

DOG ABUSE

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Animal abuse takes place all across the country whether it be in urban or rural areas and happens despite being rich or poor. While the ASPCA is working hard to help prevent animal abuse, there are still so many unreported cases out there.

People abuse dogs for all different reasons. While people often abuse dogs on purpose, there are others that don't even realize they are abusing their animals. This unintentional abuse is actually more common. Examples of this 'unintentional' abuse include just being neglectful. Neglect and abandonment are the most common forms of animal abuse as reported by the ASPCA. People often don't know what kind of shelter the animal may need. Sometimes people keep their dog outside in their doghouse in the rain where it floods or keep the dog on a little chain all the time. Also, people may keep their dog in a hot car on a hot day without realizing it is bad for their health. There are also people who just think they are disciplining their pet when they are actually being cruel. Another example of unintentional abuse are the people who take in too many animals then they can handle. Even though these people love animals and want to help, they are actually putting the animals' health at risk by introducing them into cramped and dirty homes. The best way to prevent these unintentional crimes is just basic education.

Unfortunately, abuse just doesn't happen unintentionally. Some people do it on purpose. People do it on purpose because they might want attention and to feel power. Or it might be from peer pressure. Most of the time people will take their anger out on their dog instead of the thing that is making them mad. When people abuse dogs without thinking it's usually because they're young. This group is best helped by education as well.

Sadly enough there is another class of animal abusers. These are the people who actually enjoy hurting animals. They do it on purpose because they like seeing violence and pain and feeling like they have control. This kind of violence cannot be controlled or prevented by basic education though. Often these people need help from medical professionals.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A DOG'S OWNER AFTER THEY ABUSE THE DOG?

Some states have harsher punishments than other states. In all states, animal abuse is considered a misdemeanor. Most people are guilty for abusing their dog and go to jail. Jail time ranges from 6 months to 10 years depending on the crime and the state. Also, people usually need to pay a fine for their crime. Fines usually are \$1000 or more.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT DOG ABUSE?

Basic education is the best way to prevent dog abuse. Also being a good example to others and teaching kindness and respect for animals to your children. Other ways to prevent animal abuse include getting to know the animals in your neighborhood and reporting any signs of abuse to the authorities. The ASPCA has many resources for communities around the United States. In New York City we have Humane Law Enforcement Agents who can arrest animal abusers in the state of New York. To report abuse, people can contact the New York City Police Department or to the ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement department, which can be reached at (212) 876-7700, ext. 4450, or humanel@aspca.org.

Tips for Reporting Animal Cruelty (from the ASPCA)

- Write down what you observed,
- give dates and times when possible.
- Take pictures of the animals in question, but do not put yourself in danger.
- Do not enter someone's property without their permission.
- If you can, provide the names and contact information of other people who have firsthand information about the abusive situation

