

§1901. Animal cruelty, abuse or neglect; reporting

1. Definitions. As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Animal" means every living, sentient creature not a human being. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

B. "Cruelty, abuse or neglect" means every act, omission or instance of neglect when unnecessary or unjustifiable pain or suffering is caused or permitted. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

C. "Owner" means a person, firm, partnership, association or corporation owning, keeping or harboring an animal. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

D. "Reasonably suspect" means to hold an objectively reasonable suspicion based upon facts that would cause a reasonable person in a like position to draw on that person's training or experience to suspect animal cruelty, abuse or neglect. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

2. Report. An employee of a state-funded child or adult protective services agency or other social service agency, including those providing mental health services that are funded or licensed by the department, while acting in the employee's professional capacity or within the scope of the employee's employment, who has knowledge of or observes an animal that the employee knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect may report the known or reasonably suspected animal cruelty, abuse or neglect to the local animal control officer or to the animal welfare program of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry established pursuant to Title 7, section 3902. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

3. Duty. Nothing in this section may be construed to impose a duty to investigate known or reasonably suspected animal cruelty, abuse or neglect. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

4. Immunity from liability. A person participating in good faith in reporting under this subchapter is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise result from these actions, including, but not limited to, any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise arise under state or local laws or rules regarding confidentiality of information.

In a proceeding regarding immunity from liability, there is a rebuttable presumption of good faith. [PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 140, §9 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.