

Chicago Police Department Defends Cougar Shooting

The city's animal control takes over the investigation regarding the big cat.

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The shooting death of a male cougar on April 14 by a police officer in a Chicago back alley eliminated a danger to the community, according to the Chicago Police Department. According to an officer in the department's news division, the loose animal attempted to lunge at an officer.

The officer added that the police department turned the case over to the city's animal control services for investigation. Further tests are needed to determine the cougar's origins — whether it was a pet or a wild cat.

Department Superintendent Jody P. Weis issued a written statement in response to the shooting that said the police officer's actions removed the threat of a cougar one block from the Audubon Grammar School. After numerous calls from residents and the school regarding sightings of a cougar in the area, police spotted the cougar running between homes and "finally charging toward the police officer."

Weis further stated, "The police officer exercised sound judgment in eliminating a dangerous threat to a community and to small children in making a split-second decision to discharge his weapon after the cougar charged at the officer. There's no doubt that lives were saved as a result of his actions and his fellow officers' attempts to contain the animal away from innocent bystanders."

Additional wild cougar sightings have been reported since the first big cat was killed. The department's news division did not comment on the validity of those reported sightings.