



March 30, 2021

Henry Dominguez
Police Chief
Colton Police Department

Via e-mail: hdominguez@coltonca.gov

Dear Chief Dominguez:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the world's largest animal rights organization, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including nearly 650,000 California residents. Our office has been flooded with complaints about a [video posted on social media](#) that shows a female Colton Animal Services officer (ASO) dragging a small, injured dog with a choke pole around his neck across concrete as he clearly experiences a great deal of distress, urinates involuntarily, gasps for air, and seizes/convulses. We know you have been hearing from many concerned residents about this video, but we hope you will read this letter with an open mind, as we're sending it in good faith.

We implore you to consider this an emergency and immediately reassign this ASO to a position that does not involve any contact with animals. Footage like this is an embarrassment to the animal control and sheltering community as a whole as well as a black eye on a profession that many of us have worked hard to elevate in the public eye for the last few decades. This dog should have found comfort in the caring arms of an ASO but was instead treated like a contaminated bag of trash this officer obviously didn't want to touch. Respectfully, if she has an issue with filth or bad odor, she is in the wrong profession—and we look to you to ensure that no other animals suffer as this little dog did.

During the disturbing video, the ASO can be heard telling a distraught bystander that the suffering animal was “still alive, just stressed out” and agreeing that he may have been hit by a car. Her utter lack of empathy and compassion was so extreme that she even refused to accept an offer from a bystander to provide a towel and carry the obviously incapacitated dog in order to avoid further harming him. A layperson knew the right thing to do, but this ASO chose to tie a slip-lead around the dog's hind legs and lower torso while he was lying motionless and clearly suffering and [dragged him further while choking him with a pole](#). There is simply no excuse for this sort of inhumane handling.

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Washington, D.C.
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Berkeley
2855 Telegraph Ave.
Ste. 301
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

Choke poles (also called catchpoles and control poles) are dangerous. Their use can seriously injure and [even kill animals](#) and has the potential to strain public relations and mar the reputation of animal-control agencies and their workers. We recognize that animals who are fractious, frightened, or unsocialized can act in unpredictable ways and that in certain situations more than a soft leash or slip lead may be required to avoid risking the safety of officers and the public. However, any implement tightened around the neck or torso will generally be met with resistance and distress by even the most docile animals, and choke poles should be used only as a last resort and under strict, enforceable guidelines. **No situation justifies dragging an animal by a noose tightened around their sensitive neck and throat, especially when they are barely mobile and in pain.**

I'm attaching an information sheet titled "How to Use a Control Pole," and additional information about humane animal-handling techniques can be found [here](#). **We request your assurance that all animal control workers will immediately receive training—or retraining—in the humane handling of animals as well as empathy training.** If PETA can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to ask.

We are eager to receive your written assurance that the employee in the video has been removed from duties involving contact with animals and that all animal control workers have been scheduled to be trained or retrained to prevent animals in the city's custody—many of whom have already been terribly abused and neglected and may be ill or injured—from being harmed further. I can be reached at JenniferB@peta.org or [REDACTED] I look forward to your reply.

Thank you for your time and attention and for your work for Colton's residents.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brown
Animal Sheltering Adviser
Cruelty Investigations Department

cc: The Honorable Frank J. Navarro, Mayor of Colton (fnavarro@coltonca.gov)
Colton City Council (citycounciloffice@coltonca.gov)
Lt. Tim Heusterberg, Commander, Administrative Division (theusterberg@coltonca.gov)

Attachment

"How to Use a Control Pole," The Humane Society of the United States