

**MEMORANDUM TO:** All Chiefs of Police and  
Commissioner Thomas Carrique  
Chairs, Police Services Boards

**FROM:** Richard Stubbings  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Division

**SUBJECT:** Online Course on the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019*

<b>DATE OF ISSUE:</b>	<b>February 17, 2023</b>
<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	<b>General Information</b>
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The Ontario Police Video Training Alliance (OPVTA), in consultation with Animal Welfare Services (AWS), has developed an online course on the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019* (PAWS Act) for Ontario's police services. It was released to OPVTA's 77 member agencies as *OPVTA Vol. #186: Provincial Animal Welfare Service Act, 2019*. OPVTA members can access the course through the OPVTA Catalogue on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network and online at [OPVTA.com](https://www.opvta.com).

AWS is the primary body responsible for the enforcement of the PAWS Act and its regulations. As authorized under the PAWS Act, AWS works to ensure that standards of care are met and animals in distress are attended to.

Police officers and First Nations constables may observe violations of the standards of care under the PAWS Act when responding to calls for service. [Section 60 of the PAWS Act](#) authorizes police and First Nations constables to exercise certain powers of an animal welfare inspector, including the power to investigate PAWS Act offences and take possession of animals in distress.

This course takes approximately 35 minutes to complete and provides an overview of the PAWS Act, guidance on what to do when responding to calls involving animals and features a keynote interview with Chief Animal Welfare Inspector Paula Milne. The course covers topics such as:

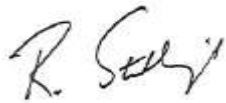
- Ontario's animal welfare enforcement model;
- Key terms and provisions in the PAWS Act;

- Police and First Nations constable powers under the PAWS Act;
- Roles and responsibilities of the police as well as AWS and municipal animal control officers;
- Instances when the PAWS Act or the Criminal Code applies;
- The Violence Link;
- When police, AWS inspectors and municipal animal control officers may intersect and how they can work together; and
- Offences and penalties under the PAWS Act.

I trust this course will provide further understanding of Ontario's animal welfare system and clarity with respect to the role and responsibilities of police services when responding to calls concerning animals.

Your continued support and assistance in protecting the welfare of animals is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Stubbings".

Richard Stubbings  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Division

c: Mario Di Tommaso, O.O.M.  
Deputy Solicitor General, Community Safety