

June 2025

The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from the Animal Control & Care Academy ▪ The Only Monthly Publication Dedicated to Animal Control



Protecting Against Witness Tampering

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Notes from our CEO...

Greetings all! It's hard to believe that June is here and the year is half way gone already! We've been busy traveling and training with classes throughout the country. The balance of 2025 is looking to be just as eventful with seasons from California to North Dakota on the calendar.

This month we are talking about investigations, but not just the basics. Complex cases face many challenges to successful prosecution, but with courts and public opinion bringing pressure to impose increasingly serious penalties, the accused and their friends are looking to find ways to derail investigators. Tampering with witnesses and evidence isn't just confined to television shows or traditional crimes. It happens in our world as well...

We hope you are staying safe and cool with summer arrived in full force. We hope to see you later this year!

Mark Kumpf, CAWA

CEO / Master Instructor ACCA

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Want to host some ACCA training?

ACCA would be honored to offer training for your agency and area agencies. We can tailor the training to your local needs. If you haven't already done so, review our training catalog for a list of training topics. Visit www.accacademy.net and click on the "training catalog" tab. Please contact Mark Kumpf at 937-825-6709 or mkumpf@accacademy.net if you have questions.





Protecting the Complainant from Possible Witness Tampering

How many times have animal control officials or dispatchers taken a complaint from someone wishing to remain anonymous? Or spoken with someone who observed a violation but refuses to “get involved”? In most of these cases, they fear some form of retaliation from the alleged offender. This leaves the animal control officer with little ability to take an appropriate action beyond issuing a warning to the alleged offender. Retaliation, whether it is verbal or physical, is a form of tampering with a witness or victim, and it is illegal in the United States. This is no less applicable in animal control cases, although in some cases the animal control officer may need to get other law enforcement officers or a prosecutor involved, depending on the animal control ordinances of the jurisdiction.

Some local municipalities have incorporated witness tampering prohibitions into their animal control ordinances. Jefferson County, Missouri, for example, has Section 215.510 Tampering With a Witness or Victim as part of its animal control ordinances. The language, which is similar in nature to other jurisdictions, says that a person commits the crime of tampering when a person uses threats or intimidation to cause

a victim, witness, or other party not to report them or provide evidence against them.

In 215.510 for instance, the ordinance says a person commits the crime of witness tampering “if, with purpose to induce a witness or a prospective witness to disobey a subpoena or other legal process, or to absent himself or avoid subpoena or other legal process, or to withhold evidence, information or documents, or to testify falsely, he or she threatens or causes harm to any person or property; uses force, threats or deception; offers, confers or agrees to confer any benefit, direct or indirect, upon such witness; or conveys any of the foregoing to another in furtherance of a conspiracy.”

So when the alleged offender finds out his neighbor called in a complaint about him letting his dog run loose and he confronts his neighbor and an argument ensues, witness tampering comes into play. All too often the alleged offender makes comments like, “You’d better not report me again,” or “You’d better stop talking to animal control.” The complainant feels threatened or intimidated into not talking anymore, and the alleged offender has just tampered with a witness. Similarly, harassing a complainant or other

witness with taunts, jeers, or snide comments, which serve to make them feel uncomfortable, worried, or frightened is also witness tampering.

215.510 goes on to say a person commits the crime of victim tampering “if, with purpose to do so, he/ she prevents or dissuades or attempts to prevent or dissuade any person who has been a victim of any crime or a person who is acting on behalf of any such victim from making any report of such victimization to an Animal Control Officer; causing a complaint to be sought and prosecuted or assisting in the prosecution thereof; or causing or seeking the arrest of any person in connection with such victimization.”

Similar to witness tampering, victims sometimes refuse to provide witness statements or press charges because they have been harassed, intimidated, threatened, or coerced by the alleged offender. In some cases, a witness or victim fears they will be retaliated against by the alleged offender by way of the alleged offender reporting accusations against them. “Causing a complaint to be sought” falls squarely under the tampering prohibitions, and yet animal care and control professionals must deal with “neighborhood disputes” all of the time. One neighbor complains about another neighbor, and that neighbor retaliates by making up a complaint about him or herself usually ends up in a he said-she said war. If the first complaint

was legitimate, the false counter-complaint is tampering because the alleged offender is seeking to get the person who complained on them in trouble of their own. Neighborhood disputes are usually quickly squashed when animal control officers start issuing citations for witness or victim tampering.

Not all animal control ordinances contain tampering prohibitions, but many that do not, have similar language somewhere else in the municipal code and animal control officers should coordinate with whom ever can issue under those codes and get them applied to animal control cases, or next time the animal control ordinances are revised, they can add tamper prohibition language.

Victims (and most of the time the complainant counts as a victim), as well as witnesses must feel safe or they will not contact the authorities when needed. Remaining anonymous often impedes the animal control officer’s ability to address violations of law. Being able to assure victims or witnesses that citations can be issued without risking intimidation or retaliation goes a long way to putting them at ease. Witness and victim tampering is prohibited; ACOs should discuss with their prosecutors how this protection can be applied to cases, thereby improving the quality of their cases and ensuring the safety of their citizens.



Upcoming Training Opportunities

For a registration form, visit www.accacademy.net or call 937-825-6709.



Basic ACO Certification • Hosted by Montgomery County Animal Care & Control
June 25-27, 2025 • Clarksville, Tennessee

Schedule of Training:

Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Professional Development Training Course • Hosted by Orange Cove Animal Control
July 9, 2025 • Orange Cove, California

Schedule of Training

Animal Shelter Maintenance; Zoonotic Disease Recognition; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; and Humane Control Pole Instruction

Shelter Technician Certification • Hosted by the Springfield-Greene County Health Department
July 9-11, 2025 • Springfield, Missouri

Schedule of Training

Advanced Case Supervision; Basic Budget Planning; Disciplinary Investigations; Equipment, Vehicles and Operational Needs; Evaluating Staff; Interviewing and Selection; Managing Generational Employees; Meetings: Individual, Specific Groups, Entire Staff; Policy and Procedures: Review and Development; Pushing Paperwork: Reports, Memos and Correspondence; Supervising Daily Operations; Training and Staff Development; Transition from Staff to Supervisor; Workplace Harassment and Violence

Professional Development Course • Hosted by Williamson County Animal Control
July 15-17, 2025 • Marion, Illinois

Schedule of Training

Day 1 - Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Investigations
Day 2 - Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing, Safe Handling, Capture And Restraint
Day 3 - Baton/Bitestick Certification; Oleoresin Capsicum Aerosol Training Certificatio

Comprehensive Animal Management Certification • Hosted by the Platte County Sheriff's Office
August 4-7, 2025 • Kansas City, Missouri

Schedule of Training:

Advanced Case Supervision; Basic Budget Planning; Disciplinary Investigations; Equipment, Vehicles and Operational Needs; Evaluating Staff; Interviewing and Selection; Managing Generational Employees; Meetings: Individual, Specific Groups, Entire Staff; Policy and Procedures: Review and Development; Pushing Paperwork: Reports, Memos and Correspondence; Supervising Daily Operations; Training and Staff Development; Transition from Staff to Supervisor; Workplace Harassment and Violence

Training Course for Animal Control Professionals • Hosted by West Des Moines Animal Control
August 18-20, 2025 • West Des Moines, Iowa

Schedule of Training

Day 1 - Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Sovereign Citizens; Community Cooperation: Outreach and Education

Day 2 - Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

Day 3 - Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Evidence Law and Collection; Diversion – Alternative Enforcement Programs; Challenging Encounters in Animal Control

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification • Hosted by Cusseta-Chattohoochie County Animal Control
August 18-21, 2025 • Cusseta, Georgia

Schedule of Training

Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Baton/Bitestick Certification • Hosted by Cusseta-Chattahoochee County Animal Control
August 22, 2025 • Cusseta, Georgia

Basic Animal Control Officer Certification • Hosted by the Fargo Police Department
August 25-27, 2025 • Fargo, North Dakota

Schedule of Training

Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

Chemical Immobilization Certification • Hosted by the Fargo Police Department
August 28, 2025 • Fargo, North Dakota

Bite Stick/Baton Certification • Hosted by the Fargo Police Department
August 29, 2025 • Fargo, North Dakota

Animal Shelter Technician Certification • Hosted by the Platte County Sheriff's Office
October 27-29, 2025 • Kansas City, Missouri

Schedule of Training:

Animal Care in a Sheltering Environment; Animal Disposition Options; Animal Identification: Breed and Description; Animal Shelter Design and Operations; Animal Shelter Record-Keeping; Canine and Feline Behaviors and Assessments; Disease Exposures in a Sheltering Environment; Emergency Animal Sheltering; Proactive Animal Sheltering

Animal Shelter Technician Certification • Hosted by the Platte County Sheriff's Office
October 27-29, 2025 • Kansas City, Missouri

Schedule of Training:

Animal Care in a Sheltering Environment; Animal Disposition Options; Animal Identification: Breed and Description; Animal Shelter Design and Operations; Animal Shelter Record-Keeping; Canine and Feline Behaviors and Assessments; Disease Exposures in a Sheltering Environment; Emergency Animal Sheltering; Proactive Animal Sheltering

Advanced ACO Certification • Hosted by Cusseta-Chattahoochee County Animal Control
November 3-6, 2025 • Cusseta, Georgia

Schedule of Training

Animal Attack Investigation and Reporting; Animal Crime Scene Photography, Videography and Sketching; Animal Hoarding Investigations; Illegal Animal Fighting; Livestock and Exotics Cases; Obtaining and Executing Search Warrants; Officer Safety in the Field; Proactive Animal Control; Using Forensics in Animal Cruelty Investigations

Chemical Immobilization Certification • Hosted by Cusseta-Chattahoochee County Animal Control
November 7, 2025 • Cusseta, Georgia

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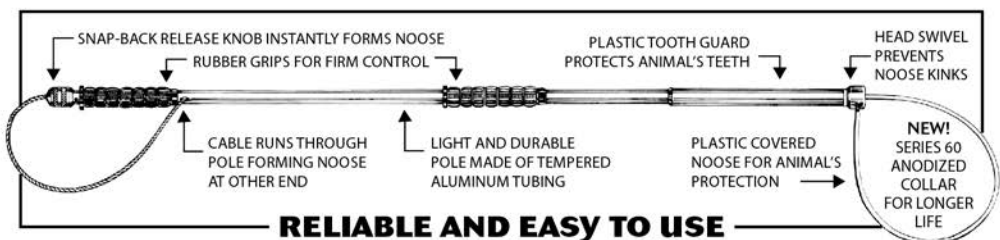
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Retracted, it is used as a longer heavy-duty restraining pole

"The ACO Voice"

2025 Advertising Rates

"The ACO Voice" is an electronic magazine that is published 12 times each year by the Animal Control & Care Academy to provide information of interest to Animal Control Officers. Advertising is provided on a space-available basis.

Publication Dates: The first week of each month.

Available ad sizes are: Full Page (7½" x 10") and Half Page (7½" x 5")

Advertising Rates			
	Three Times Full Color or B/W	Six Times Full Color or B/W	Twelve Times Full Color or B/W
Full Page	\$150 x 3	\$125 x 6	\$100 x 12
Half Page	\$125 x 3	\$100 x 6	\$75 x 12

Payments: Payments must be made in advance via check or credit card (PayPal).

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Responsibilities of Advertiser: All copy, text, display and illustrations are published upon the understanding that the advertiser and/or his agent are fully authorized to cause such material to be published. The advertiser and/or his agent further agree to save blameless ACCA from any liability arising out of such publication. Artwork is the responsibility of the advertiser. ACCA assumes no liability if for any reason it becomes necessary to omit an advertisement.

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It's all very simple and honest. The Animal Control & Care Academy is specific to the animal control profession. Our contacts and resources encompass a wide variety of animal control agencies – city and county, large and small. Our e-magazine – published every month – will feature our advertisers, focusing on their services and/or product in every issue. Our goal is to increase traffic to the ACCA website, and our advertising partners can help us achieve that goal. Our current monthly audience is comprised of over 3,000 animal control professionals who have found ACCA to be a useful resource.

You may download the current edition of our e-magazine via this link:

<https://accacademy.net/newsletter>

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Sincerely,

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