

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02114
www.mass.gov/agr



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COMMISSIONER

1/30/2026

Dear Animal Control Supervisor,

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 140, Section 151, the mayor of each city and the board of selectmen of each town shall annually designate an animal control officer ("ACO"), who may be a police officer or constable. The mayor or board of selectmen shall immediately submit to the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("Department") the names, addresses and dates of hire of such animal control officer(s).

The Department is required under MGL Chapter 140, section 151A, to inspect the facilities that municipalities use to hold stray dogs and other animals that come into the possession of the ACO. Municipal animal holding locations must also be reported to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

All ACOs are required to complete 30 education credits (ECs) in their first training year. The Massachusetts Animal Fund Animal Control Institute's Core Competencies Training is mandatory year-one training for all ACOs and is worth 16 ECs. ACOs that complete year-one training will gain training compliance. To maintain training compliance, ACOs must complete 8 continuing education hours each additional year. ACO training compliance status is now listed on the designations. ACOs will be either listed as "In Compliance" = ACO has completed all current training requirements, "Not in Compliance" = ACO has completed the Core Training but needs additional CE, "In Year-One Training" = ACO has completed Core but needs additional CE, or "Needs to Obtain Initial Compliance" = ACO must complete Core Training. Detailed training compliance letters listing all training reported to MDAR have been sent in a separate email.

Below you will find prepopulated information from our current ACO database. To confirm, add, or make changes to your ACO designations, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/forms/municipal-animal-control-officer-designation>

Please note, if you prefer this email can be printed out and updated forms can be uploaded into the portal above, or emailed to sheri.gustafson@mass.gov

Please submit designation confirmation and any needed changes no later than March 1, 2026.

Should an ACO leave his or her position mid-year, please notify the Department immediately. Any of the required information pertaining to any new hire employed during the year should be submitted on a new designation form immediately upon their hiring.

If you have any questions, please contact sheri.gustafson@mass.gov

Sincerely,

Michael Cahill, Director
Division of Animal Health,
MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources

