

How to Use a Control Pole

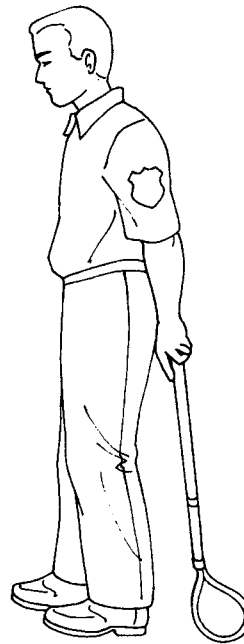
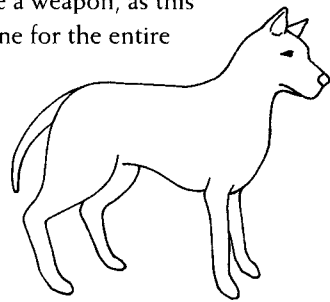
Most animal control officers consider the control pole one of the most valuable tools of the trade. But like a carpenter's hammer or drill, a control pole is only as effective as the person holding it in his or her hands.

The next time a call comes in, whether it's for a stray dog or a raccoon, remember that the control pole ("catch pole," "come-along," or "rabies pole" as it's sometimes called) is designed to gently coax animals to safety. Its use as a weapon is inappropriate, and could easily endanger the animal and the animal control officer. Remember that control poles should not be used on cats. The use of a net is the most humane and effective way of capturing a cat, and it will be detailed in the next issue of *Animal Shelters*.

Lastly, before you hop out of the truck, it's important to quickly examine the control pole, making sure that cable and release mechanisms are operating smoothly. Be sure the loop retains a rounded shape rather than a tear shape by storing the pole on a flat surface or using broom clips. Replace cables every 18-24 months as a part of regular maintenance.

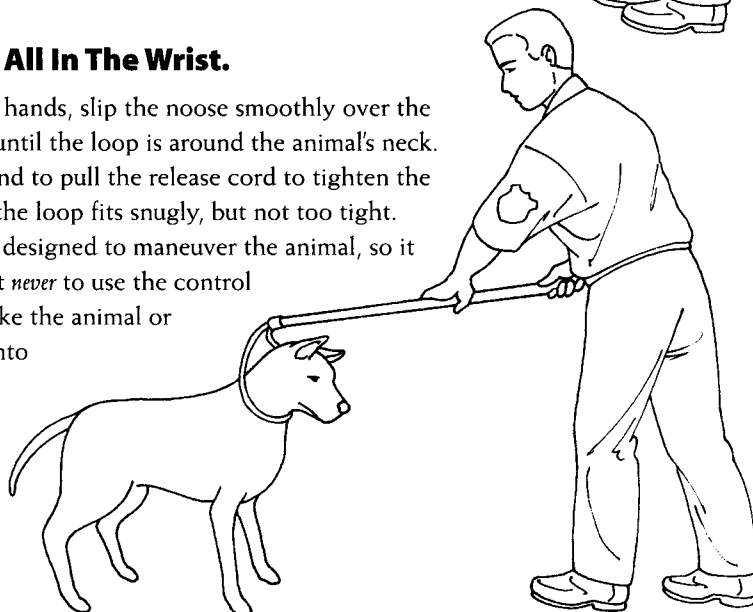
1: Easy Does It.

Approach the dog slowly, holding the control pole directly behind you or at your side, with the cable loop hanging loosely. *Never* approach a dog with a control pole held high, like a weapon, as this will set the tone for the entire encounter.



2: It's All In The Wrist.

Using both hands, slip the noose smoothly over the dog's head until the loop is around the animal's neck. Use one hand to pull the release cord to tighten the cable until the loop fits snugly, but not too tight. The pole is designed to maneuver the animal, so it is important *never* to use the control pole to choke the animal or force him into submission.



3: Lead By Following.

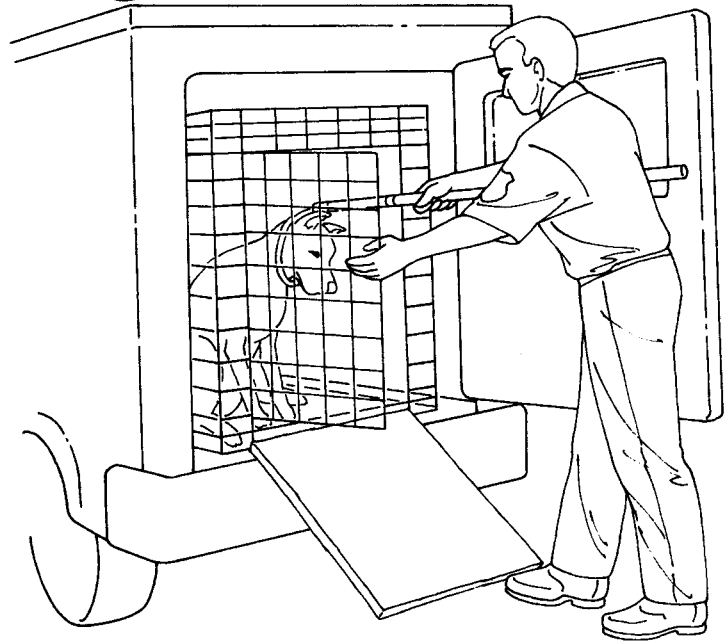
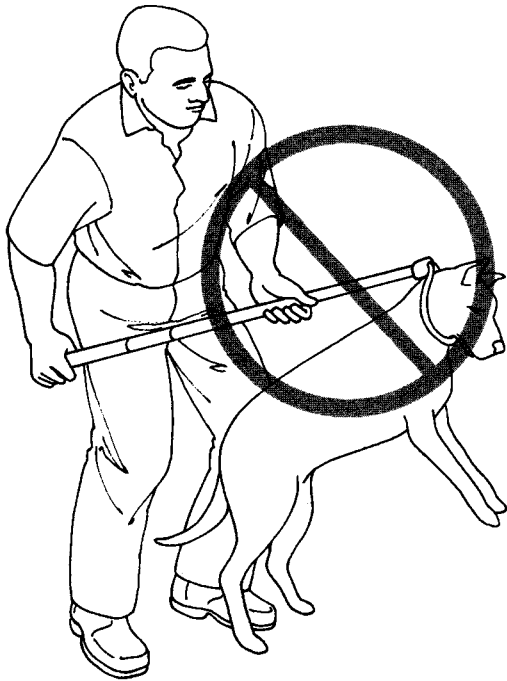
Keep both hands a slight distance apart on the pole. Once the loop is secured about the animal's neck, stand beside the dog and slowly guide the animal ahead. Most dogs will readily walk forward if you remain in their field of vision, but in some cases walking directly behind them may prompt them to move ahead.





4: Don't Try To Pull One Over.

Never drag, yank, pull, or lift a dog with a control pole. Since dogs are often put in a truck for transport, it's a good idea to bring a ramp (a piece of plywood will do) to direct them into a cage. Then, just loosen the cord, and while carefully closing the cage door with one hand, remove the control pole with the other.



Wild Ones.

It may be necessary to temporarily restrain some wild animals (such as raccoons) using the control pole. These animals should *never* be looped solely around the neck or chest. Instead, the cable should be looped "bandolier-style" around the neck and under one of the front legs, and the animal should be guided in the manner described previously.

