



WHAT IS ANIMAL ABUSE?

Veterinarians have taken an oath to protect animal welfare and have an ethical obligation to report suspected animal cruelty so that it can be investigated. In some states, they also have a legal obligation to report. In Ohio, reporting by veterinarians is not mandatory; however, pending legislation (HB 33) would make it a requirement.

Recognize

- common clinical presentations of animal cruelty, abuse, and neglect
- inconsistencies between the history and the examination findings
- the link between domestic violence and animal abuse¹

Record

- a detailed history, including the clients' narrative, all medical recommendations, and consent for treatment
- the animal's condition through clinical findings, photographs, diagrams, and diagnostics, including radiographs
- and preserve any potential evidence that was collected, such as biological samples and physical evidence

Report²

- reasonable suspicion of animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect
- to the designated humane agent in your county (animal shelter and/or local law enforcement)
- reasonable suspicion of domestic, elder, or child abuse or endangerment to the appropriate organization or agency in your area

1. For more information, visit <https://nationallinkcoalition.org>.

2. Visit <https://nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse/ohio> for contact information.

ohio's legal definition

“Cruelty,” “torment,” and “torture” include every act, omission, or neglect by which unnecessary or unjustifiable pain or suffering is caused, permitted, or allowed to continue, when there is a reasonable remedy or relief.

—Ohio Revised Code 1717.01

CLASSIFICATIONS OF ABUSE

1 Simple or Gross Neglect ▲

- The most common form of abuse encountered by veterinarians.
- Typically results from failure to provide for basic needs such appropriate diet, shelter, or sanitation.
- *Examples:* Failure to provide necessary medical care, starvation, animal hoarding, embedded collars, extreme matting.

2 Intentional Physical Abuse & Torture ▲

- Non-accidental harm is perpetrated in anger, for personal enjoyment, or to intimidate others.
- *Examples:* Blunt force trauma, poisoning, scalding or burning, projectile trauma.

3 Organized Animal Abuse ▲

- Animals are intentionally fought against each other in competitive bloodsport events.
- *Examples:* Dogfighting, cockfighting.

4 Sexual Abuse, Bestiality, & Zoophilia ▲

- Contact of the anus or genitalia with body or object, which may or may not result in physical injury to the animal.
- *Examples:* Fondling, masturbation, penetration.

5 Ritualistic Abuse

- Killing and/or mutilating an animal as part of a religious ceremony, often related to occult ideology.
- *Examples:* Blood-letting, dismembering, hanging.

6 Emotional Abuse

- Deliberate actions or inactions intended to inflict emotional distress.
- *Examples:* Social isolation, unpredictable/excessive violence intermixed with threats of violence that do not result in physical harm.

▲ Nationally reportable by law enforcement agencies to the FBI.

REMEMBER: A reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect is enough to make a report. You may always call the appropriate humane agency for consultation, if you are unsure whether a report is warranted.

