

# Animal Abuse



## Reasons for Abuse

There are many different reasons why individuals abuse animals. Animal cruelty covers a wide range of actions (or lack of action), so one blanket answer simply isn't possible. Each type of abuse has displayed certain patterns of behavior that we can use to help understand more about why people commit the crimes we encounter today.

Animal cruelty is often broken down into two main categories: active and passive, also referred to as commission and omission, respectively.

In many cases of neglect where an investigator feels that the cruelty occurred as a result of ignorance, they may attempt to educate the pet owner and then revisit the situation to check for improvements. In more severe cases however, exigent circumstances may require that the animal is removed from the site immediately and taken in for urgent medical care.



# Active Cruelty (Acts of Commission)

Implies malicious intent, where a person has deliberately and intentionally caused harm to an animal, and is sometimes referred to as NAI (Non-Accidental Injury). Acts of intentional cruelty are often some of the most disturbing and should be considered signs of serious psychological problems. This type of behavior is often associated with sociopathic behavior and should be taken very seriously.

Animal abuse in violent homes can take many forms and can occur for many reasons. Many times a parent or domestic partner who is abusive may kill, or threaten to kill, the household pets to intimidate family members into sexual abuse, to remain silent about previous or current abuse, or simply to psychologically torture the the victims, flexing their "power."

# Passive Cruelty (Acts of Omission)

Passive cruelty is typified by cases of neglect, where the crime is a lack of action rather than the action itself — however do not let the terminology fool you. Severe animal neglect can cause incredible pain and suffering to an animal.

Examples of neglect are starvation, dehydration, parasite infestations, allowing a collar to grow into an animal's skin, inadequate shelter in extreme weather conditions, and failure to seek veterinary care when an animal needs medical attention.



If you are aware of any situation of animal abuse or neglect, you must call animal control or local law enforcement. When in doubt, call Wildlife Rescue at 830-336-2725.

# Animal Abuse & Pathology

- Earl Kenneth Shriner, who raped, stabbed, and mutilated a 7-year-old boy, had been widely known in his neighborhood as the man who put firecrackers in dogs' rectums and strung up cats.

- Brenda Spencer, who opened fire at a San Diego school, killing two children and injuring nine others, had repeatedly abused cats and dogs, often by setting their tails on fire.

- Albert DeSalvo, the "Boston Strangler" who killed 13 women, trapped dogs and cats in orange crates and shot arrows through the boxes in his youth.

- Carroll Edward Cole, executed for five of the 35 murders of which he was accused, said his first act of violence as a child was to strangle a puppy.

- In 1987, three Missouri high school students were charged with the beating death of a classmate. They had histories of repeated acts of animal mutilation starting several years earlier. One confessed that he had killed so many cats he'd lost count. Two brothers who murdered their parents had previously told classmates that they had decapitated a cat.

- Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer had impaled dogs' heads, frogs, and cats on sticks.

- High school killers such as 15-year-old Kip Kinkel in Springfield, Ore., and Luke Woodham, 16, in Pearl, Miss., tortured animals before embarking on shooting sprees.

- Columbine High School students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who shot and killed 12 classmates before turning their guns on themselves, bragged about mutilating animals to their friends.

