

# What is animal cruelty and how to report it

In Victoria, animal cruelty is defined by law (*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*). However, community expectations around how animals should be treated sometimes differ from what is considered cruelty or neglect by the law. A good guide is to consider whether a person's actions or inactions are causing or will cause unreasonable pain and suffering to an animal.

**Broadly, there are two categories of animal cruelty our Inspectors investigate:**

## Deliberate cruelty

Deliberate cruelty includes beating, overworking, abusing, wounding or carrying out procedures such as ear cropping or tail docking.

## Neglect (or failing to provide adequate care)

Neglect includes **not** providing the basics such as clean water, food or shelter. It is also considered neglect if an owner fails to take their sick or injured animal to the vet.

## Reporting animal cruelty or neglect

Different agencies and levels of government look after different types of reports.

Type of report	Contact
<b>A barking dog</b>	Your local council
<b>Stray animals</b>	Your local council
<b>Abandoned animals</b>	RSPCA Victoria Inspectors are able to investigate abandoned animals. Contact RSPCA Victoria Inspectors by calling 03 9224 2222.
<b>Large numbers of livestock</b>	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR). Contact DJPR by calling 136 186 or by emailing <a href="mailto:aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au">aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Small number of livestock (Less than 10 per species)</b>	RSPCA Victoria Inspectors. Contact RSPCA Victoria Inspectors by calling 03 9224 2222.
<b>Less than 50 chickens</b>	RSPCA Victoria Inspectors. Contact RSPCA Victoria Inspectors by calling 03 9224 2222.
<b>More than 50 chickens</b>	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR). Contact DJPR by calling 136 186 or by emailing <a href="mailto:aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au">aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Dogs in hot cars</b>	If you find a pet left in a hot car, please call Victoria Police immediately on 000.
<b>Wildlife</b>	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Please see the DELWP website: <a href="http://wildlife.vic.gov.au/sick-injured-or-orphaned-wildlife">wildlife.vic.gov.au/sick-injured-or-orphaned-wildlife</a>
<b>Sick or injured animals</b>	RSPCA Victoria Inspectors. Contact RSPCA Victoria Inspectors by calling 03 9224 2222.
<b>Underweight pets or insufficient food, water or shelter</b>	RSPCA Victoria Inspectors. Contact RSPCA Victoria Inspectors by calling 03 9224 2222.

## Are there penalties for animal cruelty?

A person who is found guilty of committing either deliberate cruelty or neglect is liable for a financial penalty (250 penalty units) or 12 months' imprisonment. In addition, a person who commits an act or acts of cruelty on any animal, which result in the death or serious disablement of the animal is liable to a financial penalty (500 penalty units or approximately \$82,000) or imprisonment for 2 years or, in the case of a body corporate, 1,200 penalty units. Prosecution can also result in control orders around the types and/or numbers of animals people are allowed to keep.

## How to contact RSPCA Victoria's Inspectors

- If you believe an animal's life is at immediate risk, please call us now on **03 9224 2222**.
- You can make an online report 24 hours a day at **[rspcavic.org/report](https://rspcavic.org/report)**

## What happens when you make a report to the Inspectorate?

- All reports are investigated. However, more urgent reports are prioritised.
- You are protected under the *Privacy Act* and your details will not be passed on and will remain confidential.
- It does help having someone to contact, especially if the Inspector requires more information such as the location of the premises/animal(s) etc.
- Confidentiality applies both ways and as a result, you will not necessarily receive updates or outcomes with respect to the case.