



Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

(a) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly:

- (1) tortures an animal;
- (2) fails unreasonably to provide necessary food, care, or shelter for an animal in the person's custody;
- (3) abandons unreasonably an animal in the person's custody;
- (4) transports or confines an animal in a cruel manner;

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

(a) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly:

- (5) kills, seriously injures, or administers poison to an animal, other than cattle, horses, sheep, swine, or goats, belonging to another without legal authority or the owner's effective consent;
- (6) causes one animal to fight with another;
- (7) uses a live animal as a lure in dog race training or in dog coursing on a racetrack;
- (8) trips a horse;

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

(a) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly:

- (9) injures an animal, other than cattle, horses, sheep, swine, or goats, belonging to another without legal authority or the owner's effective consent; or
- (10) seriously overworks an animal.

(b) It is a defense to prosecution under this section that the actor was engaged in bona fide experimentation for scientific research.

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

Spectator

- Class C Misdemeanor
- Maximum fine of \$5000
- Exceptions:
 - Caused the dog to fight to protect livestock, other property, or a person
 - from another dog and for no other purpose.

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

Causing Animals to Fight

- Penalty
 - State Jail Felony
 - Maximum fine of \$10,000,
 - imprisonment for 2 years-180 days
- Exceptions:
 - Caused the dog to fight to protect livestock, other property, or a person
 - From another dog and for no other purpose.

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

Causing Animals to Fight on Premises

- Penalty:
 - State Jail Felony
 - Maximum fine of \$10,000
 - imprisonment for 2 years-180 days
- Exceptions:
 - Caused the dog to fight to protect livestock, other property, or a person
 - From another dog and for no other purpose.

Texas Penal Code - Cruelty to Animals

Place/Pit for Animal Fighting

- Penalty:
 - State Jail Felony
 - Maximum fine of \$10,000, imprisonment for 2 years-180 days
- No exceptions

Examination of the Live Abuse Victim

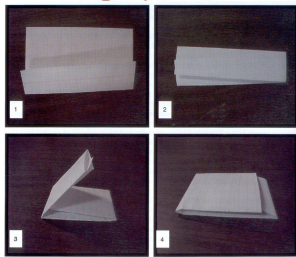
- Take Care – animals who have suffered neglect or hoarding are often unsocialized
- Ask a veterinarian for chemical restraint if needed
- Make sure animal is well enough to withstand the stress of exam (esp. cats)



Examination of the Live Abuse Victim

- Assess and document dehydration prior to providing water or fluids
 - photograph wounds prior to treatment
- Collect samples prior to intervention of any kind
 - Feces, urine, blood, vomitus, etc.
 - If hair is shaved from a wound, preserve it
 - Gunshot residue, weapon fragments, fibers

Pharmacy Fold



Exam Handouts Live Victim

- Physical Evaluation
 - [Exam and SOAP – page 2+](#)
 - Subjective and Objective Problems
 - Assessment (Possible Causes of each problem)
 - Plan for diagnosis and treatment
- [Glasgow Pain Evaluation](#)
- [External Wound Form – Live Cat](#)
- [External Wound Form – Live Dog](#)

Exam Handouts Live Victim

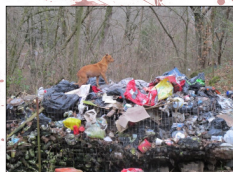
- Body Scoring – Estimates the Nutritional Status of the animal
 - Small animal
 - [Patronek – Tufts Scale](#) (1 ideal to 5 emaciated) - [ASPCA](#)
 - [Royal Canin BCS](#) - Dog (1 thin to 5 obese)
 - Purina – [Dog / Cat](#) – (1 thin to 9 obese)
 - [Royal Canine BMI](#) - Cat
 - Horse – [Henneke BCS](#) – (1 thin to 9 obese)
 - Quarter-Horse Mares

Exam Handouts Live Victim

- Have Fire Dept come and analyze air samples and assign a code
- Air [Quality Scoring](#)

Exam Handouts Live Victim

- Attach photos to an excellent report



Exam Handouts Live Victim

- Track Indicators of progress
 - [Weight form](#)
 - [Puppy growth](#)
 - Other indicators
- [Behavioral Evaluation](#)
- Certification of the Medical Record
 - [Sample Letter 1](#)
 - [Sample Letter 2](#)

Examination of the Abuse Victim – Live or Necropsy

- Take full body x-rays on all cases
- Recruit a photographer
- Add rulers in the photo when documenting injuries
- Identify (photo), remove and preserve any evidence that might be traced back to the perpetrator
 - Projectiles – arrows, bullets, etc.
 - Bindings – rope, duct-tape, etc.
 - Hair, blood, glass, clothing fibers, etc.
 - Maggot analysis can provide a timeline for duration of wounds

Examination of the Abuse Victim – Live or Necropsy

- Issue a series of preliminary reports until you are sure results are final
- Finalize the report as soon as is possible
 - Can convince a judge to sign a confiscation order for removal of additional victims
 - Can result in generation of warrant for arrest for suspect
- Using medical and industry specific terms in the report to make findings very specific is good
- But a final interpretation “in plain English” is a good idea, as this may be better understood in a court of law

Exam Handouts Live or Necropsy



- [Tufts Scales](#) – Body, Weather Risk, Environment
- Assigning proper age
 - [CSU - Dental anatomy of cats](#)
 - [CSU - Dental anatomy of dogs](#)
 - [DiGangi - Aging kittens by teeth](#)
 - [HSUS – Aging by Teeth](#) – hints for aging adults
 - Permanent incisors – old enough for a rabies vaccine
 - Permanent canines – dog old enough for heartworm test

Exam Handouts Live or Necropsy



- [Coat and Nail Check List – Long Hair](#)
- [Coat and Nail Check List – Short Hair](#)
- [Coat and Nail Condition Form – Cat](#)
- [Coat and Nail Condition Form – Dog](#)

Exam Handouts Necropsy



- [Necropsy History Form](#)
- [Necropsy Exam Form](#)
- [External Wounds Form – Necropsy Cat](#)
- [External Wounds Form – Necropsy Dog](#)
- [Histology Submission Check List](#)

Multiple Victim Cases



- May not have the resources to thoroughly examine every victim
- Every victim does get a cursory exam
- Examine thoroughly the animals in the worst condition, to document the abuse
- Examine thoroughly also animals in the best condition, to show level of care that could have been provided to all

Euthanasia



- Humane treatment of the victim may necessitate euthanasia prior to any animal cruelty hearing
- Complete and thorough necropsy should be performed by a veterinarian
 - By a board certified veterinary pathologist is even better
 - Or an expert in animal forensics
 - If no local expert, ship to a diagnostic lab, and designate on the request that it is a cruelty case
- Cause of death should be listed as euthanasia

Death After Confiscation



- It is not unusual for victims to die after confiscation
 - Stress of confiscation can compound ongoing disease
- Be absolutely sure that excellent care during confiscation is carefully documented
 - When animal control provides questionable care, or can not prove excellent care, the case is weakened
 - Judge or jury must be sure the animal was better off for being confiscated

Refeeding Syndrome

- epidemics of death when starving people gain access to food, gorge themselves, become severely ill, and die
- The body in starvation mode when caloric intake is severely reduced
 - Reduced metabolic rate prevents organ failure
 - Reduced cardiac output (lethargic)
 - Anemia (pale, weak, heart murmur)
 - GI villous atrophy (diarrhea)
 - GI hypomotility (ileus) – paralysis of the gut

Refeeding Syndrome

- Prior to introducing food, serum electrolytes and glucose are often normal
- Most of the phosphorus, potassium and magnesium in the body are inside the cells
 - There can be massive body deficit of these minerals with normal blood levels
- Refeeding causes insulin release
 - hypersensitivity to insulin upon feeding (receptor up regulation)
 - Insulin conducts P, K and Mg back into the cells
 - All three can fall dangerously low within 24-72 hours of feeding
 - Weakness, respiratory failure, coma and death

Refeeding Syndrome

- Weak heart muscle contraction (reduced cardiac output) can result in fluid overload and congestive heart failure
 - Conservative intravenous fluid replacement
 - Maintenance rates only, even if dehydrated
 - Monitor respiratory rate carefully
- Low phosphorus – anemia (weak, pale) and red urine
- Low potassium – kidney failure
- Low calcium – twitching and seizures
- Blood sugar first low, then high

Refeeding Syndrome

Leukogram (CBC – Complete Blood Count)

- Increased neutrophils and monocytes
 - Inflammatory clean-up of tissue destruction for nutrition

Histologic (biopsy) Lesions

- Small intestinal crypt lesions – ectasia
- EMH (extramedullary hematopoiesis) in lung and liver
 - Other tissues help failing bone marrow make blood cells
- **Serous atrophy of fat**

Refeeding Syndrome



Refeeding Syndrome

Treatment

- IV fluids – rehydrate before feeding
 - No dextrose despite hypoglycemia
 - Add potassium phosphates (Kphos) at 40 mEq/L of K, unless oliguric
 - Maintenance rate only even if dehydrated
 - Add free water by offering water PO and controlling vomiting
 - Do not treat acidosis with bicarbonate
 - Fluids with Mg preferred – Normosol, Plasmalyte

Refeeding Syndrome

Treatment

- Feeding – high fat, low carb diet (EVO, Core for cats, a/d for dogs)
 - Start with 25% of RER per day
RER = $70 \times (\text{wt in kg})^{0.75}$
 - Liquid diet dripped into a nasal tube as **CRI** in severe cases
 - Monitor PCV/TS, glucose, P, K, (Mg), BUN at least daily
 - Increase caloric intake gradually only if blood levels are in safe range
 - Stop feeding for 24 hours if P, K, Mg dangerously low
 - Usually stable enough to be released from hospital at 75% RER divided into 3 meals
 - Expect diarrhea

Behavioral Assessment

- If animal shows no aggression during handling by multiple people, this may refute allegations that abuse was in response to unprovoked aggressive behavior
- Evidence that animal can be easily groomed refutes claims that animals with severe matting or ingrown toenails were not due to owner's inability to restrain for grooming
- Standardized temperament testing can be used
 - SAFER
 - Assess-A-Pet
 - Temperament Testing – <http://www.atts.org>

Behavioral Assessment

- There is a strong tendency to assume that cowering is associated with history of abuse
 - Some animals are just timid
- Animal's friendly reception upon being reunited with the owner does not rule out abuse
- Fear of or aggression toward a particular person does not indicate history of traumatic encounter with that person

Hit By Car

- Common cause of trauma to dogs and cats
- Also used to explain other types of injuries
- Look for road debris on the coat
- Very unlikely but not impossible if animal found inside a building
- Look for injuries atypical of hit-by-car
 - Puncture wounds
 - Bullet entries

Fall From a Height

- Pets almost never fall down stairs unless they are blind
- **High Rise Syndrome** - pet leaps from a balcony or roof
 - Trauma to the chest, often with collapsed lungs
 - Fractured Mandible (lower jaw) and any other fractures

Burns

- Burn due to abuse much more rare than burn due to house fire
- Reports of other kinds of fires burning animals are suspect – animals run away from them
 - Stove or other appliance catching on fire
 - Fireplace or Barbecue
- Burn due to abuse can attempt to cover previous abuse
 - Beatings, strangling, or gunshot
 - Be careful not to focus only on the burns during exam

Burns

- Triad of juvenile symptoms persisting past the age of 5 years old that predict adult crime
 - Cruelty to animals
 - Firesetting
 - Enuresis (bed wetting)
- 45% of prisoners convicted of violent crimes displayed the juvenile triad
- 13% of prisoners convicted of nonviolent crimes displayed the juvenile triad
- Burning an animal may be only one aspect of a more widespread crime spree

Burns

- Estimate percentage body area of burns
 - Can measure a single burn, and then divide its area by the total body surface area
 - Or use the “Rule of Nines”
 - Head is 9% of body surface area
 - Each arm is 9% of body surface area
 - Torso front and back are each 18% of body surface area
 - Each leg is 18% BSA (9% front and 9% back)
 - Genitals are the remaining 1%
 - Babies have an adjusted formula
 - Head is 18% and each leg 13.5%
 - Use this for puppies, kittens and small breeds with large heads
 - Most burn victims have burns at least 25% of BSA

Burns

- Body Surface Area Chart

Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)	Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)	Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)
1	0.10	11	0.49	21	0.76
2	0.15	12	0.52	22	0.78
3	0.20	13	0.55	23	0.80
4	0.25	14	0.58	24	0.83
5	0.29	15	0.60	25	0.85
6	0.33	16	0.63	26	0.87
7	0.36	17	0.66	27	0.90
8	0.40	18	0.68	28	0.92
9	0.43	19	0.71	29	0.94
10	0.46	20	0.73	30	0.96

Burns

- Body Surface Area Chart

Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)	Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)	Wt (kg)	BSA (m ²)
31	0.98	41	1.19	51	1.37
32	1.00	42	1.20	52	1.39
33	1.02	43	1.22	53	1.41
34	1.05	44	1.24	54	1.43
35	1.07	45	1.26	55	1.44
36	1.09	46	1.28	56	1.46
37	1.11	47	1.30	57	1.48
38	1.13	48	1.32	58	1.49
39	1.15	49	1.34	59	1.51
40	1.17	50	1.35	60	1.53

Burns

- Swab burns for accelerants
 - Not always an associated odor
 - Submit to forensic chemist for gas chromatography
 - Porous materials from the scene may have absorbed accelerant – cloth, paper, etc.
 - Place in metal cans and seal to prevent evaporation
- Burns to the perineum, face, ears and eyes are more painful and may cause loss of function
- Amputation of more than one leg due to severe burns causes severe mobility problems
- Eschar – coagulated surface tissue

Burns

- Thick haircoats can hide burn wounds from sight
- May not become apparent for several days, when skin begins to slough
- Color of smoke reported by witnesses can give clues as to accelerants used
- Color of flames reported by witnesses can give clues as to heat of fire generated

Burns

- Most burning victims have smoke inhalation
 - The leading cause of death in burn victims
- Signs of smoke inhalation
 - Coughing, gagging, difficulty breathing, open mouth breathing
 - Weakness or incoordination
 - Rubbing at the eyes
 - Bleeding from the nose
 - Mucopurulent (thick, green) nasal discharge
 - Spasm and edema of the voicebox (cets)

Burns

- Determining whether burning happened before or after death
 - Burning alive often carries stiffer sentence
 - Suspects may claim they burned the body after finding dead
 - Indicate exposure to fire prior to death
 - Carbon monoxide in blood, liver or spleen
 - Cyanide in blood
 - Smoke, soot or burned debris in airways
 - Foam in the airway
 - Telltale lesions on lung biopsies

Burns

- Chemical burns
 - Drain cleaner = lye = sodium hydroxide
 - Also used to make crystal meth
 - Bleach sometimes also added
 - Mixed with a thickener agent so it sticks to fur and skin
 - Flour, cornstarch or pancake mix
- Analysis for skin and fur samples from burns can identify the chemical

Burns

- Microwave burns
 - Have a unique burn pattern that spares the SC fat
 - “relative layered tissue sparing”
 - Metal collar buckles cause burns due to arcing
 - At one time, microwave instruments designed specifically for rodent euthanasia were considered acceptable for euthanasia by the AVMA
 - Report made it clear that commercial microwaves for home uses were not acceptable
 - Defense might be mounted that microwaving animals is not cruelty because the AVMA accepts it as euth method
 - Understand the exact wording to combat this defense

[AVMA Panel on Euthanasia Report - 2013](#)

Sharp Force Injuries

Stab Wounds

- Track left by the wound is deeper than the skin wound
- Powerful blow could leave a bruise at the knife hilt

Incised Wounds

- Tracks are shallower than the width

Chop Wounds – axes and rotating blades

Dicing injuries – dragging across rough surface

Puncture wounds – ice pick type tool

Bite wounds

Sharp vs. Blunt force injury

a
b

Incised wound
Laceration

Types of Blunt Force Injury

- Abrasion
- Contusion
- Laceration
- Fracture

Sharp Force Injuries

How old is this abrasion?

TIME	MICROSCOPIC FINDINGS
< 2 hours	Red blood cells, serum, fibrin
4-6 hours	Perivascular neutrophil infiltration
12-18 hours	3 layers: fibrin, RBC's, PMN's, abn. collagen
2-3 days	Epithelial regeneration
5-8 days	Subepidermal granulation tissue
12 days	Regression, thinned epithelium, collagen

Bite Wounds to Animals

Killing or wounding livestock

- Wildlife experts can interpret bite marks – most likely animal
- Saliva DNA is sometimes more helpful than impression smears for dogs who produce tearing injuries
- Sample any blood that does not seem appropriate to the wound – may belong to the attacker
- Use a forensic odontologist for bite mark analysis
- Check also the environment for evidence left behind:
 - Tracks
 - Scratch and scent marks
 - Scat
 - Traces of fur, blood, saliva

Bite Wounds to Animals

[Ian Dunbar Bite Scale](#)

- **Level 1.** no skin-contact by teeth.
- **Level 2.** nicks, but no skin-puncture.
- **Level 3.** punctures from a single bite with no puncture deeper than half the length of the dog's canine teeth. **Prognosis good with compliant owner and training.**
- **Level 4.** punctures from a single bite with at least one puncture deeper than half the length of the dog's canine teeth.
 - **No bite inhibition – potentially dangerous dog**
- **Level 5.** Multiple-bite incident with at least two Level 4 bites or multiple-attack incident with at least one Level 4 bite in each. **Dangerous Dog.**
- **Level 6.** Victim dead. **Dangerous Dog.**

Projectile Injuries

- Investigation can be difficult, as there are circumstances where shooting animals is legal
 - Legal killing of meat animals
 - Hunting wildlife in season
 - euthanasia
- A common scenario in cases of domestic violence is for the abuser to kill a family pet in front of a spouse or child to demonstrate power and control
- If you cannot prove cruelty to animals, there may be other charges that will stick:
 - Discharging a firearm within city limits
 - Child endangerment
 - Domestic violence

Projectile Injuries

- Full body radiographs are essential
- Most are initially misdiagnosed as vehicular trauma
- Abdominal projectile wounds are more likely to have hidden life threatening complications – refer to a vet for exploratory surgery
- It's not unusual to find bullets or shot on an x-ray as an incidental finding – check previous records if they are available

Projectile Injuries

- **Entry wound** – often burned
- **Exit wound** – can be caused by tissue and bone in addition to the projectile
- **Contact wound** – ring shaped bruising caused by contact of the gun with the animal when it is fired
- **Close range wound** –
 - Singing of fur within 15 cm
 - Smoke fouling of the fur within 30 cm
 - “Tattooing” – embedding of gunpowder into the skin within 60 cm

Longbow or crossbow arrow wounds

Blood Spatter

90 Degrees	
90 Degrees, Non Porous	
90 Degrees, Porous	
70 degrees	
40 degrees	
10 degrees	

Ligatures

- Outgrown collars embedded in skin are common, and can cause difficulty breathing
- If ligature not still attached, ask who, when and how it was removed

Claims of Care

- Tufts Scales can help objectively evaluate:
 - Weather exposure
 - Environmental Health
 - Physical Care
 - Body Condition (also Purina)
- Check Veterinary Records
 - No vet visits in the past year makes regular care less likely
 - Presence of parasites and disease testify to lack of adequate care.
 - Vets may require owner permission to release records without a court order, except rabies vaccination

<h3>Categories of Animal Abuse</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neglect Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding) Animal Fighting Intentional Infliction of Injuries 	<h3>Suspected Frequency in Private Practice</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional to common <h3>Criteria for Suspicion</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor body condition but client refuses work-up/treatment • Severely matted but client refuses grooming • Client refuses treatment or euthanasia to relieve serious illness or injury
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Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Criteria for Suspicion

- Lack of concern for animal's welfare
- Dangerous or unsanitary environment
- Inadequate Shelter
- Excessive Number of animals

Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Suspected Frequency in Private Practice

- Probably a few clients

Criteria for Suspicion

- Large number of animals
- Poor continuity of care
- Most visits for trauma or preventable, contagious and parasitic diseases

Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Criteria for Suspicion

- Client uses several veterinary offices
- Heroic efforts requested for newly acquired pets with poor prognoses

Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Suspected Frequency in Private Practice

- Depends on Area
- Not uncommon in Texas, especially rural areas

Criteria for Suspicion

- Characteristic pattern of bite wounds on head, neck, legs
- Much more prevalent on pit bulls and other fighting breeds

Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Criteria for Suspicion

- Circumferential abrasions on the nose – muzzles tied shut for breeding
- Owner may self treat injuries
- Much more prevalent on pit bulls and other fighting breeds

Categories of Animal Abuse

- Neglect
- Large Scale Neglect (Hoarding)
- Animal Fighting
- Intentional Infliction of Injuries

Suspected Frequency in Private Practice

- Uncommon to rare

Criteria for Suspicion

- Injuries not consistent with history

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Clinical History

- Single episode
- Injuries consistent with history
- Non-life threatening injuries and conditions
- Conditions probably caused by lack of client education, or extenuating circumstances

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Client Behavior

- Seems concerned with animal's condition and is willing to improve the situation
- Delay in seeking medical attention due to financial constraints or other valid reasons
- Has followed up on previous recommendations

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Pet Behavior

- Bonded to client
- Positive response to attention
- Normal response to everyday activities

Client Profile

- Ongoing relationship, no previous suspicion of violence
- stable history of suitable number of pets
- Ownership of animal unquestioned

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Veterinary Response

- Record findings to future incidents are dealt with appropriately
- Provide client education on animal care
- Refer to animal welfare and social services if indicated
- If family violence is suspected, report as mandated

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Clinical History

- Repetitive or chronic conditions or injuries
- Injuries probably inconsistent with history
- More serious but non-life threatening conditions
- Conditions probably caused by ongoing issues that may or may not be resolved
- Maltreatment may be inadvertent or deliberate

Risk Assessment
Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Client Behavior

- Indifferent to animal condition and reluctant to improve the situation
- Delay in seeking medical attention in an attempt to hide abuse
- Did not follow up on previous recommendations

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Pet Behavior

- May cower in presence of owner
- May have abnormal response to every day activities

Client Profile

- New client or previous incident that was not adequately explained
- Seeks out new vet in order to avoid suspicion by regular vet
- Discrepancies in history with regard to ownership

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Veterinary Response

- Record findings to future incidents are dealt with appropriately
- Provide client education on animal care
- Refer to animal welfare and social services if indicated
- Report animal abuse as mandated if severe enough
- If family violence is suspected, report as mandated

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Clinical History

- Repetitive or chronic conditions
- Unexplained injuries or death of previous animals, especially young animals
- Client unresponsive to education
- Injuries not consistent with history
- Serious and life threatening conditions and injuries
- Conditions caused by ongoing issues that will not be resolved
- Known deliberate and aggravated mistreatment

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Client Behavior

- Hostile to recommendations to improve animal's condition
- Refusal to seek medical attention in order to hide abuse
- Unwilling to follow up on previous recommendations

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Pet Behavior

- Cowers in presence of client
- Happier when hospitalized
- Abnormal response to everyday activity

Client Profile

- New client or existing client with previous suspicious incidents
- Seeks out new vet to avoid suspicions by other vet
- High turnover of animals in the home, large number of animals

Risk Assessment

Low Risk
Medium Risk
High Risk

Veterinary Response

- Record findings to future incidents are dealt with appropriately
- Provide client education on animal care
- Refer to animal welfare and social services if indicated
- Report animal abuse and family violence as mandated

Be Specific

- Be very specific when recording information about animal and environment
- Water - how much, where, is it clean?
- Shade - percentage of enclosure
- Print out weather report from the day of investigation in that zip code
- Local climate information can be helpful
- Measure enclosure and square feet per animal
- Any information about food quality and air quality
- Animal's interest in environment

Keep Excellent Records

- Once the animal is in your care, you are obligated to document care that exceeds the situation the animal was removed from
- If it is not recorded, it did not happen
- Record daily
 - Food and water intake and eliminations
 - Notes on behavior and exercise
 - Every examination, test result, diagnosis, and treatment
- Weekly body weight

The expert witness

- One who has by training and practice, acquired a good knowledge of the science or art concerning that on which his opinion is sought
- Gives an opinion as to technical matters on behalf of his client
- Is not an advocate and will not allow lawyers to influence the substance of his evidence

The expert witness

Only agree to be an expert if:

- The case is within your personal experience, knowledge and competence
- The evidence you provide will assist your client
- **THE TRUTH IS YOUR BOSS!**

Avoid Pitfalls

1. Use objective scales of measurement when possible
2. Some Dog Catchers don't know Latin
2. Your field notes may be public
3. Include all facts; odor, color, and texture
4. Your opinion should be reported but separately from fact
5. Have someone proof your report
6. Leave room for new evidence
7. Be aware of breeds with low body fat (BCS)
8. Take enough time to observe carefully
9. Avoid jumping to conclusions

Avoid Pitfalls

1. What color is the man's shirt?



Avoid Pitfalls

1. Was this dog likely abused?



What to Expect: Testifying

- Yes or no when that is best
- Elaborate only when you need to in order to communicate clearly
- May I refer to my notes?
 - You are not expected to remember everything
- Can you ask that another way?
- May I address the court?
- Discrediting you may be an agenda item

Key Points

- Animal abuse is closely associated with human violence, including domestic violence, spousal, child and elder abuse.
- It can also be a strong predictor of subsequent criminal and violent behavior in adolescents.
- Veterinarians have an important role to play in keeping animals and humans safe from violence. To this end, relationships should be established with other agencies for cross reporting, training, and provision of services.

Key Points

- Animal cruelty is defined by statute, not by the veterinarian.
- Although animal cruelty as defined by statute is a crime in every state, many animal abuse cases are still not taken seriously or investigated by law enforcement.
- However, veterinarians should take a leadership role in educating clients and society in general about responsible animal care and to take animal abuse seriously.

Key Points

- AAHA - "While some states and provinces do not require veterinarians to report animal abuse, the association supports the adoption of laws requiring, under certain circumstances, veterinarians to report suspected cases of animal abuse. In order to encourage veterinarians and practice team members to be responsible leaders in their communities and to assist in the detection..."

Key Points

- AAHA – "...and reporting of animal abuse, the profession should educate its members to recognize, document and report animal abuse, develop forensic models, promote legislation concerning reporting by veterinarians and collaborate with other animal and human welfare groups and professionals within communities to eliminate the incidence of animal abuse."

Handouts



- [AVMA](#) - Practical Guidance for the Effective Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect (2011)
- [Lila Miller](#) - The Veterinarian's Role in Handling Animal Abuse Cases : Summary of Guidelines for Managing and Reporting Animal Abuse Cases
 - Risk assessment for low, medium and high risk abuse cases, by looking at clinical history, client behavior, pet behavior and client profile. Provides a suggested veterinary response.
- Lila Miller - [Dog Fighting FAQs](#)
- Lila Miller - [CSI and Examining the Victim](#)

Handouts



Articles

- [Cruelty to Animals](#): Changing Psychological, Social, and Legislative Perspectives (2001)
- Long Term Outcomes in [Animal Hoarding Cases](#) (2005)
- APRI (American Prosecutor's Research Institute) - [Animal Cruelty Prosecution Opportunities for Early Response to Crime and Interpersonal Violence](#) (2006)
- [Refeeding Syndrome](#)