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| COMPLAINT INSPECTION | A complaint inspection is conducted in response to a concern received by Animal Care. |
| Sources of Information | <p>Sources of information include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public • animal protection group • whistle blower • city, county, or State agency • APHIS personnel • other Federal agency <p>Methods of obtaining information include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phone calls • letters • e-mail • personal contact <p>NOTE: The complainant does not have to give his/her name. If the complainant does give his/her name, you should not give out the person's name in order to maintain confidentiality. However, the complainant's name may be subject to a FOI request.</p> |
| Information Follow-up | <p>Decide if the information applies to the Animal Care program.</p> <p>If it does not apply to the Animal Care Program, refer the complainant to the appropriate office/agency if known. Possible referral agencies include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Fish & Wildlife Service • State wildlife agency • local animal control • local or national humane society • State animal welfare agency <p>If it does apply to the Animal Care Program but is not a possible violation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain regulations and situation to complainant • take no further action |

If it **does apply** to the Animal Care program **and is** a possible violation:

- complete a Complaint/Search sheet (see page 8.3.3)
- determine if the complaint applies to someone in your territory

If **not** in your territory,

- forward the Complaint/Search sheet to the Regional Office
- inform the complainant it is not in your area but you are forwarding it to the Regional Office
- give the complainant the Regional Office phone number for follow-up

If in your territory,

- contact your Supervisory Animal Care Specialist (SACS) to determine if an inspection or investigation is needed
- conduct an inspection if required. Note: Designate the inspection as a “Routine” inspection.
- complete the Complaint/Search sheet
- determine with your SACS who is to respond to the complainant
- forward the Complaint/Search sheet and the inspection report, if applicable, to the Regional Office

The time frame for responding to a complaint depends on the severity of the situation. The response time may be:

- within 72 hours when the animal’s health and well-being is threatened, e.g., a report from an internal source of animals experiencing excessive pain or distress
- as directed by your SACS or other program official, e.g., a situation with high public attention or Headquarters/Administration involvement
- within 10 business days or by the deadline given for all other complaints, e.g., general complaint that a research facility is using stolen animals