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EXTREME WEATHER ORDINANCE:

- **Need:** There have been a number of cases within Talbot County where officers respond to a complaint during a period of extreme weather. Officers find an animal (usually canine) living primarily outdoors. These animals may have shelter and be in suitable condition at the moment of our visit, but we know they are vulnerable to falling victim to the weather conditions in the future. Such examples are a dog which is tethered out and gets tangled without the ability to enter his shelter or shade, a dog who chooses not to use its shelter or shade, or the dog that had shade at noon but as the sun moves they cannot get into the protection from the weather. These are all examples of times when an animal may end up in extreme distress. In fact we see more heat related injuries and illnesses in animals than we do during cold weather. Animals have died in other jurisdictions because the laws and ordinances do not take extreme weather into account. This ordinance would allow our officers to require an animal be taken indoors, issue a substantial citation, and, or remove the animal for its health and safety. We believe our county should be preventing the acts of cruelty and neglect from happening, not responding once they do.
- **Proposal:** An owned domestic dog, cat, rabbit shall be brought inside a home, building, or other suitable dwelling within 30 minutes of the onset of extreme weather conditions. These shall be defined for the purposes of this provision as temperatures below 30 degrees or above 90 degrees, or during an active weather warning issued by the National Weather Service or Talbot County Department of Emergency Services. If an owner/guardian is not present at the time of the visit by Animal Control Authority to rectify the situation the animal control officer may impound the animal on the spot for its health and safety.
- Upon impoundment the owner/guardian of animal is responsible for all fees associated with impound prior to return of the animal(s).
- Repeat offenses may result in refusal of reclaim in order to request an abatement hearing in front of the Talbot County Animal Control Board to determine final disposition of the animal.
- **Penalties:**
 - \$500 citation and subject to additional and increased citations every incident thereafter for that animal.
 - Impoundment of Animal.
 - Abatement Hearing.

MD counties with weather affected ordinances: Montgomery County (for tethered dogs), Anne Arundel County. In process: Queen Anne's County, Wicomico County, Baltimore County.