

Updated as of June 2017

## IDAHO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS

### § 25-3502. Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- (1) "Abandon" means to completely forsake and desert an animal previously under the custody or possession of a person without making reasonable arrangements for its proper care, sustenance and shelter.
- (2) "Animal" means any vertebrate member of the animal kingdom, except man.
- (3) "Animal care and control agency" means any agency incorporated under the laws of this state to which a county or municipality has conferred authority to exercise the powers and duties set forth in this chapter based upon the agency's ability to fulfill the purposes of this chapter.
- (4) "Companion animal" means those animals solely kept as pets and not used as production animals, as defined in this section, including, but not limited to, domestic dogs, domestic cats, rabbits, companion birds, and other animals.
- (5) "Cruel" or "cruelty" shall mean any or all of the following:
  - (a) The intentional and malicious infliction of pain, physical suffering, injury or death upon an animal;
  - (b) To maliciously kill, maim, wound, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, drink or shelter, cruelly beat, mutilate or cruelly kill an animal;
  - (c) To subject an animal to needless suffering or inflict unnecessary cruelty;
  - (d) To knowingly abandon an animal;
  - (e) To negligently confine an animal in unsanitary conditions or to negligently house an animal in inadequate facilities; to negligently fail to provide sustenance, water or shelter to an animal.
- (6) "Department" means the Idaho state department of agriculture.
- (7) "Department investigator" means a person employed by, or approved by, the Idaho state department of agriculture, division of animal industries, to determine whether there has been a violation of this chapter.
- (8) "Division" means the division of animal industries of the Idaho state department of agriculture.
- (9) "Custodian" means any person who keeps or harbors an animal, has an animal in his care or acts as caretaker of an animal.
- (10) "Malicious" or "maliciously" means the intentional doing of a wrongful act without just cause or excuse, with an intent to inflict an injury or death.

(11) "Owner" means any person who has a right of property in an animal.

(12) "Person" means any individual, firm, corporation, partnership, other business unit, society, association or other legal entity, any public or private institution, the state of Idaho, or any municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state.

(13) "Pound" means a place enclosed by public authority for the detention of stray animals.

(14) "Production animal" means, for purposes of this chapter:

(a) The following animals if used for the purpose of producing food or fiber, or other commercial activity, in furtherance of the production of food or fiber, or other commercial activity, or to be sold for the use by another for such purpose: cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, raptures, equines, domestic cervidae, camelidae, and guard and stock dogs; and

(b) Furbearing animals kept for the purpose of commercial fur production.

(15) "Torture" means the intentional, knowing and willful infliction of unjustifiable and extreme or prolonged pain, mutilation or maiming done for the purpose of causing suffering. "Torture" shall not mean or include acts of omission or of neglect nor acts committed unintentionally or by accident. "Torture" also shall not mean or include normal or legal practices as provided in section 25-3514, Idaho Code.

## **CRUELTY PROVISIONS**

### **§ 25-3503. Poisoning animals**

Every person who willfully administers any poisonous substance to an animal, the property of another, or maliciously places any poisonous substance where it would be found by an animal or where it would attract an animal, with the intent that the same shall be taken, ingested or absorbed by any such animal, is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison not exceeding three (3) years, or in the county jail not exceeding one (1) year, and a fine not less than one hundred dollars (\$ 100) or more than five thousand dollars (\$ 5000).

#### *Commentary:*

Several acts which may constitute an offense may be charged as a single count. *State v. Farnsworth*, 51 Idaho 768, 10 P.2d 295 (1932).

A defendant need not own the animal poisoned for malice to be shown. *Id.*

No motive for the poisoning be shown. *Id.*

### **§ 25-3504. Committing cruelty to animals**

Every person who is cruel to any animal, or who causes or procures any animal to be cruelly treated, or who, having the charge or custody of any animal either as owner or otherwise, subjects any animal to cruelty shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code. Any law enforcement officer or animal care and control officer, subject to the restrictions of section 25-3501A, Idaho Code, may take possession of the animal cruelly treated, and provide care for the same, until final disposition of such animal is determined in accordance with section 25-3520A or 25-3520B, Idaho Code.

#### *Commentary:*

Pursuant to Idaho Code § 18-112, a felony that does not specifically designate the punishment range within its text a fine up to \$50,000, or a term of imprisonment not to exceed five years, or both fine and imprisonment.

#### **§ 25-3504A. Torturing companion animals**

(1) A person is guilty of the offense of torturing a companion animal if he tortures a companion animal as defined in this chapter.

(2) A person convicted of torturing a companion animal shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, if it is the person's first conviction under this section, and shall be punished according to section 25-3520A(1) or (2), Idaho Code.

(3) A person convicted of a subsequent violation of torturing a companion animal shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished under the provisions of section 25-3520A(3)(b), Idaho Code.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, a person convicted of torturing a companion animal for the first time, but who, within ten (10) years prior to the conviction, also has been convicted of a felony offense involving the voluntary infliction of bodily injury upon any human shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished according to the provisions of section 25-3520A(3)(b), Idaho Code.

(5) Before sentencing an individual convicted of a violation of this section, the court shall order and consider a presentence investigation that shall include a psychological evaluation of the defendant.

#### **§ 25-3505. Carrying in a cruel manner -- Seizure, expenses, lien**

Whoever carries or causes to be carried in or upon any vehicle or otherwise any animal in a cruel manner, or knowingly and willfully authorizes or permits it to be subjected to cruelty of any kind, is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code. Subject to the restrictions of section 25-3501A, Idaho Code, whenever any such person is taken into custody therefor by any officer, such officer must take charge of such vehicle, and its contents, and deposit them in some place of custody, and must take possession of the animal and deposit it in some place of custody until final disposition of the animal is determined in accordance with section 25-3520A or 25-3520B, Idaho Code.

#### **§ 25-3510. Impounding without food or water**

Any person who impounds, or causes to be impounded in any pound, any animal, must supply the same during such confinement with a sufficient quantity of wholesome food and clean water, and in default thereof, is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code.

#### **§ 25-3511. Permitting animals to go without care -- Abandoned animals to be humanely destroyed**

Every owner, custodian or possessor of any animal, who shall permit the same to be in any building, enclosure, lane, street, square or lot of any city, county or precinct, without proper care and attention, as determined by an Idaho licensed veterinarian, or a representative of the division, shall, on conviction, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code. It shall be the duty of any law enforcement officer or animal care and control officer, subject to the restrictions of section 25-3501A, Idaho Code, to take possession of the animal so abandoned or neglected, and care for the same until final disposition of such animal is determined in accordance with section 25-3520A or 25-3520B, Idaho Code. Every sick, disabled, infirm or crippled

animal which shall be abandoned in any city, county or precinct, may if after due search no owner can be found therefor, be humanely destroyed, or other provision made for the animal by or on the order of such officer; and it shall be the duty of all law enforcement officers or animal care and control officers, to cause the same to be humanely destroyed, or other provision made therefor, on information of such abandonment. Subject to the restrictions of section 25-3501A, Idaho Code, such officer may likewise take charge of any animal that by reason of lameness, sickness, feebleness or neglect, is unfit for the activity it is performing, or that in any other manner is being cruelly treated; and, if such animal is not then in custody of its owner, such officer shall give notice thereof to such owner, if known, and may provide suitable care for such animal until final disposition of such animal is determined in accordance with section 25-3520A or 25-3520B, Idaho Code. If, in accordance with this section, a responsible owner cannot be found, the animal may be offered for adoption to a responsible person in lieu of destruction.

#### **§ 25-3518. Beating and harassing animals**

Every person who cruelly whips, beats or otherwise maliciously treats any animal, or maliciously harasses with a dog any cattle, horses, sheep, hogs or other livestock shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code.

### **FIGHTING PROVISIONS**

#### **§ 25-3507. Exhibition of dogfights**

- (1) Every person who knowingly owns, possesses, keeps, trains, buys or sells dogs for the purpose of a public or private display of combat between two (2) or more dogs in which the fighting, killing, maiming or injuring of dogs is a significant feature is guilty of a felony.
- (2) Every person who knowingly advertises, promotes, organizes, participates or knowingly has a monetary interest in a public or private display of combat between two (2) or more dogs in which the fighting, killing, maiming or injuring of dogs is a significant feature is guilty of a felony.
- (3) Every person who is knowingly present as a spectator at any place where preparations are being made for an exhibition of the fighting of dogs with the intent to be present at such preparations or to be knowingly present at such exhibition shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code.
- (4) Nothing in this section prohibits: demonstrations of the hunting, herding, working or tracking skills of dogs or the lawful use of dogs for hunting, herding, working, tracking or self and property protection; the use of dogs in the management of livestock or the training, raising, breeding or keeping of dogs for any purpose not prohibited by law. An exhibition of dogfighting shall not be construed to mean the type of confrontation that happens unintentionally because of a chance encounter between two (2) or more uncontrolled dogs.

#### **§ 25-3506. Exhibition of cockfights**

- (1) Every person who participates in a public or private display of combat between two (2) or more gamecocks in which the fighting, killing, maiming or injuring of gamecocks is a significant feature is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code.
- (2) Every person who knowingly advertises, promotes or organizes a public or private display of combat between two (2) or more gamecocks in which the fighting, killing, maiming or injuring of gamecocks is a significant feature and at which:

(a) Any controlled substance listed in section 37-2732C, Idaho Code, is present; and

(b) Any act of gambling, as defined in section 18-3801, Idaho Code, occurs;

is guilty of a felony and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with the penalty provisions in section 25-3520A(3)(a), Idaho Code.

(3) Every person who knowingly advertises, promotes or organizes a public or private display of combat between two (2) or more gamecocks in which the fighting, killing, maiming or injuring of gamecocks is a significant feature and at which:

(a) Gaffs or other artificial or mechanical means are used to enhance pain, inflict injury or to cause death; or

(b) Any substance to enhance activity, aggressiveness or bodily energy has been administered to a gamecock;

is guilty of a misdemeanor for a first violation and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with the penalty provisions of section 25-3520A(1), Idaho Code. Any person convicted of a second or subsequent violation of the provisions of this subsection is guilty of a felony and shall, upon conviction, be punished in accordance with the penalty provisions of section 25-3520A(3)(a), Idaho Code. Each prior conviction shall constitute one (1) violation of the provisions of this subsection regardless of the number of counts involved in the conviction.

(4) Nothing in this section prohibits any customary practice of breeding or rearing game fowl, regardless of the subsequent uses of said game fowl.

## **PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS**

### **§ 25-3519. Authority to enter premises and examine animals**

Representatives of the division are authorized and empowered to enter any field, pasture, feedyard, barn, stable, kennel, cage, yard, vehicle, trailer or other premises in this state where animals are kept, during normal operating hours, when probable cause exists, with the permission of the owner, to investigate alleged violations of the provisions of this chapter. If permission is not granted, said representatives shall be empowered to call on sheriffs, constables and peace officers to assist them in the discharge of their duties and in carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

### **§ 25-3501A. Enforcement -- Enforcement restrictions**

(1) Law enforcement agencies and animal care and control agencies that provide law enforcement or animal care and control services to a municipality or county, may enforce the provisions of this chapter in that municipality or county.

(2) Animal care and control officers enforcing this chapter shall comply with the same constitutional and statutory restrictions concerning the execution of police powers imposed on law enforcement officers who enforce this chapter and other criminal laws of the state of Idaho.

(3) In cases where production animals are subject to a violation of section 25-3504, 25-3505 or 25-3511, Idaho Code, law enforcement agencies and animal care and control agencies shall not:

(a) Enforce section 25-3504, 25-3505 or 25-3511, Idaho Code, without first obtaining an inspection and written determination from a department investigator that a violation of one (1) or more of the sections has occurred or is occurring; or

(b) Take a production animal from a production animal facility, pasture, or rangeland for a violation of section 25-3504, 25-3505 or 25-3511, Idaho Code, without first obtaining an inspection and written determination from a department investigator that such action is in the best interest of the animal.

#### **§ 25-3509. Arrests without warrants**

Any sheriff, constable, police or peace officer, qualified under the provisions of law to make arrests may enter any place, building or tenement where there is an exhibition of the fighting of birds or animals or where preparations are being made for such an exhibition, and without a warrant, arrest all persons there present.

#### **§ 25-3513. Prosecutions**

When complaint is made on oath, to any magistrate authorized to issue warrants in criminal cases, that there is probable cause to believe that any provision of law relating to or in any way affecting animals, is being, or is about to be violated in any particular building or place, such magistrate must issue and deliver immediately a warrant directed to any sheriff, police or peace officer, or animal control officer, authorizing him to enter and search such building or place, and to arrest any person there present violating or attempting to violate any law relating thereto, or in any way affecting animals and to bring such person before some court or magistrate of competent jurisdiction, within the city or county within which such offense has been committed or attempted, to be dealt with according to law, and such attempt must be held to be a misdemeanor and persons so convicted shall be punished in accordance with section 25-3520A, Idaho Code.

#### **§ 25-3520A. Penalty for violations -- Termination of rights**

(1) Unless otherwise specified in this chapter, any person convicted of a first violation of a provision of this chapter shall be punished for each offense by a jail sentence of not more than six (6) months or by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$ 100) or more than five thousand dollars (\$ 5,000), or by both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) Unless otherwise specified in this chapter, any person convicted of a second violation of a provision of this chapter within ten (10) years of the first conviction shall be punished for each offense by a jail sentence of not more than nine (9) months or a fine of not less than two hundred dollars (\$ 200) or more than seven thousand dollars (\$ 7,000), or by both such fine and imprisonment.

(3) (a) Unless the penalty is otherwise specified in this chapter, any person convicted of a third or subsequent violation of any of the provisions of this chapter within fifteen (15) years of the first conviction shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and punished for each offense by a jail sentence of not more than twelve (12) months or a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$ 500) or more than nine thousand dollars (\$ 9,000), or by both such fine and imprisonment.

(b) Any person convicted of section 25-3504A(3) or (4), Idaho Code, or any person convicted of a third or subsequent violation who previously has been found guilty of or has pled guilty to two (2) violations of section 25-3504, Idaho Code, provided the violations were for conduct as defined by section 25-3502(5)(a) or (b), Idaho Code, within fifteen (15) years of the first conviction, shall be guilty of a felony and punished for each offense by a jail sentence of not more than twelve (12) months or a fine of not less

than five hundred dollars (\$ 500) or not more than nine thousand dollars (\$ 9,000), or by both such fine and imprisonment. All other violations of section 25-3504, Idaho Code, for conduct as defined by paragraph (c), (d) or (e) of section 25-3502(5), Idaho Code, shall constitute misdemeanors and shall be punishable as provided in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(c) Each prior conviction or guilty plea shall constitute one (1) violation of this chapter regardless of the number of counts involved in the conviction or guilty plea. Practices described in section 25-3514, Idaho Code, are not animal cruelty.

(4) If a person pleads guilty or is found guilty of an offense under this chapter, the court may issue an order terminating the person's right to possession, title, custody or care of an animal that was involved in the offense or that was owned or possessed at the time of the offense. If a person's right to possession, title, custody or care of an animal is terminated, the court may award the animal to a humane society or other organization that has as its principal purpose the humane treatment of animals, or may award the animal to a law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency. The court's award of custody or care of an animal will grant to the organization or agency the authority to determine custody, adoption, sale or other disposition of the animal thereafter.

(5) Prior to sentencing pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, the court may in its discretion order a presentence psychological evaluation. If the prosecutor requests a presentence psychological evaluation prior to sentencing, the court shall determine whether a presentence psychological evaluation is warranted.

**§ 25-3520B. Seizure -- Costs -- Forfeiture proceedings -- Security deposit or bond -- Disposition -- Procedural guidelines**

(1) Any person having authority to enforce this chapter, in accordance with section 25-3501 or 25-3501A, Idaho Code, who has probable cause to believe there has been a violation of section 25-3504, 25-3505, 25-3506, 25-3507, 25-3510 or 25-3511, Idaho Code, may take custody of the animal involved.

(2) If any animal is seized under this section, the owner or keeper shall be liable for the reasonable costs of the seizure and the care, keeping and disposal of the animal. Reasonable costs shall include, but shall not be limited to, transportation, medical, board, shelter and farrier costs.

(3) If any animal is in the possession of, and being held by, a law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, pending the outcome of a criminal action charging a violation of this chapter, and prior to final disposition of the criminal charge, the animal care and control agency or law enforcement agency may file a petition in the criminal case requesting that the court issue an order forfeiting the animal to the law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency. The petitioner shall serve a true copy of the petition upon the defendant.

(4) Upon receipt of a petition pursuant to subsection (3) of this section, the court shall set a hearing on the petition. The hearing shall be conducted within fourteen (14) days after the filing of the petition, or as soon as practicable. The hearing shall be limited to the question of forfeiture of the animal.

(5) At a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (4) of this section, the petitioner shall have the burden of establishing probable cause to believe that the animal was subjected to a violation of this chapter. A prior finding of probable cause to proceed on the criminal case will create a permissive inference that probable cause exists for the forfeiture proceeding. After the hearing, if the court finds probable cause exists, the court shall order immediate forfeiture of the animal to the petitioner, unless the defendant, within seventy-two (72) hours of the hearing, posts a security deposit or bond with the municipal or

county treasurer in an amount determined by the court to be sufficient to repay all reasonable costs incurred, and anticipated to be incurred, for the care of the animal for at least thirty (30) days inclusive of the day of the initial seizure and may order anticipated costs up to the time set for trial on the criminal case if requested by the petitioner. If, after the hearing, the court finds that no probable cause exists, the animal shall be returned to the owner or keeper of the animal, and the owner or keeper shall not be responsible for any costs of the seizure, care or treatment, unless the person later pleads guilty to or is found guilty of a violation of this chapter.

(6) At the end of the time for which expenses are covered by the security deposit or bond, if the person owning or keeping the animal desires to prevent disposition of the animal, the owner or keeper shall post a new security deposit or bond with the municipal or county treasurer which must be received before the expiration date of the previous security deposit or bond. The court may correct, alter or otherwise adjust the new security deposit or bond upon a motion made before the expiration date of the previous security deposit or bond, provided however, no person may file more than one (1) motion seeking an adjustment to the new security deposit or bond.

(7) If a security deposit or bond has been posted in accordance with this section, the law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency may draw from that security deposit or bond reasonable costs in keeping and caring for the animal from the date of the seizure to the date of final disposition of the animal in the criminal action.

(8) At the end of the time for which expenses are covered by the security deposit or bond, or if no security deposit or bond has been posted in accordance with this section, the law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency may determine disposition of the animal. The owner or keeper of the animal shall be liable for all unpaid reasonable costs of the care, keeping or disposal of the animal. Posting of the security deposit or bond shall not prevent the law enforcement agency or animal care and control agency from disposing of the seized or impounded animal before the expiration of the period covered by the security deposit or bond if the court orders the forfeiture of the animal or the owner relinquishes the animal.

(9) Upon resolution of the criminal action, remaining funds deposited with the municipal or county treasurer which have not, and will not be expended in the care, keeping or disposal of the animal shall be remitted to the owner or keeper of the animal.

(10) Irrespective of any other provision of this section, if in the written determination of a licensed veterinarian, the animal is experiencing extreme pain or suffering, or is severely injured or diseased, and therefore not likely to recover, it may be immediately euthanized.

(11) No proceeding under this section shall be used as a basis for a continuance or to delay the criminal case nor shall proceedings in the criminal case, other than dismissal, be used as a basis to delay or continue the forfeiture proceeding as provided for in this section. Proceedings under this section are of a civil nature and governed by the Idaho rules of civil procedure except as to limitations upon the discovery process. Due to the need to conduct any proceeding necessary under this section in an expeditious manner, and the right of any criminal defendant to avoid self-incrimination, any and all discovery requests shall be granted only under authority of the court. Discovery shall be authorized with the intent to provide the necessary information relating directly to the evidence for the probable cause proceeding. In no event shall discovery mechanisms be used to unreasonably burden the opposing party. Discovery mechanisms shall not include the deposition of any party, witness or representative, the use of interrogatories, or the demand to inspect any records outside the immediate reports and financial accountings for the animal in question.