

The process of introducing the law and debating the issue can be a very effective public relations tool. Working to pass a law educates legislators, enhances public awareness and gives animals needed legal protection.

*Presented by The National Humane Education Society*



# Questions Answered Regarding Animal Cruelty

**If** an animal cruelty case comes to your attention, write letters to the prosecutors, the judge and others involved in the legislative process. Ask that those responsible for the cruel act be given strict penalties so that a clear message of abhorrence to cruelty



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P.O. Box 340  
Charles Town, WV 25414-0340  
304-725-0506  
[www.nhes.org](http://www.nhes.org)



will be sent. Too often, these cases are merely brushed aside by the legal system and the perpetrators are let off on very lenient charges. This gives the impression that the animal(s) was worth little, if anything. “Cruelty to animals will be punished to the fullest extent” must be the message that is sent loud and clear.

Barbarous acts to animals often lead to brutality to humans and this connection is well documented. It has been observed that serial killers often began their sprees of violence on animals. It is unfortunate that many law-makers and law enforcement officials do not connect the two acts. If they did, we might see stronger laws protecting animals and more real discipline for those who break them.

We as a society must take these acts of cruelty, however small, very seriously. We need to demand stronger sanctions for crimes against animals. We need to take a stand and proclaim that animal cruelty will not be disregarded. To ignore this violence only invites more.

As you write letters to the legislators, don't forget to also send letters to the editors of newspapers. Encourage friends and family to join the letter writing campaign. Even one letter can sometimes make the difference!

## **FOLLOWING IS A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN FOR MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE IF THE ANIMAL PROTECTION LAWS IN YOUR CITY, YOUR COUNTY OR YOUR STATE ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH:**

- Obtain copies of existing laws for your area. Ask your librarian, elected officials, humane society or local prosecutor's office for help.
- Determine whether the law you want to pass would best be considered at the local, county, or state level. A cruelty-to-animals law, for example, might be statewide, while a law establishing pet license fees may be local or countywide.
- If possible, obtain copies of model laws from other areas.
- Enlist support for the law. Contact veterinarians, your local humane society and other interest groups.
- Find a sponsor for the law. Begin with your own elected officials. If they are not interested, contact legislators from other districts.
- Work with the sponsor's office to generate publicity and media coverage.
- Seek support for the legislation from other interest groups (civic associations, tax reform groups, business forums), which may endorse the measure not for its humane aspects, but for its impact on animal control, taxes, or other issues.