

Massachusetts C.A.R.E.S.

An Animal Cruelty Investigations and Response Workshop

Comprehensive Animal Cruelty
Response, Education and Support



Agenda: Day 1 – October 20, 2026

*Law enforcement, ACOs and prosecutors are expected to attend both days of training.
All other attendees are encouraged to do the same but may prioritize Day 2.*

SESSION TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Animal Cruelty Criminal Case Development	In this interactive, scenario-based session, you'll be guided through the development of a suspected criminal animal cruelty case, from the initial complaint to investigative strategy. Using a realistic case scenario with prior call history, you will learn to analyze how information evolves over time and how early documentation impacts case outcomes. Through guided virtual property visits, you will examine the legal boundaries of entering and observing property and participate in discussions on legal authority, the Fourth Amendment and exigent circumstances. You will explore effective owner interview techniques, how to apply gathered facts to statutory cruelty elements, how to evaluate whether probable cause exists and identify gaps in proof. The session concludes with the development of an investigative plan designed to address unmet statutory elements and strengthen the case for prosecution.
Warrant Writing	In this session, you will learn a step-by-step approach to drafting clear, legally sound search and seizure warrants for animal cruelty investigations. You will develop your ability to articulate probable cause, properly structure affidavits and connect observed facts to statutory elements. You will review sample warrant language and apply principles to a case scenario to strengthen clarity, precision and defensibility in court.
Evidence Collection and Documentation	This hands-on session focuses on evidence recognition and decision-making in animal cruelty cases. You will learn to distinguish between documentation and seizure and understand when photographing evidence is sufficient versus when collection is necessary to preserve case integrity.
Charging Strategy, Animal Surrender & Disposition	This session examines the legal and strategic considerations surrounding animal disposition, owner surrender and post-seizure outcomes. You will explore how surrender agreements, forfeiture proceedings and statutory holding periods impact both animal welfare and criminal prosecution.
Testimony Tips and Training	This session prepares you to present yourself confidently and professionally in court and to provide clear, accurate testimony under oath. Through instruction and a mock testimony exercise, you will learn how to maintain credibility, communicate objectively and respond effectively to cross-examination.

Agenda: Day 2 – October 21, 2026

*Law enforcement, ACOs and prosecutors are expected to attend both days of training.
All other attendees are encouraged to do the same but may prioritize Day 2.*

SESSION TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Operational Planning for Hoarding Cases	You will examine the unique complexities in planning large-scale hoarding cases and explore the necessary safety precautions that must be considered when planning field operations.
Transportation of Animals in Large Scale Cases	Learn how to choose the proper vehicle to safely transport animals from largescale cases to a vet or shelter. We'll show you how to properly outfit a vehicle with supplies to make animal handling and transport safe for staff and comfortable for the animals.
Leveraging Cases for Change	Attendees will explore the importance of improving laws and how best to message animal-related cases to advocate for resources, policy and legal changes.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Scene and Live Animal Documentation	Law enforcement attendees will learn essential techniques for documenting scenes and identifying evidence. We'll also teach best practices related to the proper labeling and documentation of living animals on scenes involving animal cruelty investigations.
Veterinarians' Role in Cruelty Cases	Veterinarians will participate in a hands-on lesson about your role in animal cruelty and criminal investigations. We will practice conducting a forensic examination and teach you how to produce appropriate photographic and written documentation. You will also learn about state requirements and protections for veterinary reporting of animal abuse.
Sheltering Best Practices for Large Scale Cases	Shelter and rescue professionals will learn how to create an intake plan and apply an integrated care approach to sheltering animals from a variety of cruelty and neglect cases.
Pathway Planning and Placement for Large Scale Cases	Shelter and rescue professionals will gain a thorough understanding of the importance of pathway planning for every animal within their shelter system. You will learn to review and adapt your processes to address the unique challenges of large-scale intakes. We'll help you identify and eliminate bottlenecks within your processes that hinder efficient outcomes. Additionally, you will experience the advantages of a collaborative, cross- functional approach to pathway planning and its role in reducing length of stay in the shelter environment. This session will also explore holistic strategies for ensuring successful animal placement.

