



# DESCHUTES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Policy Title: <b>Use of Chemical Immobilization of Animals</b>	Effective Date: June 18, 2018	Policy Number: <b>5.05</b>
Accreditation Reference:	Review Date: June 11, 2027	Supersedes: February 25, 2015
Attachments:	L. Shane Nelson, Sheriff 	

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Deschutes County Sheriff's Office deputies and technicians with guidelines for the safe and humane capture, treatment and transportation of animals during the use of chemical immobilization.

## II. POLICY

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office recognizes and respects the value of every animal and the importance of safety precautions when utilizing chemicals and utilizing weapons that will be firing projectiles with chemical agents at a high rate of speed.

### A. Chemical Capture

Chemical capture equipment for immobilizing animals in the field will be used only under rare circumstances and when all means to eliminate the problem have failed or when danger to citizens exists. **The watch commander or Patrol Administrative Lieutenant must authorize the use of chemical capture and only deputies or animal control technicians trained and certified in its use will use chemical capture equipment.**

1. Veterinarians shall provide Deschutes County Sheriff's Office the drugs necessary to perform the procedure in chemical immobilization.
2. Almost all of the drugs that are used for chemical immobilization are only available by prescription and should be utilized only by trained deputies or animal control technicians and under the direction of a veterinarian.
3. The deputy or animal control technician using chemical capture will be responsible for ensuring that proper veterinarian care is provided prior to releasing or impounding the animal.

### B. Owner Responsibility

If an owner of an animal is on the scene, the owner of the animal must contact a veterinarian at the owner's cost. If the owner is not on scene, any attempt to capture an animal chemically must be documented in a Chemical Immobilization Report and handled as a priority report.

## III. DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### A. Training

**Chemical immobilization can only be performed by a deputy or animal control technician who has taken and passed a training class.**

Certification is required in the following subjects:

1. Philosophy and general considerations before the use of chemical immobilization
2. Chemical immobilization equipment and technology
3. Chemical immobilizing agents
4. Immobilization related emergencies
5. Record Keeping/Legal Considerations
6. Personal and public safety

**B. Decision to Use Chemical Immobilization**

The deputy or animal control technician with chemical capture training and qualifications makes the decision whether or not to attempt to capture any animal by chemical immobilization.

The decision to use chemical immobilization should be the last resort where high risks must be taken for public safety. Prior to use, consideration should be given to:

1. Necessity to impound animal;
2. Whether all options have been exhausted (team approach, live traps, etc.);
3. The environment (safety & terrain); and
4. The size of the animal. (**Use of Chemical Immobilization on small breed dogs and all domestic cats is prohibited.**)

**C. Safety considerations**

1. **Public Safety** is the most important consideration. The deputy or animal control technician will be firing a projectile that contains an immobilizing drug at a high rate of speed in an area that may have spectators present. This is a potentially dangerous situation. The deputy or animal control technician must consider where the dart is going to hit if it misses the animal. The deputy or animal control technician shall recover any and all darts that were deployed.

The deputy or animal control technician must also know where the animal is likely to go after being injected. Again, there may be spectators in the area who may be in danger from an animal that is trying to escape. The deputy or animal control technician must be aware that under extreme stress the animal's reaction will not always be predictable. Never attempt a capture if you are not completely comfortable with the situation.

2. **Personal Safety** is also of high importance. When chemically immobilizing any animal, the deputy or animal control technician must be aware of the animal's reaction to the drugs that are being used and be sure the animal is incapacitated before approaching it. When working with an animal that is immobilized the deputy or animal control technician should use rubber or bite gloves. When working with an animal that has to be immobilized, certain assumptions can be made:
  - a. The animal may act unpredictably.
  - b. The animal is not up to date on any shots.
  - c. The health of the animal is unknown. The deputy or animal control technician must protect himself as much as possible. At all times, the deputy is required to use all safety procedures for the equipment and the Material Safety Data Sheet for each drug that is being used.
3. **Animal Safety** is a priority for the deputy or animal control technician from the time the dart hits the animal until it is completely recovered.

As long as the deputy or animal control technician deems it is safe to do so, after the animal has been immobilized, the deputy will first make sure that there is an established airway. The deputy or animal control technician shall then take the animal to a veterinarian.

4. If a domestic animal dies during the course of chemical capture, a necropsy shall be performed to determine the cause of death.

#### **IV. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All of the drugs currently recommended for animal immobilization shall be obtained from a licensed veterinarian and must be used under veterinary direction.