



Definition of Animal Cruelty

Animal Cruelty is defined as depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, and/or veterinary care. Torturing, maiming, or killing animals is also animal cruelty.

There are many reasons people have used to be cruel to animals. Some offenders have indicated that they felt powerless, un-noticed or were under control of other people. Other offenders have felt a need to shock, threaten, or intimidate a helpless victim in order to demonstrate a rejection of society's rules. Some have abused animals to retaliate against people who love animals or have been cruel to the offender in the past.

Pets in homes where there has been domestic violence are often hurt, too. Animals in these situations may be silent victims, who may be threatened, injured or killed by a violent family member to control or intimidate other members of the household. And just like other family members, animals need a place to be safe.

The recognition of the importance of the link between animal cruelty and criminal behavior is currently drawing increased attention among behaviorists, the psychiatric community and police.