



How to Report Animal Cruelty or Neglect in Georgia

By Claudine Wilkins, Founder of Animal Law Source™ & The Animal Protection Society, Copyright 2019, All rights reserved

Do not hesitate to call 911 if the abuse or neglect is being eye witnessed, imminent or urgent, if you believe the animal or person is in distress or the abuse or neglect warrants 911 emergency.

You may contact an Animal Control Officer (ACO) or Animal Control Services and/or police or sheriff AKA Law Enforcement officers (LEO) in the county where you witnessed the abuse/neglect if 911 was not contacted. If you do not receive an adequate or timely response from an ACO, call your local LEO department. Note, some counties do not have animal control and therefore LEO contact is certainly appropriate.

If an animal is subject to regulatory rules under the Georgia Department of Agriculture (GADOA), we recommend to ALWAYS contact local enforcement first (ACO/Police or Sheriff) and GADOA as well. The criminal case will be handled by local LEO and/or ACO and the regulatory violation will be handled by the GADOA. Note, criminal cases are handled under the judiciary branch of the government and regulatory violations are handled under the executive branch of the government. Both can work simultaneously and one should not affect the other. Note, agencies can work together. More importantly, if a crime has occurred, local ACO and/or LEO should always be contacted first. More on how to report to GA DOA at the end of document.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED BEFORE REPORTING ALLEGED ANIMAL ABUSE/NEGLECT?

For efficiency, the local police/sheriff (LEOs), animal control (ACO) and/or the Georgia Department of Agriculture (GADOA) (or all of the above) asks that you provide with the following information:

Witness: The name, address, and telephone number of the person who witnessed the alleged incident. Such information may be kept confidential, depending on the particular agency; however, it is helpful for investigators to have a point of contact in the event of misdirection or miscommunication. Remember, the burden of proof falls upon the accuser. If you are unwilling to give your name the case may not be able to proceed.

Who: An accurate identity of the alleged perpetrator, if known, including name, address and telephone number, if possible and known associates or co-participants in the alleged criminal activity.

What and How: An accurate and exact description of the incident witnessed to the best of your knowledge is helpful. The investigator must receive sufficient details and be able to verify substantial portions of the information as true before being used to establish probable cause. Document complete descriptions of the animals and associated conditions and include:

- Pertinent conversations with the alleged perpetrator;
- Eyewitness accounts to reconstruct the exact happenings of what and how the incident occurred (written notes and PHOTOGRAPHS are very valuable - a picture is worth a thousand words);
- Written documents or reports that verify conditions (i.e., veterinary examination findings);
- The date(s) and time(s) of the incident(s)

Where: The specific location where the incident was witnessed (physical address and city, community, or county), including directions.

When reporting to GADOA:

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Please refer to the following lists to report animal abuse/cruelty or humane care violations against different species:

For Companion Animals (e.g., dogs, cats, exotic birds, pet rabbits, pot-bellied pigs)

- Report those persons holding an Animal Protection License issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture (or those that should be licensed) to the Animal Protection Section at 1-800-282-5852, ext. 4914 or 404-656-4914, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.). Their website list [“Who must be licensed in Georgia?”](#)

- Report all other persons to your local law enforcement agency and the animal control office, if one exists in the area. Please report to law enforcement using the non-emergency number, unless the alleged perpetrator is actively involved in an act that threatens an animal's life. If you suspect that other crimes (e.g., illegal drug activity or gambling) are involved, be sure to report this as a part of the call.

For Equine (e.g., horses, mules, donkeys, zebras)

Report to the Georgia Department of Agriculture Equine Health Section at 1-800-282-5852, ext. 1500 or 404-656-3667, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. or to the local law enforcement agency and the animal control office, if one exists in the area.

For other Livestock (e.g., cattle, swine, goats, sheep, poultry, llamas)

- Report to the Georgia Department of Agriculture Livestock Poultry Field Forces at 1-800-282-5852, ext. 1500 or 404-656-3667, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Report to your local municipal or county police department or county sheriff's department.

For Captive Wildlife or Exotic Animals (e.g., whitetail deer, raptors, large cats)

Report to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division at 770-761-3044, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Ask for the region the animal is located. They will provide you the local contact. They license individuals and companies engaged in the exhibition of wildlife and exotic animals (not normally domesticated) and enforce the Standards for Humane Handling and Care, O.C.G.A. §27-5-6. For more information, visit the Department of Natural Resources website.

For Circus or Zoo Animals (e.g., elephants, primates, big cats, circus dogs)

Report to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Care, Regional Office, Raleigh, N.C. at 919-716-5532, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. They license animal dealers (pet wholesalers, animal brokers, laboratory animal breeders and dealers, exotic and wild animal dealers), animal transporters (commercial airlines), animal exhibitors (circuses, zoos, promotional animal exhibits), and research facilities. They enforce the federal Animal Welfare Act and the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 1, Subchapter A. For more information, visit the USDA website

You may wish to visit the website for the Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDOA) for more information on animal protection, cruelty to animals and requirements for licensing of animal care



organizations. You may also wish to consult the website for your local animal control facility, if one exists in your county. You can also find additional information about animal abuse on this site.

Here is a link to the **Georgia Animal Cruelty Statutes**, provided by Animal Law Source:

<http://animallawsource.org/criminal-.../animal-cruelty-law-ga/>

<http://animallawsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Animal-Cruelty-in-GA-Summary.pdf>

<http://animallawsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Animal-Abandonment-Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf>

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Attend our annual Animal Protection Conference & Expo, www.animalprotectionexpo.org

Thank you,

Claudine Wilkins, J.D., M.S.E.L.

Animal Law Expert, Speaker, Founder Animal Law Source, The Animal Protection Society, Co-Founder of Georgia Pet Foundation, & past chair and vice chair of the Animal Law Section to the Georgia Bar.