

Every Cat Deserves Love

Here are easy steps you can take to make sure no pet suffers from animal cruelty.

Stacy N. Hackett

You love your pet cat and shower her with affection. Unfortunately, not every animal receives such tender treatment from its owner. Every day, thousands of animals are subjected to cruel treatment from the people they rely on for proper care. It is heartbreaking to think about, but there are steps you can take to help prevent such acts of cruelty. Annemarie Lucas, animal humane law enforcements supervisory special investigator for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, offers these tips for recognizing and preventing animal cruelty.

1. Learn to recognize animal cruelty. While some signs of cruelty are immediately obvious, such as an owner physically abusing an animal, other symptoms of abuse are more subtle. Be aware of these signs: Severe tick or flea infestations. Obvious wounds on the animals body. An animal that limps or favors a leg. Extremely thin or starving animals. Patches of missing hair on the animals body. Dogs chained up in a yard without access to food, water or shelter. Animals that act fearfully or aggressively around their owners.
2. Report acts of animal cruelty. Animal humane officers would not know about instances of animal cruelty without reports from concerned citizens. If you suspect an animal in your neighborhood is being abused, report it to the proper authorities.
3. Know how to report animal cruelty. While some cities employ animal humane law enforcement officers, not every city has dedicated staff to investigate and arrest people who commit acts of animal cruelty. You may need to call your citys police department or contact the local animal control office. If you're not sure who to call, ask your local animal shelter.
4. Give as much information as possible. When you call to report an act of animal cruelty, try to give the investigating officer as many details as possible. Write down what you witnessed, and include details such as the breed of dog, who was involved, the date of the incident and the location. The more information you provide, the better.