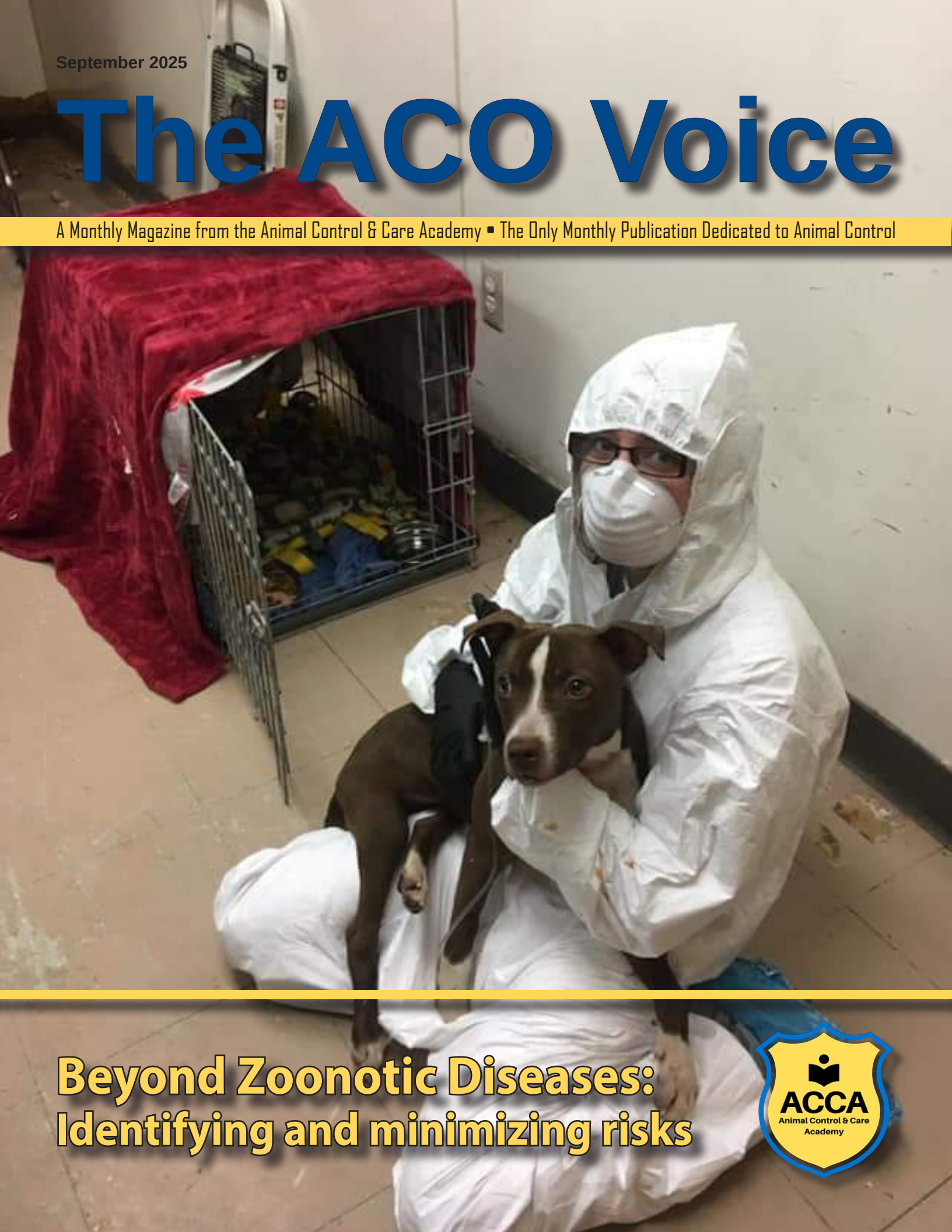


September 2025

The ACO Voice

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



**Beyond Zoonotic Diseases:
Identifying and minimizing risks**



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Notes from our CEO...

Greetings to all!

Summer is fading as fall arrives! Unfortunately it seems like it hasn't meant a decrease in calls for service or animals flooding shelters. With the constant influx of critters, comes the risk of zoonotic diseases. This month's newsletter focuses on the hazards animal control officers face from atypical situations.

In addition, many shelters are aging with the actual buildings deteriorating, leading to more concerns with things including black mold and even asbestos exposures. Most recently, a shelter in Montana was flooded with toxic fumes when the local animal incinerator was used to burn two pounds of methamphetamine and a fan failed. Employees had to double up in a local hyperbaric chamber for treatment!

For those interested, retired ACO Jeff Christner maintains the ACO Line of Duty Death web memorial page. Recently moved, it is available at www.sixbyfire.com/acolodd/index.html and covers 1886 through 2025, including the recent loss of a Texas officer from an exposure in the shelter. Our condolences go out to his family and coworkers.

ACCA covers many of these issues in our Animal Shelter Technician course as well as our Animal Management Course. We have also added new courses in our 2025/2026 Training Catalog. Check out the Advanced Animal Management course, which includes OSHA for animal control as well as advanced PPE and Equipment.

Finally, ACCA sponsored and attended the Missouri Animal Control Association conference and the Connecticut Municipal Animal Control Officers Association conference. We will feature these in our next newsletter.

A special thank you to our newsletter and course sponsors including SWAB Wagon Company, Ketch-All Company and Jackson Creek Manufacturing. An extra shout out to Pneu-Dart Inc. and Animal Care Equipment & Services for their continued support of the profession.

2026 dates are booking, so reach out now to lock in your training and the 2025 pricing!

Mark Kumpf, CAWA

CEO / Master Instructor ACCA

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

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Please take a moment to review the rate card on the next page and let us know if we can assist with your advertising needs.

Sincerely,

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Beyond Zoonotic Diseases: Identifying and minimizing risks

Animal care and control professionals are exposed to zoonotic diseases during their encounters with animals in the field as well as in the animal shelter. Zoonotic diseases, those animal diseases that are transmitted to humans, are frequent topics of training for animal care and control professionals, but the health risks to people who handle and work with animals goes beyond zoonotic diseases. While zoonotic disease exposures are often not obvious, exposure to other diseases and health conditions are similarly not as obvious.

Animal control officers and animal shelter technicians are exposed to a range of non-zoonotic diseases, to include things like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, and Typhus; as well as infectious diseases like Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and tuberculosis. Some of these illnesses are commonly known and the transmission is usually obvious, such as rabies virus being transmitted through a bite or needle stick, but other exposures are not so obvious.

Hepatitis B and C, and HIV are bloodborne pathogens that are transmitted through contact with blood and other bodily fluids. This can happen to ACOs and shelter technicians when they are present at a dog bite and are exposed to the victim's blood or other body fluids, and in some cases through needlestick injuries while executing search warrants.

Typhus is a group of bacterial diseases that are transmitted to humans by a variety of insects. The particular strain is determined by the infected insect: epidemic typhus being spread by lice, murine typhus being spread by fleas, or scrub typhus spread by mites and chiggers. The transmission of typhus can also be made through contact with contaminated feces of the infected insect.

The animal care and control world mourned the loss of a peer last month, when Lt. Albert Stout, 62, of Robstown, Texas, died from typhus. The 31-year police veteran was assigned to the Special Services Division, where animal control and the animal shelter was assigned. He was working in the animal shelter in Feb-

ruary when he became ill and was later diagnosed with typhus. He passed away in August from complications associated with the disease.

All too often, animal care and control professionals are exposed to a variety of unhealthy conditions without realizing it. Cleaning kennels creates exposures to bacteria, virus, chemicals, and sometimes drugs. Fleas, ticks, chiggers, ringworm, parasites, and more are safety threats that officers in the field are exposed to anytime they handle an animal in the field. Then, loaded into the truck's kennel, they contaminate the kennel. Those same animals then enter the animal shelter and expose the environment and the personnel to those same threats.

When working in the field, ACOs are at risk simply by climbing into their vehicle, not from motor vehicle accidents, but from bacteria and viruses left behind by the sick or injured animals placed in the vehicles. When responding to a dead animal pick up, most often it is assumed the animal has been hit by a vehicle and killed, but what if it is not? Perhaps the animal was



Cleaning kennels from ceiling to floor in proper PPE aids in safety.

Shelter technicians should clean kennels and animal housing areas from ceiling to floor in order to counter any aerosolized viruses that have been spread by sick animals.

sick and the result of the illness is what killed the animal or caused it to walk into oncoming traffic. All too often ACOs pick up the deceased animal, stick it in a trash bag, put it in a truck kennel and transport it to disposal. The proper procedure is to decontaminate the entire truck, inside and outside, front bumper to back bumper because of the risk of aerosolized viruses.

Properly decontaminating a vehicle can take the vehicle out of service for hours to have the kennels, the truck, and everything on board cleaned and sanitized before being put back in service. When contagious pathogens are involved, sanitizing cannot be overlooked.

All ACOs should have hand-sanitizer in their trucks and clean their hands after loading an animal, dead or alive, into their vehicles. They should sanitize the kennel after removing the animal from the kennel, then sanitize the equipment used, and themselves as soon as possible. They should sanitize the entire vehicle after possible exposure from aerosolized viruses, especially from transporting deceased animals where the cause is unknown. Shelter technicians must clean and sanitize the kennels, the animal housing area—from the ceiling down—and all of the food and water bowls, toys, bedding and blankets before being used again. Bacteria and viruses are transmitted by more than contact. Aerosolized bacteria

and viruses can settle on any surface.

All staff need to wash their hands, from the elbows down, frequently. Smokers should refrain from handling a cigarette or e-cig device while cleaning. Everyone should similarly avoid eating or drinking while cleaning and sanitizing. Latex gloves will not stop the transmission of bacteria or viruses when that glove is placed that close to the mouth.

Too often ACOs, Shelter Technicians, Veterinary Technicians, and others working in animal care and control are exposed to obvious risks, but similarly they are exposed to conditions which are not so obvious. Most often, when thinking of safety concerns, the tendency is to think of the safety threats to officers and investigators in the field. However, there are very real risks to workers in the animal shelter. Caution must be exercised by all. The animal care and control world is mourning the loss of four animal welfare workers already this year, more in the past nine months than in the past several years combined. Caution must be exercised by all.

****Cover photo: Field officers are equally at risk from exposure to zoonotic and communicable diseases.**

ACOs handling animals in the field are as equally at risk as shelter personnel, especially in clearly unsanitary situations such as animal hoarding cases where PPE is necessary.

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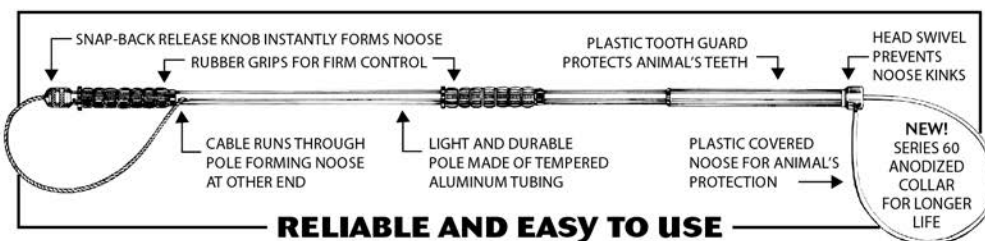
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Schedule of Training

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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

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November 7, 2025 • Cusseta, Georgia

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"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")

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