

# CONNECTICUT ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS

## CRUELTY PROVISIONS

### **Sec. 53-247. Cruelty to animals. Animals engaged in exhibition of fighting. Intentional injury or killing of police animals or dogs in volunteer canine search and rescue teams.**

(a) Any person who overdrives, drives when overloaded, overworks, tortures, deprives of necessary sustenance, mutilates or cruelly beats or kills or unjustifiably injures any animal, or who, having impounded or confined any animal, fails to give such animal proper care or neglects to cage or restrain any such animal from doing injury to itself or to another animal or fails to supply any such animal with wholesome air, food and water, or unjustifiably administers any poisonous or noxious drug or substance to any domestic animal or unjustifiably exposes any such drug or substance, with intent that the same shall be taken by an animal, or causes it to be done, or, having charge or custody of any animal, inflicts cruelty upon it or fails to provide it with proper food, drink or protection from the weather or abandons it or carries it or causes it to be carried in a cruel manner, or fights with or baits, harasses or worries any animal for the purpose of making it perform for amusement, diversion or exhibition, shall, for a first offense, be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year or both, and for each subsequent offense, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(b) Any person who maliciously and intentionally maims, mutilates, tortures, wounds or kills an animal shall, (1) for a first offense, be guilty of a class D felony, and (2) for any subsequent offense, be guilty of a class C felony. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to any licensed veterinarian while following accepted standards of practice of the profession or to any person while following approved methods of slaughter under section 22-272a, while performing medical research as an employee of, student in or person associated with any hospital, educational institution or laboratory, while following generally accepted agricultural practices or while lawfully engaged in the taking of wildlife.

(c) Any person who knowingly (1) owns, possesses, keeps or trains an animal engaged in an exhibition of fighting for amusement or gain, (2) possesses, keeps or trains an animal with the intent that it be engaged in an exhibition of fighting for amusement or gain, (3) permits an act described in subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection to take place on premises under his control, (4) acts as judge or spectator at an exhibition of animal fighting for amusement or gain, or (5) bets or wagers on the outcome of an exhibition of animal fighting for amusement or gain, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(d) Any person who intentionally injures any animal while such animal is in the performance of its duties under the supervision of a peace officer, as defined in [section 53a-3](#), or intentionally injures a dog that is a member of a volunteer canine search and rescue

team, as defined in section 5-249, while such dog is in the performance of its duties under the supervision of the active individual member of such team, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(e) Any person who intentionally kills any animal while such animal is in the performance of its duties under the supervision of a peace officer, as defined in section 53a-3, or intentionally kills a dog that is a member of a volunteer canine search and rescue team, as defined in section 5-249, while such dog is in the performance of its duties under the supervision of the active individual member of such team, shall be fined not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

**Sec. 22-329. Prevention of cruelty to dogs and other animals.**

The commissioner, the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or any law enforcement officer may interfere to prevent any act of cruelty upon any dog or other animal, and any person who interferes with or obstructs or resists the commissioner or any such officer in the discharge of such duty shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

**Sec. 53-249. Cruelty to poultry.**

Any crate or other container used for the purpose of transporting, shipping or holding for sale any live poultry shall be in a sanitary condition and shall be constructed so as to provide sufficient ventilation and warmth, and such poultry, while in such container, shall receive such reasonable care as may be required to prevent unnecessary suffering. Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

**Sec. 53-248. Sale or treatment of animals unable to work.**

Any person who sells, offers for sale, trades or gives away any horse for the purpose of being worked, which could not be worked in this state without violating the provisions of section 53-247, or any person who leads, rides or drives an animal on any public highway for any purpose except that of conveying the animal to a suitable place for its humane keeping or killing or for medical or surgical treatment, which animal could not be worked in this state without violating the provisions of said section, shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

**Sec. 53-250. Use of animals, reptiles and birds.**

Any person who uses any animal, reptile or bird for the purpose of soliciting any alms, collection, contribution, subscription, donation or payment of money, or uses any animal or bird as a prize or award in the operation of any game or device, or exhibits any wild animal in connection with any business for the purpose of attracting trade upon any street, highway or public park or at any fair, exhibition or place of amusement, recreation or entertainment, or owns, keeps or has in his custody any animal, reptile or bird for any such purpose, shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor, but no provision of this section shall be construed so as to apply to the exhibition of any animal, reptile or bird by any educational institution or in a zoological garden

or in connection with any theatrical exhibition or circus or to the use of any animal in a cow-chip raffle.

### **Sec. 53-252. Transportation of animals on railroads**

No railroad company, in transporting animals, shall permit them to be confined in cars more than twenty-eight consecutive hours, except when transported in cars in which they have proper food, water, space and opportunity for rest, without unloading them for food, water and rest, for at least five consecutive hours, unless prevented by storm or other accidental cause; and, in estimating such confinement, the time during which the animals have been confined, without such rest, on connecting roads from which they are received, shall be included. Animals so unloaded shall be properly fed, watered and sheltered during such rest by the owner or person having their custody or, on his neglect, by the railroad company transporting them, at his expense; and such company shall, in such case, have a lien upon such animals for food, care and custody furnished and shall not be liable for any detention of them for such purpose. Any such company or the owner or custodian of such animals, who does not comply with the provisions of this section, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars. The knowledge and acts of agents of, and of persons employed by, such company, in regard to animals transported, owned or employed by it or in its custody, shall be held to be its acts and knowledge.

### **Sec. 53-253. Notice of arrest of offender to be given**

Any person making an arrest for a violation of the laws relating to cruelty to animals shall use reasonable diligence to give notice thereof to the owner of animals found in the charge or custody of the person arrested and shall properly care and provide for them until their owner takes charge of them, provided the owner shall take charge of them within sixty days from the date of such notice; and the person making such arrest shall have a lien on such animals for the expense of such care and provision.

## **ADVOCATE APPOINTMENT**

### **Sec. 54-86n. Appointment of advocate in proceeding re the welfare or custody of a cat or dog. Advocate's duties. Department of Agriculture to maintain list of eligible advocates.**

(a) In any prosecution under section 53-247, or in any court proceeding pursuant to section 22-329a or in the criminal session of the Superior Court regarding the welfare or custody of a cat or dog, the court may order, upon its own initiative or upon request of a party or counsel for a party, that a separate advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice. If a court orders that an advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice, the court shall appoint such advocate from a list provided to the court by the Commissioner of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. A decision by the court denying a request to appoint a separate advocate to represent the interests of justice shall not be subject to appeal.

(b) The advocate may: (1) Monitor the case; (2) consult any individual with information that could aid the judge or fact finder and review records relating to the condition of the cat or dog and the defendant's actions, including, but not limited to, records from animal control officers, veterinarians and police officers; (3) attend hearings; and (4) present information or

recommendations to the court pertinent to determinations that relate to the interests of justice, provided such information and recommendations shall be based solely upon the duties undertaken pursuant to this subsection.

(c) The Department of Agriculture shall maintain a list of attorneys with knowledge of animal issues and the legal system and a list of law schools that have students, or anticipate having students, with an interest in animal issues and the legal system. Such attorneys and law students shall be eligible to serve on a voluntary basis as advocates under this section. The provisions of sections 3-14 to 3-21, inclusive, of the Connecticut Practice Book shall govern a law student's participation as an advocate under this section.

## **SEIZURE AND PROCEDURE PROVISIONS**

### **Sec. 22-329a. Seizure and custody of neglected or cruelly treated animals. Vesting of ownership of animal. Animal abuse cost recovery account**

(a) The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control officer may take physical custody of any animal when such animal control officer has reasonable cause to believe that such animal is in imminent harm and is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, and, not later than ninety-six hours after taking physical custody, shall proceed as provided in subsection (c) of this section, except that if, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian or the State Veterinarian, at any time after physical custody of such animal is taken, such animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed immediately, such officer may humanely destroy or cause such animal to be humanely destroyed.

(b) The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control officer may take physical custody of any animal upon issuance of a warrant finding probable cause that such animal is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, and shall thereupon proceed as provided in subsection (c) of this section except that if, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian or the State Veterinarian, at any time after physical custody of such animal is taken, such animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed immediately, such officer may humanely destroy or cause such animal to be humanely destroyed.

(c) Such officer shall file with the superior court which has venue over such matter or with the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford at Hartford a verified petition plainly stating such facts of neglect or cruel treatment as to bring such animal within the jurisdiction of the court and praying for appropriate action by the court in accordance with the provisions of this section. Upon the filing of such petition, the court shall cause a summons to be issued requiring the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal, if known, to appear in court at the time and place named.

(d) If physical custody of an animal has been taken pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section and it appears from the allegations of the petition filed pursuant to subsection (c) of

this section and other affirmations of fact accompanying the petition, or provided subsequent thereto, that there is reasonable cause to find that the animal's condition or the circumstances surrounding its care require that temporary care and custody be immediately assumed to safeguard its welfare, the court shall either (1) issue an order to show cause why the court should not vest in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition, or (2) issue an order vesting in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition. A hearing on the order issued by the court pursuant to subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection shall be held not later than fourteen days after the issuance of such order. The service of such order may be made by any officer authorized by law to serve process, state police officer or indifferent person and shall be served not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing. If the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal is not known, notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given by publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the town in which such officer took physical custody of such animal not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing.

(e) If physical custody of an animal has not been taken pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional animal control officer has reasonable cause to believe that an animal is neglected or is cruelly treated in violation of section 22-366, 22-415, 53-247, 53-248, 53-249, 53-249a, 53-250, 53-251 or 53-252, such animal control officer may file a petition with the superior court which has venue over such matter or with the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford at Hartford, plainly stating such facts of neglect or cruel treatment as to bring the animal within the jurisdiction of the court and praying for appropriate action by the court to ensure the welfare of the animal including, but not limited to, physical removal and temporary care and custody of the animal, authorization of an animal control officer or a licensed veterinarian to provide care for the animal on site, vesting of ownership of the animal, the posting of a bond in accordance with subsection (f) of this section and the assessment of costs in accordance with subsection (h) of this section. Upon the filing of such petition, the court shall cause a summons for an order to show cause to be issued requiring the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal, if known, to appear in court at the time and place named. If the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal is not known, notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given by publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the town where the animal is located not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of the hearing. If it appears from the allegations of the petition filed pursuant to this subsection and other affirmations of fact accompanying the petition, or provided subsequent thereto, that there is reasonable cause to find that the animal's condition or the circumstances surrounding its care require the immediate removal of the animal from the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal to safeguard its welfare, the court shall issue an order vesting in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person the animal's temporary care and custody pending a hearing on the petition which hearing shall be held not later than ten days after the issuance of such order for such temporary care and custody. The service of such order may be made by any officer authorized by law to serve

process, state police officer or indifferent person and shall be served not less than forty-eight hours prior to the date and time of such hearing.

**(f)** If the court issues an order vesting the animal's temporary care and custody in some suitable state, municipal or other public or private agency or person, the owner or owners shall either relinquish ownership of the animal or post a surety bond or cash bond with the agency or person in whom the animal's temporary care and custody was vested. The surety bond or cash bond shall be in the amount of five hundred dollars for each animal placed in the temporary care or custody of such agency or person and shall secure payment for the reasonable expenses of the agency or person having temporary care and custody of the animal in caring and providing for such animal until the court makes a finding as to the animal's disposition under subsection (g) of this section. The requirement that a bond be posted may be waived if such owner provides satisfactory evidence that such owner is indigent and unable to pay for such bond.

**(g)**

**(1)** If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is neglected or cruelly treated, it shall vest ownership of the animal in any state, municipal or other public or private agency which is permitted by law to care for neglected or cruelly treated animals or with any person found to be suitable or worthy of such responsibility by the court.

**(2)** If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed, the court may order that such animal be humanely destroyed.

**(3)** If, after hearing, the court finds that the animal is not neglected or cruelly treated, it may cause the animal to be returned to its owner or owners or person having responsibility for its care or, if such owner or owners or person is unknown or unwilling to resume caring for such animal, it may vest ownership of the animal in any state, municipal or other public or private agency or person found to be suitable or worthy of such responsibility.

**(4)** If the court makes a finding under subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection less than thirty days after the issuance of an order of temporary care and custody and the owner of the animal has posted a bond, the agency or person with whom the bond was posted shall return the balance of such bond, if any, to the owner. The amount of the bond to be returned to the owner shall be calculated at the rate of fifteen dollars per day per animal or twenty-five dollars per day per animal if the animal is a horse or other large livestock for the number of days less than thirty that such agency or person has not had temporary care and custody of the animal less any veterinary costs and expenses incurred for the welfare of the animal.

**(5)** If the court makes a finding under subdivision (3) of this subsection after the issuance of an order of temporary care and custody and the owner of the animal has posted a bond, the agency or person with whom the bond was posted shall return such bond to such owner.

**(h)** If the court finds that the animal is neglected or cruelly treated, the expenses incurred by the state or a municipality in providing proper food, shelter and care to an animal it has taken custody of under subsection (a) or (b) of this section and the expenses incurred by any state, municipal or other public or private agency or person in providing temporary care and custody pursuant to an order vesting temporary care and custody, calculated at the rate of fifteen dollars per day per animal or twenty-five dollars per day per animal if the animal is a horse or other large livestock until the date ownership is vested pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (g) of this section shall be paid by the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the care of the animal. In addition, all veterinary costs and expenses incurred for the welfare of the animal that are not covered by the per diem rate shall be paid by the owner or owners or person having responsibility for the animal.

**(i)** If the court vests ownership of the animal in the Commissioner of Agriculture or a municipality, the commissioner or the municipality may conduct or participate in a public auction of the animal under such conditions the commissioner or the municipality deems necessary or the commissioner or the municipality may consign the animal to an auction or sell the animal through an open advertised bid process whereby bid price and demonstration of sufficient knowledge and ability to care for such animal are factors for the commissioner's or municipality's consideration. All moneys collected from the sale of animals sold by the Commissioner of Agriculture through such open advertised bid process shall be deposited in the animal abuse cost recovery account established in subsection (j) of this section. All moneys collected from the sale of animals sold by a municipality through such open advertised bid process shall be deposited by the town treasurer or other fiscal officer in the town's general fund. The commissioner or the municipality may also vest ownership of any such animal in an individual or a public or private nonprofit animal rescue or adoption organization.

**(j)** There is established a separate, nonlapsing account within the General Fund, to be known as the "animal abuse cost recovery account". All moneys collected from sales at public auction of animals seized by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the account. Deposits of moneys may be made into the account from public or private sources, including, but not limited to, the federal government or municipal governments.

**(k)** Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, any moneys received by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (j) of this section shall be deposited in the General Fund and credited to the animal abuse cost recovery account. The account shall be available to the Commissioner of Agriculture for the purpose of the housing, care and welfare of any animal seized by the department, until final disposition of such animal. Additionally, the account may be used for the purpose of providing reimbursement to any municipality for the costs of providing temporary care to such animal if such temporary care exceeded thirty days in duration and such costs exceeded the amount of any surety bond or cash bond posted pursuant to subsection (f) of this section provided the total annual reimbursement to municipalities from said account for such purpose shall not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars. Nothing in this section shall prevent the commissioner from obtaining

or using funds from sources other than the account for the housing, care and welfare of any animal seized by the department pursuant to this section.

**Commentary** “Animal” means any brute creature, including, but not limited to, dogs, cats, monkeys, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, birds and reptiles §22-327 (a)

**Sec. 22-329b. Reporting of neglected or cruelly treated animals.**

(a) Any animal control officer appointed pursuant to section 22-328, 22-331 or 22-331a who (1) has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal observed in the course of the officer’s employment is being or has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly in violation of section 53-247, or (2) files a verified petition with the Superior Court pursuant to section 22-329a shall make a written report to the Commissioner of Agriculture in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The written report shall be made by the officer as soon as practicable, but not later than forty-eight hours after the officer has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section or has filed a verified petition. Each written report shall contain, if known: (1) The address where the animal was observed and the name and address of the owner or other person responsible for care of the animal; (2) the name and a description of the animal; (3) the nature and extent of the harm to, neglect of or cruelty to the animal; (4) the approximate date and time such harm, neglect or cruelty occurred; (5) any information concerning any previous harm to, neglect of or cruelty to the animal; (6) the circumstances under which such harm, neglect or cruelty came to be known by the officer; and (7) the name and address of every person the officer reasonably suspects to be responsible for such harm, neglect or cruelty.

(c) Not later than November 1, 2014, and monthly thereafter, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall send a report to the Commissioner of Children and Families containing all of the information received pursuant to subsection (b) of this section during the preceding month.

**Sec. 22-330. Authority of officers issuing summons.**

The commissioner, the Chief Animal Control Officer and any animal control officer in any part of the state, any regional animal control officer in the territory to which he is assigned and any municipal animal control officer in the municipality for which he has been appointed may arrest any person and may issue a written complaint and summons in furtherance thereof for any violation of any law relating to dogs or to any domestic animal in the same manner police officers or constables may exercise in their respective jurisdictions.

**Sec. 22-332. Impoundment and disposition of roaming, injured or mistreated animals. Authority to spay or neuter unclaimed dog. Liability for provision of veterinary care to injured, sick or diseased impounded animal.**



**(a)** The Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal animal control officer shall be responsible for the enforcement of this chapter and shall make diligent search and inquiry for any violation of any of its provisions. Any such officer may take into custody (1) any dog found roaming in violation of the provisions of section 22-364, (2) any dog not having a tag or plate on a collar about its neck or on a harness on its body as provided by law or which is not confined or controlled in accordance with the provisions of any order or regulation relating to rabies issued by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, or (3) any dog or other domestic animal found injured on any highway, neglected, abandoned or cruelly treated. The officer shall impound such dog or other domestic animal at the pound serving the town where the dog or other domestic animal is taken unless, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian, the dog or other domestic animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed immediately, in which case the municipal animal control officer of such town may cause the dog or other domestic animal to be mercifully killed by a licensed veterinarian or disposed of as the State Veterinarian may direct. The municipal animal control officer shall immediately notify the owner or keeper of any dog or other domestic animal so taken, if known, of its impoundment. Such officer shall immediately notify the owner or keeper of any other domestic animal which is taken into custody, if such owner or keeper is known. If the owner or keeper of any such dog or other domestic animal is unknown, the officer shall immediately tag or employ such other suitable means of identification of the dog or other domestic animal as may be approved by the Chief Animal Control Officer and shall promptly cause (A) a description of such dog or other domestic animal to be published once in the lost and found column of a newspaper having a circulation in such town or that has a state-wide circulation, and (B) a photograph or description of such dog or other domestic animal and the date on which such dog or other domestic animal is no longer legally required to be impounded to be posted on a national pet adoption Internet web site or an Internet web site that is maintained or accessed by the animal control officer and that is accessible to the public through an Internet search, except such posting shall not be required if: (i) The dog or other domestic animal is held pending the resolution of civil or criminal litigation involving such dog or other domestic animal, (ii) the officer has a good faith belief that the dog or other domestic animal would be adopted by or transferred to a public or private nonprofit rescue organization for the purpose of placing such dog or other domestic animal in an adoptive home even in the absence of such posting, (iii) the dog or other domestic animal's safety will be placed at risk, or (iv) such animal control officer determines that such dog or other domestic animal is feral and not adoptable. If any animal control officer does not have the technological resources to post such information on an Internet web site as required by subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, such officer may contact a public or private animal rescue organization and request that such organization post such information, at such organization's expense, on an Internet web site that is accessible to the public through an Internet search. To the extent practicable, any such posting by an animal control officer or a public or private animal rescue organization shall remain posted for the duration of such dog's or other domestic animal's impoundment in the municipal or regional dog pound.

**(b)** If such dog or other domestic animal is not claimed by and released to the owner within seven days after the date of publication, the municipal animal control officer, upon finding such dog or other domestic animal to be in satisfactory health, may have a licensed

veterinarian spay or neuter such dog and sell such dog or other domestic animal to any person who satisfies such officer that such person is purchasing such dog or other domestic animal as a pet and that such person can give it a good home and proper care. The municipal animal control officer may retain possession of such dog or other domestic animal for such additional period of time as such animal control officer may deem advisable in order to place such dog or other domestic animal as a pet and may have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter such dog. If, within such period, any dog or other domestic animal is not claimed by and released to the owner or keeper or purchased as a pet, the officer shall cause such dog or other domestic animal to be mercifully killed by a licensed veterinarian or disposed of as the State Veterinarian may direct. Any veterinarian who so destroys a dog shall be paid from the dog fund account. No person who so destroys a dog or other domestic animal shall be held criminally or civilly liable therefor nor shall any licensed veterinarian who spays or neuters a dog pursuant to this section be held civilly liable, including, but not limited to, liability for reconstructive neuteal implantation surgery.

(c) The town treasurer or other fiscal officer shall pay from the dog fund account the advertising expense incurred under the provisions of this section upon receipt of an itemized statement together with a copy of the advertisement as published. Any person who purchases a dog as a pet shall pay a fee of five dollars and procure a license and tag for such dog from the town clerk, in accordance with the provisions of section 22-338. In addition to the five-dollar fee, any person who purchases a dog as a pet may be charged the cost the municipality incurred, if any, to spay or neuter and vaccinate the dog, provided such charge shall not exceed one hundred fifty dollars.

(d) No regional or municipal dog pound facility, municipality, regional or municipal animal control officer or public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization that arranges for the provision of treatment by a licensed veterinarian to an injured, sick or diseased animal pursuant to a contract described in section 22-332e shall be held civilly liable for such actions unless such actions are performed in a wanton, reckless or malicious manner. No licensed veterinarian who provides treatment free of charge or for a reduced fee, to an injured, sick or diseased animal as a direct result of a contract described in section 22-332e shall be held civilly liable for the provision of such treatment unless such actions are performed in a wilful, wanton or reckless manner.