



## HOW TO REPORT ANIMAL ABUSE IN COSTA MESA

Monsters do exist. Not the imaginary ones from your childhood that are under the bed or in the closet. Sammy is a dog I fostered (but later we adopted him into our family). The only history I know of him is that he and other animals were abandoned when the renters moved out of a house. From the beginning, he shrunk away from anyone touching him. Even after four years, he still flinches when I touch him. I don't think he will ever be a carefree dog, but at least these days he barks with joy riding in the car to the dog park.

Animal abuse is among the most underreported and undercharged crimes in our society. California Penal Code 597, along with other animal cruelty laws, protect domesticated pets, stray animals and farmed animals. Animal abusers may be charged for crimes such as:

- maliciously and intentionally injuring or killing an animal
- general cruelty and neglect (e.g., overloads, overworks, torments, deprives of necessary sustenance, drink, or shelter, cruelly beats or subjects any animal to needless suffering)
- cruelty to animals being transported
- abandonment or neglect of animals
- animal confinement
- failure to care for animals
- animal endangerment (e.g., confinement in an unattended vehicle)
- poisoning
- sexual assault

Our community needs to understand the importance of reporting animal abusers for an additional reason. If a person commits animal abuse, it is likely that the person already has, or will commit violence against humans. There are numerous documented studies that show there is a direct link between cruelty to animals and violence against humans, such as domestic abuse, child abuse, elder abuse and other violent behavior. Several states, including California, have even enacted statutes that allow pets to be included in protective orders.

However, for the animal abuser to be convicted, residents of a community need to report the abuse. In the City of Costa Mesa, concerned residents should report animal abuse to: **Costa Mesa Animal Control at 714-754-5674**