

# ANIMAL EXPOSURE POLICY

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Staff Review

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## 1.0 POLICY

It is the policy of Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) to protect its employees from risk to their safety.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

While working in the field, there is a potential exposure to animals, domestic or wild, that can result in severe injuries. To address and mitigate these risks, CMWD has created this Animal Exposure Policy to provide a framework of procedures to follow during work in the field. This Policy sets forth the CMWD practices for approaching animals, provides information and guidance on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and contains procedures to follow to assess risk. This policy is unable to cover all potential scenarios and there is an expectation that the employee will apply common sense and good judgement at all times when in the field, and seek assistance when the situation is uncertain.

## 3.0 SCOPE

This program applies to all CMWD employees who work outside to perform assigned duties. Examples of animals that pose a risk are:

- 3.1 Bees/Wasps/Hornets
- 3.2 Biting Insects
- 3.3 Dogs
- 3.4 Snakes

## 4.0 NO SERVICE POLICY

When performing a task or responding to a customer requests, if any employee feels unsafe or endangered by animals at the work site, they do not have to perform any services until that risk has been mitigated. The employee shall notify their supervisor immediately and complete an Incident Report upon return to the office.

## 5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 Management is responsible for:
  - 5.1.1 Determining the work activities with the highest risk of exposure to risky animals
  - 5.1.2 Providing proper safety equipment and PPE for protection during an incident
  - 5.1.3 Providing employees with adequate training and instructions on all equipment
  - 5.1.4 Providing a means of communicating the presence of hazards to staff
- 5.2 Supervisors/Forepersons are responsible for:

- 5.2.1 Addressing risks with animals during work reviews and safety meetings on a periodic basis or during higher risk times of the year
- 5.2.2 Ensuring employees are following the practices listed in this policy
- 5.2.3 Ensuring all employees have access to the recommended safety equipment and PPE
- 5.2.4 Ensuring all employees have completed the required safety trainings
- 5.3 Employees are responsible for:
  - 5.3.1 Following all procedures recommended in this policy, including all measures to become aware of the presence of an animal and the application of mitigating measures/PPE
  - 5.3.2 Notifying supervisor of any incident or exposure at the earliest possible time
  - 5.3.3 Keeping tetanus boosters up-to-date (every 10 years) [this is a recommendation to employees based on Center for Disease Control information]
  - 5.3.4 Completing assigned safety training in the designated amount of time
  - 5.3.5 Maintaining, replacing and utilizing safety equipment and PPE according with the safety trainings
  - 5.3.6 Communicating to co-workers, supervisors and management about hazards identified by the employee
  - 5.3.7 It is strongly recommended that any employees with allergies to stings and bites should always have their personal EpiPen in close proximity for use in emergencies

## 6.0 BEES/WASPS/HORNETS

- 6.1 Africanized bees are present throughout the district and in the recreation area. These types of bees are:
  - 6.1.1 Quicker to attack when provoked
  - 6.1.2 Chase potential threats
  - 6.1.3 More willing to sting
  - 6.1.4 Not known for attacking without provocation
- 6.2 All employees working in the field should be aware of their surroundings when entering a job site
  - 6.2.1 Look to see if any bees are present in the area
  - 6.2.2 If present, is there a concentration of bees in one area that could be a hive or nest
  - 6.2.3 If the bees fly at your face or buzz around over your head consider these warning signs about your proximity to their nest
  - 6.2.4 Know the most direct path to your vehicle or other indoor shelter
- 6.3 Insects become aggressive when feeling that their nest or hive is endangered. Tasks that can trigger a swarm are:
  - 6.3.1 Noise – vehicles, operation of equipment like a lawnmower
  - 6.3.2 Vibration – excavation equipment or yardwork equipment

- 6.3.3 Scents – odors, pleasant and unpleasant, like newly cut grass, have been known to cause a swarm
- 6.4 Be alert for insects coming and going from the following places
  - 6.4.1 Inside hollow trees, walls and attics – entrance is usually a very small hole
  - 6.4.2 Inside pipes or under shingles
  - 6.4.3 In shrubs and hedges
  - 6.4.4 In abandoned tires and crates
  - 6.4.5 Under logs and piles of rocks
  - 6.4.6 Inside holes in the ground
- 6.5 Reduce your likelihood of getting stung by
  - 6.5.1 Not using scented deodorant, cologne or perfume
  - 6.5.2 Wear light colored clothing
  - 6.5.3 Wear long-sleeve shirts and pants
  - 6.5.4 Tie back long hair to keep stinging insects from getting entangled
  - 6.5.5 If insect is inside vehicle, stop slowly and open all windows
- 6.6 If you encounter a swarm
  - 6.6.1 Run in a straight line away from the swarm
  - 6.6.2 Protect your face with your hands
  - 6.6.3 Get indoors quickly, which could mean a work vehicle
  - 6.6.4 Do not swat at the bees or wave your arms which can result in more stings
  - 6.6.5 Do not jump into water – they will wait at the surface
  - 6.6.6 Do not stay still but remove yourself from the danger area
- 6.7 First Aid
  - 6.7.1 If allergic to bee, wasp or hornet venom, seek medical attention immediately
  - 6.7.2 If you receive multiple stings, seek medical attention immediately - the average person can tolerate 10 stings per pound of body weight
  - 6.7.3 Once in a safe place, use a blunt object to scrape any stingers out of your skin – the venom sac could still be pumping venom – Do not pull with tweezers
  - 6.7.4 Wash area with soap and water to avoid infection
  - 6.7.5 Use ice packs to reduce swelling and pain
  - 6.7.6 Apply cream or gel with lidocaine to help control pain and calamine lotion to help with itching
  - 6.7.7 Use an over-the-counter pain reliever like acetaminophen and an antihistamine like Benadryl (Diphenhydramine) to help reduce your reaction to the sting(s)
  - 6.7.8 Localized itching and redness in the first 24 hours can become as large as 12 to 18 inches in diameter

## 7.0 BITING INSECTS

- 7.1 Observe the site to see if there are potential locations for biting insects to reside
  - 7.1.1 Look for evidence of spider webs in the trees, bushes and uninhabited structures (vaults, diversion dam)
  - 7.1.2 Inspect the ground for evidence of an ant colony prior to setting tools down or working in an area

- 7.1.3 Be careful when lifting items off the ground or placing fingers on the underside of an object
- 7.2 When working in areas with the risk of biting insects, wear the following items:
  - 7.2.1 Long sleeves and pants
  - 7.2.2 Leather gloves
- 7.3 First Aid
  - 7.3.1 Scorpions
    - 7.3.1.1 Remain relaxed and calm
    - 7.3.1.2 Do not take sedatives
    - 7.3.1.3 Ice may be applied to sting site (do not submerge affected limb in ice water)
    - 7.3.1.4 Capture scorpion for identification if possible and safe to do so
    - 7.3.1.5 Contact a qualified health care provider for advice and medical treatment
  - 7.3.2 Fire Ants
    - 7.3.2.1 Antihistamines may help
      - 7.3.2.1.1 Follow directions on packaging
      - 7.3.2.1.2 Drowsiness may occur
    - 7.3.2.2 Seek emergency medical attention if the sting causes severe chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech
  - 7.3.3 Spiders
    - 7.3.3.1 Attempt to identify the spider if safe to do so
    - 7.3.3.2 Wash bite area with soap and water
    - 7.3.3.3 Apply a cold, damp or ice filled cloth to bite area to reduce swelling
    - 7.3.3.4 Elevate bite area if possible
    - 7.3.3.5 Do not attempt to remove venom
    - 7.3.3.6 Immediately seek professional medical attention
  - 7.3.4 Ticks
    - 7.3.4.1 Always check for ticks after working in an outdoor area
    - 7.3.4.2 The longer the tick stays attached to the skin, the greater the chances of infection
    - 7.3.4.3 To remove a tick
      - 7.3.4.3.1 Put on gloves
      - 7.3.4.3.2 Use fine-tipped, pointed tweezers with a smooth inside surface
      - 7.3.4.3.3 Grasp the tick at the head as close to the skin as possible, pull upward slowly and steadily without twisting until the tick releases its hold
    - 7.3.4.4 Seal tick in container to help healthcare provider with identifying type of tick later
    - 7.3.4.5 Wash area with soap and warm water and then apply an antibiotic wound ointment, cream or gel if person has no known allergies or sensitivities to the ingredients
    - 7.3.4.6 If unable to remove tick, or if the tick's mouth parts are still embedded in the skin, see a healthcare provider
    - 7.3.4.7 Seek medical attention to determine if any pathogens were

transmitted

## 8.0 DOGS

Dogs are an ever present hazard throughout the district as on a typical 500-household route, an employee could encounter 300 dogs. Every dog bite has the potential to become serious as there is the potential of nerve damage if deep enough. It is estimated that 12% of all dog bites on adults require medical care. To mitigate the risks associated with interacting with dogs, employees should follow these steps:

- 8.1 Inspect the property prior to entry:
  - 8.1.1 Look and listen to see if there are any the following evidence of dogs
    - 8.1.1.1 Water bowls
    - 8.1.1.2 Chains to trees
    - 8.1.1.3 Dog scat
    - 8.1.1.4 Paths on the property
    - 8.1.1.5 Common toys for dogs
    - 8.1.1.6 Dog doors
  - 8.1.2 Prior to entry into the property
    - 8.1.2.1 When feasible, check customer records for notes referring to the presence of a dog
    - 8.1.2.2 Ask the pet owner or property occupant to restrain the dog during your visit to the property
    - 8.1.2.3 Make noise to prevent startling any hidden dogs by a whistle, call out, or rattle the gate
    - 8.1.2.4 Before ringing a door bell or knocking on the door, look at the condition of the door for signs of a dog that may be kept in the house
    - 8.1.2.5 Make sure to have personal protection with you
- 8.2 Have readily available the following items when potential for contact with dogs
  - 8.2.1 Items that can be placed into the dog's mouth – clip board, stick, water meter stick, etc.
    - 8.2.1.1 Dog Bite Stick will be offered upon request – a stick with a tennis ball attached to the end - see PPE section
  - 8.2.2 Dog Deterrent Spray – a spray irritating to a dog's respiratory system – will be offered upon request - see PPE section
- 8.3 When in the presence of a dog – whether on their property or in a public space – it is recommended that the actions listed below are followed
  - 8.3.1 Never turn away from the dog
  - 8.3.2 Be more aggressive than the dog
    - 8.3.2.1 Stay forward, stand tall and stay big
    - 8.3.2.2 Use the word "No" loudly
  - 8.3.3 Always keep an object between yourself and the dog for the dog to bite on
    - 8.3.3.1 Use the object to steer yourself to a safe place if the dog bites it
  - 8.3.4 Keep your back against something to prevent the dog from

- attacking from behind
- 8.3.5 Beware that a dog is more likely to attack when in the presence of their owner and will attempt to move behind
- 8.4 If the dog or dogs attack
  - 8.4.1 Use only the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the CMWD employee to ensure their personal safety
  - 8.4.2 The levels of force are
    - 8.4.2.1 Level 1: Place an object between yourself and the dog, attempting to make the dog latch onto it with its mouth
    - 8.4.2.2 Level 2: Spray the dog deterrent spray into the eyes, nose and throat of the dog
      - 8.4.2.2.1 The effective range is 10 feet
  - 8.4.3 Keep your hands in a fist to prevent injury to your fingers
  - 8.4.4 Focus on the dog's paw as it is the most sensitive, vulnerable part of a dog
  - 8.4.5 Stay upright and protect your face and neck
  - 8.4.6 If attacked by a pack of dogs, pick one dog and hurt it. This will cause the remainder of the pack to attack it, allowing an opportunity to escape
- 8.5 If bitten
  - 8.5.1 Call for help – 911 or supervisor depending on severity of injury
  - 8.5.2 If possible, record the description and location of the dog to investigate later if there is a potential for rabies
  - 8.5.3 Report the incident to your supervisor as soon as possible
  - 8.5.4 First Aid for Minor Wounds
    - 8.5.4.1 Minor wounds are scratches on the surface of the skin
    - 8.5.4.2 Clean injuries with warm, soapy water
    - 8.5.4.3 Disinfect area with antibacterial cleansing agents
    - 8.5.4.4 Place clean bandage on wounded area
    - 8.5.4.5 Monitor the injury for possible infections that manifest in pus, pain, red fluid oozing out of the wound and an unpleasant odor
    - 8.5.4.6 In the event of a bite on a joint, fingers, hand or feet, consider immediate medical attention to get the right prescription
  - 8.5.5 First Aid for Major Wounds
    - 8.5.5.1 Major wounds are torn skin, deep wounds and/or excessive bleeding
    - 8.5.5.2 Control bleeding by applying firm pressure using a sterile, dry cloth
    - 8.5.5.3 Elevate the injured organ and stop any movements to control bleeding
    - 8.5.5.4 Visit the nearest medical center for qualified medical care

## 9.0 SNAKES

- 9.1 Rattlesnakes are

- 9.1.1 The largest venomous snakes in the United States and are commonly found in the District area
- 9.1.2 Can accurately strike at up to one-third their body length
- 9.1.3 Use rattles or tails as warning
- 9.1.4 Can be found sunning themselves near logs, boulders and open areas
- 9.2 Employees should
  - 9.2.1 Never try to handle any snake unless trained and authorized to do so
    - 9.2.1.1 Untrained employees should contact animal control or trained CMWD employee to remove the snake from the area. Do not perform any work until snake has been removed.
  - 9.2.2 Stay away from tall grass and piles of leaves when possible
  - 9.2.3 Inspect the area before performing work
  - 9.2.4 Wear appropriate footwear and long pants when working outdoors
  - 9.2.5 Wear leather gloves when handling brush and debris
  - 9.2.6 Listen for the rattle signature of the snake and move carefully away from the area
- 9.3 If bitten
  - 9.3.1 Call for assistance – 911 or supervisor depending on severity
  - 9.3.2 Seek medical attention as soon as possible
    - 9.3.2.1 If in the backcountry, away from vehicle access, initiate the GPS emergency device and await rescue
  - 9.3.3 Attempt to remember the color and shape of the snake
    - 9.3.3.1 Do NOT attempt to trap the snake
  - 9.3.4 Keep still and calm to slow down the spread of venom
  - 9.3.5 Do NOT wait for symptoms to appear before seeking medical attention
  - 9.3.6 Do NOT apply a tourniquet
  - 9.3.7 Do NOT slash the wound with a knife
  - 9.3.8 Do NOT suck out the venom
  - 9.3.9 Do NOT apply ice or immerse the wound in water
  - 9.3.10 Do NOT consume caffeinated beverages
- 9.4 First Aid
  - 9.4.1 Lay or sit down with the bite below the level of your heart
  - 9.4.2 Wash the bite with soap and water
  - 9.4.3 Cover the bite with a clean, dry pressure immobilization bandage over a long body section

## 10.0 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- 10.1 Wear the following items when working in areas that have the potential of exposure to bees/hornets/wasps, biting insects, dogs, and snakes
  - 10.1.1 Long sleeved, light colored shirts – recommended when possible
  - 10.1.2 Long pants
  - 10.1.3 Appropriate footwear
  - 10.1.4 Leather Gloves – when placing hands in areas with potential insects and/or snakes – ex. vaults

- 10.2 When working in areas with the potential of interactions with dogs, employees shall have the following equipment in their possession:
  - 10.2.1 An item that can be placed into the dog's mouth so they can latch onto it. This could be a clip board, stick, or tool – any other item that a dog can latch onto
    - 10.2.1.1 Dog Bite Sticks will be provided upon request to any CMWD employees who are exposed to dogs
      - 10.2.1.1.1 A dog will bite the closest thing – place the ball near the mouth so it will latch on to it
  - 10.2.2 Dog Repellent
    - 10.2.2.1 Only District issued repellent spray can be used by the employee
    - 10.2.2.2 The repellent spray should be used when it is the least amount of force that can be used to protect yourself against a dog that is aggressive, bypasses items to latch on to and appears to be preparing to attack.
    - 10.2.2.3 Spray directly at the eyes, nose, and mouth of the attacking dog. Effective range is 10 feet.
    - 10.2.2.4 The use of the spray shall be immediately reported to the employee's manager, followed by a written report of the use filed with the manager within one working day of the incident
    - 10.2.2.5 A waiver (see in Google Drive/Shared Drives/District Wide/SAFETY/FORMS/Animal Policy/Dog Deterrent Spray – Authorization Form) will need to be reviewed and completed prior to receiving authorization to use deterrent

## 11.0 TRAINING

- 11.1 Training on interacting with animals will be provided every three (3) years and address the following topics
  - 11.1.1 Risk of exposure
  - 11.1.2 Identification of hazards and animal types
  - 11.1.3 How to prevent exposures
  - 11.1.4 What to do if injured
  - 11.1.5 Proper use of dog repellent (if applicable)
- 11.2 Snake removal training will be provided to employees required to move snakes from CMWD locations.
  - 11.2.1 Snake removal cannot be provided by an untrained employee

## 12.0 RESOURCE

- 12.1 Bees, Hornets, Wasps:
  - 12.1.1 [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/beeswasphornets](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/beeswasphornets)
  - 12.1.2 <https://nationalsafetyinc.org/2012/08/13/bee-and-wasp-safety-awareness-and-tips/>
  - 12.1.3 <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/ahb/inf18.html>
  - 12.1.4 [www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/lifelines/september-2015/work-safely-around-bees-and-other-stinging-insects/](http://www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/lifelines/september-2015/work-safely-around-bees-and-other-stinging-insects/)

- 12.2 Biting Insects:
  - 12.2.1 [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/)
  - 12.2.2 [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/spiders/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/spiders/)
- 12.3 Dogs:
  - 12.3.1 <http://incident-prevention.com/ip-articles/occupational-dog-bite-prevention-safety>
  - 12.3.2 <http://www.mycprcertificationonline.com/blog/first-aid-tips-for-dog-bite/>
  - 12.3.3 <http://bulliray.com/>
  - 12.3.4 How to Avoid Dog Bites: Dogs and Dog Repellent – USPS
- 12.4 Snakes:
  - 12.4.1 <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/snakes/default.html>