

## What to do if you see a situation where animals are suffering and you think the law is being broken



**Make sure you have your facts straight:**

- ✓ The exact address and location of the animals.
- ✓ Details of the situation. *Be very specific about the animals' situation and related suffering.*
- ✓ The date/time you last saw the animals.
- ✓ The attached complaint form, which you may turn into us at SPCHS, will help you organize information.

**Act quickly.**

**Be persistent and pleasant.**

**Know the law.**

**Don't let your emotions interfere with the factual interpretation of the case.**

- ✓ It is very important to act when you witness a situation. If you delay a few hours or a day or a week, the situation could be temporarily improved, as in weather-related cases, or the animals may be severely injured or dead.

**Whom to contact:**

**COUNTY-WIDE 24-HOUR CONTACT NUMBERS: 360.642.9397 OR 360.875.9397**

Within the city limits of Long Beach and Ilwaco:

Long Beach Police Department  
212 S Pacific Hwy  
PO Box 310  
Long Beach, WA 98631

[lbpdchief@centurytel.net](mailto:lbpdchief@centurytel.net)

All other areas of Pacific County:

Pacific County Sheriff  
300 Memorial Drive  
PO Box 27  
South Bend, WA 98586

[sheriffsreport@co.pacific.wa.us](mailto:sheriffsreport@co.pacific.wa.us)

**When you call:**

- ✓ Don't overreact. *Be prepared to work WITH the authorities and let them do their job.*
- ✓ Allow appropriate time to respond. Be respectful and polite. *Stop and think -- Whom would you rather work with: someone who is pleasant and professional or someone who is demanding and angry? Which attitude will get better results for the animals?*
- ✓ Try and be brave enough to offer your name. *You are the only voice the animals have. Tips from actual sources are better received than anonymous sources. If you must remain anonymous, explain your fear of retribution and remind law enforcement they get reliable anonymous tips all the time from people reporting crime, the location of criminals, drunk drivers, and child abuse victims.*
- ✓ Be prepared to cite the laws that you have witnessed being broken. *Many law enforcement officers are not familiar with animal laws - so make the information accessible to them:*
  - Federal: <http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stfedset.htm>
  - Washington State: <http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/statestatutes/stuswaset.htm>
  - Pacific County: TBD
  - Long Beach: <http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/WA/Long%20Beach/index.htm>  
Click on TITLE 6: POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY and then CHAPTER 4: ANIMAL CONTROL
  - Ilwaco: <http://www.ilwacowashington.com/html/codes.html>

- ✓ Request that the case be given a case number and request that a report be written, even if formal charges are not filed. *This will allow you to follow up on the action taken on the case more easily and request copies of reports. This also creates a paper trail for repeated abuse scenarios.*
  - ✓ Let the officer know you expect charges to be filed if the law is being broken. *Law enforcement can always stipulate on the ticket that the charges will be dropped if conditions improve in a reasonable amount of time (i.e., failing to provide a dog with shelter is against the law; a ticket can be written and the charges dismissed if the dog gets adequate shelter within 24 - 48 hours). Owners can release custody of animals in place of charges.*
  - ✓ Ask if you need to file a formal complaint for the situation to be investigated or charged. *Be brave enough to follow through.*
  - ✓ Tell the officer you expect domestic animals in immediate distress (an untreated injury, a dog without shelter during a storm or extreme weather) to be taken into protective custody. *There is no reason not to do this; a local vet, our shelter, or foster home can take the animal until conditions are improved or the case is resolved in the courts.*
  - ✓ You may have to remind them that just because "everyone else is doing it" the law still needs to be enforced. *Drunk driving and domestic violence were once ignored because "everyone was doing it".*
- ❑ **Request follow-up on the situation if the animals are left and no charges are filed.**
  - ❑ **Make sure to follow up on the case and request a copy of the reports or charges.** *This helps with accountability and, if you have to report the incident again, you can refer to previous action taken.*
  - ❑ **If there is still no action taken, consider calling print and broadcast media.** *Ask to speak to a reporter. Explain the problem with the animals and the lack of action by law enforcement. You can remain anonymous with media, but you may want to arrange a time to call them back in case they have follow-up questions. Always allow agencies a last chance to respond before contacting the media.*
- ❑ **Always -- make sure you have your facts straight. Consider:**
    - ✓ A case of starving horses was reported repeatedly to one agency and the horses had actually just been rescued from a cruel situation and were being rehabilitated.
    - ✓ A dog with a dangling leg was reported. When asked to describe which leg was injured, the complainant referred to it as "the leg with all the stitches". The dog had been hit by a car, had already been taken to the vet, and was receiving treatment.