

Title 15
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Subtitle 14 BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS
Chapter 15 Animal Cruelty Reporting

Authority: Agriculture Article, §§2-304 and 2-310, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to protect animals that are suspected to be victims of cruelty by encouraging veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty, including animal fighting.

.02 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) "Animal cruelty" means:

(a) Overdriving, overloading, torturing, tormenting, or cruelly beating an animal, depriving an animal of necessary sustenance, or causing, procuring, or authorizing these acts;

(b) Inflicting unnecessary suffering or pain upon an animal, or unnecessarily failing to provide an animal with nutritious food in sufficient quantity, necessary veterinary care, proper drink, air, space, shelter, or protection from the weather;

(c) Using or permitting to be used any bird, fowl, or cock for the purpose of fighting with any other animal, which is commonly known as cockfighting; or

(d) Using or permitting to be used any dog for the purpose of fighting with any other animal.

(2) "Board" means the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

.03 Reporting Procedure.

A. A veterinarian should do the following, if a case of suspected animal cruelty is presented:

(1) Note the condition of the animal upon presentation in the animal's treatment record;

(2) Note the basis for suspecting cruelty in the animal's treatment record; and

(3) Promptly report the suspected instance of cruelty, including animal fighting, to the appropriate local law enforcement or county animal control agency.

B. The Board shall maintain a list of the appropriate law enforcement or county animal control agencies that veterinarians may contact for reporting purposes.

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C. A veterinarian who reports, in good faith, a suspected incident of animal cruelty is immune from any civil liability that results from this report, in accordance with Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, §5-424, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Administrative History

Effective date: February 17, 2003 (30:3 Md. R. 181)