

Town of Stoneham, Maine

Animal Control Annual Report – Calendar Year 2025

Brandon E. Holmes, Animal Control Officer

Overview

In 2025, the Town of Stoneham began receiving Animal Control coverage through a contract with Brandon E. Holmes, with service commencing in March 2025. Coverage includes 24-hour on-call response for public safety, animal welfare, and ordinance enforcement. Given Stoneham's remote geography, response distances are significantly greater than in more densely populated towns, and mileage reflects that reality.

A total of 25 calls for service were logged within Stoneham town limits between March and December 2025. As the contract was new and began mid-year, this represents a partial-year baseline.

Call Volume by Category

- Stray or loose animals – 12
- Bite investigations and quarantine enforcement – 4
- General animal control and administrative – 4
- Continuing education – 2
- Welfare checks – 2
- Cruelty to animals – 1

Stray and roaming animals make up the largest share of calls. Welfare checks and bite investigations require multiple return visits to verify compliance or monitor quarantine status.

Public Safety and Enforcement

Four bite investigation case activities were documented in Stoneham in 2025. These include both initial incident reports and required follow-up for quarantine compliance. One case involved a cat bite during a veterinary visit, which initiated a 45-day observation period that was resolved without incident. A second case in December involved a Cane Corso that bit a child on the face at a residence, resulting in a quarantine and a formal bite report submitted to the appropriate state agency.

An administrative matter involving a potentially forged rabies vaccination record was also documented and referred to the appropriate law enforcement authority for follow-up.

Geographic Considerations

Stoneham is one of the more remote towns in the coverage area. Response distances from a central base routinely exceed 40 to 60 miles round trip per call. As a result, 967.87 miles were logged for just 25 calls in 2025, averaging approximately 38.7 miles per call. This reflects the geographic reality of rural Animal Control coverage and should be considered when evaluating service costs relative to call volume.

Stray and Lost Animal Cases

Several stray and lost animal cases in 2025 required extended monitoring and multiple return visits. A newly adopted cat that went missing required months of trapping efforts and field monitoring. Two dogs from the same property were picked up near the post office and transported to a shelter partner, with the owner later identified and notified. A separate incident involved a Cane Corso that was picked up at a traffic stop and required coordinated effort from multiple responders to safely load and transport.

Welfare Checks

Two welfare check case activities were documented in 2025. Both involved a property requiring multiple contact attempts across several visits. Deputies were ultimately required to be present to safely complete the assessment, and the case remains subject to follow-up if additional concerns are reported.

Continuing Education

The following training was completed in 2025, with Stoneham's proportional share included in billing records:

- Maine CARES training – hosted by ASPCApro, focused on coordinated community animal response and emergency preparedness
- Large Animal Emergency Rescue (LAER) Parts I and II – classroom and hands-on training for responding to horses, donkeys, and other large animals in distress
- Maine Humane Conference – three CE credits; sessions on humane handling, community cat programs, and communication

Mileage and Field Activity

In 2025, 967.87 miles were logged responding to Stoneham calls. This includes emergency response, shelter transports, quarantine checks, welfare visits, and training travel allocated to Stoneham. High per-call mileage is expected and consistent with the town's geographic position within the coverage area.

Community Education

Residents received guidance on containment requirements, the at-large statute under Maine Title 7, rabies quarantine procedures, and lost animal recovery protocols. Public posts were made for several stray and missing animal situations to engage community assistance.

Closing

Stoneham's first year under a formal Animal Control contract established a foundation for consistent, documented coverage in a remote jurisdiction. The 2025 data provides an initial baseline for evaluating call trends and planning for future service years. Response in this area requires a commitment to distance that is reflected in the mileage figures and the time invested per incident.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon E. Holmes

Animal Control Officer

Town of Stoneham, Maine