

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Animal and Food Industry Services
Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response
102 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219
804-692-4001

Guidelines Governing the Approval of Continuing Education Training for Animal Control Officers

I. Statutory Authority: Code of Virginia §§ 3.2-6555 through 3.2-6556

- a. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6556, all animal control officers (ACOs) and deputy ACOs are mandated to complete a minimum of 15 hours of approved continuing education (CE) every three (3) years in the area of animal control and protection.
- b. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6556, this training must be approved by the State Veterinarian.

II. Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education (CE) Courses for Entities Offering a Course

- a. Organizations, individuals, or other entities seeking to offer CE training to ACOs must first submit a request for approval using the Animal Control Continuing Education Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11).
- b. The State Veterinarian will approve a CE course that addresses the animal control topics outlined in the Animal Control Basic Training Core Curriculum (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/vaaco.pdf>) or otherwise addresses animal control and protection.
- c. As in-person training is a valuable component of animal control and protection training, the State Veterinarian will approve a maximum of seven CE credit hours for any single online course that meets the requirements listed in subdivision b of Section II.
- d. All course approvals expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).
- e. For courses recurring throughout a calendar year, any changes to an approved course must be re-submitted for approval using the Animal Control Continuing Education Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11).
- f. Formal field training or in-service training required by an employer may be eligible for CE credit hours, but the training must be pre-approved by the State Veterinarian.

III. Criteria for ACOs Seeking Continuing Education (CE) Approval for Course Attendance

- a. ACOs seeking to attend a training course for CE credit must first submit a request for approval using the Animal Control Continuing Education Request Form (Form VDACS AC-11). ACOs do not have to submit the Animal Control Continuing Education Request Form for a course that the State Veterinarian has approved. A list of approved CE courses will be posted on the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response webpage (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals-animal-care-and-emergency.shtml>).
- b. The State Veterinarian will approve a CE course that addresses the animal control topics outlined in the Animal Control Basic Training Core Curriculum (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/vaaco.pdf>) or otherwise addresses animal control and protection.
- c. As in-person training is a valuable component of animal control and protection training, the State Veterinarian will approve a limited number of online CE credit hours for each ACO in a three-year cycle. A maximum of seven CE credit hours, which meet the requirements listed in subdivision b of Section II, can be used toward the required 15 hours.

- d. Formal field training or in-service training required by an employer may be eligible for CE credit hours, but the training must be pre-approved by the State Veterinarian.
- e. All course approvals expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).
- f. For courses recurring throughout a calendar year, any changes to an approved course must be re-submitted for approval.

IV. ACO Training Report

- a. Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6555, every locality shall submit a completed Animal Control Officer Training Report to the State Veterinarian (Form VDACS AC-12). The report shall contain information regarding the training status of each ACO and each deputy ACO employed by each locality.
- b. As required in Code of Virginia § 3.2-6556(A)(2), the State Veterinarian will maintain the Animal Control Officer Training Report to document and ensure that ACOs are in compliance with the training requirements prescribed in § 3.2-6556(A)(2).
- c. Localities that fail to submit a report, or submit a report that indicates a failure to comply with the training requirements for ACOs in their employ, may be subject to a civil penalty assessed pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546(K) and the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Virginia Animal Shelter Civil Penalty Matrix (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/Civil-Penalty-Matrix.pdf>).
- d. In an effort to fulfil the requirements in § 3.2-6556, the State Veterinarian may request further documentation of CE completion at any time.

V. Tracking and Ensuring ACO CE Compliance

- a. Documentation of CE completion may include copies of course sign-in rosters, course certificates, or other similar documents.
- b. Individual ACOs are responsible for ensuring their own compliance and must retain proof of course attendance and completion.
- c. All courses that have received ACO CE approval from the State Veterinarian will be posted on the VDACS Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response webpage (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals-animal-care-and-emergency.shtml>).
- d. ACO CE requirements will start the calendar year following the date of completion of ACO Basic Training. *Example: An ACO who completes basic training on March 31, 2017 (or any other date during the calendar year 2017) will need to complete 15 CE credits before December 31, 2020.*
- e. For extenuating circumstances, the State Veterinarian may grant an extension of up to one (1) year for the completion of CE requirements. A written request for an extension must be received prior to the end of the calendar year (December 31) during which the extenuating circumstances occurred. The State Veterinarian or his representative will provide a written response indicating approval or denial of the requested extension.



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Animal Control Continuing Education Request Form

Please submit all requests for ACO CE to animalcare@vdacs.virginia.gov.

Name	
Email	
Host Agency (i.e. Organization facilitating the course)	
Course Title	
Course Location	
Course Date	
Course Time (i.e. 12pm-6pm)	

Course Description:

(Please indicate how this course is related to **animal control** AND how it **supports the current training standards**. A copy of the current training standards can be found on the VDACS website (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/vaaco.pdf>).

Who is invited to attend (circle): a)ACOs and staff from one locality only b) open to ACOs and shelter staff from select/limited localities c)open to any ACO or staff wanting to attend d) other
 (describe) _____

Is there a cost to attend? Yes or No **If yes, how much?** _____

BELOW FOR OFFICAL USE ONLY

Denied

Approved

 (# of CE Hours)

 Virginia State Veterinarian or State Veterinarian Representative

 Date

KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVED DOCUMENT WITH YOUR RECORDS AND ATTACH PROOF OF CE COURSE ATTENDANCE AFTER COMPLETION OF THE COURSE