



HIDALGO, BANFILL, ZLOTNIK & KERMALI, P.C.

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE  
COMMUNICATION CENTER**

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT**



Annise D. Parker

**City of Houston**

Annise D. Parker  
City Controller

Report No. 05-31

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**CITY OF HOUSTON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE  
COMMUNICATION CENTER**

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**



OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER  
CITY OF HOUSTON  
TEXAS

ANNISE D. PARKER

November 18, 2005

The Honorable Bill White, Mayor  
City of Houston, Texas

SUBJECT: Health and Human Services Department – Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care  
Communication Center Performance Audit (Report No. 05-31)

Dear Mayor White:

I am pleased to submit to you this independent Performance Audit Report of the Health and Human Services Department's Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care (BARC) Communication Center. The firm of Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik & Kermali, P.C. (HBZK) conducted the audit and identified recommendations to improve the coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of the BARC Communication Center functions.

The primary objectives of the engagement were to identify improvement opportunities in the quality of the processes and deployment of resources related to the communication and dispatch functions that directly interface with the community. HBZK also performed an employee survey and held two voluntary focus group sessions with employees to help assess functions and performance.

The report identified recommendations for improvement in areas such as Work Schedules; Staff Morale; Information Technology; Incident Assignments; and Vehicles. Draft copies of the matters contained in the report were provided to Health and Human Services Department management. The views of the responsible officials as to actions being taken are appended to the report as Exhibit A.

We commend BARC for taking immediate steps to address and implement many of our recommendations. Also, we appreciate the cooperation extended to HBZK by BARC personnel during the course of the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

Annise D. Parker  
City Controller

xc: City Council Members  
Anthony Hall, Chief Administrative Officer  
Michael Moore, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Stephen Williams, Director, Health and Human Services Department  
Judy Gray Johnson, Director, Finance and Administration Department



**HIDALGO, BANFILL, ZLOTNIK & KERMALI, P.C.**

*Certified Public Accountants*

November 1, 2005

The Honorable Annise D. Parker  
City Controller  
City of Houston  
901 Bagby, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, TX 77002

We have conducted a performance audit of the Health and Human Services Department's Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care's (the Bureau) Communication Center as outlined in our engagement letter dated June 13, 2005, under contract no. 56544.

The purpose of our audit was to assess the quality of the processes, the deployment of resources, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations of the Communication Center and to identify practical recommendations for improvements. Our observations and recommendations noted during the performance of the audit are presented in the report. Our procedures, which accomplished the audit objectives, were performed through June 30, 2005, and have not been updated since that date. Additionally, a summary of recommendations with views of responsible officials is included in the report as Exhibit A.

We appreciate the full cooperation and assistance we received from the personnel of the Bureau during the audit.

Very truly yours,

*Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik & Kermali, P.C.*

Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik & Kermali, P.C.

CITY OF HOUSTON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE  
COMMUNICATION CENTER

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

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BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE  
COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Purpose and scope of audit**

This audit was performed at the request of the Audit Division of the Controller's Office. The primary purpose was to explore practical improvements in the operations of the Communication Center of the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care (BARC). The audit included a review of the following primary areas:

- Staffing and scheduling
- Answering and handling calls
- Prioritizing calls for action
- Assigning incident investigations to field personnel
- Information systems support for the communications and dispatch process
- Data collection in Chameleon
- Smart Map
- Telecommunications/Telephone system
- Radio system
- Computer hardware and software

**Background**

The Communication Center of BARC carries out the communications and dispatch functions and directly interfaces with the community. The communication system is an integral part of BARC's operations, and its effectiveness is a critical factor in delivering services to the public. The system includes the telephone and radio equipment, information software and hardware, and personnel--the telecommunications staff, the dispatchers, and the animal control officers (ACO's), to the extent that their jobs interact closely with the Communication Center. The effectiveness of the whole system is the result of the quality of performance of all these components in the system.

BARC underwent management changes in February 2005. The new management team has since made numerous positive changes to various aspects of operations. They have identified certain problems and issues in the Communication Center that require further study and investigation for resolutions to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the center.

## Executive Summary

### Major Observations and Recommendations

The following are key observations and recommendations to improve the coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of the BARC Communication Center functions. The observations and recommendations are discussed in greater detail within the report.

Work Schedules - We found that there are instances when the continuity of communications between the ACO's and dispatchers is broken after the change of shifts of dispatchers because the Telecommunications Staff and the Dispatchers have 8-hour work shifts, whereas the Animal Control Officers (ACO's) have 10-hour work shifts. In addition, we found that the call volume on weekends is considerably lower than on weekdays. Currently, all telecommunications employees have to rotate to work on Saturdays and Sundays. We recommend that management complete a more comprehensive study of call volumes with the objective being better coordination and efficiency of Telecommunications Staff, Dispatchers and ACO's, including an evaluation to determine proper staff scheduling on weekends.

Staff Morale, Job Satisfaction and Environment - We found that the majority of employees, both the telecommunications staff and ACO's, are dissatisfied with their compensation, their supervisors, their lack of communication with supervisors and their lack of training. In addition, the workspace provided to dispatchers is inadequate. We have provided several recommendations for improvement, including holding regular meetings between managers and staff and providing formal training to employees. In addition, the size of the room used by the dispatchers should be increased.

Wireless Laptop Computers - We found that ACO's come into the office during the latter part of the day to enter case data into office computers. This results in time wasted attributable to waiting for an available computer in the office. However, with laptop computers, ACO's can enter case information immediately after a case is completed and avoid wasting time waiting for an available computer in the office. With more accurate, complete and prompt information provided by laptops, service to the public will be improved resulting in fewer repeated calls and complaints. With computers, ACO's will have direct access to case information in the Database and most of the radio contact with the Communication Center can be eliminated. Wireless computer systems are currently being used in other areas of the Health and Human Services Department and BARC can certainly benefit from them. We recommend the immediate purchase and use of wireless laptop computers by the ACO's.

Incident Assignments- We found that incident assignments are currently performed by the dispatchers who assign cases to ACO's based on geographical areas. We also found that ACO's have a much better understanding of the nature of the cases and actions that should be taken. Thus, we recommend that all case assignments be done by senior ACO's (supervisors).

## Executive Summary

### Major Observations and Recommendations (Continued)

Information Technology - We found that any employee logged into the system has access to all information in the database including cash and accounting information. Furthermore, all case activities can be updated by any employee without restriction and there are no tracking records of access, except for the first and last entries. Also, the current software used by BARC to monitor call distribution activities provides information in minutes and seconds stated in averages only. We recommend that security methods be established to prevent unauthorized and/or fraudulent activities. In addition, we have been informed by the City's Technology Department that upgraded software will be obtained that will provide exact time records of incoming calls that can be used to evaluate the efficiency of the Communication Center and the productivity of the telecommunications staff.

Map Software, Satellite Monitoring System and Travel Chargers- We found that, with the continuing growth of the city, Smart Map, the computer software that provides Key Map information to ACO's to locate case addresses, is obsolete, and no upgrade is available. We also found that although all BARC field vehicles are equipped with global satellite positioning devices, this equipment is not being used regularly and effectively. In addition, we found that radios now in use have poor reception and short battery lives. We recommend the use of the website of the Harris County Appraisal District ([www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org)) which provides updated addresses and Key Map numbers of all areas within the city. In addition, the Bureau may consider using the database of the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline of the Office of the Mayor or the City's Planning and Development Center. We also recommend that the Satellite monitoring systems on all vehicles be used to monitor field activities and help prevent vehicle misuse. In addition, the ACO's should be provided with travel charger kits or car adapters so they can recharge the radios in the field.

Vehicles - We found that there are inadequate control procedures in place over the allocation of vehicles to ACO's. Other than vehicles out of service due to repairs, vehicles are sometimes not readily available due to absence of keys that are in the possession of other officers or for some other reason. We recommend that control procedures be put in place over vehicles so that service time is not lost as officers spend time trying to locate an operating vehicle.

The above issues and recommendations are discussed in the more detailed report and related recommendations, which follow. Please refer to **Exhibit A, "Summary of Recommendations with Views of Responsible Officials"**, for an index of our recommendations and management's response to those recommendations.

Many thanks to the Health and Human Services Department, the Office of the City Controller, the City's Information Technology Department and all the employees of the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care for the support extended to Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik & Kermali during this audit. We appreciate this opportunity to have been of service to the City of Houston.

Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik & Kermali, P.C.



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Overview

In early 2005, BARC came under the spotlight of the Houston media due to the facility's treatment of animals, low adoption rates, and extensive euthanasia. After a new management team from the City's Health and Human Services Department was assigned to oversee the operations of the Bureau, the Bureau chief at the time retired after nine years of service.

The new management team has since made significant improvements to the various aspects of the Bureau's operation — physical plants, training, equipment, and uniforms for field staff, new employees, and policies and procedures to set standards of operations.

The Communication Center is an integral part of the Bureau's operation—it has direct interaction with the public as it carries out the telecommunications and dispatch functions. The performance of the center in answering and handling service calls from the community reflects largely on the quality of the Bureau's service. The field services are also affected by the center's ability to carry out the dispatch functions. Prompt case assignments and complete relevant information are important for the field officers to carry out their duties. The center's operation is, on the other hand, restricted by the capacities of the telephone system, radio system, and computers hardware and software. Last, but not least, the center's level of service is a result of the job satisfaction of its employees.

### Center Administration

#### Organization

The Communication Center has nine staff and one office supervisor. The job title of eight staff members is senior dispatcher although only two staff are dispatchers at any one time. At other times, they are telecommunications staff responsible for answering telephone calls requesting service. Assignments as dispatchers are by rotations. One staff member primarily answers phone calls from the administrative lines but occasionally also answers calls from the service lines. The office supervisor reports to one of the two Animal Control Managers in the Enforcement Operations Department. The Animal Control Manager reports to the Bureau Chief.

The Communication Center operates under a \$310,000 budget for fiscal year 2006, which does not reflect a significant increase from the actual 2005 expenditures. The budget is almost entirely made up of salaries and fringe benefits for eight staff and the office supervisor. One staff's salary and benefits are paid under the budget of the City's Information Technology Department.

On the average, the Communication Center answers about 100,000 calls annually. In 2004, the Center answered 94,008 calls, and as of June 30, 2005, the Center answered 45,440 calls. (See Appendix E)

**Animal Control Manager**

The animal control manager is responsible for the administration of field operations and supervision of field officers (animal control officers). He/she must ensure that citizen requests for service are properly recorded, dispatched, and served in a timely and courteous manner in accordance with policies and procedures. He/she coordinates and supervises the training of the officers including training in state certification tests. His/her duties also include fleet management of vehicles.

**Office Supervisor**

The office supervisor's duties include supervising senior dispatchers in day-to-day procedures and monitoring employees' workflow. He/she also carries out the functions of a senior dispatcher, when circumstances require. The current supervisor has assumed additional duties: liaison with the City's Information Technology Department and Health and Human Services Department, maintaining telephone equipment and computer hardware and software, as well as generating computerized call records and field activities reports for management use.

**Senior Dispatchers**

Senior dispatchers perform communication duties including answering and prioritizing service calls, and dispatching the calls to field officers (animal control officers) in a timely manner. They enter case information in the Chameleon case management system and assign the cases to the field officers. They locate service sites (key map) and obtain pertinent information necessary for the field officers to complete case activities. They maintain radio communication with the field officers to monitor locations, activities, and dispositions.

**Animal Control Officers**

The twenty-four animal control officers (ACO's) are not employees of the Communication Center, but they are in the same Enforcement Operations Department and report to four Animal Control Supervisors who report to two Animal Control Managers. The dispatchers allocate service calls to the ACO's based on assigned geographical territory. The ACO's investigate the cases and take appropriate actions to enforce regulations and city ordinances. They enter disposition information to the Chameleon system at the end of their shifts in the Bureau office. The performance and productivity of the ACO's have direct effects on the operations of the center and vice versa.

## The Process

Each day from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., telephone calls come through eleven administrative lines, nine service call lines, and one direct line to the dispatch center. The administrative lines are answered by one staff at the switchboard and the service call lines are answered by four (six on Wednesdays) staff members. Two staff members work in the dispatch center which is in a separate room.

Upon receiving a call, the telecommunications staff will first determine if the report address is within the jurisdiction of BARC by extracting key map information from the Smart Map software. The ACO's also use the information to locate the address in their key maps.

After the telecommunications staff obtains the necessary information from the callers, they assign a priority code to the calls ranging from 1 to 5.

- Priority 1 Person in danger or at risk—Biting animal at large.
- Priority 2 Animal in danger or at risk—Severely injured or sick animals near death.
- Priority 3 Not 1 or 2 but send next available officer—Police/fire officers standing by.
- Priority 4 To be done today—Animals in traps; injured or sick animals.
- Priority 5 Normal priority—Any activity not deserving a higher priority.

The staff enters all the pertinent information in the Chameleon case management system which is used for dispatching. The dispatchers assign immediately all priority 1 calls to available officers and ACO's are notified via radios. Most priority 2 and 3 calls are usually dispatched and worked on the same day, a small percentage are worked on the next day. Priority 4 and 5 calls are sometimes held over until the next day or later. On June 16, 2005, about 1,604 low priority calls were still pending for disposition, some of them dated back to October 2004.

The following table summarizes the number of Priority 1-3 case activities in May 2005 that were not dispatched or worked on the same day the calls were received.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Dispatched after 1 or more days	17	1	28
Worked on after 1 or more days	35	17	43
Total number of activities in May	446	182	451

Other than incident assignments, the dispatchers maintain contacts with the ACO's on the radios, and when necessary, assist them in calling the Houston Police Department or citizens. They also enter into the system, actions taken by ACO's and information about impounded animals to be kept in one of the BARC kennels.

## OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### Objectives and Scope

The new management team at the Bureau and the City Controller's Office saw the need to have an independent assessment of the Communication Center. The primary objectives are to identify improvement opportunities in the quality of the processes and deployment of resources related to the communication and dispatch functions that directly interface with the community.

The audit included a review of the following areas of operations:

- Staffing and scheduling
- Answering and handling calls
- Prioritizing calls for action
- Assigning incident investigations to field personnel
- Information systems support for the communications and dispatch process
- Data collection in Chameleon
- Smart Map
- Telecommunications/Telephone system
- Radio system
- Computer hardware and software

### Methodology

This performance audit was conducted with procedures designed to achieve the objectives of the audit and included the following:

- Interviewed agency personnel to determine the availability of data needed to perform the audit.
- Reviewed the staff and equipment requirements and compared to current availability.
- Obtained and reviewed copies of management plans, both short and long term.
- Gathered and analyzed statistics, reports, forms, schedules, and time studies.
- Obtained and reviewed the policies and procedures manual.
- Obtained and reviewed job descriptions, organizational charts, and documents related to the levels of authority.
- Conducted customer satisfaction telephone survey.
- Conducted individual interviews with telecommunications employees and ACO's.
- Conducted focus groups with Communication Center employees and ACO's.
- Obtained written surveys from Communication Center employees and ACO's.
- Observed operations.
- Listened to tape recordings from the telephone system.
- Reviewed the Smart Map and Chameleon systems.
- Determined whether other comparable audit reports or studies are available on similar departments (for Houston and other cities).

## OBSERVATIONS AN RECOMMENDATIONS

### STAFFING AND SCHEDULING

#### Observations

The center staff works eight hours a day (7 a.m. to 4 p.m., or 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.), five days a week with rotation every three months to work on weekends. There are four employees on weekends, seven on weekdays except nine on Wednesdays. A typical schedule for a week is five employees work from Monday through Friday, two work from Wednesday through Sunday, and two work from Saturday through Wednesday, as shown in the following table:

Employee	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1			7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4
2			7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4
3			9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6
4			9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6
5			8-5	8-5	8-5	8-5	8-5
6	9-6	9-6			9-6	9-6	9-6
07	9-6	9-6			9-6	9-6	9-6
8	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4		
9	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4	7-4		
Total	4	4	7	7	9	7	7

Some employees prefer to have a four 10-hour day shift and not working on weekends. They think that two more employees are needed to handle the calls on weekdays. They also express concerns that their 8-hour day schedule does not correspond very well with the ACO's 10-hour day shift. There are times when communications between the two shifts of dispatchers and the ACO's are lost.

The following table shows the daily average volumes of calls answered in May 2005:

	No. of Calls	Percentage	No. of Staff	Percentage
Sat.	619	8%	4	9.0%
Sun.	443	5%	4	9.0%
Mon.	1,770	22%	7	15.5%
Tue.	1,553	19%	7	15.5%
Wed.	1,389	17%	9	20.0%
Thu.	1,152	14%	7	15.5%
Fri.	1,225	15%	7	15.5%
Total	8,151	100%	45	100.0%

As the data indicates, weekend call volumes are low.

The following table represents total number of case activities completed by ACO's in the month of May 2005. It shows that activity on Saturdays and Sundays is slow.

	Case Priority					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Month of May	446	182	451	1,744	1,150	3,973
Saturdays	41	19	49	203	16	328
Sundays	36	4	59	208	35	342

### Recommendation:

1. We recommend that management complete a more comprehensive study of call volumes, taking at least six months (preferably twelve months) data into account. We recommend management consider the efficiency and potential cost savings of adopting one of the following alternatives:
  - A. Establish a 10-hour, four-day week, rotating personnel similar to the way it is done now but giving consideration to reducing the number of personnel on weekends and increasing it on other days of the week.
  - B. Maintain the current 8-hour, five-day week but establish procedures that will reduce the current inefficiencies of shift changes. Give consideration to reducing the number of personnel on weekends and increasing it on other days of the week.
  - C. Reducing or eliminating the telecommunications staff and dispatchers on weekends. Automatic call answering services could be established and Priority 1, 2 and 3 calls could be forwarded to Houston Police Department and then dispatched to the ACO's. Lower priority calls could be deferred until the following Monday.

### Staff morale and job satisfaction

The comments given by the employees (both Communication Center staff and ACO's), during the interviews and focus groups discussions, and from the written survey, indicate that a majority of the employees are dissatisfied with their job. Detail results and comments from the written survey and focus groups discussions are presented in Appendix A and Appendix B. The following are areas of employee concerns, either actual or perceived.

- Communication between management and employees is poor; there have been no regular meetings to discuss job related issues and employee concerns.
- Unnecessary changes were made without input from staff.
- Management and supervisory personnel are not responsive to employees' complaints.
- Management does not practice consistent policies and procedures.
- Employees do not receive adequate training.
  - Communication Center employees receive only one week on-the-job training.
  - Communication Center employees are not provided training to improve call handling skills.
  - Continuing education is not offered to ACO's to maintain certification status.
  - New ACO's are trained by inexperienced officers.

- Some ACO's have not received training to use tranquilizer guns.
- No employee has received formal Information Technology training to maintain telecommunications equipment, computer software and hardware and be able to generate meaningful management reports.
- Lack of team work; favoritism is practiced among staff and supervisors.
- Dispatch rotations are unpopular. The job of a dispatcher is complex and bears a tremendous amount of responsibilities. Constant shifting of employees from the center to dispatch creates confusion and conflicts between center employees and ACO's.
- Lack of supervision.

## Salary

The results of the Employee Survey (Appendix A) indicate that only 1 out of 10 Communication Center staff and 4 out of 26 ACO's are satisfied with their salary. Their opinion is that the salary is low and there have been no raises for many years.

We have compared the base hourly salary for BARC's dispatchers/call takers and entry level ACO's with Harris County and two cities: Austin and Dallas, as follow:

City/County	Job Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
Houston (BARC)	Sr. Dispatcher	\$ 9.86	\$ 13.19	\$ 16.53
Austin	Dispatcher II	\$ 11.12	\$ 13.90	\$ 15.98
Dallas	911/311 Call Taker/Trainee	\$ 12.35	\$ 16.36	\$ 20.37
Harris County	Information Referral Specialist	N/A	N/A	\$ 18.03

City/County	Job Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
Houston (BARC)	Animal Control Officer	\$ 10.30	\$ 13.81	\$ 17.34
Austin	Animal Control Officer	\$ 10.53	\$ 12.61	\$ 15.13
Dallas	Animal Control Officer	\$ 12.35	\$ 16.36	\$ 20.37
Harris County	Animal Control Officer	N/A	N/A	\$ 18.03

The City wages are as posted on each City's web site and the wages for Harris County were obtained in writing from the Human Resources Department of the County's Health Department. The amounts do not include benefits which may vary between locations.

The base salary ranges indicate that Houston employees are paid less than those in Dallas but higher than most of those in Austin.

## **Vehicles**

ACO's need more than 30 minutes in the morning to get ready for the field. Time is spent to locate vehicles and equipment.

Vehicles are not readily available to the ACO's and there are no control procedures to allocate vehicles. The Bureau has 43 vehicles of which 37 are ACO trucks. During the interviews with the ACO's, we were informed that, on the average, about eight vehicles were out of service due to repairs and several more were not available because some ACO's kept the keys of more than one vehicle. There were no daily records of fleet maintenance and allocations until recently.

## **Recommendations**

2. Hold regular meetings between managers, supervisors, and staff to discuss progress, problems, and concerns.
3. Provide formal training to new employees.
4. Assess personnel development needs and provide skill-enhancement trainings to employees.
5. Review performance of employees and adjust salary appropriately.
6. Reclassify the current office supervisor as the Bureau's Information Technology coordinator, and provide formal IT training, specifically on generating meaningful management reports, handling crises in telecommunications, and maintaining computer hardware and software.
7. Develop and implement fleet management procedures to ensure vehicles are available to the field officers.

## **ANSWERING AND HANDLING CALLS**

### **Observations**

To evaluate the performance of BARC's Communication Center, we have 1) conducted a customer satisfaction survey, 2) observed the work of the staff, 3) obtained comments from ACO's during interviews and focus group discussions, 4) listened to recordings of phone calls, and 5) analyzed the call records for May 2005.

The results of the customer satisfaction survey are presented in Appendix C. The results indicate that 79 of 100 of the respondents are satisfied with the service they received and 91 of 100 of the respondents have positive experience with the communication staff. Respondents of high priority calls are more satisfied with the service. This reflects the current level of service being provided by the Bureau – many priority 4 and 5 calls are not adequately served.

During our observation in the Communication Center and dispatcher room, we found the workflow was smooth, and, in general, the calls were answered professionally. However, we noticed that the size of the dispatcher room is only 125 square feet and is too small for two persons to function effectively. The dispatchers are sitting too close to each other and there is no buffer between them.



The common criticism made by the ACO's are about the incomplete and inaccurate information taken by the communication staff. In addition, some ACO's indicated that the communication staff should clearly convey possible delay in service for the low-priority callers. In most cases, the officers cannot respond quickly to the low-priority cases.

We listened to the recordings of selected calls and the details are presented in Appendix D. During the process, we noticed several instances that the callers were put on hold without being notified.

### **Recommendations**

8. Formal class training should be provided to the staff to improve their communication and call screening skills. The training can be in-house classes or seminars offered by outside agencies/companies. The courses should cover skills in obtaining sufficient information, determining jurisdiction, prioritizing calls, handling waiting callers with courtesy and tact, telephone etiquette and transferring pertinent information to ACO's.
9. Enlarge the dispatch room to provide more space for effective operation.

### **Industry standards**

We used various Erlang Traffic Models in the evaluation of the Communication Center's telecommunications traffic and to measure the Center's performance and requirements. We recommend using these models by BARC in evaluating and improving the Center's operations efficiently toward achieving its goal of community satisfaction.

The Erlang Models were developed by Agner Krarup Erlang, a pioneer in the study of telecommunications traffic. Mr. Erlang worked for Copenhagen Telephone Company for twenty years. During the 1940s, the Erlang Models became the accepted unit of telecommunications traffic measurement, and the models are still used today in the design of modern telecommunications networks.

The formulas that were used by us are free online calculators available at [www.erlang.com](http://www.erlang.com), a website maintained by Westbay Engineers Limited.

One of the most cited industry standards in the Erlang Models is the 80/20 rule – that 80 percent of all calls are answered within 20 seconds. BARC has not adopted such a standard, but to provide us some perspective, it was the benchmark we used to evaluate the center's performance.

Based on Erlang B model, during the busiest hour of traffic (between 09:01 and 10:00 a.m.) in May 2005, more than 26% of the calls failed (blocking) due to insufficient number of lines. If the acceptable level of the failure (blocking) were set at 5%, the number of lines required in the busy hour would be 15.

Similarly, based on Erlang C model, during the busiest hour of traffic (between 09:01 and 10:00 a.m.) and tolerable delay in answering calls set at 20 seconds, 9 communication center staff are required to answer 154 calls with average call duration of 140 seconds.

Based on Erlang's communication center model with a call answering target of 80% answered in 20 seconds and a 5% trunk blocking target, the maximum communication center staff required are 10 and lines required are 11.

**Recommendation - Same as Recommendation No. 1**

## **PRIORITIZING CALLS FOR ACTION**

### **Observations**

From the customer satisfaction survey, we selected 50 cases, tested the priority code, and found no exception.

Erroneous priority codes are usually caused by the callers who purposely provide untrue information to obtain a higher priority code.

**Recommendation - Same as Recommendation No. 8**

## **INCIDENT ASSIGNMENT**

### **Observations**

During interviews and focus group discussions, the ACO's had the following comments about the dispatchers:

- Sometimes dispatchers are not professional, letting personal emotions take over.
- Dispatchers should not practice favoritism toward certain officers and cause disparity in case assignments.
- Training is necessary to improve the dispatchers' efficiency and effectiveness.
- There should be two more channels and two more dispatchers to handle the workload.
- Frequent changes of dispatchers, as center employees rotate to be dispatchers and change shifts at 4 p.m., makes it difficult to develop good working relationships. Sometimes, information is lost between shifts because of different work habits and communication problems between the dispatchers.
- Occasional assignment of cases that are not in BARC's jurisdiction.
- Tranquilizer cases are at times assigned to officers without tranquilizer guns.

### **Recommendation**

10. Incident assignments require making judgments based on knowledge of animal control activities. The job literally manages the case loads of the ACO's and should be performed by a senior ACO, such as a supervisor.

## **INFORMATION SYSTEMS SUPPORT**

### **Observations**

Information systems support for BARC is provided by the office supervisor whose experience in information technology is mostly from on-the-job training. In liaison with the City's Information Technology Department, the supervisor monitors and maintains the Bureau's telephone and computer equipment and software upgrades. The responsibilities were assumed by the supervisor in addition to the supervisory duties.

Computerized activity reports are generated from the Chameleon and telephone systems for management review. Due to the lack of formal training provided for the supervisor, some of the reports do not capture all the relevant information that is necessary for management purposes.

### **Recommendation**

11. Consideration should be given to provide formal training to the supervisor that is necessary to assume a full time position as the Bureau's IT support personnel.

## **CHAMELEON CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

### **Observations**

Chameleon is a case management system specially designed for the animal care industry. It captures all pertinent information about a case — date of activity (call date), date of dispatch, date of work, date of completion, and notes entered by call takers and ACO's. Completed or pending case activities reports, are management tools. Almost all of the employees are satisfied with the software. The following are our observations:

- The same activity number is assigned to several calls from the same caller even though the calls are for different complaints. Consequently, in some instances, no action was taken on a certain complaint because it had the same activity number as a case that had previously been solved.
- There is a lack of security measures to prevent unauthorized access to the information in the system. All logged-in employees can modify the entries made to any case in the system, but there is no tracking of identification except for the first and last entries. There is no restriction to access to other modules, such as cash accounting.

### **Recommendations**

12. Procedures should be followed to assign a new activity number to each new complaint from the same caller so that action will be taken to solve each case.
13. Establish access controls to sensitive information in the system.
14. Identify ways to obtain tracking data of all users.

## **SMART MAP**

### **Observations**

Smart Map is a computer software that provides key map information. It is a tool that BARC uses to assist ACO's to locate case addresses. Smart Map has not been upgraded for several years and no upgrade will be available. It has become obsolete and needs to be replaced.

### **Recommendations**

15. Instead of Smart Map, employees can use the website of Harris County Appraisal District which provides free and update information on most properties in Harris County.
16. Use other street maps and driving directions websites that offer free information on the Internet.
17. Consider using the database of the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline of the Office of the Mayor or the City's Planning and Development Center.

## **TELETRAC FLEETDIRECTOR**

### **Observations**

Teletrac Fleetdirector is a global satellite positioning (GSP) system that is used to monitor fleet movements of trucks and other vehicles. Each of BARC's field vehicles is equipped with the mobile receiving and transmitting device, the Tadiran-B Vehicle Locator unit. However, the system is not being used regularly and effectively. Moreover, several of the tracking devices in the vehicles are not functioning because they have not been serviced by Teletrac in the last six years. The Bureau's radio shop is maintaining the equipment without adequate training and/or knowledge of the system.

### **Recommendation**

18. The GSP system should be used by management to monitor field activities. This can be a motivational tool to improve productivity of the ACO's. The tracking system can reduce vehicle misuse and theft, and BARC should be able to benefit from cost savings from lower insurance and capital costs.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS/TELEPHONE SYSTEM

### Observations

The telecommunications part of our audit focused on telephone operations and also addressed auto attendant technology that affects the ability of the Bureau to maintain public communications. We also examined the management of the communications system.

The telecommunications area is a part of the Communication center and Dispatch functions. Two major areas associated with this sector are telephone and computing operations.

Our observations included some areas that were resolved informally during the audit. The new management team was already aware of some areas that needed correction and corrective actions were already planned. Other observations that are significant are included in this report as conditions requiring improvement.

Presently the Bureau is using two ACD switch boxes. Box A is for administration with 11 incoming lines and Box B is for Communication center with 9 incoming lines. Box B is programmed to transfer overflow calls to the Box A Operator when all logged in communication center staff are answering other calls. Only the Communication center switch box is equipped with the auto attendant feature.

The communication center staff in the Communication center had been provided individual headsets to answer calls, which were misplaced. Telephone conversations sometimes cannot be clearly comprehended due to background conversations and music from a radio.

There is also a system wallboard available to monitor incoming call traffic located in the Communication center.

The new kennel building and warehouse should be part of the telephone network. Presently the warehouse has a stand-alone line and there is no telecommunications device available at the new kennel building. In order for the warehouse to call the main building a public line is used. When the warehouse makes a call to the main building, they have to dial the Communication center and use auto attendant to transfer their call to respective employees in the other building. This uses a public line. Veterinarians, etc. cannot be paged due to the same reason when they are at the new kennel building and/or an ACO is at the warehouse.

BARC uses Nice Call Log System to record all the incoming and outgoing calls including radio communication. Altogether, there are 23 channels recorded, 2 (31 & 32) radio, 9 Communication Center (12 to 20), 11 Administration (1 to 11) and 1 direct line at dispatch (21). There are two NT servers recording Call log on cassettes that are retained for a period of 3 years. A workstation is installed with the Nice Call log system in the computer room. There are 5 user licenses plus one administrator license for the Nice Call Log Software installation on 6 computers. All the available Nice Call Log system licenses are not being used but are being paid for.

No fire extinguishers are available in the computer and telephone rooms. Cables (telephone and computer network) are not passing through fire stop material when they pass through the equipment room and the power circuits are not clearly marked.

During the audit, we requested information on policies, procedures, and security features available and in place at the Communication Center. However, the following information was not provided to us for evaluation of effectiveness:

- Documentation for changes and upgrades to the telecommunications software.
- Records of entries showing whom among those with "super user privileges" (administrator with access to most of the hardware and software) accessed the password tables during May 2005.
- Access status reports of all employees with both telephone and Internet access.
- Agent logs of activity, unavailable time, and security violations.
- Communication systems plan.
- Written telecommunications policy.

### **Recommendations**

19. The communication center staff should get their respective headsets issued again, directly in their name and made responsible for its maintenance and availability.
20. The System Wallboard should be moved to Manager's / Supervisor's room in order for it to be effectively used towards improvement of agent's time.
21. The use of Public line for interoffice use can be avoided by having the warehouse and new kennel building as part of the telephone network. All the buildings should have the capability of paging with complete telephone networking in the entire complex.
22. The current two ACD switch boxes, with 9 and 11 lines each, should be converted to one 20-lines ACD with auto attendant feature. This will extend the auto attendant feature to cover all lines instead just the 9 communication center lines as provided by the current system. The auto attendant feature will relieve the workload of the communication center staff in answering administrative calls and improve their productivity in handling service calls. This may also increase the feasibility of reducing the number of staff for the weekends.
23. Nice Call Log user Licenses should be reduced from 5 to 3 and the available features should be effectively used to monitor telephone conversations and complaints on wait time.
24. Communication center staff should be walked through the telephone system operation every quarter in a group as a classroom session.
25. The administration switch box operator should be educated to read telephone messages (DND, etc.) and console lights (who is on line). Additionally, operators should be provided information memorandums on who among the employees have voice mail boxes.
26. There should be fire extinguishers in computer and telephone rooms. In addition, the cables (telephone and computer network) should pass through fire stop material when they pass through equipment room and the power circuits should be clearly marked.

Written policies and procedures should be adopted and relevant reports generated and reviewed in the following areas:

27. Proper documentation and controls should be established to ensure that IT contractors or the resident technicians are authorized to make software changes/upgrades.
28. Records of entries showing who among those with "super user privileges" (administrator with access to most of the hardware and software) accessed the password should be generated and reviewed in order to determine how access to the password tables is restricted and whether such access is actually restricted to those who really need to access the password tables.
29. Access status reports of all employees should be submitted to the user departments periodically (say quarterly) to enable department heads to validate the access capabilities currently provided to employees in their departments.
30. Agent log reports of activity, unavailable time, and security violations should be generated correctly and reviewed continuously. Procedures should be instituted to ensure that reports of log and security violations are reviewed and resolved. Also, if possible, ensure that such procedures provide for automatic suspension of user ID/Code or the disability of terminal, PC, data entry device, etc., after a determined number of security procedure violations such as persistent unsuccessful access attempts. Records of security violations should also be protected from accidental or intentional destruction/alterations.
31. A formal communications plan should be established for standard telecommunications architecture to ensure that a proper approach is taken for the telecomm systems design and acquisition. Network optimization studies should also be conducted to ensure a cost-effective facility design.
32. Written telecommunications policy should be developed and enforced detailing the operational rules for telephone, cable, satellite, and computer networks.

## **RADIO SYSTEM**

### **Observations**

Motorola portable radios are used by the ACO's at the field to communicate with the dispatchers. There are 25 older model units and 20 (LTS 2000) new model units. The shortcomings of these radios, to the general consensus of the ACO's, are that they have short battery life (4-8 hours), poor reception and are of poor quality. To compensate for the short battery life, many ACO's carry two sets of radios in the field causing a shortage to accommodate all ACO's.

### **Recommendation**

33. Travel charger kits or car adaptors for the original charger bases should be purchased for the ACO's to recharge the batteries in the field. The estimated cost for 20 Intec Car Adapter PSP is \$10 each for a total of \$200.

The estimated cost for 20 travel charger kits for the LTS 2000 units are as follows:

Model No.	Unit Cost	No. of Unit	Total Cost
MOTOROLA			
RLN4833A	\$68	20	\$1,360
RLN4833	\$73	20	\$1,460

## COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

### Observations

Computer equipment in the Bureau is comprised of three servers, fifty workstations, and one computer for trunk recordings. One of the servers is idle and can be used for the Voice over IP system to be installed this September.

The Pentium III model computers are being replaced with new Pentium 4 units. However, due to licensing issues, an older version of office program, the MS Office 1997, is being used in the new computers, while MS Office 2000 is being used in the old machines. Some files between these two programs are not exchangeable.

During the last several years, as the network systems were upgraded, the network cables had also been upgraded three times. According to a representative in the City's Information Technology Department, due to budget constraints, the older cables have not yet been removed from the ceilings of the buildings and may become potential hazards.

There seems to be a general consensus among the employees that the ACO's should be provided with laptop computers so that they can have wireless access to the main system in the office. With wireless technology, the ACO's will have direct access to the data in the Chameleon system and be more efficient in completing field activities. Radio communications with the dispatchers can be reduced significantly eliminating the necessity to increase the numbers of dispatchers, as suggested by many employees. Furthermore, the ACO's can enter case information into the Chameleon system without wasting time waiting for an available computer in the office. Productivity will be increased and better services will be provided for the public.

### Recommendations

34. Streamline computer software being used in different machines to ensure exchangeability of work files.
35. Remove old network cables in the ceilings to avoid potential hazards.



36. Provide ACO's with laptop computers with wireless connection to the main system. For use in the field, we recommend the fully rugged notebooks that have a unit cost ranging from \$3,400 to \$4,100. The total estimated cost for a minimum of 30 notebooks (24 ACO's, 4 ACO supervisors and 2 ACO managers) would range from \$102,000 to \$123,000. These costs do not include fees for the wireless system as the Bureau could use a system currently used or to be used by the Health and Human Services Department or by the City. After our discussion about this recommendation, the Bureau's management is considering coordination with the Department of the Health and Human Services Department or the Information Technology Department of the City to obtain funding for these expenditures.

## APPENDIX A

### BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE – COMMUNICATION CENTER PERFORMANCE AUDIT

#### Communication Center Employee Survey Results

Population  
N=10

Survey Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	No Response	Total
1. My skills are effectively used in my current position.	-	-	10%	50%	40%	-	-	100%
2. The job orientation I received was effective.	20%	20%	10%	40%	-	10%	-	100%
3. The workload is reasonable.	10%	20%	10%	40%	-	10%	10%	100%
4. The work environment is safe.	10%	10%	10%	50%	20%	-	-	100%
5. The work environment is comfortable.	10%	30%	20%	30%	10%	-	-	100%
6. The work environment is appropriately equipped.	10%	40%	20%	20%	10%	-	-	100%
7. I am provided with enough training to do my job properly.	30%	10%	30%	20%	-	-	10%	100%
8. I am provided with enough information to do my job properly.	10%	30%	-	40%	10%	-	10%	100%
9. I understand what the Bureau expects of me.		30%	-	60%	10%	-	-	100%
10. High quality work is stressed.	20%	-	20%	40%	20%	-	-	100%
11. There is a high degree of team spirit on my job.	30%	40%	20%	10%	-	-	-	100%
12. Bureau provides equal opportunities for all employees.	30%	10%	40%	10%	10%	-	-	100%

Survey Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	No Response	Total
13. Supervisor gives fair and equal treatment to all employees.	30%	20%	30%	10%	10%	-	-	100%
14. Supervisor is available to discuss job related issues.	30%	20%	10%	30%	10%	-	-	100%
15. Supervisor welcomes suggestions and feedback.	30%	10%	20%	30%	10%	-	-	100%
16. Supervisor discusses with respective employee their performance and evaluations periodically.	10%	30%	10%	40%	10%	-	-	100%
17. Supervisor has trust and confidence in staff.	20%	10%	30%	40%	-	-	-	100%
18. Supervisor gives recognition for improvement and achievement.	40%	20%	20%	20%	-	-	-	100%
19. Supervisor encourages cooperation in the workplace.	10%	30%	30%	20%	10%	-	-	100%
20. Supervisor provides development opportunities.	40%	20%	20%	10%	10%	-	-	100%
21. Supervisor practices consistent policies and procedures.	20%	30%	30%	10%	10%	-	-	100%
22. Staff have trust and confidence in their Supervisor.	20%	20%	30%	30%	-	-	-	100%
23. Personnel information is kept confidential.	20%	10%	50%	10%	10%	-	-	100%
24. I am satisfied with my salary.	30%	40%	20%	10%	-	-	-	100%
25. My compensation matches my responsibilities.	20%	40%	10%	20%	-	-	10%	100%
26. I am empowered to influence the quality of my work.	-	-	60%	20%	20%	-	-	100%
27. I am comfortable with the professionalism of my co-workers.	20%	30%	20%	10%	10%	-	10%	100%
28. I am able to achieve balance between my work and my family life.	10%	20%	20%	30%	20%	-	-	100%
29. I enjoy the physical working environment.	-	10%	30%	40%	-	10%	10%	100%
30. I am satisfied with the Bureau as a place to work.	-	-	40%	60%	-	-	-	100%

31. Overall, how would you rate your job experience? Would you say you are?

Very satisfied	10%
Mostly satisfied	30%
Satisfied	20%
Not very satisfied	40%
Not at all satisfied	-
Total	100%

32. How long have you worked for the Bureau?

Less than 1 year	30%
1 - 3 years	-
4 - 6 years	30%
More than 6 years	40%
Total	100%

33. If you are less than satisfied, what could your employer do to make your job experience better?

I wish that we could speed up the ACO's picking up the animals.

---

Put schedule back to 10 hours.

---

Better equipment, communication and training.

---

The supervisor could communicate more with her employees, where they will feel okay about talking to her.

---

Should give fair and equal treatment to all employees, discuss job related issues and keep confidential.

---

34. Finally, if you could implement one change at the Bureau, what would it be?

Complete the calls faster.

---

Teamwork.

---

Provide each person with an opportunity to receive training, which would help her or him to advance within the city.

---

Each person should hold accountable for her or his action and not having the whole Bureau punished for the action of one person.

---

Have a supervisor communicate to all of the employees, have trust and confidence in all staff and treat everyone equally.

---

Practice consistent policies and procedures.

---

Recognize improvement and achievement.

---

Dispatch goes back to 10-hour shift while call takers back to 8-5 with Saturday and Sunday off.

---

New management.

---

*BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE – COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT*

*Animal Control Officer Employee Survey Results*

Population  
N=26

Survey Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	No Response	Total
1. My skills are effectively used in my current position.	8%	4%	4%	49%	27%	8%	-	100%
2. The job orientation I received was effective.	12%	4%	15%	49%	8%	8%	4%	100%
3. The workload is reasonable.	4%	15%	12%	54%	15%	-	-	100%
4. The work environment is safe.	12%	23%	23%	38%	4%	-	-	100%
5. The work environment is comfortable.	8%	38%	19%	27%	4%	-	4%	100%
6. The work environment is appropriately equipped.	34%	31%	19%	12%	4%	-	-	100%
7. I am provided with enough training to do my job properly.	23%	19%	23%	31%	4%	-	-	100%
8. I am provided with enough information to do my job properly.	27%	23%	15%	27%	4%	-	4%	100%
9. I understand what the Bureau expects of me.	12%	8%	12%	49%	19%	-	-	100%
10. High quality work is stressed.	8%	27%	27%	27%	-	-	11%	100%
11. There is a high degree of team spirit on my job.	38%	31%	15%	8%	8%	-	-	100%
12. Bureau provides equal opportunities for all employees.	38%	31%	19%	8%	4%	-	-	100%

Survey Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	No Response	Total
13. Supervisor gives fair and equal treatment to all employees.	35%	19%	8%	19%	19%	-	-	100%
14. Supervisor is available to discuss job related issues.	19%	19%	4%	39%	19%	-	-	100%
15. Supervisor welcomes suggestions and feedback.	19%	23%	12%	23%	19%	-	4%	100%
16. Supervisor discusses with respective employee their performance and evaluations periodically.	19%	23%	11%	39%	8%	-	-	100%
17. Supervisor has trust and confidence in staff.	19%	27%	15%	19%	12%	-	8%	100%
18. Supervisor gives recognition for improvement and achievement.	23%	23%	23%	15%	12%	-	4%	100%
19. Supervisor encourages cooperation in the workplace.	19%	23%	12%	34%	12%	-	-	100%
20. Supervisor provides development opportunities.	23%	27%	31%	15%	4%	-	-	100%
21. Supervisor practices consistent policies and procedures.	31%	15%	23%	23%	8%	-	-	100%
22. Staff have trust and confidence in their Supervisor.	34%	15%	23%	12%	12%	-	4%	100%
23. Personnel information is kept confidential.	31%	15%	12%	34%	8%	-	-	100%
24. I am satisfied with my salary.	42%	31%	12%	15%	-	-	-	100%
25. My compensation matches my responsibilities.	31%	34%	27%	8%	-	-	-	100%
26. I am empowered to influence the quality of my work.	8%	19%	30%	23%	12%	-	8%	100%
27. I am comfortable with the professionalism of my co-workers.	19%	35%	23%	19%	4%	-	-	100%
28. I am able to achieve balance between my work and my family life.	-	12%	4%	50%	30%	-	4%	100%
29. I enjoy the physical working environment.	4%	8%	23%	35%	30%	-	-	100%
30. I am satisfied with the Bureau as a place to work.	23%	27%	15%	27%	8%	-	-	100%

31. Overall, how would you rate your job experience? Would you say you are?

Very satisfied	12%
Mostly satisfied	15%
Satisfied	23%
Not very satisfied	38%
Not at all satisfied	12%
Total	100%

32. How long have you worked for the Bureau?

Less than 1 year	23%
1 - 3 years	23%
4 - 6 years	31%
More than 6 years	15%
No Response	8%
Total	100%

33. If you are less than satisfied, what could your employer do to make your job experience better?

Be on the same page. We are used to the left hand not knowing what right hand is doing. Do not nit pick, be professional.

---

More money and better communication, better equipment.

---

Make the job more comfortable, less stressful and give a higher salary.

---

Hire a permanent bureau chief with an animal control background.

---

Be more respectful to employees. Be less prejudiced in general. Not be two faced. Back up the employee's decisions.

---

Management.

---



Training has been seriously lacking. There are no standard ways of performing paperwork or activities, or promotions when earned. It is very unorganized and has not improved with the new regime.

---

Better pay.

---

It does not matter, because nothing will be done anyway.

---

Listen to the ideas of your employees.

---

34. Finally, if you could implement one change at the Bureau, what would it be?

---

Hire a trainer and place laptops in vehicles.

---

More money for equipment.

---

New radios, computer in the truck.

---

To make the (all) employees equal to each other. To all be treated the same.

---

Equipment. More training on animal species.

---

More education.

---

Co-operation.

---

Better management.

---

More training.

---

Remove the current management people they have no knowledge of animal control work.

---

I expect to get paid what I'm supposed to. We need laptops in the trucks.

---

If people are going to come to listen to us I expect for them to really listen to us. If not don't even bother.

---

It had been asked before nothing had been done.

---

If you ask our opinions then please do something about them.

---

Put someone in charge that actually has some knowledge of an efficient animal control operation.

---

Better training program. Better supervisor, promotions when they are due, supervisors and managers that care, and equipment that is needed.

---

Stop making unnecessary changes.

---

Follow the work of all ACOs and make sure everyone is pulling their weight. Some officers only running 3-4 calls a day while most officers are running 9-13 daily.

---

Get laptops for officers.

---

Better and fair management that really cares about their employees.

---

Too many to write down.

---

More Comments and suggestions:

I feel that if people are coming in to make changes they should stop rushing our comments. Stop and listen and make changes to help the employees. If not willing please don't come out trying to act as if you care.

I realize BARC is in a transition phase, and now would be the time to organize it properly. The problem is that the people who are currently in charge do not seem to have any practical knowledge of our field, and so the old school practices of some supervisors are allowed to continue. Managements do not treat all employees equally, allowing some to do as they wish, and others are watched much more prejudicially. Calls are frequently inaccurate, with poor information and missing vital notes. Every investigative ordinance call can't be a priority 4, with aggressive dogs attacking people. Better training for communication personnel is greatly needed.

In my opinion, all officers should be trained and give a tranquilizer gun. Too many times, dogs are left in a neighborhood or park where there is no officer to assist with a tranquilizer gun. When a TranQ officer is available, then you are left waiting for an hour for assistance. By the time they get there and tranquilize the dog, you have now spent 2 or more hours on one call. This to me is a waist of time. Most officers could run 4 or more calls in this time, just while waiting.

Overall we have a very diverse and complex operation. Everyday at BARC is a new day. Truck and equipment has always been our predominant way of life. Our new management people from the health department have no animal control knowledge and most seriously they are displaying double standards at BARC. Please help.

Phones in communication are put on unavailable for long periods of time. Citizens say that they have a 40-minute wait. Go back a few months and pull a day during the week at random and run a report on the phones down time.

Call run on an investigation ordinance and there is a NHLN (Not Home Left Notice) with violations and the call is not sequenced. The problem is the citizen is on hold for a possible a long time and then all we do is leave a NHLN, and the complainant thinks we never showed up and since the call is not sequenced, we never go back to fix problem and the complainant has to start all over again.

Training has been eliminated and no travel allowed. CE hours not current CERT could be lost.

Truck cleaning personnel gone and no equipment.

Need to have SOP's and training manuals.

Our evaluations for ACO's are based on calls, number of animals, and citations and warnings. The numbers are now 1980 numbers plus update to 2005 numbers.

T guns, officer could wait up to 45 minutes for a TRANQ assist.

Laptop or handhelds could do the notes right after the call was complete.

Citation writer.

License is big money being missed.

Education for the public was cut. One of our most important jobs.

NHLN (Not Home Left Notice) needed, door hangers have to print and cut paper ones. Cards are needed to be professional.

HPD calls, 9 times out of ten they are gone. Need to have them there or have two type of HPD calls. One HPD actually standing by or two HPD wants us to check by but they won't be there.

Our radios are old technology. Maybe cell and or the walkie talkie mode.

Bite case is a special case needs an independent supervisor like before to run and keep up with its special needs.

We have a city of five million and two bite case officers. One bite case officer for two and one half million people is not enough. That is one bite case officer for fifty astrodomes.

Caller ID. If a person calls anonymous they never know if we run the call and assume that we didn't.

## APPENDIX B

### ***BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE – COMMUNICATION CENTER PERFORMANCE AUDIT***

#### ***Focus Groups Comments***

Six Communication Center personnel and ten animal control officers were invited to participate in two focus group sessions held separately. These discussions were conducted under the following topics:

- Scheduling and Staffing
- Working Area Allocation
- Training
- Communication between communication center and animal control officers
- Staff Meetings
- Supervisor Evaluation
- Supervisor and Management
- Telephone Performance
- Computer and Software
- Radio Equipment
- Vehicles
- Supplies

Information obtained from the discussions helped guide the audit team through the performance audit. The following is a summary of the comments received from the focus groups.

The opinions presented are strictly of the employees of BARC and do not reflect the opinions of the audit team.

*Is the schedule being discussed and acceptable?*

- Yes, it is being discussed.
- As for acceptable, animal control officers have little choice but pick up their work schedule prepared by the dispatcher the previous day. We do feel the pressure to get the preparation done within 30 minutes in the morning. There is no security over the tools so that we have to reload them each day. The worst part is many times we could not even find a working vehicle to drive.
- For Communication Center, the schedule has been discussed and changed several times to meet the workload and individual's needs.
- Dispatchers prefer a 10-hour shift that they would be able to do their job more consistently. That would reduce the confusion arising from different work routines from the previous shift.
- Communication Center is short of staff. We need at least two more people to cover the telephone.

*How do you like your working geographical area allocation?*

- Most of the animal control officers have no problem with that. But there are some occasions that supervisors would change the allocation just to satisfy a certain person. The majority of the officers prefer to stay within the same area so that officers can get familiar with the community and provide better service.

*Is the training adequate to carry out day-to-day operations?*

- Not really. For animal control officers there is only one basic certificate course available. Continue education hours were not accounted for and we have to pay for these courses out-of-pocket. The training is not consistent and systematic. Some officers are trained by less experienced employees.
- For communication, one day training is far less enough. Personnel need to be trained more systematically on handling calls, prioritizing calls and entering data into Chameleon.

*Is the communication from Communication center clear and precise?*

- Overall, we were not satisfied with Communication center services.
- Dispatchers sometimes take their personal emotion and mood into work. Part of the reason is because they were doing so many things at the same time, which makes their job really stressful. The problems are getting worse on Wednesdays when so many people need to communicate. Dispatchers should be trained to talk courteously and their job should be more specific. Probably we need two more channels and two more dispatchers.
- Officers feel comfortable with the same dispatcher since we have developed certain correspondence over the years that we could easily understand each other. Recent constant schedule change creates some unnecessary confusion and misunderstanding.
- Animal control officers need more specific information. Sometimes call takers did not take the right information, did not ask the right questions, did not take time to ask the questions, or did not input the information completely and accurately.
- Cancelled calls are not being informed timely. Officers waste time in responding to a cancelled call.
- The Smart Map that call takers is using needs update. Sometime the key map information given to the officer is not in the book.

*Do you receive many complaints from the field officers?*

- Yes, we do. But officers tend to criticize dispatch for every wrongdoing.
- Officers blame call takers to place a low priority call into a higher one when sometimes it's because of the citizens that try to get their call prioritized.

*Do you have regular meetings with supervisors and managers?*

- There are no regular meetings. Two shifts of ACOs only communicate within their own shift even though they get the opportunity to meet other shift on Wednesdays.
- There are no regular meetings of communication center personnel with their supervisor and ACOs.

*Does your supervisor discuss evaluation with you and how do you like your supervisor?*

- Communication supervisor will discuss the evaluation with someone as requested but not everyone.
- Communication Center employees receive no appreciations from the supervisor and there is no evaluation for employees to evaluate their supervisor.
- When communication receives complaints from the officers, our supervisor simply asked the dispatcher to fix the problem when it is actually call takers' fault.
- Some tool additions made by current management are not practical at all. It is a waste of money.
- One of ACO supervisor over exercises his power. Management failed to take everybody's opinion but rather only one person.

*How do you like the performance of the telephone system?*

- Telephone equipment works fine, but voicemail function is not fully utilized by staff.
- Communication center personnel would like to have hands-free set.
- Operators receive many repeated calls due to lack of updates on demographic information, updates on animal adoption, and outside speakers for paging people that work outside.

*How is the computer and software?*

- There are not enough computers for all ACOs. Officers have to wait for their turn to enter the note into Chameleon by the end of the day.
- Computers in Communication center are new and work fine while the ones in dispatch are old and slow.
- Chameleon is easy to use except there is no restrict access to it so the information can be easily altered.
- Smart Map is out dated resulting in incorrect information provided to the officers.
- Email has not been fully utilized. Still many people do not know how to use it.

*How is the radio equipment?*

- The battery is horrible. Officers have to take three or more radios with them to last for a day.
- The radio communication between dispatchers and officers are bad. We need stronger receiver especially for the Kingwood area. Officers need charger adapter in their vehicle or better radios.

*How are the vehicles?*

- Vehicles are not properly maintained resulting in fewer working units than officers' needs. It also takes a long time for vehicles to get repaired. Each officer has an assigned vehicle but some have to share with someone else because of this maintenance issue.

*Are there adequate supplies for ACOs?*

- Supplies are not easy to get and have to get supervisor's approval. Some supervisors are unwilling to help their employees.
- Officers need more safety equipment like first aid kits for themselves.

*How do you like putting Laptops in officers' vehicles?*

- Every officer likes this idea and agrees that this can solve many of the communication problems that they have right now.
- Communication employees welcome the idea of laptop and wireless technology except some officers are not computer literate.

*Other comments*

- Salary is not fair. Raises have been delayed.
- ACO's – prefer different kind of uniform for the summer – t-shirts and shorts.



**APPENDIX C**

**BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE - COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

*Customer Satisfaction Survey Results*

Population  
n=100

Survey Question	Survey Response
-----------------	-----------------

General Questions

1. How do you rate the services in response to your call?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
35%	36%	13%	16%	100%

2. Were the services completed to your satisfaction?

Yes	No	Total
79%	21%	100%

3. Were all employees professional and knowledgeable?

Yes	No	Total
87%	13%	100%

Questions regarding Call Center

4. When you contacted BARC were you treated courteously?

Yes	No	Neither	Total
91%	8%	1%	100%

5. Was your call being answered promptly?

Yes	No	Can't recall	Total
86%	13%	1%	100%

6. How would you rate the personnel's communication skills?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
30%	54%	7%	9%	100%

7. Did the personnel take time to answer all your questions?

Yes	No	Can't recall	Total
91%	6%	3%	100%

Questions regarding ACO's

8. Was the officer polite and courteous?

Yes	No
85%	6%

Not Applicable	Total
9%	100%

9. Were the officer's actions appropriate for the situation?

Yes	No
82%	10%

Not Applicable	Total
8%	100%

10. How would you rate the response time to your call?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable	Total
27%	40%	14%	11%	8%	100%

11. How would you rate the officer's communication skills?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable	Total
34%	49%	6%	2%	9%	100%

12. How would you rate the officer's attitude?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable	Total
37%	45%	6%	3%	9%	100%

Apply to priority level 4 and 5 calls

13. Were you informed clearly when the officer would react to your request?

Yes	No
75%	22%

Not Applicable	Total
3%	100%

Comments/Suggestions:

1. Called three times before officer came out.
2. Was not informed clearly when the officer would come out. (for priority level 2 call)
3. Officer came out unprepared. Caller had to find a box to hold the cat.
4. Caller didn't want to pick up the dead animal and did give permission for BARC to enter her property. Unfortunately, the caller didn't think the call center personnel understand her and she ended up picking up the dead animal herself.
5. Instead of simply telling the caller that the officers were busy, the operator could be more professional and explicit.
6. Officer was confrontational.
7. Good Appearance.
8. Most Satisfied.
9. Took three calls for them to come out.
10. Not helpful at all. Got the runaround raccoons left on their own.
11. Someone from the transportation department at the airport took the job after no one came out.
12. Animal was picked up promptly, most satisfied.
13. The officer was not very understanding, somewhat cruel to animal.
14. Shot and killed the dog, excellent.
15. Came out, but was unable to catch the dog.
16. There were two dogs unable to catch, but got the majority.
17. Took two calls to come out, otherwise satisfied.
18. Overall satisfied.
19. Picked up promptly.
20. So pleased, wants to write a letter of thanks.

*Cross-tabulation of Questions Indicating Customer Satisfaction by Telephone Survey*

Population  
n=100

Priority Level	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Count	20	20	20	20	20	100

Survey Question	Survey Response
-----------------	-----------------

General Questions

1. How do you rate the services in response to your call?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Excellent	N=35	34%	29%	11%	6%	20%	100%
Good	N=36	14%	19%	31%	28%	8%	100%
Fair	N=13	15%	15%	15%	32%	23%	100%
Poor	N=16	6%	6%	19%	25%	44%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Excellent	60%	50%	20%	10%	35%
Good	25%	35%	55%	50%	15%
Fair	10%	10%	10%	20%	15%
Poor	5%	5%	15%	20%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

2. Were the services completed to your satisfaction?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=79	23%	24%	20%	19%	14%	100%
No	N=21	10%	5%	19%	24%	42%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	90%	95%	80%	75%	55%
No	10%	5%	20%	25%	45%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

3. Were all employees professional and knowledgeable?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=87	21%	21%	22%	19%	17%	100%
No	N=13	15%	15%	8%	23%	39%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	90%	90%	95%	85%	75%
No	10%	10%	5%	15%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

Questions regarding Call Center

4. When you contacted BARC were you treated courteously?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=91	21%	20%	21%	20%	18%	100%
No	N=8	13%	13%	-	25%	49%	100%
Not Sure	N=1	-	100%	-	-	-	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	95%	90%	100%	90%	80%
No	5%	5%	-	10%	20%
Not Sure	-	5%	-	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

5. Was your call being answered promptly?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=86	20%	22%	22%	17%	19%	100%
No	N=13	22%	8%	8%	31%	31%	100%
Can't Recall	N=1	-	-	-	100%	-	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	85%	95%	95%	75%	80%
No	15%	5%	5%	20%	20%
Can't Recall	-	-	-	5%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

6. How would you rate the personnel's communication skills?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Excellent	N=30	20%	30%	20%	7%	23%	100%
Good	N=54	24%	15%	24%	22%	15%	100%
Fair	N=7	-	29%	14%	14%	43%	100%
Poor	N=9	11%	11%	-	56%	22%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Excellent	30%	45%	30%	10%	35%
Good	65%	40%	65%	60%	40%
Fair	-	10%	5%	5%	15%
Poor	5%	5%	-	25%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

Questions regarding Call Center (Continued)

7. Did the personnel take time to answer all your questions?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=91	21%	21%	21%	18%	19%	100%
No	N=6	17%	-	17%	49%	17%	100%
Can't Recall	N=3	-	34%	-	33%	33%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	95%	95%	95%	80%	90%
No	5%	-	5%	15%	5%
Can't Recall	-	5%	-	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

Questions regarding ACOs

8. Was the officer polite and courteous?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=85	22%	21%	22%	18%	17%	100%
No	N=6	17%	-	-	17%	66%	100%
Not Applicable	N=9	-	22%	12%	44%	22%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	95%	90%	95%	75%	70%
No	5%	-	-	5%	20%
Not Applicable	-	10%	5%	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

9. Were the officer's actions appropriate for the situation?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=82	23%	22%	21%	16%	18%	100%
No	N=10	10%	-	30%	30%	30%	100%
Not Applicable	N=8	-	25%	-	50%	25%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Yes	95%	90%	85%	65%	75%
No	5%	-	15%	15%	15%
Not Applicable	-	10%	-	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

Questions regarding ACOs (Continued)

10. How would you rate the response time to your call?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Excellent	N=27	30%	33%	11%	7%	19%	100%
Good	N=40	23%	15%	22%	25%	15%	100%
Fair	N=14	7%	14%	36%	14%	29%	100%
Poor	N=11	18%	10%	27%	18%	27%	100%
Not Applicable	N=8	-	25%	-	50%	25%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Excellent	40%	45%	15%	10%	25%
Good	45%	30%	45%	50%	30%
Fair	5%	10%	25%	10%	20%
Poor	10%	5%	15%	10%	15%
Not Applicable	-	10%	-	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

11. How would you rate the officer's communication skills?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Excellent	N=34	29%	29%	12%	12%	18%	100%
Good	N=49	18%	16%	27%	18%	21%	100%
Fair	N=6	17%	-	33%	33%	17%	100%
Poor	N=2	-	-	-	50%	50%	100%
Not Applicable	N=9	-	22%	12%	44%	22%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Excellent	50%	50%	20%	20%	30%
Good	45%	40%	65%	45%	50%
Fair	5%	-	10%	10%	5%
Poor	-	-	-	5%	5%
Not Applicable	-	10%	5%	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

12. How would you rate the officer's attitude?

	Cases	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total
Excellent	N=37	32%	27%	14%	5%	22%	100%
Good	N=45	13%	18%	27%	24%	18%	100%
Fair	N=6	33%	-	33%	17%	17%	100%
Poor	N=3	-	-	-	67%	33%	100%
Not Applicable	N=9	-	22%	12%	44%	22%	100%

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Excellent	60%	50%	25%	10%	40%
Good	30%	40%	60%	55%	40%
Fair	10%	-	10%	5%	5%
Poor	-	-	-	10%	5%
Not Applicable	-	10%	5%	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20

Apply to priority level 4 and 5 calls

13. Were you informed clearly when the officer would react to your request?

	Cases	P4	P5	Total
Yes	N=30	43%	57%	100%
No	N=9	67%	33%	100%
Not Applicable	N=1	100%	-	100%

	P4	P5
Yes	65%	85%
No	30%	15%
Not Applicable	5%	-
Total	100%	100%
	N=20	N=20

## APPENDIX D

### BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE – COMMUNICATION CENTER PERFORMANCE AUDIT

#### SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDINGS

On June 27, 2005 we reviewed selected calls from recordings of May 25, 2005 between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. The total calls recorded during this hour were 117 of which we selected 28 calls (24%).

	Channel No.	Time	Description
1	32	09:01:03 - 09:01:58	Radio discussion
2	21	09:02:49 - 09:04:21	Citizen had already called earlier and HPD was confirming presence at the scene. The Communication Center staff had put HPD on hold between 09:03:20 to 09:04:12 (Communication Center staff was talking to ACO). The complete radio talk was between 09:03:20 to 09:05:25.
3	6	09:03:38 - 09:20:22	Channel not working
4	32	09:03:20 - 09:05:25	See 2 above
5	15	09:03:38 - 09:16:45	Internal call transferred from Auto Voice message.
6	16	09:04:11 - 09:06:22	Auto message transfer to ACO Manager for complaint and request to do something about the neighbor's dog.
7	17	09:04:27 - 09:07:54	Call was put on hold between 09:05:50 to 09:07:35. Transferred from Auto message recording to Communication Center staff. Stray loose was reported and entered at priority 4 in Chameleon. The same person had called on 05/20/05 for a cat and the case was closed. However, same case number was used for this case, this is not recommended by BARC policy. This case was closed as the call was cancelled and another case was recorded next day.
8	32	09:05:37 - 09:05:43	Radio discussion.
9	32	09:06:10 - 09:09:51	Radio discussion, working activities reported by various officers.
10	1	09:06:14 - 09:06:48	Inquiry for a dog lost in Spanish. The Communication Center staff gave city's website address to look at lost and found and also informed the caller that he can visit BARC's location.
11	14	09:06:36 - 09:07:36	Call from BARC's warehouse at Communication Center number. Caller used the auto message recording to transfer call to the Administration Manager.
12	16	09:06:59 - 09:11:29	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report a family of raccoons at caller's residence. This was recorded in Chameleon at priority 5 to provide a trap to the citizen. The call has not yet been attended by any ACO.
13	20	09:07:40 - 09:09:25	Communication Center staff made a personal outgoing call.
14	14	09:09:14 - 09:11:42	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report 2 baby kittens in a box. The case was recorded in Chameleon at priority 4 and ACO picked up kittens the next day between 08:53 and 09:11 05/26/05.



	Channel No.	Time	Description
15	31	09:09:49 – 09:10:28	Radio discussion.
16	17	09:10:12 – 09:14:05	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report dogs in neighbor's house who presently is in jail. The call was on hold between 09:10:58 to 09:11:03 at which it was transferred to another Communication Center staff without telling the caller. The case could not be located in Chameleon as the recorded sound of caller was not very clear.
17	1	09:19:53 - 09:21:05	Called for Licensing, Communication Center staff gave the necessary contact number. The staff hung-up while the caller was still talking.
18	14	09:20:14 - 09:23:26	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report a raccoon caught in a trap. The caller had already called a day before. A cat was picked up immediately after the raccoon was picked up but no case was recorded. In June the same caller called to report opossum but a new case was not recorded instead the old case number was used. All this created confusions for the ACO.
19	1	09:25:19 - 09:27:13	Caller wanted information on possibility of burial of her dead dog. The Communication Center staff put her on hold, which was not very clearly communicated and the caller was still talking. Caller was put on hold from 09:26:02 to 09:27:07 at which the Communication Center staff found that the caller has hung-up.
20	14	09:31:01 - 09:32:39	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report that he has found a dog with owner's collar in the apartment where he lives. The staff instructed him to take it to the apartment manager and if that manager feels necessary for ACO to go out there, she should call BARC.
21	16	09:31:50 - 09:33:20	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to report a stray dog loose in yard. The staff checked in Chameleon and found that caller had already called on 05/24/05 and that case was recorded at priority 5 that was scheduled to be attended on 05/25/05. The same was communicated to the caller. However, later on the case was put on pending list, as the ACO was unable to attend this call on 05/25/05. The call still is showing as pending.
22	1	09:32:14 - 09:34:03	A volunteer called to talk to Kennel manager and the Communication Center staff transferred the call accordingly. The volunteer was working on a dog adoption by a citizen.
23	20	09:33:47 - 09:36:27	Outgoing call from BARC's payroll clerk to City's personnel department.
24	14	09:33:59 - 09:36:24	Auto message recording was used by warehouse to transfer to an administrative associate - interoffice call.

	Channel No.	Time	Description
25	15	09:34:46 - 09:43:00	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to an Communication Center staff to get a status on stray found by the caller and turned in by herself the evening before. The caller wanted to make sure the dog gets adopted. The staff informed her that if the Veterinarian feels the dog is fit for adoption then only it will be put for adoption, otherwise it might be subject to euthanasia. The caller had a concern and wanted to talk to the veterinarians who were in a meeting at that time. The record of incoming animal could not be found in Chameleon. The Communication Center staff is not allowed to communicate on such matters, the call should have been transferred to kennel manager or veterinarian as per BARC's policy explained to us by the Communication Center supervisor.
26	15	09:46:10 - 09:52:54	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to a Communication Center staff to inquire about his dog that was bought in on 05/19/05 for quarantine as it bit the owner (caller). The staff told him that if he wants the dog back he could pick up the dog on 05/29/05. The staff did not notice on the Chameleon screen that the dog was already be-headed on 05/24/05 and the head was scheduled to be sent to lab on 05/25/05 as per caller / owner's roommate's instruction and authorization. No further update was noted in Chameleon.
27	13	09:51:58 - 09:52:51	Outgoing call by a Communication Center staff to verify a dog pick-up that was reported on 05/24/05 as confined dog at an auto shop but the address showed an apartment number. After verification, it turned out that the telephone number and address provided by the caller was good and it was a shop, but there was no one by the name of that caller over there. Accordingly the case was closed stating bad information.
28	20	09:59:51 - 10:01:20	Auto message recording was used by caller to transfer to leave a voice mail for a veterinarian

APPENDIX E

BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE-COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT

ANSWERED CALL VOLUME 2004 AND 2005

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2004	8,158	9,179	7,915	7,946	9,586	10,497	7,239	7,637	6,826	6,425	6,159	6,441	94,008
2005	6,565	6,474	8,676	7,544	8,151	8,030							45,440

APPENDIX F

BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE-COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT

CALL VOLUME MAY 2005

Following is a summary of information extracted from May 2005 call reports that were provided to us. The information was used in various analyses and recommendations:

Time	Type of call							Total
	Answered ACD	Answered Administrative line	Transfer	Disconnected	Busy	Abandoned		
7:00 to 8:00 A.M.	394	61	1,058	4	4	170	1,691	
8:01 to 9:00 A.M.	745	133	1,874	12	20	265	3,049	
9:01 to 10:00 A.M.	810	225	2,518	7	50	305	3,915	
10:01 to 11:00 A.M.	694	272	2,370	16	61	295	3,708	
11:01 to 12:00 A.M.	583	249	2,172	9	24	339	3,376	
12:01 to 01:00 P.M.	479	200	2,013	5	30	367	3,094	
01:01 to 02:00 P.M.	605	262	2,072	29	19	318	3,305	
02:01 to 03:00 P.M.	524	277	1,884	22	9	240	2,956	
03:01 to 04:00 P.M.	499	227	1,873	18	8	284	2,909	
04:01 to 05:00 P.M.	343	240	1,765	17	27	331	2,723	
05:01 to 06:00 P.M.	155	171	1,293	17	13	360	2,009	
Others	3	-	92	389	1	1,041	1,526	
	5,834	2,317	20,984	545	266	4,315	34,261	
	17%	7%	61%	2%		13%	100%	

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS  
WITH VIEWS OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS**

**EXHIBIT A**



## CITY OF HOUSTON

Health and Human Services  
Department

05 OCT 26 AM 10:34  
CONTROLLER'S

**Bill White**

Mayor

Stephen L. Williams, M.Ed., M.P.A.  
Director  
Health and Human Services  
Department  
8000 N. Stadium Drive,  
Houston, Texas 77054-1823

T.713.794.9311  
F.713.798.0862  
[www.houstonhealth.org](http://www.houstonhealth.org)

October 25, 2005


Annise D. Parker, City Controller  
City Controller's Office  
901 Bagby, Eighth Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

Ms. Parker:

The Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care submits the following responses to address the findings and recommendations identified during the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services Performance audit prepared by Hidalgo, Banfill, Zlotnik, and Kermali PC. Thank you for your generous supports in an effort to assist us in the evaluation, reorganization and revitalization of this Bureau.

If you have additional questions please contact Deoniece Arnold, RN, MBA, Interim Bureau Chief, Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care at 713-238-2182. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Stephen L. Williams, MEd, MPA  
Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

attachment

cc: Deoniece Arnold  
Estella Penn  
File

BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION AND CARE-COMMUNICATION CENTER  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT

FINDING NUMBER	REPORT PAGE	RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
1	9	Consider adopting a new staff schedule to improve efficiency.	BARC is working closely with the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) Human Resources Bureau to ensure compliance with the City's payroll policies. New schedules for field operations and kennel were effective October 1, 2005.
2	11	Hold regular meetings between managers, supervisors, and staff to discuss progress, problems, and concerns.	Quality Assurance Team made an effort to meet individually with each staff member during initial evaluation. BARC management will hold regular meetings with management and staff to discuss progress and concerns to enhance communication.
3	11	Provide formal training to new employees.	BARC will accomplish this recommendation with the hiring of a new Sr. Trainer/Educator/Community Liaison. Current management has held a number of training classes related to new policies and procedures implemented during the evaluation and reorganization of the department.
4	11	Assess personnel development needs and provide skill-enhancement training to employees.	See response at Finding No. 3. Sr. Trainer will be able to provide guidance and monitor skill development and training for all employees. See attached training schedule implemented for 2005.
5	11	Review performance of employees and adjust salary appropriately.	HDHHS evaluates employee performance on an annual basis. Employee performance reviews coincide with the Mayor's Performance Pay Zone Program (PPZ).
6	11	Reclassify the current office supervisor as the Bureau's Information Technology coordinator, and provide formal IT training to generate meaningful management reports.	Management recognized this need and made the recommendation effective with the FY06 budgets and reorganization. This will allow a designated employee to focus on IT issues, enhance reporting capabilities.

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7	11	Develop and implement fleet management procedures to ensure vehicles are available to the field officers.	BARC will strengthen administrative oversight of this area. BARC will implement a new procedure requiring each ACO to turn in vehicle keys daily, coordinate security and distribution of keys and monitor repair of vehicles.
8	12	Provide formal class training to the staff to improve their communication skills.	BARC will assess what is available and enroll staff in communications skills and telephone classes at the E. B. Cape Corporate University for training.
9	12	Enlarge the dispatch room to provide more space for effective operation.	BARC is relocating the dispatch room to provide more space for operation. Completion scheduled for November 1, 2005.
10	13	Consider having ACO supervisor/manager do incident assignments.	The proposed reorganization structure provides an administration manager over the communications center and field operations. A senior ACO/ACO supervisor will supervise the communications and dispatch area. An ACO supervisor/senior ACO will function as the dispatcher.
11	14	Provide formal training to the office supervisor that is necessary for her/him to assume a full time position as the Bureau's Information Technology support personnel.	BARC's IT position will be transferred to the HDHHS IT Bureau. IT training will be offered as appropriate. The new IT position's work location will remain at BARC.
12	14	Implement procedures that ensure that a new activity number is assigned to each new complaint from the same caller.	The Chameleon system does not assign activity numbers based on callers. The system automatically assigns new activity numbers for each complaint received. Management is reviewing and evaluating the type, priority and entry numbers related to various calls and complaints. Staff is instructed to assign each complaint a new activity number. A specific



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			training plan and calendar is being developed for implementation beginning January 2006 with the new senior trainer position.
13	14	Establish access controls to sensitive information in the Chameleon case management system.	BARC management submitted a recommendation on 9/12/05 to HLP, Inc. (provider of the Chameleon system) to alter the software to strengthen access controls to sensitive information, increase security measures and tracking data. The system is designed to track changes and indicates the last user to make any changes on a record. Only the officer supervisor has the access rights to change cash accounting information in the system that may be altered to include specific management personnel. Information received has been forwarded to IT.
14	14	Identify ways to obtain tracking data of all Chameleon users.	See response to Finding No. 13.
15	15	Use the website of Harris County Appraisal District as an alternative to Smart Map.	Procedure implemented June 30, 2005.
16	15	Use other street maps and driving directions websites that offer free key map information on the Internet.	Procedure implemented June 30, 2005.
17	15	Consider using the database on the 311 Houston Service Help-line of the Office of the Mayor or the City's Planning and Development Center.	This has been considered previously, however, the proprietary nature of the data and the exclusive information contained in the Chameleon database for BARC has been a deterrent to this recommendation. The initial entry by the senior dispatcher in the Chameleon database generates the initial entry into the system. Any additional information resulting from the handling of the complaint is entered

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			into the Chameleon database based on the original entry. This data provides the statistical, activity, trends and performance of the Bureau.
18	15	Use the available global satellite positioning system to monitor field activities.	Call center management will increase use of the Teletrac vehicle monitoring and mapping system to monitor field activities. HDHHS is developing a new policy for vehicle monitoring operations. The new policy is intended to ensure local managers regularly and effectively utilize the tracking service. It will allow HDHHS to hold managers and employees accountable for enforcing and/or complying with the tracking policy and the City's AP 2-2, Vehicle Assignment and Use Policy. The policy will also require that tracking equipment is working properly in each vehicle. Every effort will be made to have BARC's tracking devices serviced by the Teletrac Company, subject to funding availability. Teletrac training classes to update selected management were held on Wednesday October 12, 2005.
19	17	Provide telecommunications staff with headsets.	Headsets were issued to communications center staff on 7/12/05.
20	17	Move the system wallboard to ACO's manager's or supervisor's office.	Work order was submitted to HDHHS IT Bureau, Telecommunications Section, on 8/12/05.
21	17	Re-arrange the telephone network to include the new kennel and the warehouse.	HDHHS is scheduled to be upgraded to VOIP during this calendar year 2005.
22	17	Convert the current two ACD switch boxes with 9 and 11 lines each to one switch box with 20 lines and one auto attendant message system.	See response to Finding No. 21. It was previously discussed with the performance audit team by ITD telecommunication's staff that any

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			major changes to the existing system must wait until VOIP is installed.
23	17	Effectively use the Nice Call Log system to monitor telephone conversations and complaints.	Presently, the call center supervisor monitors telephone conversations daily for approximately one hour. BARC administration is evaluating the feasibility of expanding access to the Nice Call Log system to other managers.
24	17	Hold regular classroom training for employees to understand the operation of the telephone system.	BARC will implement regular classroom training for communication center employees upon creation of the new IT position.
25	17	Provide training to the switchboard operator on reading the switch box.	See response to Finding No. 24.
26	17	Install fire extinguishers and fire stop materials in the computer and telephone rooms.	Work order submitted on 7/12/05. Installation completed and in place.
27	18	Retain proper documentation of upgrades to the telecommunications software.	This recommendation has been forwarded to the City's IT Department for review. BARC IT employee will maintain documentation of future telecommunication software and systems upgrades.
28	18	Review report on access to password (Log) tables to ensure network security.	This item has been forwarded to the HDHHS IT Bureau for response and resolution.
29	18	Review network user access report to monitor user activity.	See response to Finding No. 28.
30	18	Review agent call log report to monitor agent activity.	Call log activity report is monitored on a daily basis. Information gathered from the call log will be analyzed more carefully by management to ensure that call center staff achieves maximum performance.
31	18	Develop formal communication system plan to optimize the network system.	This recommendation will be forwarded to the City's IT Department (ITD) for review. BARC management will work with ITD in the

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			development of a formal communication system plan including enhancement of telecommunications architecture and acquisition of equipment.
32	18	Develop and enforce telecommunication policies and procedures.	This recommendation will be forwarded to the City's IT Department (ITD) for review. BARC management will work with ITD in the development of formal telecommunication policies and procedures.
33	18	Purchase travel charger kits or car adaptors for ACO's to recharge radio batteries in the field.	BARC will evaluate the current process and implement more control and monitoring of radios distributed to ACO officers. Management feels that a distribution policy may enhance accountability.
34	19	Streamline computer software being used in different computers to ensure compatibility of work files.	See response to Finding No. 28.
35	19	Remove old network cables in the ceilings to avoid potential hazards.	Work order was submitted to HDHHS IT Bureau on 7/12/05. Contract renewal has delayed correction. The department will continue to follow-up until resolved.
36	20	Provide ACO's with laptop computers with wireless access to the main system in the Bureau office.	BARC will submit a request to purchase laptop computers with wireless access to the main system. Since this is considered technology equipment, the HDHHS IT Bureau must submit a request for Equipment Acquisition Funding (EAF) for review and approval by the City's IT Department.

## BARC TRAINING LOG 2005

DATE	CLASS	LENGTH	TRAINER	ATTENDEES	CE'S
2/23/05	Truck Unloading and Sanitation	8 hrs	C. Lewis, C. Shaw, G. Costas	24 Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-
2/25/05	Truck Unloading and Sanitation	8 hrs	C. Lewis, C. Shaw, G. Costas	25 Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-
3/2/05	Euthansia	8 hrs	D. Fakemma	8 – Vet Staff	-0-
4/6	Safety Program	45 min	Olen Lewis	30 – All staff	-0-
4/6	Cat behavior & Handling	2 hrs	Wm Folger, DVM	18 – Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-
4/13	Safety Program	45 min	Olen Lewis	27 – All staff	-0-
4/13	Cat behavior & Handling	2 hrs	Wm Folger, DVM	31 – Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-
5/25 AM	Canine Behavior	4 hrs	D. Fakemma	25 - Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-
5/25 PM	Canine Behavior	4 hrs	D. Fakemma	24 - Vet Staff, Kennel & ACO's	-0-