Animal Control Officer Resources Request Guidance

CDFA and Cal OES Partnership

Introduction

As defined by the [California Animal Welfare Association](#) (Cal Animals), "Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are employed by governmental animal care and control agencies or private animal welfare organizations with contracts with cities or counties to provide animal control services. Officers may be a part of the law enforcement branch, government, or housed in another department."

This ACO informational guidance was created to explain the role of ACOs, provide recommended practices, and explain how to request ACOs using the Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) process.

When to Request Animal Control Officers

It may be challenging to find a qualified ACO during a large-scale event. Jurisdictions, Operational Areas (OAs), and tribal governments should consider developing neighbor-to-neighbor mutual aid agreements to share animal care resources during disasters or consider developing a mutual aid agreement with a local Community Animal Rescue Team (CART). CARTs can provide personnel and equipment to evacuate, care for, and manage animal shelters. To learn more about CARTs, visit the [Cal CARTS](#) website. If no mutual aid agreement(s) exist, and local resources are reasonably exhausted, consider a resource request through the OA Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Resource requests initiated at the local level are sent to the OA EOC utilizing the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and established jurisdictional processes. Formal requests are required because SEMS does not allow for self or spontaneous deployment of resources to disasters. Spontaneous deployment may result in confusion, duplication of effort or resources, and a lack of accountability, that may cause safety concerns and financial reimbursement issues. Local jurisdictions should coordinate and collaborate with their OA to identify gaps and enhance

efficiency in the resource request process. Tribal governments should submit their resource requests in accordance with their emergency plans.

ACOs Are For

✓ Evacuations, search and rescue, and/or transport of animals, large and small.

✓ Alternate animal-related dispatching duties.

✓ Assistance with animal-related field operations.

✓ Support of EOCs, incident command posts (ICPs), and/or animal department operations centers (DOCs).

✓ Public safety responsibilities. May include, but are not limited to, patrolling neighborhoods for stray, injured, aggressive, and abandoned animals.

✓ Rescue injured, domestic, and small wildlife; loose animals in traffic; and stray livestock.

✓ Euthanasia of animals, if ACO is certified.

ACOs Are NOT For

✗ Shelter work: ACOs should not be requested to clean kennels, perform routine shelter duties, and feed animals and/or livestock except under special circumstances only.

✗ Donations management.

✗ Paperwork, data entry.

✗ Site security of shelters.

✗ Code Enforcement.*

✗ Local Assistance Centers/Disaster Resource Centers

✗ Large Wildlife: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has the primary responsibility to respond to injured animals that live in the wild.

*Some jurisdictions utilize ACOs for Code Enforcement

Animal Control Officer Resource Requests

The following information should be included in your request for ACO to ensure the incident's needs are adequately met. **Include as much detail as possible.**

- **Description of Work:** Explain the work that needs to be done and why it is needed.

- **Personnel Needs:** Include an estimated number of ACOs needed.

- **Transportation Needs:** Specify whether animal control vehicles are required. If so, include vehicle details and desired capabilities, for example 2WD/4WD, towing capacity, stock/horse trailer, etc.

- **Equipment, and Tools Needs:** Identify equipment and tools needed, such as catch poles, muzzles, halters, kennels, personal protective equipment, firearms, etc.

- **Training Recommendations:** What types of training is required, such as fireline, high/low angle rescue, swift water, animal decontamination, fire safety equipment, AWR 328, MGT 448, IS-010.a, etc.?

- **Certification Requirements:** Indicate if any specific certifications are required, such as euthanasia, firearms, arrest/citation, etc.

    o Know your jurisdiction's codes that relate to ACO authorities, such as arrest, citation issuance, entering private property, and animal seizure before making your request.

    o If the requested ACO is expected to carry a firearm and issue citations, they must meet all applicable Penal Code (PC) 830.9 and 832 requirements, and any other applicable ACO training and/or certifications.

- **Deployment:** How long is the ACO needed? Specify shifts, deployment length, and reporting requirements.

- **Logistics:** When requesting ACOs, ensure:

    o The funding mechanism is identified, and what, if any, reimbursement process will be, reimbursement vs. per diem of all associated expenses, such as lodging, meals, fuel, mileage, equipment replacement, and other incidentals.

    o Include details on processes for returning equipment when no longer needed.

- **Justification**: Explain the resource gaps and local attempts to resolve them. This should include information such as how many local ACOs have been deployed and how many more are needed; the potential effects of not having enough ACOs on operations; and attempts to acquire ACOs through local agreements, mutual aid, or other means.

- **Receiving Points of Contact:** Primary and alternate contact information, reachable 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Contacts should be knowledgeable about the work requirements and able to guide the requested ACOs to their assignments.

    Note: *It is essential for both the deployed ACO and the requesting agency to maintain and track all expenses for possible reimbursement through federal and/or state disaster recovery grants, if applicable.*
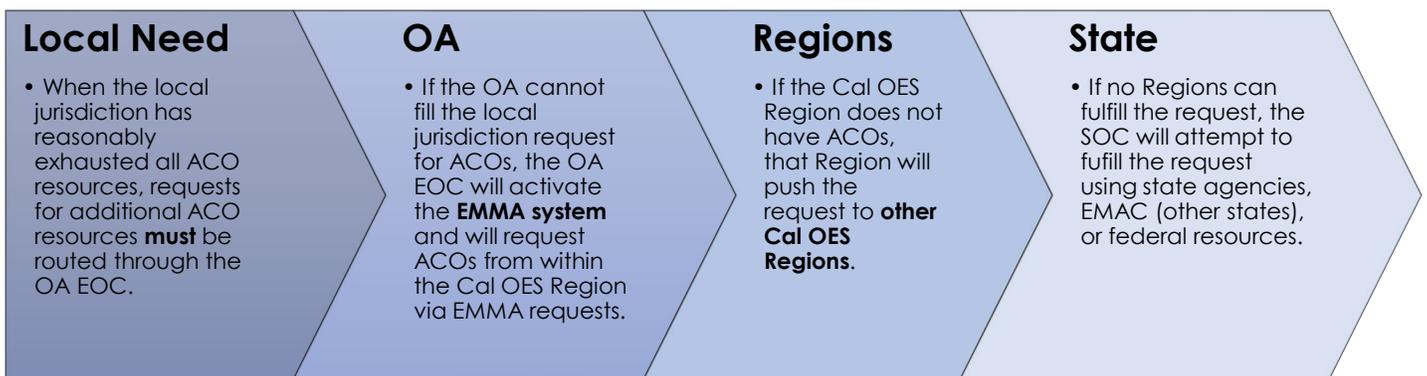
How to Request Assistance

Per SEMS, local jurisdictions must submit their requests for ACOs to their OA EOC. Generally, ACO resource requests that can't be filled within the OA will be **submitted through the Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) system.**

ACO requests will not use the Law Enforcement Mutual Aid (LEMA) system, regardless of the location of the ACO resource within the local governmental organization.

Tribal governments should submit their ACO resource requests in accordance with their emergency plans or coordinate with the OA.

See the diagram below for the **EMMA Resource Request** process:

Local Need	OA	Regions	State
• When the local jurisdiction has reasonably exhausted all ACO resources, requests for additional ACO resources **must** be routed through the OA EOC.	• If the OA cannot fill the local jurisdiction request for ACOs, the OA EOC will activate the **EMMA system** and will request ACOs from within the Cal OES Region via EMMA requests.	• If the Cal OES Region does not have ACOs, that Region will push the request to **other Cal OES Regions**.	• If no Regions can fulfill the request, the SOC will attempt to fufill the request using state agencies, EMAC (other states), or federal resources.

Note: Mutual Aid requests through EMMA are strictly for government employees, who are considered Disaster Service Workers and not for contracted organizations, such as Humane Society and other animal welfare associations, or non-profit/volunteer organizations, such as CARTs, CalAnimals, etc.

For more information about EMMA, see the EMMA Plan posted on the Cal OES Planning & Preparedness web page under State Plans and Publications. For more information on LEMA, visit the Cal OES Law Enforcement Mutual Aid System web page.

Recommended Practices

Plan. When developing Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), coordinate with your local office(s) of emergency management, the Agricultural Commissioner, first-response agencies, and other partners using the Whole Community Planning approach. Plans should identify an animal services coordinator within the local or OA EOC to coordinate animal-related missions.

Create and Maintain a List of local veterinary and animal care resources.

Refer to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES) webpage for resources, tools, and disaster

preparedness information. The CARES Unit offers numerous local government resources and tools to support operational areas in addressing animal-related disaster issues.

Work Directly with Neighboring Governments/Agencies/Tribes to establish Memorandum of Understanding/Agreements (MOUs/MOAs) for services.

Work with Community Animal Response Teams (CARTs) who can deploy. Encourage animal control agencies to work closely with local CARTs to develop MOUs/MOAs. MOUs/MOAs with these volunteer agencies may facilitate reimbursement for disaster response. For additional information on CARTs in your OA, visit the Cal CARTs webpage.

Use the EMMA Process to request ACOs when all other local resources are exhausted. *Requests are no longer accepted through LEMA.*

Ensure _all_ required certification and training requirements are identified when requesting ACOs**.**

Contact Information

For more information, visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) California Animal Response Emergency Support (CARES) webpage and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Animal Emergency Preparedness webpage.

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