

# **Operational Review of Systems and Practices for Placer County Animal Services Final Report**

**Completed by  
Animal Legal and Veterinary Medical  
Consulting Services**

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## **Letter of Transmittal**

This document is the Operational Review of Systems and Practices for Placer County Animal Services Final Report submitted by Animal Legal and Veterinary Medical Consulting Service (ALVMCS).

Over 130 findings were identified during three site visits from May 23 - June 14, 2005 in five categories: Administration, Veterinary Services, Field Operations, Shelter Services and Information Technology. The Final Report concisely prioritizes recommendations from these findings in order to provide a foundation for the department to meet industry standards of excellence in shelter and field operations while allowing for growth and development as the needs of the people and animals in the community change and evolve.

ALVMCS would like to thank Placer County Administrators and Placer County Animal Services staff for their cooperation for the duration of this project and for their interest and desire to move forward with changes and innovations that will help advance the agency and earn the respect of the community and fellow animal control departments throughout the state of California.

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## **Executive Summary**

Every Department of Animal Control (DAC) that operates in the state of California has specific legal mandates that must be fulfilled. Each DAC has different circumstances that will influence the manner in which they address these mandates. These circumstances include: monetary, staffing, physical limitations of the facility, and demographics of their community. Basic department operational policies and procedures are created involving health/safety practices which establish the unique core foundation of each facility.

The findings and implementation *of* recommendations identified through this assessment process will contribute to Placer County Animal Services' ability to meet animal control and sheltering standards of practice. It is essential that the organizational structure be established and state-of-the art practices be mastered in order to provide the stability necessary prior to attempting growth through advanced projects and programs (ie., spay/neuter outreach, "No-Kill" shelter practices, off-site adoption programs, animal cruelty task forces etc.)

This section contains the specific operational recommendations for Placer County Animal Services that will serve to strengthen the department's foundation. Each recommendation is prioritized in the following five subject areas: Administration, Veterinary Service, Field Operations, Shelter Service and Information Technology.

## **Administration**

There are four areas of recommendation identified in the subject area of Administration. In order of highest priority they are: supervision/human resources, safety, occupational safety and health, and building renovations/equipment replacement.

### Supervision/Human Resources (ADM - S/HR)

ADM - S/HR 1: The County should fill the Client Services Program Manager position as soon as possible.

ADM - S/HR 2: The County should begin revising the Manual of Policy and Procedure to reflect the written suggestions submitted by the contractor and add to the Manual all recommendations listed in this report that the County chooses to implement.

ADM - S/HR 3: The County should provide training for all staff in identifying and preventing gender discrimination and hostile work environments.

ADM - S/HR 4: (Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

ADM - S/HR 5: An on-site Supervising Clerk should be designated.

ADM - S/HR 6: Develop an itemization of clerical responsibilities, checks and balances, and training guidelines at all three Levels (Senior, Journey, and Entry).

ADM - S/HR 7: Administrators/Supervisors need to improve staff morale and teamwork between both facilities.

### Safety (ADM - S)

ADM - S 1: The rolling gate into the back of the facility should have a chain and padlock that is secured at all times.

ADM - S 2: At the Tahoe Shelter, establish and provide training for staff on security precautions associated with public access to the outdoor exercise enclosure.

ADM - S 3: Develop procedures for handling escalating situations in the front lobby, including available staff to assist and make definitive decisions on controversial issues.

ADM - S 4: Utilize a doorbell alert system at the public counters that allows clerks to contact available employees who can provide protection/assistance to the clerical division.

ADM - S 5: Installation of protective glass at the public counters should be considered.

### Occupational Safety and Health (ADM - OSH)

ADM - OSH 1: Develop an emergency action plan for both shelters.

ADM - OSH 2: Obtain and organize in a notebook, MSDS for all pharmaceuticals, laboratory reagents, cleaning solutions and other potentially hazardous products used in the shelter.

ADM - OSH 3: Develop an Injury Illness and Prevention Program (IIP) and select a Program Administrator.

ADM - OSH 4: An additional refrigerator should be purchased for the ACT trailer.

### Building Renovations/Equipment Replacement (ADM - BR/ER)

ADM - BR/ER 1: Replace damaged flooring in animal holding areas and lobby with toweled epoxy resin flooring over concrete.

ADM - BR/ER 2: Tahoe Shelter:

The rusted chairs directly outside the entrance to the facility should be removed and replaced by chairs that are appropriate for remaining outdoors and are secured to the facility.

The worn and dirty carpet runner needs to be cleaned or replaced with a vinyl, non-carpeted entry floor mat.

The following professional signage should be obtained and placed in the Tahoe shelter:

- . Entrance to the facility indicating clerical, animal relinquishment, stray and adoptable animals
- . Entrance to the Dog Kennels (indicating stray and adoptable animals)
- . Entrance to the Cat Room (indicating stray and adoptable animals)
- . No public entry to the bowl washing room on both sides of the door
- . No public entry on the exit door to the outdoor exercise enclosure'

ADM - BRIER 3: At the Auburn Shelter, both doors to the lobby should be utilized and the counters redesigned so that clerical staff could work two counters from one side of the room, and the opposite side of the room should be used for animal receiving (stray and surrenders).

- The live animal side of the lobby should contain a bank of holding cages on a moveable rack, a desk area, and space to place cat traps.

ADM - BRIER 4: Install signage at the entrance to the Auburn shelter that directs the public to the clerical area, viewing adoptable animals, or searching for lost pets.

### **Veterinary Service**

There are three areas of recommendation identified in the subject area of Veterinary Service. In order of highest priority they are: staffing, euthanasia procedures, and pharmaceuticals.

#### Staffing (VET - S)

VET - S 1: Hire a full-time California licensed veterinarian, and hire a full time Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT).

VET - S 2: Diagnostic tests should only be performed by veterinary staff when test result interpretation constitutes a diagnosis on an animal.

#### Euthanasia Procedures (VET - EP)

VET - EP 1: All County employees performing euthanasia should be trained and certified in humane euthanasia procedures.

VET - EP 2: Animals should be euthanized in a designated room that is non-accessible to the public.

VET - EP 3: Only County staff should be allowed to restrain animals undergoing the euthanasia procedure.

VET - EP 4: Members of the public should not be allowed to be present in the room where the euthanasia procedure is performed.

#### Pharmaceuticals (VET - PHARM)

VET - PHARM 1: Any controlled substances should be properly secured and logged.

VET - PHARM 2: All medications should be stored in an employee only access area and properly labeled.

VET - PHARM 3: Medications should not be accessible to the public or to volunteers.

VET - PHARM 4: All medications prescribed by local veterinarians for specific animals should only be administered to the animal identified on the prescription label.

## **Field Operations**

There are eight areas of recommendation identified in the subject area of Field Operations. In order of highest priority they are: safety, firearms, supervision, communication, vehicles/equipment, dispatch, field calls/serving the public/statistics, and training.

### Safety (FIELD - SAF)

FIELD - SAF 1: Update the Policy and Procedure Manual for Field Services to include detailed protocols mandating safety procedures and requirements.

FIELD - SAF 2: Ballistic vests should only be distributed to ACOs, when they are approved for full protection based on manufacturer recommendations.

- Vests that are used, damaged, or do not provide full protection should not be distributed to ACOs in the field.
- Field Operations Policies and Procedures should indicate if wearing vests is required or optional when on duty.

FIELD - SAF3: Law enforcement staff should be trained to diffuse conflict situations with citizens when working in the field.

FIELD - SAF 4: Provide lariat/rope and tazer training for all ACO staff.

### Firearms (FIELD - F)

FIELD - F 1: If ACOs are required to wear a sidearm:

- ACOs must be wearing a duty belt with a holster which is approved and authorized by the sheriff's department.
- The department must select a person qualified or trained as a Rangemaster or utilize the Sheriff's Department Rangemaster.
- ACO Supervisor must maintain documentation for training and biannual qualification.
- The department must select a person qualified or trained as an Armorer or utilize the Sheriff's Department Armorer.
- ACO Supervisor should perform random, weekly inspections of officer's firearms.

FIELD - F 2: Loaded firearms should not be kept in County vehicles unless they are properly mounted and secured in the vehicles.

FIELD - F 3: Firearms Policy and Procedure must include a section on the Use of Force Policy, including Deadly Force, if officers are required to carry firearms.

FIELD - F 4: Firearms Policy and Procedure should identify only one to two officers who will receive the combination to the firearms safe.

FIELD - F 5: The department should train ACOs that they have "command presence" with or without firearms because they are wearing a badge, enforcing laws, writing citations and performing investigations/search and seizure.

### Supervision (FIELD - SUP)

FIELD - SUP 1: The County should permanently fill the ACO Supervisor position.

Until the position is filled, administration should have the final word in policy changes but should allow field staff to have a voice in discussing and providing input in the changes.

FIELD - SUP 2: Improve safety training and supervision of ACOs at the Tahoe Shelter while working in the dog kennels.

FIELD - SUP 3: A standard chain of command protocol that correlates with experienced and reliable supervisors that are respected by the ACOs and reachable when officers are in the field should be developed.

FIELD - SUP 4: Officers at both locations should be accountable, evaluated, and supervised

similarly.

FIELD - SUP 5: Supervisors must monitor and address ACO issues of attendance, tardiness, and "beat" coverage.

FIELD - SUP 6: The County should implement an official process through Field Services for dismissing a citation issued by an ACO.

#### Communication (FIELD - C)

FIELD - C 1: One alternative to the current poor radio communication system used for the field staff would be to "piggyback" on the Sheriff's system on a radio frequency uniquely assigned to the department.

FIELD - C 2: Establish safety/communication lines with ACOs in the shelter or in the field by mandating employees wear radios or walkie talkies.

FIELD - C 3: A phone tree system should be developed and implemented.

#### Vehicles/Equipment (FIELD - VIE)

FIELD - V/E 1: Replace or expedite the repair of all animal compartment cooling units on ACO trucks and take trucks out of service that are in need of repair.

FIELD - V/E 2: Each vehicle currently in the fleet should be retrofitted with lock boxes for firearms and/or controlled substances if utilized in the field.

FIELD - V/E 3: Develop a standard list identifying equipment that must be kept in each vehicle and its location.

FIELD - V/E 4: Obtain microchip scanners at a reduced price or free of charge that are to be placed in each vehicle that is actively used in the field.

FIELD - V/E 5: Establish a wash rack area and purchase cleaning equipment for ACOs to wash their vehicles.

FIELD - V/E 6: Consider installing computers into ACO vehicles that are purchased in the future.

#### Dispatch (FIELD - D) (additional recommendations listed under Information Technology)

FIELD - D 1: The field division needs an additional dispatcher or part time dispatcher to adequately provide service to the field officers.

FIELD - D 2: Develop an official listing of field calls in priority order that can be utilized by dispatchers.

#### Field Calls/Serving the Public/Statistics (FIELD - FC/PUB/S) (additional recommendations listed under Information Technology)

FIELD - FC/PUB/S 1: The Spay/Neuter Outsourcing Program should be adjusted so that adopted animals are delivered by ACOs the following day to one veterinary hospital.

FIELD - FC/PUB/S 2: The Daily Call Log should be utilized to develop statistics from which action plans can be created.

FIELD - FC/PUB/S 3: Develop an accurate annual assessment of the number of field call responses based on call description.

- Use the information to perform a cost/benefit analysis of continuing dead animal pick up or contracting this service out to a private agency.

#### Training (FIELD - T)

FIELD - T 1: The ACO Supervisor or an officer should be designated as the official training officer.

FIELD - T 2: Dedicate an annual pre-determined amount of time to off site training for officers.

## Shelter Service

There are six areas of recommendation identified in the subject area of Shelter Service. In order of highest priority they are: safety, disease prevention, animal care, supervision, identification/inventory, and service to the public.

### Safety (SHELTER - S)

SHELTER - S 1: A collection of restraint devices (leashes, ropes and a Rabies pole) should be permanently placed, visible, and easily accessible in the kennel area.

SHELTER - S 2: No dog shall be relocated within the shelter (including dogs transferred from kennels to an outdoor exercise enclosure) without being placed on a leash, rope, Rabies pole, in a carrier/transport cage, or gurney (if ill or injured) and will be moved individually.

SHELTER - S 3: Animals with a bite history, attempted bites or similar behavior resulting in a public safety concern, should be considered unadoptable and not be adopted or transferred; such animals should be humanely euthanized.

SHELTER - S 4: At the Tahoe Shelter:

- Establish safety policies and provide training for staff.
- Dogs should only be released into the outdoor exercise enclosure (excluding adoption interactions) when the shelter is not open to the public.
- Whenever dogs are in the outdoor exercise area, the door should be locked and secured from the inside.
- A small window should be cut in the door leading to the outdoor exercise area.
- The entrance to the bowl washing room should be locked and not accessible to the public during open hours of operation.
- Feral cats should be housed separately from adoptable cats.
  - ✓ If this is not possible, moveable, professional signage that can be placed on feral cat cages (indicating "dangerous, don't touch") should be available in cat holding rooms.
- All animals should be placed in species specific appropriate caging and relinquished/impounded animals should not be housed in the front lobby of the shelter.

SHELTER - S 5: Dog quarantine area at the Auburn Shelter:

- Quarantine dogs should not be allowed to roam freely in any area of the shelter.
- Dogs in quarantine should be placed in an empty kennel while their permanent enclosure is being cleaned.
- A Rabies pole in good working condition should be permanently placed in the quarantine area.

SHELTER - S 6: Dogs in the following circumstances should not be rotated outside into the exercise pens unsupervised:

- ✓ Dogs in protective custody,
- ✓ Dogs that are personal property,
- ✓ Dogs involved with pending animal cruelty/abuse cases,

SHELTER - S 7: Dogs in the following circumstances should not be rotated outside into the exercise pens:

- ✓ Dogs in quarantine,
- ✓ Dogs in isolation,
- ✓ Dogs that have been involved in a provoked or unprovoked bite attempt or bite,
- ✓ Dogs with a documented history of aggressive behavior (towards animals or people).

SHELTER - S 8: Establish safety/communication lines with ACTs by mandating they wear radios or walkie-talkies while working in the shelter and/or transporting animals in ACO trucks or County vehicles.

SHELTER - S 9: Purchase key locks for all holding cages for animals impounded into the shelter.

- ✓ All animal enclosures (cages, kennels) should be locked whenever the facility is open to the public.

SHELTER - S 10: Euthanasia should only be performed in the designated euthanasia room.

SHELTER - S 11: All kennel guillotine doors should be repaired or replaced. .

SHELTER - S 12: Repair the missing ceiling sections in the Feral Cat Room.

SHELTER - S 13: ACO Trucks without a functioning radio should not be in service and not used by ACT staff.

SHELTER - S 14: The County must uniformly train all employees on the official Behavior Assessment procedure if they are involved with the adoption process.

SHELTER - S 15: The shelter Public Address (PA) system should be audible in the back parking lot area of the Auburn shelter.

SHELTER - S 16: The RFA (Rabies fluorescent antibody) enclosure needs to be repaired and secured or relocated to a more secure room within the shelter.

SHELTER - S 17: County Counsel should develop a waiver for Animal Services when animals are adopted/transferred that may exhibit behavior problems, but are not assessed to pose serious public safety concerns.

SHELTER - S 18: Squeeze cages should be purchased to facilitate humane handling of feral cats and wildlife when administering pre-euthanasia anesthetics.

SHELTER - S 19: Plexiglass shields should be purchased for handling difficult cats in cages.

SHELTER - S 20: All spray bottles used for cleaning cages and other daily spot cleaning must have a label identifying its contents.

SHELTER - S 21: The door to the dead animal cooler should have a padlock placed on it.

#### Disease Prevention (SHELTER - DP)

SHELTER - DP 1: Develop Policy and Procedure for dogs requiring medical treatment and isolation.

SHELTER - DP 2: Animals that are in quarantine for rabies should not be moved from isolation in order to limit exposure to other animals and people.

SHELTER - DP 3: Floors in cat holding areas should be resurfaced so that they are smooth, impervious, and easily cleaned.

SHELTER - DP 4: ACT staff should follow standard protocols designating concentrations of cleaning/sanitizing solutions for floors and in spray bottles for cages.

SHELTER - DP 5: After spraying disinfectant on cage walls during cleaning, staff should wipe off solution using individual cloth towels for each cage, or disposable paper towels.

SHELTER - DP 6: Staff should utilize the commercial dishwasher in the Isolation Cleaning Room for all bowl washing rather than hand washing bowls from cat holding areas in the sink along with litter pans.

SHELTER - DP 7: Install wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the animal holding areas and corridors for use by staff and the public.

SHELTER - DP 8: The dead animal cooler (including barrels and floors) needs to be thoroughly cleaned on a weekly basis.

#### Animal Care (SHELTER - AC)

SHELTER - AC 1: Department food orders should include canned dog and puppy, and canned cat and kitten products.

SHELTER - AC 2: Consider using Feral Cat Dens for animal housing in the Feral Cat Room.

#### Supervision (SHELTER - SUP)

SHELTER - SUP 1: Reduce the current level of responsibility for the ACT Supervisor so that he is not also performing duties as the acting ACO and Clerical Supervisor.

SHELTER - SUP 2: A system should be put in place that assigns an ACT, as the Acting Supervisor or Lead (title dependent on job description restrictions) when the ACT Supervisor is not on site or unavailable.

SHELTER - SUP 3: The ACT Supervisor should make up a master list of short and long term clean up projects at the shelter (indoor and outdoor) and set up a schedule for completing each project.

#### Identification/Inventory (SHELTER ID/INV)

SHELTER - ID/INV 1: All animals impounded into the shelter must wear external identification.

SHELTER - ID/INV 2: Microchip scanners must be kept at the shelter and each animal must be scanned at initial entry to the facility and at final disposition (adoption or euthanasia).

SHELTER - ID/INV 3: An accurate daily inventory must be performed by the ACO Supervisor or appointed Lead which itemizes every animal housed at the shelter.

SHELTER - ID/INV 4: At the Tahoe Shelter, remove individual cat cage cards from the cork board in the cat room and affix cards to the cage doors of each respective cat.

- ✓ Utilize professional signage that indicates that cats are temporarily out of their permanent enclosures, but will soon be replaced.

SHELTER - ID/INV 5: Additional safeguards against animal identification error include taking digital photographs of animals and incorporating those pictures onto the cage cards.

Service to the Public (SHELTER - PUB)

SHELTER - PUB 1: The stray dog section should be unlocked and available to the public for viewing animals during public hours.

SHELTER - PUB 2: ACT staff should be trained to rotate from the kennel to the clerical area, performing duties related to animal handling.

SHELTER - PUB 3: Post a copy of the cage/impound cards of cats that are housed in isolation and out of view of the public in the entrance to the animal holding area.

SHELTER - PUB 4: Both shelters should use a County approved owner relinquishment form which should be readily available for review by potential adopters.

**Information Technology**

There are six areas of recommendation identified in the subject area of Information Technology. In order of highest priority they are: general software/hardware issues, animal care data management, clerical data management, field service data management, phone tree, and website issues.

General software/hardware issues (IT - SOF/HARD)

IT- SOF/HARD 1: PetWhere should be replaced by a more progressive and user friendly system.

The new software system should produce customized reports.

IT - SOF/HARD 2: The database should be relocated to a server class machine and relocated from the administrative office.

IT - SOF/HARD 3: Consider upgrading from the 16-bit to a 32-bit system. Upgrade to Microsoft SQL (database server with sequel database on it.)

IT - SOF/HARD 4: Staff utilizing the animal inventory software should log onto a network.

IT - SOF/HARD 5: Once network conductivity has been established, the database at Tahoe needs to be incorporated into the Auburn database. There needs to be one database and it needs to be located at the Auburn Shelter.

Animal Care Data Management (IT - ACDM)

IT - ACDM 1: Upgrade the software to ensure all medical treatments, observations, behavior information etc. that is collected on an animal, can be entered into the animal inventory system as the official permanent record.

IT - ACDM 2: Create a designated area for taking digital photographs of impounded animals (i.e., relocate the laundry room to the nearby storage area and change the set up of the room to accommodate the camera system.)

IT - ACDM 3: Expand the role of Animal Care staff to drive processes

like photographing animals and entering final dispositions in a timely manner in order to maintain a current website.

IT - ACOM 4: Consider placing a County computer terminal at The Cat House once the software has been updated.

#### Clerical Data Management (IT - CDM)

IT - CDM 1: Develop an itemized overview of the computer accounting needs for the department and then upgrade the current animal management system.

IT - CDM 2: Consider upgraded software that can:

- ✓ Expedite license processing and provide payment of license fees on line,
- ✓ Streamline information entry by decreasing the number of screens used.

IT - CDM 3: Expedite public transactions by reducing clerical counters to one counter where the Point of Sale machine and printer would all be conveniently located.

IT - CDM 4: The Senior Administrative Clerk should amend the current protocol on generating receipts and eliminate extra printouts.

#### Field Service Data Management (IT - FSDM)

IT - FSDM 1: Incorporate software programs:

- ✓ With a separate application screen for law enforcement functions that will expedite an officer's ability to obtain background information,
- ✓ To include document security, date, time, and identification of staff when entries are changed,
- ✓ With extensive note/information input in report sections,
- ✓ That utilize a simple drag and drop routine where the dispatcher on a single screen can assign the call to a designated officer as well as relay the information related to the call,
- ✓ That are user friendly when generating field statistics.

IT - FSDM 2: Safety

- ✓ Incorporate software programs that:
  - Provide time tracking systems to improve supervision and accountability of officers in the field.
  - Utilize GPS tracking for officers (ie., HLP Inc.).

#### Phone Tree (IT - PT)

IT - PT 1: Develop a phone tree system.

#### Website Issues (IT - WI)

IT - WI 1: Place animals on the website that are currently available for adoption in "real time."

## I. Background & Purpose

Early in 2005, Placer County Animal Services experienced vacancies in key management and supervisory positions. Administrators utilized this time period to take an objective look at the department's operations which included identifying a private consulting firm to perform a complete review to be completed by July 2005.

Animal Legal and Veterinary Medical Consulting Service (ALVMCS) was contacted by Placer County Administrators in April 2005 to provide assistance in conducting a comprehensive operational review of the current systems and practices, both in Auburn and the satellite operation in Lake Tahoe.

## II. Scope & Parameters

ALVMCS conducted three separate site visits totaling six days of "hands on" evaluation time with shelter and field staff of Placer County Animal Services in May and June 2005.

The department provided background information, documents, charts, logs, forms, and the 2004 revised Placer County Animal Services Manual of Policy and Procedure to ALVMCS for review prior to commencement of the site visits.

Three separate weeks of site visits lasting two days each were completed as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Milestones</u>
May 23	Auburn	<b>Shelter Services</b> (cleaning/sanitation, housing, feeding, identification, impounding, security, fostering)
May 24	Auburn	<b>Shelter Services</b> (euthanasia, quarantine, rescue, occupational health/safety, supervision) <b>Veterinary Services</b> (treatments, disease screening, spay/neuter outsourcing, veterinary emergency hospitals, isolation).
May 31	Auburn	<b>Information Technology</b> (PetWhere software, security, network link, generation of reports, officer safety, website, clerical functions, licensing)
	Auburn	<b>Shelter Services</b> – Night meeting with Rescues

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Milestones</u>
June 1	Tahoe	<p><b>Shelter Services/Field Operations</b> housing, cleaning/sanitation, feeding, identification, euthanasia, quarantine, supervision, security, occupational health/safety, field calls, firearms, safety, vehicles)</p> <p><b>Veterinary Services</b> (treatments, disease screening, spay/neuter outsourcing, veterinary emergency hospitals, isolation)</p>
June 13	Auburn	<p><b>Field Operations</b> (ridealong, field calls, firearms, safety, cruelty investigations, dead animal pickup, veterinary emergency hospitals, vehicles, supervision, training, scheduling, ACO concerns)</p>
June 14	Auburn	<p><b>Field Operations</b> - Dispatch (radios, telephone lines, staffing, response time, supervision)</p> <p><b>Administration</b> - Clerical Services (PetWhere, supervision, protocols, licensing, cross training, animal receiving, public interaction, forms, safety)</p>

### III. Findings & Recommendations

This section contains a summary of the Findings and Recommendations compiled from the Manual of Policy and Procedure review and three site visits:

May 23 - 24, 2005

May 31 - June 1, 2005

June 13 - 14, 2005

#### A. Administration

For the purposes of this report the category of administration contains findings and recommendations related to: the supervisory divisions of the operation (upper management), the clerical division, occupational safety and health, human resources, and other areas that require administration approval/oversight for action or change in status.

##### Supervision/Human Resources (ADM - SHR)

###### **ADM - S/HR Finding One:**

Staff need direction and permanent leadership for the shelter and field operations.

###### **ADM - S/HR Recommendation One:**

The County should fill the Client Services Program Manager position as soon as possible.

###### **ADM - S/HR Finding Two:**

The Manual of Policy and Procedure needs to be amended to contain procedures and is incomplete and/or inaccurate in many areas when comparing actual practices currently performed within the shelter and field services.

###### **ADM - S/HR Recommendation Two:**

The County should begin revising the Manual of Policy and Procedure to reflect the written suggestions submitted by the contractor and add to the Manual all recommendations listed in this report that the County chooses to implement.

###### **ADM - S/HR Finding Three:**

(Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records' Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

###### **ADM - S/HR Recommendation Three:**

(Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -Government Sections 620-626254.*)

###### **ADM - S/HR Recommendation Four:**

(Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

**ADM - S/HR Finding Five:**

According to clerical staff, there is no official Clerical Supervisor on site at the Auburn Shelter.

**ADM - S/HR Recommendation Five:**

An on-site Supervising Clerk should be designated.

**ADM - S/HR Finding Six:**

Clerical staff performs clerical and animal impound duties which can cause increased customer wait times.

**ADM - S/HR Recommendation Six:**

ACT staff should be trained to rotate from the kennel to the clerical area, performing duties related to animal handling.

**ADM - S/HR Finding Seven:**

There are currently no consistent County protocols/procedures or check and balance system to follow when completing daily clerical duties and when training permanent and temporary employees in this division.

**ADM - S/HR Recommendation Seven:**

Develop an itemization of clerical responsibilities, checks and balances, and training guidelines at all three Levels (Senior, Journey, and Entry).

**ADM - S/HR Finding Eight:**

There is distrust, animosity and disapproval between staff at the Auburn and Tahoe facilities.

**ADM - S/HR Recommendation Eight:**

Administrators/Supervisors need to improve staff morale and teamwork between both facilities.

Safety (ADM - S)

**ADM - S Finding One:**

The entrance to the back parking lot at the Auburn Shelter has a rolling gate that remains unlocked during hours the shelter is open to the public and is not monitored by personnel or video.

**ADM - S Recommendation One:**

The rolling gate into the back of the facility should have a chain and padlock that is secured at all times.

**ADM - S Finding Two:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, there are no safety precautions taken to alert staff or the public that several dogs may be roaming freely in the easily accessible outdoor exercise area. There are no precautions to prevent accidental entry to this area or direct contact with these unrestrained and possibly unpredictable animals.

**ADM - S Recommendation Two:**

Establish and provide training for staff on security precautions associated with public access to the outdoor exercise enclosure at the Tahoe Shelter.

**ADM - S Finding Three:**

There is no official procedure when handling a disgruntled citizen, chain of command, or readily accessible supervisor that would assist the clerical staff if a situation in the lobby escalated with a citizen to a potential safety concern.

**ADM - S Recommendation Three:**

Develop procedures for handling escalating situations in the front lobby, including available staff to assist and make definitive decisions on

controversial issues.

**ADM - S Finding Four:**

At the Auburn Shelter, there is an emergency call button located under the counter in the clerical area which activates a doorbell that rings in the ACT trailer (former ACO trailer). The objective of activating this doorbell was to alert a uniformed officer that assistance is needed in the front lobby.

**ADM - S Recommendation Four:**

Utilize a doorbell alert system at the public counters that allows clerks to contact available employees who can provide protection/assistance to the clerical division.

**ADM - S Finding Five:**

There is no protective glass at the counter area between the clerks and the general public.

**ADM - S Recommendation Five:**

Installation of protective glass at the public counters should be considered.

Occupational Safety and Health (ADM - OSH)

**ADM - OSH Finding One:**

There is no posted Fire or Emergency Evacuation Plan in any region of either of the two shelters.

**ADM - OSH Recommendation One:**

Develop an emergency action plan for both shelters.

**ADM - OSH Finding Two:**

The shelter does not have Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for any of the products that are used by staff on a daily basis.

**ADM - OSH Recommendation Two:**

Obtain and organize in a notebook, MSDS for all pharmaceuticals, laboratory reagents, cleaning solutions and other potentially hazardous products used in the shelter.

**ADM - OSH Finding Three:**

Throughout the assessment period there were a variety of concerns regarding employee injury and safety that were documented. Every California employer must establish, implement, and maintain a written Injury and Illness Prevention (IIP) Program and a copy must be maintained at each worksite.

**ADM - OSH Recommendation Three:**

Develop an IIP Program and select a Program Administrator.

**ADM - OSH Finding Four:**

Auburn ACT staff are utilizing the same refrigerator in the ACT trailer to store medical supplies and food for human consumption.

**ADM - OSH Recommendation Four:**

An additional refrigerator should be purchased for the ACT trailer.

## Building Renovations/Equipment Replacement (ADM - BR/ER)

### **ADM – BR/ER Finding One:**

Floors at the Auburn Shelter in cat holding rooms have numerous areas of damage, uneven surfaces and other irregularities.

### **ADM – BR/ER Recommendation One:**

Replace damaged flooring in animal holding areas and lobby with troweled epoxy resin flooring over concrete.

### **ADM – BR/ER Finding Two: Tahoe Shelter**

The poor condition of the building and inanimate objects it contains not only contribute to the public's first impression of the department's professionalism, but may result in public safety concerns.

### **ADM – BR/ER Recommendation Two: Tahoe Shelter:**

- ✓ The rusted chairs directly outside the entrance to the facility should be removed and replaced by chairs that are appropriate for remaining outdoors and are secured to the facility.
- ✓ The worn and dirty carpet runner needs to be cleaned or replaced with a vinyl, non-carpeted entry floor mat.
- ✓ The following professional signage should be obtained and placed in the Tahoe shelter:
  - Entrance to the facility indicating clerical, animal relinquishment, stray and adoptable animals
  - Entrance to the Dog Kennels (indicating stray and adoptable animals)
  - Entrance to the Cat Room (indicating stray and adoptable animals)
  - No public entry to the bowl washing room on both sides of the door
  - No public entry on the exit door to the outdoor exercise enclosure

### **ADM – BR/ER Finding Three:**

At the Auburn Shelter the entrance to the lobby is currently set up in a manner that is not user friendly and poses the risk of altercations between animals that are brought in by the public.

### **ADM – BR/ER Recommendation Three:**

Both doors to the lobby should be utilized and the counters redesigned so that clerical staff could work two counters from one side of the room, and the opposite side of the room should be used for animal receiving (stray and surrenders).

- ✓ The live animal side of the lobby should contain a bank of holding cages on a moveable rack, a desk area, and space to place cat traps.

### **ADM – BR/ER Finding Four:**

Clerks were observed completing transactions with constant interruptions by members of the public wandering into the lobby and asking where animals and services were located throughout the shelter.

### **ADM – BR/ER Recommendation Four:**

Install signage at the entrance to the Auburn shelter that directs the public to the clerical area, viewing adoptable animals, or searching for lost pets.

## **B. Veterinary Services**

For the purposes of this report the category of veterinary services contains findings and recommendations related to: medical staff (i.e., veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians) medical and surgical care of shelter animals, screening tests for disease, performing euthanasia, pharmaceuticals, and controlled substances.

### Staffing (VET - S)

#### **VET - S Finding One:**

Animal Services does not currently have a full or part-time veterinarian or Registered Veterinary Technician on staff which has resulted in a reduced level of medical care for ill animals.

#### **VET - S Recommendation One:**

Hire a full-time California licensed veterinarian, and hire a full-time Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT).

#### **VET - S Finding Two:**

ACTs are acting as unregistered assistants when administering medications and performing screening tests for diseases and based on the results of those tests, making a diagnosis.

#### **VET - S Recommendation Two:**

Diagnostic tests should only be performed by veterinary staff when test result interpretation constitutes a diagnosis on an animal.

### Euthanasia Procedures (VET - EP)

#### **VET - EP Finding One:**

ACOs and ACTs at both facilities are not following the same policies and procedures when performing euthanasia.

#### **VET - EP Recommendation One:**

All County employees performing euthanasia should be trained and certified in humane euthanasia procedures.

#### **VET - EP Finding Two:**

ACOs and ACTs are not consistently performing euthanasia in the designated euthanasia room; at the Auburn Shelter in the feral cat room, RFA room, and at the Tahoe Shelter occasionally in the front lobby for owner requested euthanasia.

#### **VET - EP Recommendation Two:**

Animals should be euthanized in a designated room that is non-accessible to the public.

#### **VET - EP Finding Three:**

Staff from the Tahoe Shelter told the consultant that pet owners are allowed to restrain their pets during owner requested euthanasia.

#### **VET - EP Recommendation Three:**

Only County staff should be allowed to restrain animals undergoing the euthanasia procedure.

**VET - EP Finding Four:**

Staff from the Tahoe Shelter told the consultant that pet owners are allowed to observe the owner requested procedure.

**VET - EP Recommendation Four:**

Members of the public should not be allowed to be present in the room where the euthanasia procedure is performed.

Pharmaceuticals (VET - PHARM)

**VET - PHARM Finding One:**

ACTs remove controlled substances (pre-euthanasia anesthetics and euthanasia solution) from the euthanasia room when performing the procedure in noneuthanasia designated rooms in the facility. Once the pharmaceuticals are used in these situations, the controlled substance log is not completed until the technician returns to the euthanasia room.

**VET - PHARM Recommendation One:**

Any controlled substances should be properly secured and logged.

**VET - PHARM Finding Two:**

When performing euthanasia outside of the room designated for this procedure, ACOs and ACTs take pre-loaded unlabeled syringes of euthanasia solution and perform the procedure in areas that are accessible to the public.

**VET - PHARM Recommendation Two:**

All medications should be stored in an employee only access area and properly labeled.

**VET - PHARM Finding Three:**

Medications prescribed for shelter animals are being stored in clear plastic jackets that are hanging from the kennel or cage door and accessible to members of the public.

**VET - PHARM Recommendation Three:**

Medications should not be accessible to the public or to volunteers.

**VET - PHARM Finding Four:**

At the Tahoe Shelter expired medications (antibiotics) were identified in the controlled substance safe that were prescribed by local veterinarians for specific animals that no longer reside at the shelter and are being used on animals currently impounded at the facility.

**VET - PHARM Recommendation Four:**

All medications prescribed by local veterinarians for specific animals should only be administered to the animal identified on the prescription label.

### **c. Field Operations**

For the purposes of this report the category of field operations contains findings and recommendations related to: firearms, officer safety, staffing, scheduling/shifts, animal control vehicles, field calls, field training, dispatch, communication - radios, and shelter duties performed by officers at the Tahoe shelter.

#### Safety (FIELD - SAF)

##### **FIELD - SAF Finding One:**

Officers identified different protocols and procedures for field services (including handling firearms) during the assessment.

##### **FIELD - SAF Recommendation One:**

Update the Policy and Procedure Manual for Field Services to include detailed protocols mandating safety procedures and requirements.

##### **FIELD - SAF Finding Two:**

Ballistic vests were distributed to officers that were outdated and previously used. Some officers stated that wearing ballistic vests was part of the uniform; others commented that wearing a vest was a personal decision made by each officer.

##### **FIELD - SAF Recommendation Two:**

Ballistic vests should only be distributed to ACOs, when they are approved for full protection based on manufacturer recommendations.

- ✓ Vests that are used, damaged, or do not provide full protection should not be distributed to ACOs in the field.
- ✓ Field Operations Policies and Procedures should indicate if wearing vests is required or optional when on duty.

##### **FIELD - SAF Finding Three:**

Officers complain that they are unable to work effectively in the field and are mandated to leave the scene of a field call if any conflict arises with members of the public regardless of the circumstances.

##### **FIELD - SAF Recommendation Three:**

Law enforcement staff should be trained to diffuse conflict situations with citizens when working in the field.

##### **FIELD - SAF Finding Four:**

Officers do not possess expertise/training with equipment utilized for animal restraint and self defense.

##### **FIELD - SAF Recommendation Four:**

Provide lariat/rope and tazer training for all ACO staff.

#### Firearms (FIELD - F)

##### **FIELD - F Finding One:**

The contractor was unable to confirm that all of the standard requirements listed in recommendations below are met if officers are wearing a sidearm.

##### **FIELD - F Recommendation One:** If ACOs are required to wear a sidearm:

- ✓ ACOs must be wearing a duty belt with a holster which is approved and authorized by the sheriff's department.

The department must select a person qualified or trained as a Rangemaster or utilize the Sheriff's Department Rangemaster.

- ✓ ACO Supervisor must maintain documentation for training and bi-annual qualification.
- ✓ The department must select a person qualified or trained as an Armorer or utilize the Sheriff's Department Armorer.
- ✓ ACO Supervisor should perform random, weekly inspections of officer's firearms.

**FIELD - F Finding Two:**

Officers keep loaded, unsecured firearms in their locked vehicles while completing field calls away from the vehicle.

**FIELD - F Recommendation Two:**

Loaded firearms should not be kept in County vehicles unless they are properly mounted and secured in the vehicles.

**FIELD - F Finding Three:**

The County's current Use of Force Policy does not include a section on Extended Use of Force, up to and including Deadly Force.

**FIELD - F Recommendation Three:**

Firearms Policy and Procedure must include a section on the Use of Force Policy, including Deadly Force, if officers are required to carry firearms.

**FIELD - F Finding Four:**

All officers currently have access to the weapons safe.

**FIELD - F Recommendation Four:**

Firearms Policy and Procedure should identify only one to two officers who will receive the combination to the firearms safe.

**FIELD - F Finding Five:**

Officers exhibited concern about "command presence" and the effects of not wearing a sidearm.

**FIELD - F Recommendation Five:**

The department should train ACOs that they have "command presence" with or without firearms because they are wearing a badge, enforcing laws, writing citations and performing investigations/search and seizure.

Supervision (FIELD - SUP)

**FIELD - SUP Finding One:**

Officers exhibited concern over management/supervisory expertise and guidance with law enforcement questions and development of Policies and Procedures.

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation One:**

The County should permanently fill the ACO Supervisor position.

- ✓ Until the position is filled, administration should have the final word in policy changes but should allow field staff to have a voice in discussing and providing input in the changes.

**FIELD - SUP Finding Two:** (Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -Government Sections 620-626254.*)

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation Two:** (Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

**FIELD - SUP Finding Three:**

Officers do not follow a chain of command when questions or problems arise in the field and often contact fellow officers for advice rather than Supervisors.

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation Three:**

A standard chain of command protocol that correlates with experienced and reliable supervisors that are respected by the ACOs and reachable when officers are in the field should be developed.

**FIELD - SUP Finding Four:**

Auburn officers complained that Tahoe officers are not held accountable for field call completion and administration does not follow up or recommend disciplinary action regarding incidents of animals disappearing from the Tahoe Shelter.

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation Four:**

Officers at both locations should be accountable, evaluated, and supervised similarly.

**FIELD - SUP Finding Five:**

Officers complained that supervision is selective in addressing issues of tardiness and attendance among officers. In addition, some officers commented that their "beats" are not covered if they are absent and upon return to duty, they are back logged with calls.

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation Five:**

Supervisors must monitor and address ACO issues of attendance, tardiness, and "beat" coverage.

**FIELD - SUP Finding Six:**

Field decisions and issuing citations by officers are often reversed by administration if the public complains.

**FIELD - SUP Recommendation Six:**

The County should implement an official process through Field Services for dismissing a citation issued by an ACO.

#### Communication (FIELD - C)

**FIELD - C Finding One:**

Radio transmission from dispatcher to officers in the field is poor and non-existent in some parts of the County.

**FIELD - C Recommendation One:**

One alternative to the current poor radio communication system used for the field staff would be to "piggyback" on the Sheriff's system on a radio frequency uniquely assigned to the department.

**FIELD - C Finding Two:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, ACOs perform kennel duties alone which may involve potentially dangerous animals and have no "life line" or communication if they should be injured or placed in a dangerous situation.

**FIELD - C Recommendation Two:**

Establish safety/communication lines with ACOs in the shelter or in the field by mandating employees wear radios or walkie-talkies.

**FIELD - C Finding Three:**

The dispatcher is answering all telephone lines including non-emergency calls from the public such as shelter hours of operation, directions to the shelter etc. **FIELD - C Recommendation Three:**

A phone tree system should be developed and implemented.

#### Vehicles/Equipment (FIELD – V/E)

**FIELD – V/E Finding One:**

Some cooling units for the animal compartments on ACO trucks do not function properly and the trucks continue to be dispatched to the field and carry animals during the approaching summer season of hot weather.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation One:**

Replace or expedite the repair of all animal compartment cooling units on ACO trucks and take trucks out of service that are in need of repair.

**FIELD – V/E Finding Two:**

Officers keep loaded, firearms in their locked vehicles while completing field calls away from the vehicle.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation Two:**

Each vehicle currently in the fleet should be retrofitted with lock boxes for firearms and/or controlled substances if utilized in the field.

**FIELD – V/E Finding Three:**

Contractor observed and confirmed with officers that there is no protocol for standard vehicle set up which would include specific safety gear, location of the gear, standards for cleanliness, disposal of sharps etc.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation Three:**

Develop a standard list identifying equipment that must be kept in each vehicle and its location.

**FIELD – V/E Finding Four:**

Officers do not have access to microchip scanners while in the field.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation Four:**

Obtain microchip scanners at a reduced price or free of charge that are to be placed in each vehicle that is actively used in the field.

**FIELD – V/E Finding Five:**

There is no official washing station for ACO vehicles, no cleaning supplies, and the power spray unit is unavailable when being used by ACT staff to clean the parking lot.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation Five:**

Establish a wash rack area and purchase cleaning equipment for ACOs to wash their vehicles.

**FIELD – V/E Finding Six:**

The ACOs do not have access to computers in their vehicles which could provide animal identification for lost animals picked up in the field through the County licensing database allowing for their return directly to the owner rather than impoundment.

**FIELD – V/E Recommendation Six:**

Consider installing computers into ACO vehicles that are purchased in the future.

Dispatch (FIELD - D) (additional recommendations listed under Information Technology)

**FIELD - D Finding One:**

There is currently one full-time dispatcher and only several ACOs that are partially trained in dispatch to replace her if she takes vacation or sick days which results in further short staffing in the field.

**FIELD - D Recommendation One:**

The field division needs an additional dispatcher or part-time dispatcher to adequately provide service to the field officers.

**FIELD - D Finding Two:**

There is no official listing of field calls in priority order for use by dispatch, ACOs, and Sheriff's department dispatch.

**FIELD - D Recommendation Two:**

Develop an official listing of field calls in priority order that can be utilized by dispatchers.

Field Calls/Serving the Public/Statistics (FIELD - FC/PUB/S) (additional recommendations listed under Information Technology)

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Finding One:**

The current Spay/Neuter Outsourcing Program involves daily delivery of adopted animals to multiple private veterinary hospitals which can take officers several hours each morning resulting in an increased number of field calls not answered in a timely manner for that officer's "beat."

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Recommendation One:**

The Spay/Neuter Outsourcing Program should be adjusted so that adopted animals are delivered by ACOs the following day to one veterinary hospital.

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Finding Two:**

Supervisors are not monitoring when and how the Daily Call Logs are being completed which may lead to errors or report omissions.

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Recommendation Two:**

The Daily Call Log should be utilized to develop statistics from which action plans can be created and should be monitored by Supervisors.

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Finding Three:**

The Dispatcher categorized "dead animal pick up" field calls as very time consuming and among the top calls that are not responded to in a timely manner.

**FIELD - FC/PUB/S Recommendation Three:**

Develop an accurate annual assessment of the number of field call responses based on call description.

- ✓ Use the information to perform a cost/benefit analysis of continuing dead animal pick up or contracting this service out to a private agency.

Training (FIELD - T)

**FIELD - T Finding One:**

Officers reported there is no designated training officer for new ACO recruits and often times the selected Field Training Officer (FTO) has only one year of field experience.

**FIELD - T Recommendation One:**

The ACO Supervisor or an officer should be designated as the official training officer.

**FIELD - T Finding Two:**

Officers stated that they are not offered the opportunity for off-site attendance to seminars and law enforcement training to the degree they understand is department policy.

**FIELD - T Recommendation Two:**

Dedicate an annual pre-determined amount of time to off-site training for officers.

## **D. Shelter Services**

For the purposes of this report the category of shelter services contains findings and recommendations related to: sanitation, feeding/nutrition, impound process, animal identification, disease prevention/isolation, kennel management, repairs of animal holding areas, safety, quarantine, adoptions, microchip scanning, feral cats.

### Safety (SHELTER - S)

#### **SHELTER - S Finding One:**

At both Shelters, restraint devices (leashes, ropes, and a Rabies pole) could not be located in animal holding areas, including the Quarantine room which often holds dogs with a bite history.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation One:**

A collection of restraint devices should be permanently placed, visible, and easily accessible in the kennel area.

#### **SHELTER - S Finding Two:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, potentially dangerous animals were running loose in the kennel area and bowl washing room as they were relocated to the outdoor exercise enclosure during hours the shelter was open to the public.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation Two:**

No dog shall be relocated within the shelter (including dogs transferred from kennels to an outdoor exercise enclosure) without being placed on a leash, rope, Rabies pole, in a carrier/transport cage, or gurney (if ill or injured) and will be moved individually.

#### **SHELTER - S Finding Three:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, animals are being adopted/placed that are not behaviorally assessed and/or have proven pre-existing behavior problems that may pose a public safety risk.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation Three:**

Animals with a bite history, attempted bites or similar behavior resulting in a public safety concern, should be considered unadoptable and not be adopted or transferred; such animals should be humanely euthanized.

#### **SHELTER - S Finding Four:**

The contractor observed and/or discussed with the ACO at the Tahoe Shelter his disregard for safety practices pertaining to moving dogs to and from the outdoor exercise enclosure, housing of feral cats, and housing exotics in the front lobby.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation Four:**

At the Tahoe Shelter:

- ✓ Establish safety policies and provide training for staff
- ✓ Dogs should only be released into the outdoor exercise enclosure (excluding adoption interactions) when the shelter is not open to the public.
- ✓ Whenever dogs are in the outdoor exercise area, the door should be locked and secured from the inside.
- ✓ A small window should be cut in the door leading to the outdoor exercise area

- ✓ The entrance to the bowl washing room should be locked and not accessible to the public during open hours of operation.
- ✓ Feral cats should be housed separately from adoptable cats.
  - If this is not possible, moveable, professional signage that can be placed on feral cat cages (indicating "dangerous, don't touch") should be available in cat holding rooms.
- ✓ All animals should be placed in species specific appropriate caging and relinquished/impounded animals should not be housed in the front lobby of the shelter.

**SHELTER - S Finding Five:**

ACTs at the Auburn Shelter did not practice safe techniques when handling dogs in the Quarantine section.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Five:**

Dog quarantine area at the Auburn Shelter:

- ✓ Quarantine dogs should not be allowed to roam freely in any area of the shelter.
- ✓ Dogs in quarantine should be placed in an empty kennel while their permanent enclosure is being cleaned.
- ✓ A Rabies pole in good working condition should be permanently placed in the quarantine area.

**SHELTER - S Finding Six:**

Most dogs being held long term at the Auburn Shelter are being rotated into the outdoor unsecured exercise pens which are accessible by the public due to the unlocked rolling gate.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Six:**

Dogs in the following circumstances should not be rotated outside into the exercise pens unsupervised:

- ✓ Dogs in protective custody,
- ✓ Dogs that are personal property,
- ✓ Dogs involved with pending animal cruelty/abuse cases,

**SHELTER - S Finding Seven:**

Dogs with a history of aggression or contagious illness are being rotated outside into the exercise pens.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Seven:**

Dogs in the following circumstances should not be rotated outside into the exercise pens:

- ✓ Dogs in quarantine,
- ✓ Dogs in isolation,
- ✓ Dogs that have been involved in a provoked or unprovoked bite attempt or bite,
- ✓ Dogs with a documented history of aggressive behavior (towards animals or people).

**SHELTER - S Finding Eight:**

There are currently communication deficiencies among ACT and other shelter staff that could result in staff safety issues as the ACTs often work independently in secluded areas of the shelter with potentially dangerous animals.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Eight:**

Establish safety/communication lines with ACTs by mandating they wear radios or walkie-talkies while working in the shelter and/or transporting animals in ACO trucks or County vehicles.

**SHELTER - S Finding Nine:**

Many of the animal enclosures (cages/kennels) are not padlocked during hours that the facility is open to the public which increases the possibility that animals (especially those that are part of pending prosecution) may escape or be stolen from their enclosures.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Nine:**

Purchase key locks for all holding cages for animals impounded into the shelter.  
0 All animal enclosures (cages, kennels) should be locked whenever the facility is open to the public.

**SHELTER - S Finding Ten:**

The contractor observed ACT staff at the Auburn Shelter performing euthanasia in the feral cat holding room and was told by staff that euthanasia is also performed in the RFA room.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Ten:**

Euthanasia should only be performed in the designated euthanasia room.

**SHELTER - S Finding Eleven:**

The guillotine doors in kennels at the Auburn Shelter do not function which results in increased handling of dogs during daily cleaning and increased opportunity for employee injury.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Eleven:**

All kennel guillotine doors should be repaired or replaced.

**SHELTER - S Finding Twelve:**

The feral cat room ceiling at the Auburn Shelter has sections missing where cats gain access and can travel throughout the building and if not located have the potential for injury or death by starvation.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Twelve:**

Repair the missing ceiling sections in the Feral Cat Room.

**SHELTER - S Finding Thirteen:**

ACT staff at the Auburn Shelter was observed using ACO trucks that did not have functioning radios and therefore were unable to communicate with the shelter in case of an emergency once they were in the field transporting animals.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Thirteen:**

ACO Trucks without a functioning radio should not be in service and not used by ACT staff.

**SHELTER - S Finding Fourteen:**

The ACO at the Tahoe Shelter that interacted with the contractor stated that he was not qualified or trained to make behavior determinations on animals at the shelter even though he was adopting animals to the public and that all animals impounded into the shelter would eventually be adopted. .

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Fourteen:**

The County must uniformly train all employees on the official Behavior Assessment procedure if they are involved with the adoption process.

**SHELTER - S Finding Fifteen:**

When ACT staff is working in the back parking lot of the Auburn Shelter, they do not have the ability to communicate with other areas of the shelter and the public announcement (PA) system is not audible in this section of the facility.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Fifteen:**

The shelter Public Address (PA) system should be audible in the back parking lot area of the Auburn shelter.

**SHELTER - S Finding Sixteen:**

The RFA room at the Auburn Shelter which is used for decapitation procedures in order to submit samples to the County veterinarian for Rabies testing is inadequately secured. The plywood sides do not fully come together making it easily accessible and the room contains a variety of knives and other large cutting implements.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Sixteen:**

The RFA (Rabies fluorescent antibody) enclosure needs to be repaired and secured or relocated to a more secure room within the shelter.

**SHELTER - S Finding Seventeen:**

ACT staff performing Behavior Evaluations on animals are classifying some animals with behavior problems but not identifying them specifically as possible public safety concerns.

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Seventeen:**

County Counsel should develop a waiver for Animal Services when animals are adopted/transferred that may exhibit behavior problems, but are not assessed to pose serious public safety concerns.

**SHELTER - S Finding Eighteen:**

ACT staff did not have advanced protective/animal handling equipment (only utilizing nylon leashes, Rabies poles, cat nets, and leather gloves).

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Eighteen:**

Squeeze cages should be purchased to facilitate humane handling of feral cats and wildlife when administering pre-euthanasia anesthetics.

**SHELTER - S Finding Nineteen:**

ACT staff did not have advanced protective/animal handling equipment (only utilizing nylon leashes, Rabies poles, cat nets, and leather gloves).

**SHELTER - S Recommendation Nineteen:**

Plexiglass shields should be purchased for handling difficult cats in cages.

### **SHELTER - S Finding Twenty**

Unlabeled plastic spray bottles, presumably containing cleaning solution for cage washing were located in the animal holding areas.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation Twenty:**

All spray bottles used for cleaning cages and other daily spot cleaning must have a label identifying its contents.

### **SHELTER - S Finding Twenty-One:**

Security in the rear parking lot of the Auburn Shelter is poor due to the unlocked rolling gate. The dead animal cooler is located near this gate and is unlocked, not monitored and accessible to the public which could result in removal of dead bodies or placement of unknown items/bodies in the cooler.

#### **SHELTER - S Recommendation Twenty-One:**

The door to the dead animal cooler should have a padlock placed on it.

### Disease Prevention (SHELTER - DP)

#### **SHELTER - DP Finding One:**

Dogs that present or become ill at the shelter are housed in the main kennels and not isolated. There are no standard operating procedures to reduce the spread of disease and limit disease exposure for healthy dogs.

#### **SHELTER - DP Recommendation One:**

Develop Policy and Procedure for dogs requiring medical treatment and isolation.

#### **SHELTER - DP Finding Two:**

The contractor was told by staff that dogs in the Quarantine section are allowed to exercise in the outdoor exercise area.

#### **SHELTER - DP Recommendation Two:**

Animals that are in quarantine for rabies should not be moved from isolation in order to limit exposure to other animals and people.

#### **SHELTER - DP Finding Three:**

Floors in the cat holding rooms at the Auburn Shelter have numerous areas of damage, uneven surfaces and other irregularities.

#### **SHELTER - DP Recommendation Three:**

Floors in cat holding areas should be resurfaced so that they are smooth, impervious, and easily cleaned.

#### **SHELTER - DP Finding Four:**

ACT staff at both facilities do not follow written protocols for designated concentration of cleaning solutions for floors and in spray bottles for cages.

#### **SHELTER - DP Recommendation Four:**

ACT staff should follow standard protocols designating concentrations of cleaning/sanitizing solutions for floors and in spray bottles for cages.

#### **SHELTER - DP Finding Five:**

During the morning cat cage cleaning at the Auburn Shelter, the contractor observed ACT staff using the same towel for an entire room when wiping down cages.

#### **SHELTER - DP Recommendation Five:**

After spraying disinfectant on cage walls during cleaning, staff should wipe off

solution using individual cloth towels for each cage, or disposable paper towels.

**SHELTER - DP Finding Six:**

During the morning cleaning of the cat holding rooms at the Auburn Shelter, the contractor observed ACT staff filling the sink in the hallway with soapy solution and placing dirty feeding bowls and non-disposable dirty litter pans (used for litters of kittens) together in the sink.

**SHELTER - DP Recommendation Six:**

Staff should utilize the commercial dishwasher in the Isolation Cleaning Room for all bowl washing rather than hand washing bowls from cat holding areas in the sink along with litter pans.

**SHELTER - DP Finding Seven:**

Both shelters can take additional measures to decrease the spread of disease throughout the shelter.

**SHELTER - DP Recommendation Seven:**

Install wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the animal holding areas and corridors for use by staff and the public.

**SHELTER - DP Finding Eight:**

The dead animal cooler is currently being thoroughly cleaned twice per month.

**SHELTER - DP Recommendation Eight:**

The dead animal cooler (including barrels and floors) needs to be thoroughly cleaned on a weekly basis.

Animal Care (SHELTER - AC)

**SHELTER - AC Finding One:**

ACT staff at the Auburn Shelter reported to the contractor that the County food orders do not include canned products for dogs and cats. Staff is currently purchasing these items themselves at the grocery store to feed to shelter animals with special needs.

**SHELTER - AC Recommendation One:**

Department food orders should include canned dog and puppy, and canned cat and kitten products.

**SHELTER - AC Finding Two:**

ACT staff at the Auburn Shelter are either administering pre-euthanasia anesthetics or performing euthanasia in the feral cat room.

**SHELTER - AC Recommendation Two:**

Consider using Feral Cat Dens for animal housing in the Feral Cat Room and safe transport to the euthanasia room when necessary.

Supervision (SHELTER - SUP)

**SHELTER - SUP Finding One:**

At the Auburn Shelter there is lack of follow through and accountability in the Animal Care Division because ACT staff are waiting for direction or approval from the Supervisor who is not readily available or unable to make definitive decisions and provide direction and oversight in completing tasks.

**SHELTER - SUP Recommendation One:**

Reduce the current level of responsibility for the ACT Supervisor so that he is not also performing duties as the acting ACO and Clerical Supervisor.

**SHELTER - SUP Finding Two:**

There is no designated Acting ACT Supervisor (or Lead) when ACT Supervisor is not on site or during the weekends.

**SHELTER - SUP Recommendation Two:**

A system should be put in place that assigns an ACT as the Acting Supervisor or Lead (title dependent on job description restrictions) when the ACT Supervisor is not on site or unavailable.

**SHELTER - SUP Finding Three:**

There are many pending or unfinished maintenance/clean up projects at the Auburn Shelter.

**SHELTER - SUP Recommendation Three:**

The ACT Supervisor should make up a master list of short and long term clean up projects at the shelter (indoor and outdoor) and set up a schedule for completing each project.

Identification/inventory (SHELTER ID/INV)

**SHELTER - ID/INV Finding One:**

Shelter animals do not wear external identification while housed at both facilities.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Recommendation One:**

All animals impounded into the shelter must wear external identification.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Finding Two:**

There is no microchip scanner in the euthanasia room and animals are not scanned prior to being euthanized.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Recommendation Two:**

Microchip scanners must be kept at the shelter and each animal must be scanned at initial entry to the facility and at final disposition (adoption or euthanasia).

**SHELTER - ID/INV Finding Three:**

A daily inventory of the animals and a shelter "walk through" is not currently conducted.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Recommendation Three:**

An accurate daily inventory must be performed by the ACO Supervisor or appointed Lead which itemizes every animal housed at the shelter.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Finding Four:**

Cat Cage Cards were not affixed to cages at the Tahoe Shelter. In addition, empty cat cages that served as permanent housing for cats did not have signage indicating where cats were temporarily located.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Recommendation Four:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, remove individual cat cage cards from the cork board in the cat room and affix cards to the cage doors of each respective cat.

- ✓ Utilize professional signage that indicates that cats are temporarily out of their permanent enclosures, but will soon be replaced.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Finding Five:**

Both shelters should provide as many safeguards for animals as possible in order to prevent mistaken identification and euthanasia.

**SHELTER - ID/INV Recommendation Five:**

Additional safeguards against animal identification error include taking digital photographs of animals and incorporating those pictures onto the cage cards.

Service to the Public (SHELTER - PUB)

**SHELTER - PUB Finding One:**

The stray dog side at the Auburn Shelter is locked and inaccessible to the public on a regular basis, unless a citizen finds an ACT and asks to walk through this holding area in search of a lost pet.

**SHELTER - PUB Recommendation One:**

The stray dog section should be unlocked and available to the public for viewing animals during public hours.

**SHELTER - PUB Finding Two:**

Clerical staff performs clerical and animal impound duties which can cause increased customer wait times.

**SHELTER - PUB Recommendation Two:**

ACT staff should be trained to rotate from the kennel to the clerical area, performing duties related to animal handling.

**SHELTER - PUB Finding Three:**

Cats that are housed in isolation at the Auburn Shelter are currently inaccessible for public viewing.

**SHELTER - PUB Recommendation Three:**

Post a copy of the cage/impound cards of cats that are housed in isolation and out of view of the public in the entrance to the animal holding area.

**SHELTER - PUB Finding Four:**

At the Tahoe Shelter, information collected on owner relinquished animals is not readily accessible to potential adopters via the County approved form.

**SHELTER - PUB Recommendation Four:**

Both shelters should use a County approved owner relinquishment form which should be readily available for review by potential adopters.

## **E. Information Technology**

For the purposes of this report the category of information technology contains findings and recommendations related to: animal inventory software programs, database security, generation of reports, dispatch assigning field calls, time tracking systems, digital photographs of shelter animals, website, clerical issues, and cage card updates.

### General software/hardware issues (IT - SOF/HARD)

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Finding One:**

The current animal inventory system, PetWhere has been in place for over eight years and has reached the end of its lifecycle (support has been discontinued for this system), the system is not user friendly, and can not perform report/statistical functions as currently needed by the department.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Recommendation One:**

PetWhere should be replaced by a more progressive and user friendly system.

- ✓ The new software system should produce customized reports.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Finding Two:**

The current data base is FoxPro Multi-user 2.9 which is contained on a desktop machine in the office currently occupied by the acting Client Services Program Manager at the Auburn Shelter and is remotely backed up using Onmi-Back.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Recommendation Two:**

The database should be relocated to a server class machine and relocated from the administrative office.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Finding Three:**

The PetWhere software program is a 16-bit client that does not employ client-server database methodologies.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Recommendation Three:**

Consider upgrading from the 16-bit to a 32-bit system.

- ✓ Upgrade to Microsoft SQL (database server with sequel database on it.)

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Finding Four:**

The server should be relocated to a server class machine to enhance speed and reliability.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Recommendation Four:**

Staff utilizing the animal inventory software should log onto a network.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Finding Five:**

The Tahoe Shelter enters their animal inventory data on a stand-alone system which is backed up by a separate tape drive. The data between the Tahoe and Auburn Shelters is asynchronous, rather than shared.

#### **IT - SOF/HARD Recommendation Five:**

Once network conductivity has been established, the database at Tahoe needs to be incorporated into the Auburn database.

- ✓ There needs to be one database and it needs to be located at the Auburn Shelter.

#### Animal Care Data Management (IT - ACDM)

##### **IT - ACDM Finding One:**

Kennel cage cards have information (i.e. administration of vaccines and medication, safety issues - "biter") that is communicated through stamps or stickers and not entered into the animal's legal permanent record in the database.

##### **IT - ACDM Recommendation One:**

Upgrade the software to ensure all medical treatments, observations, behavior information etc. that is collected on an animal, can be entered into the animal inventory system as the official permanent record.

##### **IT - ACDM Finding Two:**

There is currently no location designated within the current physical organization of the Auburn Shelter to digitally photograph impounded animals and in turn upload these photographs to the Animal Service website.

##### **IT - ACDM Recommendation Two:**

Create a designated area for taking digital photographs of impounded animals (i.e., relocate the laundry room to the nearby storage area and change the set up of the room to accommodate the camera system.)

##### **IT - ACDM Finding Three:**

Animal Care staff has a limited role with respect to the PetWhere program.

##### **IT - ACDM Recommendation Three:**

Expand the role of Animal Care staff to drive processes like photographing animals and entering final dispositions in a timely manner in order to maintain a current website.

##### **IT - ACDM Finding Four:**

The Cat House cares for cats that have been transferred from the Auburn Shelter and interfaces with potential adopters on a daily basis but does not have animal inventory communication with the shelter.

##### **IT - ACDM Recommendation Four:**

Consider placing a County computer terminal at The Cat House once the software has been updated.

#### Clerical Data Management (IT - COM)

##### **IT - CDM Finding One:**

The current PetWhere system does not contain an Accounts Receivable function.

##### **IT - CDM Recommendation One:**

Develop an itemized overview of the computer accounting needs for the department and then upgrade the current animal management system.

##### **IT - CDM Finding Two:**

The current software system requires several repetitions of the License Number data entry and there is no ability for pet owners to pay license fees on line. In addition, clerical staff must switch from numerous screens, which is very time consuming, in order to complete a data entry for a single transaction.

**IT - CDM Recommendation Two:**

Consider upgraded software that can:

- ✓ Expedite license processing and provide payment of license fees on line,
- ✓ Streamline information entry by decreasing the number of screens used.

**IT - CDM Finding Three:**

The Point of Sale machine is located at only one of the two counters in the front lobby of the Auburn Shelter.

**IT - CDM Recommendation Three:**

Expedite public transactions by reducing clerical counters to one counter where the Point of Sale machine and printer would all be conveniently located.

**IT - CDM Finding Four:**

Multiple receipts were generated for one transaction resulting in paper waste and time consuming for clerical staff.

**IT - CDM Recommendation Four:**

The Senior Administrative Clerk should amend the current protocol on generating receipts and eliminate extra printouts.

Field Service Data Management (IT - FSDM)

**IT - FSDM Finding One:**

The current PetWhere system is not user friendly, does not provide security for entries that are changed, is insufficient in providing space for report writing, requires the dispatcher move through several screens in order to assign a call in the field and cannot readily generate reports/statistics that are needed by the department.

**IT - FSDM Recommendation One:**

Incorporate software programs:

- ✓ With a separate application screen for law enforcement functions that will expedite an officer's ability to obtain background information,
- ✓ To include document security, date, time, and identification of staff when entries are changed, 0 With extensive note/information input in report sections,
- ✓ That utilize a simple drag and drop routine where the dispatcher on a single screen can assign the call to a designated officer as well as relay the information related to the call,
- ✓ That are user friendly when generating field statistics.

**IT - FSDM Finding Two:**

The current PetWhere system does not provide time tracking systems for ACOs to clock in and out. Dispatch is also unable to identify the physical location of an officer without radio contact.

**IT - FSDM Recommendation Two:**

Safety

- ✓ Incorporate software programs that:
  - Provide time tracking systems to improve supervision and accountability of officers in the field.
  - Utilize GPS tracking for officers (i.e., HLP Inc.).

Phone Tree (IT - PT)

**IT - PT Finding One:**

The dispatcher is answering all telephone lines including non-emergency calls from the public such as shelter hours of operation, directions to the shelter etc.

**IT - PT Recommendation One:**

Develop a phone tree system.

Website Issues (IT - WI)

**IT - WI Finding One:**

The department does not have a vehicle for displaying pictures of animals on its website which could potentially increase adoptions.

**IT - WI Recommendation One:**

Upgrade the software system so that animals that are currently available for adoption can be placed on the website in "real time."

## IV. Conclusions

Implementation of the recommendations documented in this Final Report has the potential to improve administrative services, veterinary and shelter services, field operations and information technology. However, the foundation for the County's success is dependent on leadership, supervision, adherence to a definitive Manual of Policy and Procedure and absolute accountability for compliance by all employees in order to guarantee animal welfare and public safety. These factors are crucial in achieving and maintaining an animal control department that meets industry standards of excellence in shelter and field operations. Currently at Placer County Animal Services there is insufficient supervision, leadership and a deficiency of accurate policies and explicit procedures for staff to follow, and lack of accountability by staff for uniform compliance to standards.

- ✓ Staff and operations require supervision on a daily basis and there must be leadership that provides progressive direction for staff and the community. Permanent, qualified supervisors need to be selected for the Client Services Program Manager, the ACO Supervisor, and the Clerical Supervisor.....

(Redacted pursuant to *California Public Records Act -- Government Sections 620-626254.*)

The contractor performed a review of the current Manual of Policies and Procedures during the week of May 16-20, 2005. The Manual was an incomplete summary of departmental policies without procedures. The Manual should be written so that it can be utilized as a training manual for new employees, a reference manual for current employees, and the guide for all supervisors to use in order to maintain consistency and a high level of performance within the department. Every implemented recommendation from this report should be integrated into the County's official Manual of Policy and Procedure and all staff should be trained on these policies.

Firearms were a key issue during the assessment process. Animal Legal and Veterinary Medical Consulting Service (ALVMCS) has observed/discussed County firearms practice, considered administrative and staff concerns, and identified legal training and firearm program requirements that will assist the County in determining whether or not Placer County Animal Control Officers should be wearing a sidearm.

Once the vacant supervisory positions have been filled and the Manual of Policy and Procedure has been updated and staff is properly trained, the department will have its "house in order" and can move forward with:

- ✓ Expanding community outreach programs for low cost spay/neuter and other responsible pet ownership projects,
- ✓ Continuing the development of positive relationships with the Placer Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the City of Truckee regarding partnerships and consideration/discussion of future animal campuses,
- ✓ Fully utilizing external assistance from Friends of Auburn/Tahoe Vista Placer County Animal Shelter, A New Hope Animal Foundation and Rescue Groups.

Placer County Animal Services has exhibited a genuine interest and desire to improve its operations. ALVMCS believes that the goals set in this report are realistic and achievable and we have been honored to be involved in this positive effort.