

SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
COURT SERVICES BUREAU
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

DATE	DISSEMINATION	CATEGORY	NUMBER
January 1, 2003	BUREAU-WIDE	FIELD SERVICES	D.4
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY EUTHANASIA TO INJURED ANIMALS			PAGE 1 of 1

Purpose:

To establish a Court Services Bureau (CSB) guidelines in regards to euthanising animals.

Policy:

There are instances when deputies are confronted with seriously injured animals that require immediate medical attention. If there is no response from a responsible party/animal emergency response agency, the decision to dispose of the animal may be the only option. The shooting of an animal should only be undertaken as a last resort. The shooting should only take place if the animal poses a real threat to the safety of humans or it is appropriate to humanely end the suffering of the animal.

Procedure:

- I. When possible, notify a supervisor before shooting an animal.
- II. When possible, the owner's permission to destroy the animal should be obtained.
- III. All bystanders must be protected by removal to a safe area behind the shooting employee. The area behind and to the sides of the animal should be protected in the event of over penetration or ricochet of the bullet. The preferred method is to select a location that provides a dirt embankment or other suitable backstop.
- IV. Extreme caution must be used when approaching an injured animal. When in pain, animals become vicious and may attack.
 - A. Generally, the best place to aim is the chest area of the animal. This area contains vital organs including the lungs and heart. Shooting at the head /brain of a large animal is generally discouraged, since the skull could deflect a bullet.
 - B. In the case of a bite inflicted on a human, by a suspected rabid animal, a head/brain shot should be avoided. The animal's brain must be undamaged for a reliable rabies test.