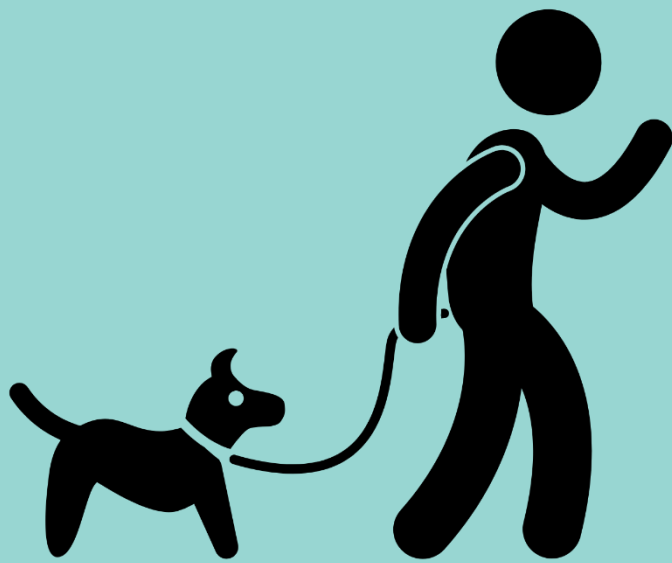
ANIMAL CAPTURE & SAFE HANDLING



Animal Capture & Safe Handling

You must understand both animal behavior and animal territories to understand how to most effectively capture domestic animals, wildlife, and livestock

If you can “outthink” an animal instead of trying to “outmuscle” it, capture will be easier



Pursuit



Only chase an animal if you will capture it quickly or you will be able to follow it home

If an animal does run away, there are other ways to handle the situation without chasing it

Follow the animal until you locate where it lives or where it is denning

Try to corral the animal into an enclosed area

Try to capture the animal by setting a live trap

Issue a citation to the owner



Animal Transport

- You should have some means of safely transporting animals that you have captured
- You should have multiple crates and “Evac-Sacs” in various sizes available to you





CANINE BEHAVIOR

Canine Behavior



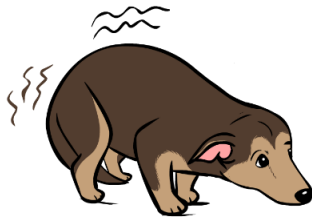
Dogs communicate nonverbally through the use of body language and vocalizations

Body language includes:

- **The way a dog carries and moves his tail**
- **Ear position**
- **Eye position**
- **Body position and movement**
- **Facial expressions**

Canine Behavior

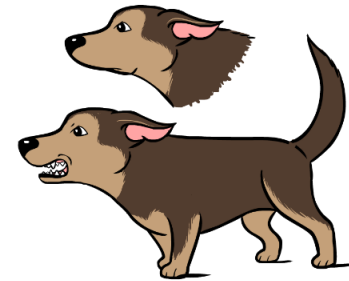
Five main types of communication:



Fearful
trembling



Anxious
spinning



Aggressive
curled lip, tense mouth, growl



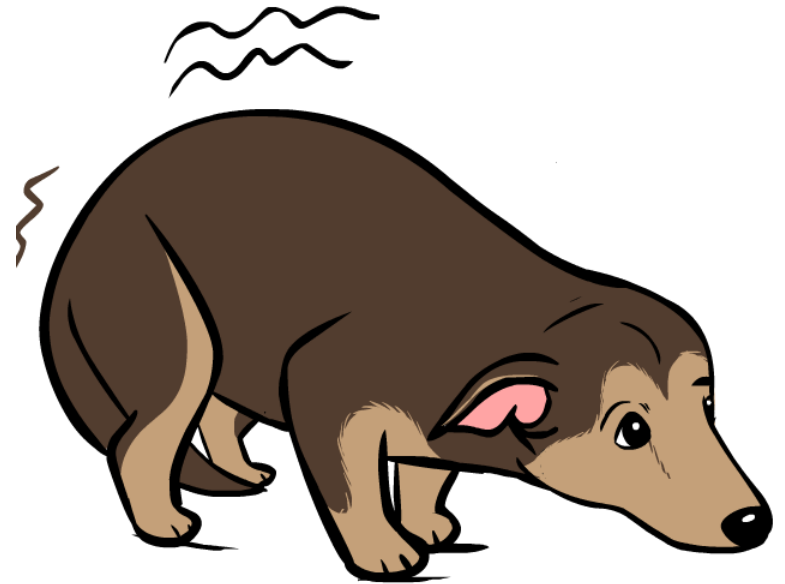
Relaxed
frog legs, lying down



Aroused
hackles up, body and ears
forward, pilo-erect

Fearful Communication

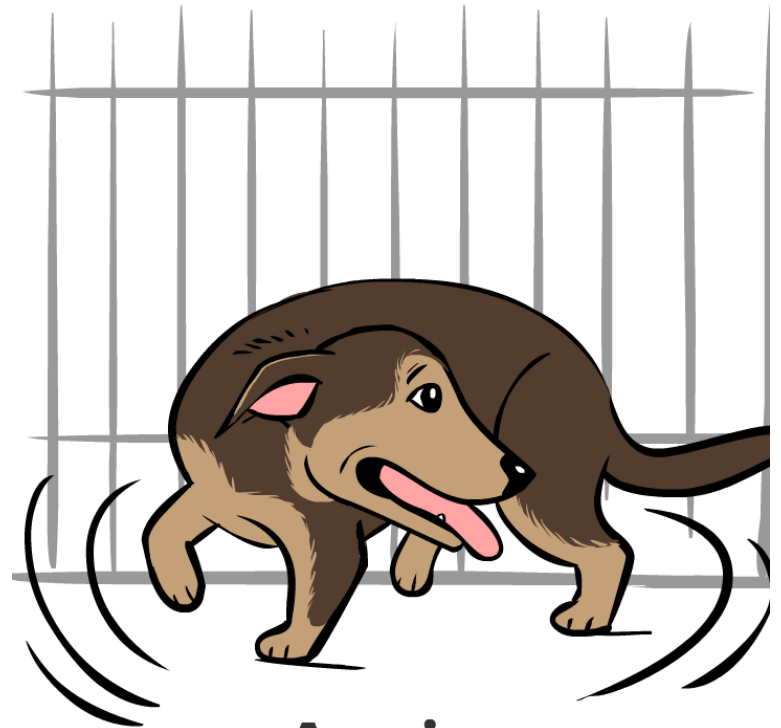
- Ears back
- Tucked tail
- Trembling
- Avoiding eye contact
- Crouching
- Cowering
- Licking lips
- Backing away
- Running away



Fearful
trembling

Anxious Communication

- Panting
- Pacing
- Spinning
- Jumping repetitively against walls
- Yawning
- Cowering



Anxious
spinning

Aroused Communication

- Body forward, ears forward, high tail
- Hackles up
- Lunging and/or barking
- Jumping on people
- Play bow
- Mouthy
- Biting leash
- Biting/tugging clothes



Aroused

hackles up, body and ears
forward, pilo-erect

Relaxed Communication

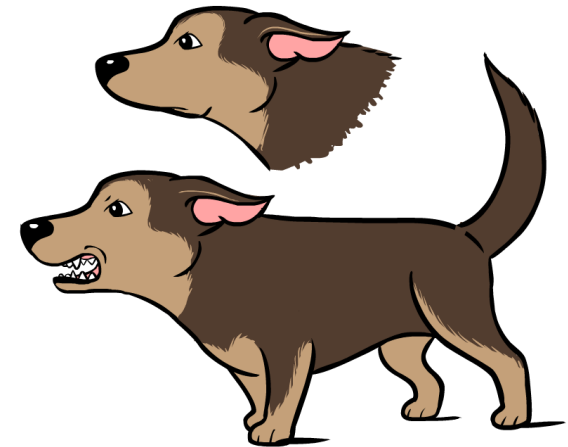
- Lying down relaxed
- Lying down resting
- Open-mouthed smile
- Standing relaxed
- Frog legs, lying down
- Body loose and friendly



Relaxed
frog legs, lying down

Aggressive Communication

- Freeze, ears back, eyes wide
- Wide-eyed/whale eye
- Showing teeth
- Curled lips, tense mouth, growl
- Barking and/or growling
- Air snap



Aggressive
curled lip, tense mouth, growl

Watching Body Language



GROUP DISCUSSION

Watch this next video for aggressive body language cues and then discuss what the trainer could have done differently.

(Don't try this at home!)

Aggressive Communication



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FELINE BEHAVIOR

Feline Behavior

- Four main types of communication
 - Alert
 - Aggressive
 - Fearful
 - Relaxed



Alert



Aggressive



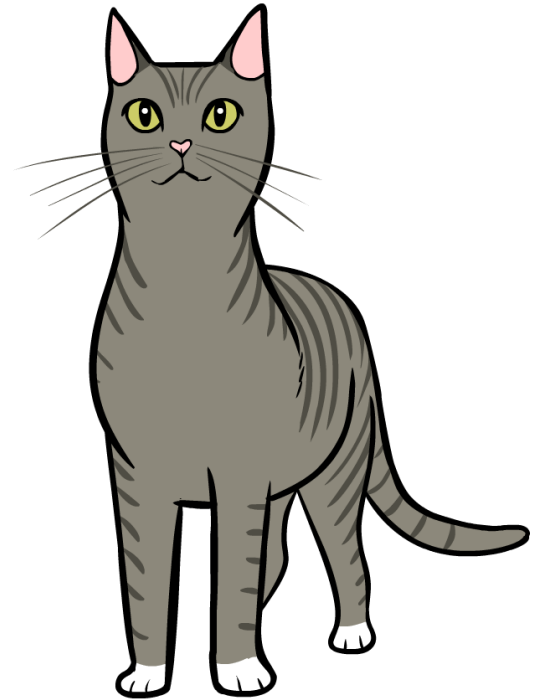
Fearful



Relaxed

Alert Communication

- Stopping in its tracks
- Holding its head and ears erect
- Standing with an even expression
- Standing with its back level and tail erect



Alert

Aggressive Communication

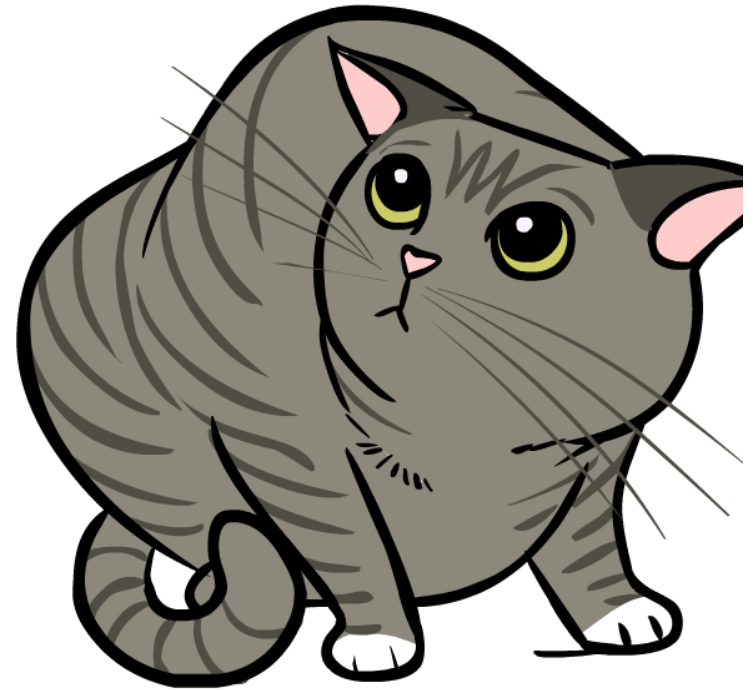
- Lowering the head
- Holding the ears to the back or side of the head
- Arching the back
- Fluffing the tail and holding it erect
- Growling/hissing



Aggressive

Fearful Communication

- Crouching low to the ground
- Fluffing hair along back and tail
- Pulling the tail to its side
- Dilating the pupils
- Flattening the ears
- Growling/hissing
- Displaying “fear biter” behavior



Fearful

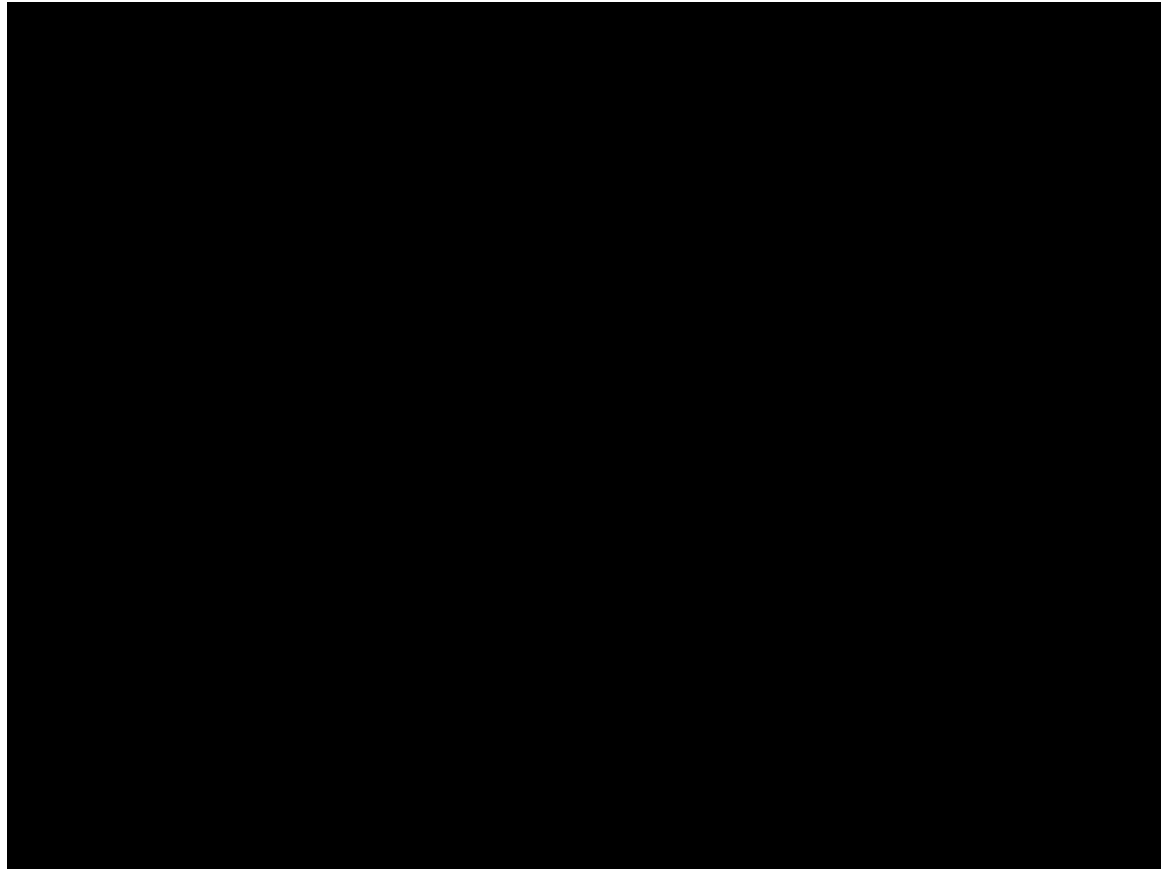
Relaxed Communication

- Sleeping or resting
- Playing
- Lying on side, back, or belly
- If standing/moving, back horizontal
- Normal/slow breathing
- Tail extended or loosely wrapped
- Slow blinking



Relaxed

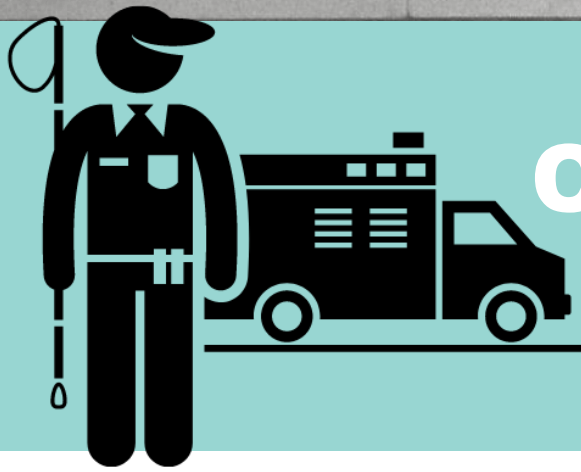
Feline Behavior





Animal Control Equipment

ANIMAL CAPTURE & SAFE HANDLING



Common ACO Equipment

- Work gloves
- Disposable rubber gloves
- Large clip board (with forms)
- Note pad and pen
- Catch pole
- Pet carrier
- Snappy snare
- Microchip scann
- Flashlight
- Some form of ID that identifies you as an ACO
- Traffic vest
- Leash
- Muzzles
- Net
- Rope
- Blanket/towel

Capture Equipment

There are four major kinds of equipment for capturing animals:



Extended
Reach

Traps

Physical
Barriers

Chemical
Injections



Extended Reach

Extended reach equipment allows you to control an animal without getting too close to it

- Catch Poles
- Slip Leads/Rope
- Nets

Catch Poles



- Catch poles (also known as rabies poles or control sticks) and snares are often used and come in all styles and lengths (3' – 12')
- Have a stiff handle with an adjustable loop of rope or cable on one end
 - Should be between 3' – 5' long and be strong and lightweight
 - Typically catch poles have an aluminum tube for the staff, a plastic-covered wire cable for the loop, and a cable-locking device to prevent accidental release of the animal



Technique for Using a Catch Pole

- Slide the catch pole along the ground toward the animal
- Once the catch pole has crossed the animal's personal space, gently stroke the animal with the end of the staff and then slowly apply the loop
- The loop must not be too tight, so as to restrict blood flow or breathing, and it must not be too loose or the animal will escape
- Never use a catch pole to lift any animal

Slip Leads & Rope

- Slip leads and rope can be hard to use and are normally only good for catching large animal (30 lbs. +)
- Store ropes in a dry, clean space and inspect them frequently for worn or weak areas



Slip Leads & Rope

- Good ropes for general animal control use are those which have a strong nylon center core and a woven cotton outer covering
- Flat nylon leashes should not be used as slip leads
- High-quality vinyl-coated aircraft cables are also good to use as they maintain their loop well and dogs cannot easily chew through them



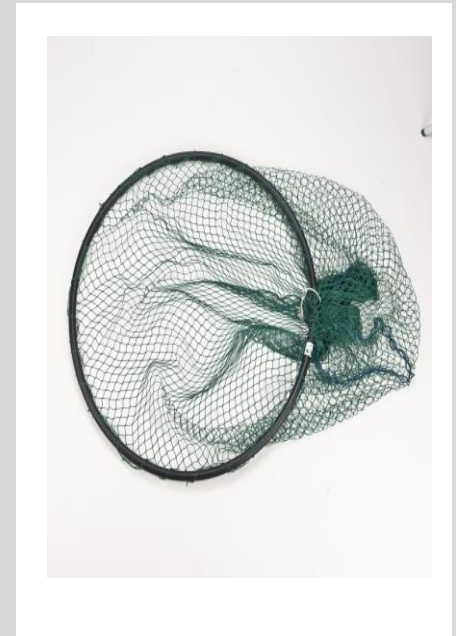
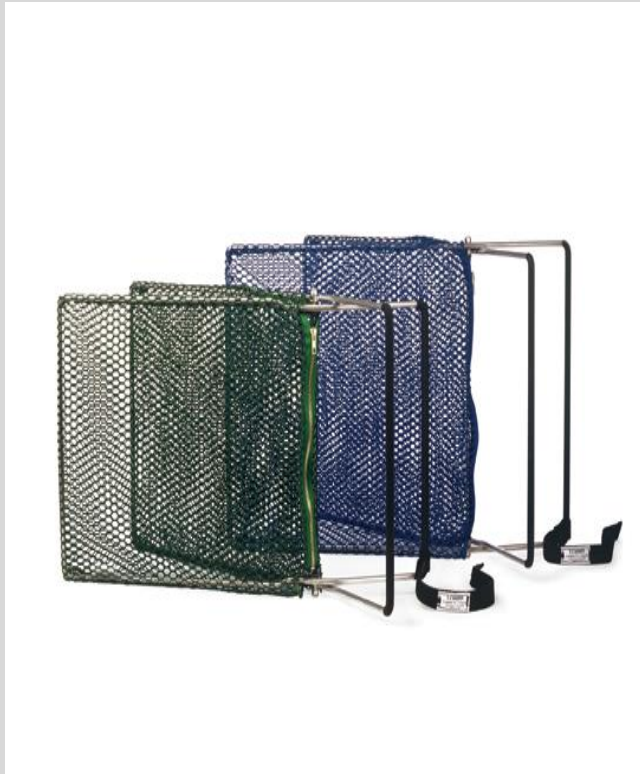
Technique for Using a Rope

- Lift the loop of the rope over the dog's head if it is not attempting to run
 - If it is attempting to run, a short underhand or sidearm throw is most effective
 - Make sure to hold on to one end of the slip lead
- Use the rope to bring the animal closer to you and then lift the dog with your arms if it is small enough
 - Lead larger dogs to your vehicle and then lift them into the cage with your arms
 - Never lift any animal off the ground by its neck alone



Nets

- Nets come in varying sizes and can be effective in helping to catch cats and other small animals
- The depth of a net for cats should be of sufficient length to allow for a flip or a twist to prevent escape

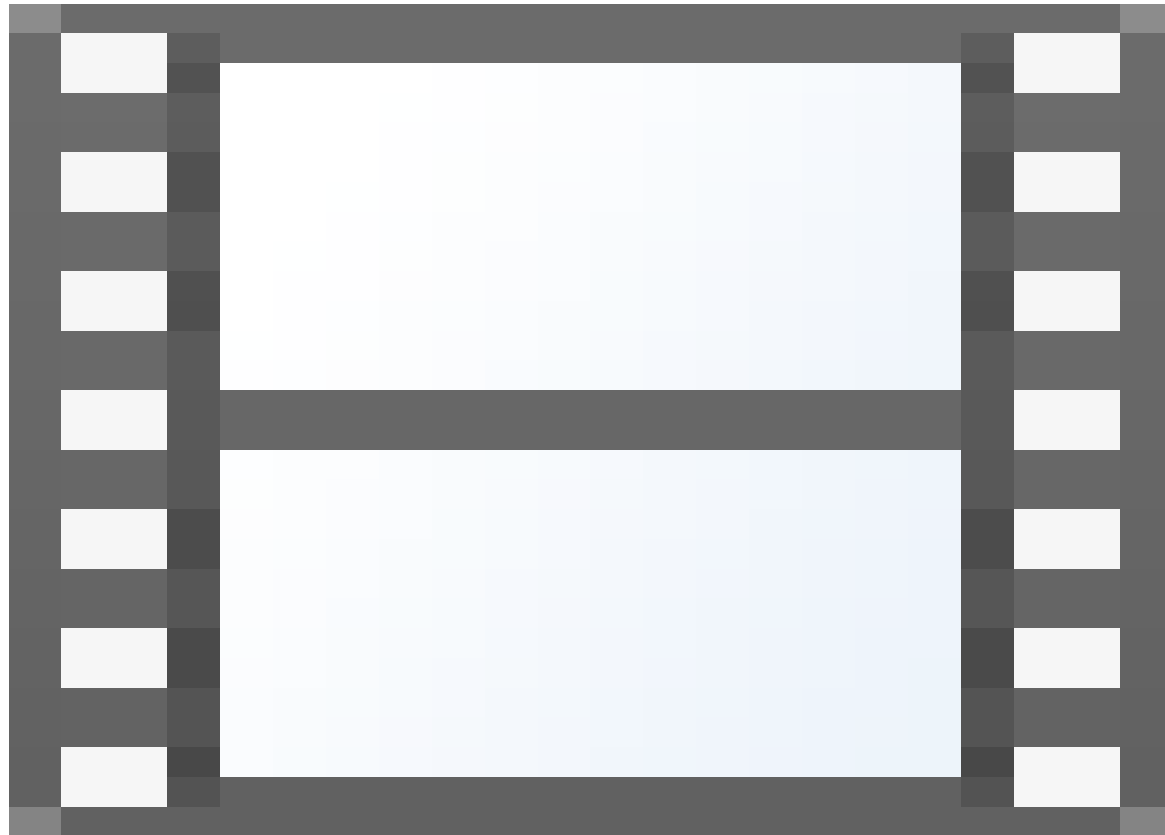




Nets

The cage net is specifically designed for animal control and features a net made of tightly-woven mesh and a closeable top

Using a Cage Net



<https://youtu.be/ZZDVBaNV1Ak>



Physical Barriers

Bite gloves

Cut-resistant gloves

Rubber gloves

Bite sticks

Blankets

Bite Gloves

- Offer great protection against penetration
- Animals with small, needle-like teeth may easily penetrate the gloves
- Provide little to no protection from the force of a bite
- Allow for very little dexterity



Cut-resistant Gloves

- Also called “duty gloves” or “patrol gloves”
- Have Kevlar lining
- Protect you from animal bites and help animal saliva that might contain rabies virus from contacting any breaks in the skin on your hands



Rubber Gloves

- Offer no bite protection
- Provide great level of protection from blood pathogens



Bite Sticks

Bite sticks can be carried by ACOs specifically to prevent animal bites by providing a physical barrier between the ACO and an attacking animal

The preferred bite stick for an ACO is an expandable baton

A bite stick gives the animal something to bite besides the officer, and can be used as a distraction to fill the dog's mouth

Bite Sticks

- Make sure you have departmental approval and training before carrying a bite stick



Technique for Using a Bite Stick



<https://youtu.be/hkFukSeXvrk>



Blankets

- Blankets, large towels, or other heavy cloths can be placed over an animal
- Use a blanket that is thick enough so the animal cannot tear it, but thin enough so that you can still handle the animal
- Blankets help calm animals and may protect you from bites

Blankets

- Many animals may be calmed by the darkness created by being covered with a blanket
- Make sure the blankets and towels are washed after each use to prevent disease transmission





Traps

- Box-type live traps are good tools for capturing animals
- Use traps for capture of animals when close approach is difficult
- Traps should be properly tagged and identified with contact information for whose trap it is

Traps

- Live traps of any size work in the same way

**Door is opened
and a brace is
connected to a
treadle or a
metal plate on
the floor**

**Animal triggers
door when
stepping on
treadle by bait**

**The door then
closes and locks**

Feral Cat Trapping

- Make sure you have resources such as spay/neuter/vaccination appointments and funding lined up **BEFORE** you trap whenever possible.
- Trapping is typically a multi-day process, but being prepared can make the process go smoothly.



Trapping a Feral Cat



Squeeze Cages



- Squeeze cages work well for vaccinating and examining animals
 - Slide the squeeze panel forward until the animal is firmly held between the panel and the side of the cage
 - The galvanized metal bottom can be removed for easy cleaning, the handles fold flat and lock in place for easy storage, and the sliding rear door is provided for easy release of an animal

Traps

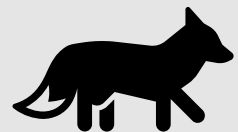
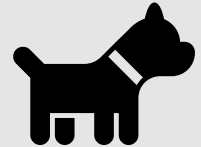
The only humane trap is a live trap

Live traps must be carefully examined after each use and kept clean and in good condition

Make sure to use a trap that is the right size for the animal being captured

After setting the trap properly, check it at least once a day

Most animals will quickly learn to recognize the trapping device and will be hard to trap a second time



Chemical Capture & Firearms

ACOs have no statutory authority to carry chemical capture weapons or firearms in the commission of their duties

The use of chemical capture and firearms is solely at the discretion of your employer



Muzzling

ANIMAL CAPTURE & SAFE HANDLING

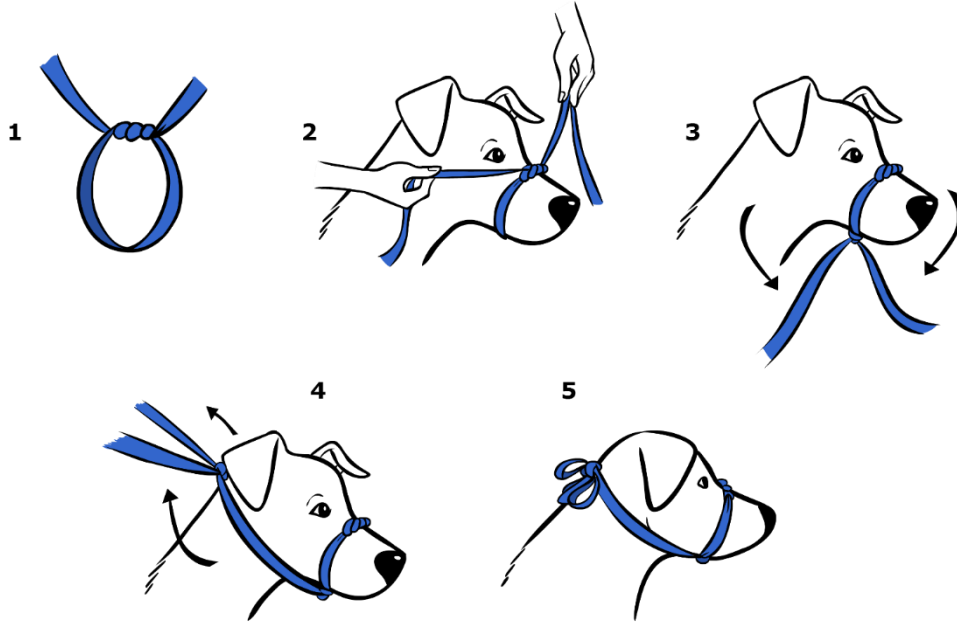
Muzzling

Muzzles can prevent an animal from biting you by restricting the movement of their mouth

You can make muzzles yourself, or your agency can purchase commercial muzzles

Homemade muzzles are cheap, comfortable, and easy to make using rope, cloth, or cotton gauze

Commercial muzzles come in different sizes and are usually made of nylon with buckles or Velcro straps



- **Make a loop in the center of a four-foot cord or bandage**
- **Slip the loop over the nose and draw it snug**
- **Bring the ends down under the chin and tie them with an overhand knot**
- **Carry one end around each side of the neck and at the nape tie them in a square knot**

Making Your Own Muzzle

Making Your Own Muzzle



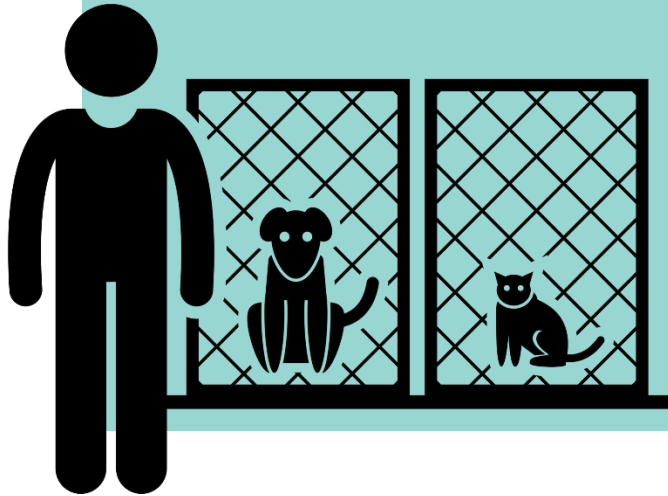
Other Types of Muzzles

- Police training muzzles
- Nylon muzzles
- Wire basket muzzles
- Plastic basket muzzles
- Head halters





Muzzle Warning



Never leave a
muzzle on an
unattended animal

Never leave a
muzzle on a caged
animal

Let's take a minute
and review guide
page 15

Training Guide Pause

Circle True or False for the Statements below		
Dogs primarily use verbal communication to display how they are feeling.	TRUE	FALSE
If a cat has dilated pupils, flattened ears and appears fluffed it is displaying signs of fear.	TRUE	FALSE
The ONLY humane trap is a live trap.	TRUE	FALSE
All ACOs have the authority to carry chemical weapons and firearms.	TRUE	FALSE
There are 4 main types of capture equipment: extended reach equipment (rabies, poles, nets), traps (box, drop), physical barriers (gloves, blankets) and chemical (injectables).	TRUE	FALSE

WRAP UP

Questions?