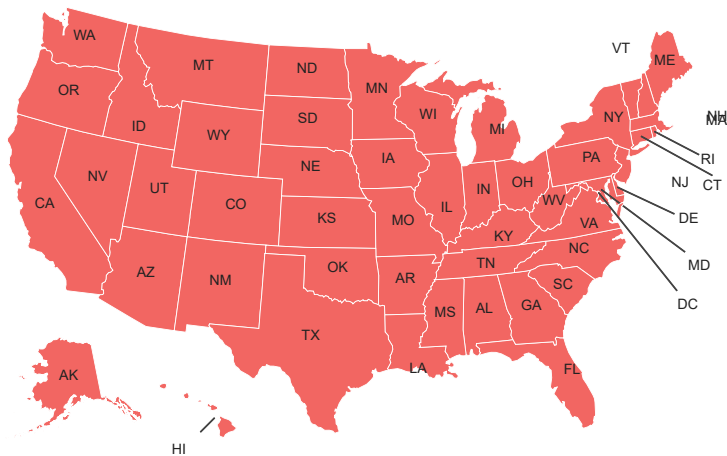


# National Link Coalition

## How Do I Report Suspected Abuse?

Please Click on Your State Below:



### The National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies

Reporting suspected family violence can be either a relatively simple or fairly confusing process. In cases of suspected [child abuse and neglect](#), elder abuse, or [domestic violence and sexual assault](#) the procedures are fairly straightforward: any municipal, county or state law enforcement agency is authorized to receive reports and initiate an investigation. In addition, every state has either a statewide crisis line, or a directory of county agencies, where reports may be made. (For elder abuse, many states have two hotlines: one for elder abuse in the home, and an ombudsman for elder abuse in long-term care facilities.)

Furthermore, there are statewide associations, such as coalitions for the prevention of [child abuse](#) or elder abuse or coalitions against [domestic violence](#), that can offer assistance.

Reporting animal cruelty, abuse and neglect is far more complicated. There are no national or statewide systems: contrary to popular opinion, local humane societies or SPCAs (societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals) are not branches or affiliates of national organizations. Each local animal welfare organization is independent with its own board of directors and anti-cruelty law enforcement powers which range from full to none. Many city or county animal control or animal services officers are empowered to enforce cruelty laws, but many are not – and many are limited in the scope of which laws or species they are allowed to assist.

Click on the map above to find what we believe to be the current procedures in your state, listed by county and often by communities therein. The listing of a reporting agency does not necessarily mean enforcement is

vigorous. Inclusion of a law enforcement agency may merely be by default in the absence of a readily-identified animal control or humane agency. If an agency does not enforce in your jurisdiction or species, they should be able to refer you to the agency that does. If you believe an animal's life is in immediate danger, call 911.

Do not be surprised if you encounter a “runaround”: in many areas law enforcement officials do not feel adequately trained to handle animal cases and frequently refer complaints to local animal control or humane officers – who, if they are not sworn law enforcement officers, may, in turn refer the caller back to the police or sheriff. Just be patient and keep trying. Insist that animal abuse is a crime and the law enforcement agency is sworn to investigate it as they must with any other possible violation. A follow-up call may be required to assure the animal gets help.

In each state's Directory on the pages that follow, the reportable agencies are color-coded as follows to help you determine local response:

- **BLACK:** a defined animal control/animal services agency (which may be a division of municipal police or county sheriff)
- **GREEN:** a defined humane society or SPCA with cruelty investigatory powers
- **BLUE:** a municipal police department in a community where no specific animal control authority has been identified
- **BROWN:** a county sheriff's office in a county where no specific animal control authority has been identified
- **PURPLE:** animal cruelty enforcement is handled by another agency, such as Code Enforcement, Environmental Services, community dispatch, or others.

These lists will be updated as much as possible. If you are aware of new information that should be added or corrected, please contact the [National Link Coalition](#).

When making a report, you must provide specifics. Please provide the dispatcher with your name, a telephone number where you can be reached, the exact address where the animal can be found, a description of the animal, the date and time of the incident, and a description of the abuse or neglect the animal is suffering. If you have personally witnessed animal cruelty, the investigating officer may ask you to sign a complaint against the animal's owner.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE?

The [Texas Humane Legislation Network](#) has published 5 handy one-page flyers listing the most common physical and environmental signs of child abuse and neglect, domestic or intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and animal and equine cruelty and neglect.

The [ASPCA](#) recommends the following steps for reporting suspected animal cruelty:

Try to gather the following information before submitting a report of animal cruelty:

- A concise, written, factual statement of what you observed—giving dates and approximate times whenever possible—to provide to law enforcement.
- Photographs of the location, the animals in question and the surrounding area. **Note: do not put yourself in danger!** Do not enter another person's property without permission, and exercise great caution around unfamiliar animals who may be frightened or in pain.

- If you can, provide law enforcement with the names and contact information of other people who have firsthand information about the abusive situation.
- It is possible to file an anonymous report, but please consider providing your information. The case is more likely to be pursued when there are credible witnesses willing to stand behind the report and, if necessary, testify in court.

Keep a record of exactly whom you contacted, the date of the contacts, copies of any documents you provided to law enforcement or animal control and the content and outcome of your discussion. If you do not receive a response from the officer assigned to your case within a reasonable length of time, make a polite follow-up call to inquire about the progress of the investigation.

## GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC REPORTERS

**FOR VETERINARIANS:** Veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal abuse in Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Guam. They are permitted to report suspected animal abuse in Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. Most of these states grant immunity from civil and/or criminal liability for good-faith reports.. [The AVMA](#) has collected basic information about reporting requirements by state and other resources. The AAHA has a [position statement](#) on reporting suspected animal abuse.

**FOR SOCIAL SERVICES WORKERS:** **Child protective services** workers are *mandated* to report animal abuse in Connecticut, D.C., Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia, and are *permitted* to report animal abuse in California, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Guam. **Adult protective services** workers are *mandated* to report animal abuse in Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia and Guam and are *permitted* to report animal abuse in California, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, and Oregon.

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE:** 18 states mandate that **everyone** must report suspected child abuse: Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. **Animal control and humane officers** are mandated reporters in California, Colorado, Connecticut, D.C., Florida, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and West Virginia. (Connecticut and Ohio animal control officers report animal cruelty to the Department of Children and Families, which correlates these reports with their own case files.) **Veterinarians** are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse in California and Colorado.

**REPORTING ABUSE OF ELDERS AND DISABLED ADULTS:** 16 states mandate that **everyone** must report suspected elder/disabled abuse: Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, plus Puerto Rico. **Animal control and humane officers** are specified mandated reporters in Arkansas, California (if employed by a law enforcement agency), D.C., Maine (humane agents), Massachusetts, Ohio, and West Virginia. **Veterinarians** are specified mandated reporters of elder abuse in Colorado and Illinois.

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Pingback: [Office of the District Attorney, District 12 | First National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies Is Released](#)

Pingback: [New directory aims to make reporting animal abuse easier for veterinary professionals - Shareabler](#)

Pingback: [The Link between Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse - PetsEmpower](#)

Pingback: [US Law Enforcement Works to End Animal Abuse | FACE Foundation](#)

Pingback: [Tragic loss - kitten abandoned in parking lot did not survive • Pet Rescue Report](#)

Pingback: [Active vs. Passive Animal Cruelty: Know the Difference | Litter-Robot Blog](#)

Pingback: [Homepage](#)

Pingback: [CBD Oil For Dogs](#)

Pingback: [Reporting Neglect Cases Can Be A Thorny Prospect — Even For Equine Veterinarians - Washington latest](#)

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