



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Care Concerns and Animal Cruelty



235 Jersey City Blvd
Jersey City, NJ 07305
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201.547.4147

Every animal, domestic and wild, is protected under New Jersey anti-cruelty laws.

It is illegal to torment, cause bodily injury to, or kill (outside of hunting regulations) any living creature. Animals cannot be fought, confined without adequate access to food and water, or transported in an inhumane way. Wild animals, including those on private property, may not be indiscriminately trapped, relocated, or euthanized. Mice and rats are the only animals who can legally be controlled via lethal means at any time by the public.

If you witness an act of animal cruelty, call Animal Control immediately.

Interpreting Animal Cruelty Laws

Phew. Now that we've got that out of the way, most situations involving alleged animal cruelty are much less clear-cut. They typically revolve around the quality of care a domestic animal is receiving from its owner, or the conditions in which it is living. These complaints are handled on a case-by-case basis by the Animal Response Team.

Animal Abandoned or At-Risk of Abandonment

Abandoning a domestic animal is a crime. Tying a dog to a fence, leaving a pet behind during a move, or dropping the animal off at a vet's office or shelter are all forms of animal abandonment. If you believe someone is at-risk of abandoning or has abandoned a pet, call Animal Response Team immediately. Have a description of the animal, the time and place of abandonment, and information about the owner ready when you call.

Animal Left Outside or Confined/Chained for Extended Periods of Time

In the state of New Jersey it is illegal to leave a dog, cat, or other domestic companion animal unattended and without shelter outside in temperatures less than 32 degrees or greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. If you witness an animal outside in these conditions call the Animal Response Team for help. Be prepared to describe the conditions the pet is housed in and if any shelter is provided. No matter the temperature, dogs may not be tethered outside overnight. It is not illegal to tether a dog in a yard, but there are additional care requirements. Call the Animal Response Team if you have concerns about a pet who is kept in this way.

Animal Left Unattended In a Vehicle in Hot or Cold Weather

If the animal appears to be in distress, call the Animal Response Team or the Police Department immediately. **In hot weather, temperatures inside the vehicle can quickly become dangerous, even with windows cracked open. Call immediately.**

Too Many Animals in a Home

Jersey City does not have a limit on the number of animals a person can own, but all animals need to be humanely cared for in a dwelling that is safe to live in. When the number of animals a person owns exceeds their ability to care for them, conditions deteriorate. Animals may breed in the home, making the situation worse. If these conditions become severe enough they may constitute a health hazard, the home itself may be deemed unfit for habitation, and the owner could be charged with animal cruelty. If you see or smell signs of animals who may be living in a situation like this, call the



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Animal Response Team. Residential complaints are often the first sign there is a problem, and it's better for everyone to address these situations as soon as possible.

Animal in Poor Health Not Receiving Veterinary Care

It is the responsibility of each pet owner to provide reasonable medical care to their animals. That means ensuring freedom of movement through proper grooming, sufficient nutrition, pain management, and treatment of illness or disease. There are different opinions regarding what constitutes reasonable medical care. If you see an animal who you believe to be suffering from lack of care, call the Animal Response Team to discuss the situation.

Animal Response Team Contact Information

201.547.4888