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Sheriff-Coroner

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*Kern County*  
**SHERIFF**

**ISSUE: 22-01**

## **TRAINING BULLETIN**

**DATE: January 5, 2022**

### **LIVESTOCK THEFT, DELIBERATE INJURY OR DESTRUCTION INVESTIGATIONS**

The Kern County Sheriff's Office serves many diverse environments from densely populated urban areas to oil, agricultural and ranching operations. It is not uncommon for deputy sheriffs to be tasked with investigations concerning ranching and livestock. Such investigations may include theft of livestock, deliberate injury of livestock or death of livestock. During these investigations, special care should be made to conduct thorough and complete investigations. In an effort to assist deputy sheriffs complete such investigations, the following guidelines have been developed:

When livestock have been stolen, deliberately injured, or killed, deputy sheriffs will respond to the location.

#### **1. Investigative questions.**

- a. Is the animal injured, missing or dead?
- b. Did the reporting party witness the incident?
- c. Are there any witnesses to the incident?
- d. When was the livestock last seen uninjured or alive?
- e. How long after finding injury or death did the reporting party call?
- f. Does the reporting party have a veterinarian who treats the livestock?  
If yes, collect contact information. Are medical records available?
- g. Is the animal current on vaccinations?
- h. Could the injury or death be from illness? If so, explain.
- i. Could the injury or death be accidental? Vehicle, fall, fencing, barbed wire etc.? If so, how?
- j. Could the injury or death be the result of a predator? If so, why?
- k. Was the injury or death the result of poisoning? If so, why?
- l. Was the injury or death the result of a lightning strike?
- m. Will the victim be seeking veterinary services for injuries or post examination? If so, collect contact information and dates services will be provided.
- n. In cases of suspected deliberate injury or death, veterinary services are recommended to help establish cause of death and to collect and preserve any foreign materials such as bullets or bullet fragments.
- o. Has the animal been moved? If so, when and how?
- p. How can the animal be identified? Serialized ear tag or branding?

- q. Is the animal on closed or open range?
- r. Was the animal tethered or in an enclosure? If so, what type and size?
- s. Have there been any issues with neighbors or adjoining property owners? If so, obtain contact information of involved parties, dates of incidents, and if the issues have been reported.

## **2. Crime scene documentation and evidence collection.**

- a. Description of animal and how the animal was identified.
- b. Description of injury.
- c. Condition of animal. Decomposed, bloated, rigor mortis, etc.?
- d. Description of location. Open range, closed range, enclosure, fencing?
- e. Document any damage to fencing or enclosures.
- f. Document evidence of predators in the area.
- g. Document any shoe or vehicle tracks.
- h. Document if surveillance or game cameras are used in the area and collect the video.
- i. Document if there is evidence of a struggle such as trampled grass, broken fences, or blood trails.
- j. Take photographs of animal, injury, overall layout of scene, and all located evidence.
- k. Interview reporting party and witnesses.
- l. Use Body Worn Camera if equipped.
- m. Contact Rural Crimes Investigation Unit.

## **3. Additional documentation.**

- a. Generate and include overhead maps of area with notations of animal location(s).
- b. Closed / open range overhead maps may be available for the location from Kern County Animal Control. Contact Kern County Animal Control dispatch for requested information.

## **4. Additional available resources.**

- a. Kern County Sheriff's Office Rural Crimes Investigation Unit should be contacted regarding all livestock investigations.
  - b. Kern County Animal Control does not investigate livestock crimes but can assist by providing closed / open range overhead maps for the location if available.
  - c. A California Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health and Food Safety Services Division (CDFA-AHFSS) Brand Inspector can assist with livestock ownership identification.
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<https://apps1.cdfa.ca.gov/brandinspector/Default.aspx?c=15>

- d. California Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health and Food Safety Services Division (CDFA-AHFSS) Bureau of Livestock Identification, Special Investigations can assist with livestock investigations. [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Livestock\\_ID/](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Livestock_ID/)
- e. California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System UC Davis Veterinary Medicine, Tulare Laboratory may assist in veterinary and veterinary pathology services. Costs associated with veterinary services are the responsibility of the animal owner. Costs may be recoverable from the party determined to be responsible for the injury or death of the animal via civil litigation.

<https://cahfs.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/locations/tulare-lab>

All livestock reports SHALL be routed to the Kern County Sheriff's Office, Rural Crimes Investigation Unit.

## IMPORTANT

Please **SIGN IN** to acknowledge your reading after reviewing the Training Bulletin

**22-01 LIVESTOCK THEFT, DELIBERATE INJURY OR DESTRUCTION INVESTIGATIONS**

I have read and understand Training Bulletin 22-01 Livestock Theft, Injury or Destruction Investigations dated January 5, 2022.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CAD ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

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