

*Anne Arundel County
Animal Control*

*Domestic Violence
Pet Support Program*



*Assisting Victims
of Domestic Violence
And Their Pets*

*Anne Arundel County
Animal Control Facility*

410 222-8900

*Your Local Animal Services
Center*

**Anne Arundel County Animal Control's
Domestic Violence Pet Support Program**

411 Maxwell Frye Road
Millersville, Maryland 21108

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Domestic Violence Pet Support Program

Anne Arundel County Animal Control has established a Pet Support Program for pets of domestic violence victims. This program will provide temporary shelter, at a moments notice, for the pet(s) of domestic violence victims who must immediately escape abusive situations. The Pet Support Program protects pets from continued or potential abuse and supports domestic violence victims in seeking their own safety.

In Anne Arundel County and across the nation, law enforcement officials and Humane Society professionals have identified a distinct correlation between domestic violence and animal abuse. When a domestic violence victim and their pet are bonded, the abuser frequently threatens or harms the pet to further intimidate and control the behavior of the victim. Domestic violence counselors confirm this correlation, attesting that victims often find their pets injured, threatened with injury or even killed by their abusers. Reports indicate that many such victims are hostage to their abusers because they are fearful of abandoning their pets and escaping.

At Anne Arundel County Animal Control, the Pet Support Program will offer victims in this situation immediate alternative housing for their companion pet(s), providing victims the peace of mind needed to seek their own safety. In addition, the Agency will organize a foster care network to shelter large pets, such as horses and livestock, which are just as susceptible to abuse.

In promoting the Pet Support Program, Animal Control will also educate the county's citizens on the correlation between domestic violence and animal abuse. Most importantly, the program will foster a community awareness and intolerance for both.

TEMPORARY SAFE HOUSING

Animal(s) may be either picked up by Animal Control Officers or brought to Animal Control by the victim. The pet(s) shall be placed in a "Protective Custody" status. Victims can be assured that their pet(s) will be safely maintained at Animal Control until redeemed by them and that it is a very difficult process for anyone other than the victim to redeem his/her pet(s). Only upon written and verbal authorization from the victim shall a pet be redeemed to anyone other than themselves.

To further secure a pets' safety, victims who acquire ex-parte orders are encouraged to seek their pets inclusion in the order if it is believed the pet is in jeopardy to the same extent as the victim.

Animal Control employees shall exercise sensitivity to the needs and concerns of victims and their pet(s). The following items may be supplied when a pet is brought into protective custody for care:

- *Food that the pet(s) is accustomed to eating*
- * Medical records establishing vaccination status or medical problems*
- *Any medications with set of instructions for administering*
- *Completion of Pet History Form*
- * Any toys, blankets, etc., that will allow the pet to feel more comfortable*

Stringent security measures shall be in place to the same degree as with all housed animals at the facility. Since some animals are actual victims of animal cruelty, assistance from animal behaviorists may be solicited to encourage positive responses by the animal.

Any request for information relating to a "Protective Custody" pet(s) shall be submitted in writing and responded to under guidelines established by the Freedom of Information Act.

For further information, please contact:

*Anne Arundel County
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(410) 222-8900*

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