



**SUMMARY REPORT (Updated October 2019)
Reporting Requirements for Animal Abuse**

In recent years, many states have focused their attention on animal abuse, neglect, and cruelty reporting by veterinarians, health care providers, and other social service providers. Currently, eleven states require licensed veterinarians to report certain suspected animal cruelty violations. Section 21 of the AVMA's Model Veterinary Practice Act encourages veterinarians to report animal abuse.

The following table highlights the states with laws and regulations requiring, allowing, or encouraging veterinarians and veterinary technicians to report animal abuse and cruelty. The table also highlights the states that provide civil immunity for good faith reporting of animal abuse.

State	Persons REQUIRED to Report Suspected Animal Abuse	Reporting Allowed/Encouraged	Reportable Offenses	Immunity Clause	Other
Alabama	Licensed Veterinarian	Veterinarian is <i>obligated</i> to report grossly inhumane treatment when he or she has direct knowledge.	Grossly Inhumane Treatment	N/A	Citation: Alabama Practice Act Rule 930-X-1-.10
Alaska	Licensed veterinarian	A licensed veterinarian can report suspected animal abuse.	Animal Abuse	N/A	Citation: 12 AAC 68.100
Arizona	Licensed veterinarian	Licensed veterinarian who reasonably suspects or believes that an animal has been a victim of abuse, cruelty or neglect or has been involved in animal fighting <i>shall report that suspicion, or cause a report to be made, to law enforcement within 48 hours after treatment or examination</i>	Animal abuse, cruelty, neglect, animal fighting, and livestock abuse	Civil immunity for good faith reporting by veterinarians	Citation: A.R.S. § 32-2239
Arkansas	Licensed veterinarian A person acting at the direction of a licensed veterinarian	N/A	Animal Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for any person in good faith reporting, including veterinarians or a person acting at the direction of a	Citation: A.C.A. § 5-62-109

				licensed veterinarian	
California	Licensed veterinarian	Licensed veterinarian having reasonable cause to believe an animal under its care has been the victim of abuse, cruelty, or staged dog fighting <i>shall be the duty</i> of to make a prompt report.	Animal abuse, cruelty, and staged dog fighting	Civil immunity for good faith reporting by veterinarians	Citation: West's Ann. Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 4830.7 West's Ann. Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 4830.5
Colorado	Licensed veterinarian Any person	Licensed veterinarians, who, during the course of attending or treating an animal, has reasonable cause to know or suspect that the animal has been subjected to cruelty or animal fighting <i>shall report</i> .	Cruelty, animal fighting	Civil or criminal immunity for persons that report in good faith	Citation: C.R.S.A. § 12-64-121 Citation: C.R.S.A. § 18-9-209
Connecticut	Appointed animal control officer	Any animal control officer appointed who has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal observed during the officer's employment is being or has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly	Harmed, Neglected, Cruelty	N/A	Citation: C.G.S.A. § 22-329b
Delaware	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
District of Columbia (D.C.)	Any law enforcement or child or protective services employee	Any law enforcement or child or protective services employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect an animal has been the victim of cruelty, abandonment, or neglect, shall provide a report within 2 business days to the Mayor. If the health and welfare of the animal is in immediate danger, the report shall be made within 6 hours.	Victim of cruelty, abandonment, or neglect	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reports	Citation: DC ST § 22-1002.01
Florida	Licensed veterinarian	N/A	Animal Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for decisions	Citation: West's F.S.A. § 828.12

	Law Enforcement Officers Humane or Animal Control Officers			made, services given, or investigation about animal cruelty	
Georgia	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician Any person	Licensed veterinarian or veterinary technician having reasonable cause to believe that an animal has been subjected to animal cruelty <i>may</i> make or cause to make a report.	Animal cruelty or dog fighting	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: Ga. Code Ann., § 4-11-17
Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Idaho	Licensed veterinarian	N/A	Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting by veterinarians	Citation: I.C. § 25-3514A
Illinois	Licensed veterinarian	Any veterinarian who is presented with an animal for treatment of injuries or wounds resulting from aggravated cruelty, torture, and from dog fighting <i>shall</i> file a report.	Aggravated cruelty, torture, and fighting event	Civil immunity for good faith reporting by veterinarians	Citation: 510 ILCS 70/4.01
Indiana	Licensed veterinarian Registered veterinary technician	N/A	Animal cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: IC 25-38.1-4-8.5
Iowa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kansas	Licensed veterinarian	Failure to report cruel or inhumane treatment to an animal constitutes grounds for disciplinary action against a veterinarian if the veterinarian has direct knowledge of such treatment.	Cruelty or inhumane treatment to animals	N/A	Citation: K.A.R. 70-8-1 K.S.A. 47-830 K.S.A. 47-839
Kentucky	Licensed Veterinarian	A veterinarian shall not violate the confidential relationship between the veterinarian and the veterinarian's client except on receipt of a waiver, appropriate	N/A	N/A	Citation: KRS § 321.185

		court order, or subpoena			
Louisiana	No veterinary-specific language Any state or local law enforcement officer, or any employee of government or of a government contractor who in his/her professional capacity	Any state or local law enforcement officer, or any employee of government or of a government contractor who becomes aware of evidence of neglect or abuse of an animal <i>shall report</i> such incident to the law enforcement authority of the governing authority in which the incident has occurred or the local animal welfare authority	Neglect or abuse	N/A	Citation: LSA-R.S. 14:403.6
Maine	Licensed veterinarian	Veterinarians who have reasonable cause to suspect that animal is subject of cruelty or neglect <i>may</i> report instances of animal cruelty or neglect. Veterinarians who has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal is the subject of aggravated cruelty <i>shall</i> report the suspected violation.	Animal cruelty, neglect, and aggravated cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: 7 M.R.S.A. § 4018
Maryland	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian who has reason to believe that an animal that has been treated by the veterinarian has been subjected to cruelty or fighting <i>shall</i> report the suspected animal cruelty or animal fighting to the appropriate law enforcement agency or county animal control agency in a timely manner.	Cruelty, animal fighting	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: MD Code, Agriculture, § 2-313.1 MD Code, Courts and Judicial Proceedings, § 5-424
Massachusetts	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian who, while in the normal course of business, observes an animal whom such	Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: M.G.L.A. 112 §58B

		veterinarian knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of animal cruelty <i>shall</i> report said suspected animal cruelty to a police officer or special state police officer.			
Michigan	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician	Veterinarian or technician who knows or reasonably believes <i>may</i> report.	Abandoned, neglected, or abused animals	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: M.C.L.A. 333.18827
Minnesota	Licensed veterinarian	Veterinarian <i>must report</i> known or suspected cases of abuse, cruelty, or neglect.	Abuse, cruelty, or neglect	N/A	Citation: M.S.A. § 346.37
Mississippi	Licensed veterinarian	Veterinarian <i>may</i> report a suspected incident of animal cruelty to the proper authorities.	Animal cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: Miss. Code Ann. § 73-39-87
Missouri	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician	When situations cannot be resolved through education, the Board of Veterinary Medicine considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to the appropriate authorities.	Abuse, neglect	N/A	Citation: 20 Mo. Code of State Regulations 2270-6.011
Montana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nebraska	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician	Any health care professional, in an employment capacity, who observes or is involved in an incident which leads the animal health care professional to reasonably suspect that an animal has been abandoned, cruelly neglected, or cruelly mistreated, <i>shall report</i> .	Abandonment, neglect, and mistreatment	Immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: Neb. Rev. St. § 28-1020
Nevada	Any person	Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe there is cruelty <i>may</i> report the act of cruelty. Reports are confidential, and no	Animal cruelty	N/A	Citation: N.R.S. 574.053

		information concerning the report may be released except for the purposes of a criminal investigation or prosecution.			
New Hampshire	Licensed veterinarian	N/A	Animal cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: N.H. Rev. Stat. § 644:8
New Jersey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	Licensed veterinarian	The reporting of cruelty or illegal action is not a violation of confidentiality.	Animal cruelty	N/A	Citation: N.M. Admin. Code 16.25.3
New York	Licensed veterinarian	When a veterinarian reasonably suspects that a companion animal's injury, illness, or condition is the result of animal cruelty <i>may</i> report suspected incidents of animal cruelty.	Animal cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: McKinney's Education Law § 6714
North Carolina	Licensed veterinarian	Failure by a veterinarian to make a report of animal cruelty <i>does not</i> constitute grounds for disciplinary action.	Animal cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity, liability from professional disciplinary action, and shall not be in breach of any patient confidentiality for good faith reporting by veterinarians	Citation: N.C.G.S.A. § 14-360.1
North Dakota	Licensed veterinarian	Unprofessional conduct, including failure to report inhumane treatment <i>is grounds</i> disqualifying a licensee from practicing; Veterinarians <i>are required</i> to notify law enforcement if animal is in custody because of reasonable cause to believe animal abuse.	Animal neglect, abuse, cruelty, inhumane treatment, staged animal fights, training events for fights	N/A	Citation: NDAC 87-05-02-01
Ohio	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Oklahoma	Licensed veterinarian	Veterinarian <i>shall</i> report suspected cases of animal abuse within 24 hours of examining or treating animal.	Abuse, cruel, inhumane treatment	Civil immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: 21 Okl. St. Ann. § 1680.3 Okla. Admin. Code 775:10-5-30
Oregon	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technicians Any person with whom the veterinarian has come in contact	Veterinarians and veterinary technicians <i>may</i> report any animal that they know or reasonably believes to be abandoned, neglected or abused. Veterinarians who has reasonable cause to believe that an animal with which the veterinarian has come in contact has suffered aggravated animal abuse, or that any person with whom the veterinarian has come in contact has committed aggravated animal abuse, <i>shall</i> immediately report the suspected aggravated animal abuse.	Animal abuse, abandonment, neglect, aggravated animal abuse	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: O.R.S. § 686.445 O.R.S. § 686.465
Pennsylvania	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician Veterinary assistant	<i>Must</i> report repeated acts of negligence by another veterinarian or animal abuse.	Abuse, neglect	Civil immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: 18 Pa. C.S.A. § 5556 49 Pa. Code § 31.21
Rhode Island	Licensed veterinarian Veterinary technician Animal Shelter Animal Kennel	Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal shelter, or animal kennel <i>may</i> report if they know, or reasonably believed, to be abandoned, neglected, or abused.	Abandonment, neglect, abuse	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: Gen. Laws 1956, § 4-1-37
South Carolina	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	No veterinary-specific language	N/A	Animal cruelty, abuse, injury to animals	No agent of the board, peace officer, or agent or	Citation: SDCL § 40-1-31

	Agent of the board Peace officer Agent or officer of a humane society			officer of a humane society may be held liable as a result of reasonable actions	
Tennessee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Texas	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian <i>may</i> report a suspected incident of animal cruelty.	Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: V.T.C.A., Occupations Code § 801.3585
Utah	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian <i>may</i> report a suspected incident of animal cruelty.	Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: U.C.A. 1953 § 58-28-602
Vermont	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian <i>may</i> report cases of suspected cruelty to animals.	Cruelty	No monetary liability and no cause of action for damages for good faith reporting	Citation: 26 V.S.A. § 2404
Virginia	Licensed veterinarian	The veterinarian <i>shall</i> make such reports and keep such records of such sick or injured animals. It is considered to be unprofessional conduct if a veterinarian <i>fails to report</i> suspected animal cruelty to appropriate authorities.	Abuse, neglect, cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reporting	Citation: VA Code Ann. § 3.2-6507 18 VAC 150-20-140
Washington	Licensed veterinarian	A veterinarian <i>may</i> report a suspected incident of animal cruelty.	Cruelty	Civil and criminal immunity for veterinarians' liability for reporting, in good faith and in the normal course of business, a suspected incident of animal cruelty	Citation: West's RCWA 16.52.330
West Virginia	Licensed veterinarian	It is the <i>duty</i> of any veterinarian, and the <i>right</i> of any other	Abandoned, neglected, cruelly treated	Civil and criminal immunity for	Citation: W. Va. Code, § 7-10-4a

	Any other person	person, to report any animal found, reasonably known, or believed to be abandoned, neglected, or cruelly treated.		good faith reporting	
Wisconsin	Licensed veterinarian	Any veterinarian who has reason to believe that an animal has been in a fight <i>shall</i> report the matter.	Dog fighting, mistreatment of dogs	N/A	Citation: W.S.A. 173.12
Wyoming	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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