

Animal Cruelty Information

There is a link between animal abuse and human violence. People may wonder how to identify abuse and what to do about it. There are signs to look for in the physical condition of the animal and also his home environment. Often, if a pet is poorly treated, other family members like children are also mistreated. There are steps people can take if abuse is suspected.

Signs of Animal Abuse and Neglect

Observe the Animal's Physical Condition

- Does the animal have an untreated injury or limp?
- Is the animal extremely thin or weak?
- Is there a severe flea or tick infestation?
- Does the animal have much missing hair?
- Is the animal overly fearful or aggressive?

Observe the Animal's Environment

- Is there adequate shelter and water outside?
- Is the animal left outside alone and in extreme weather?
- What is the condition of the animal's yard? Is it relatively clean?
- Is the animal outside during all hours of the day?
- What is the condition of children living in the house? Do they appear well-cared-for or not?

If You Suspect Animal Cruelty or Neglect

- If you witness animal cruelty, call **911** immediately
- Also report any cruelty or neglect to animal control at **311**
- Document what you have witnessed - a camera phone can help
- If you suspect neglect, consider offering to help
 - Find a new home for the animal
 - Refer to MD SPCA services like our low-cost clinic. Go to www.mdspca.org for more information
- If you are fearful of approaching the family, call the police or animal control confidentially
- Contact social services if you are concerned about other family members
- **Do something.** There is a link between animal abuse and human abuse. Violence hurts everyone.

MD SPCA's Anti-Cruelty Programs

- In-school visits to teach children about kindness to animals
- Host tours and activities at the MD SPCA for children to help animals
- Take abused animals in from Animal Control and BARCS
- Neuter thousands of animals in need to reduce strays (often victims of violence)
- Support reward funds in cases of cruelty
- Serve on the Mayor's Anti-Cruelty Task Force