

Signs of Animal Abuse & Neglect

GUIDELINES FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROFESSIONALS

If you are visiting a family with pets and observe any of the following, ask questions about the pet(s). If pets are not visible but there are clear indications that pets reside in or outside the home, ask additional questions.

Animal's Physical Condition

- Open wounds or signs of multiple wounds that have healed
- Fur infested with fleas, ticks, or other parasites
- Emaciation or extreme weight loss
- Ongoing illness or injury that appears to be untreated
- Physical weakness, limping, or the inability to stand or walk in a normal manner
- Heavy discharge coming from the animal's nose or eyes
- Signs of confusion or extreme drowsiness
- Skin conditions that appear untreated, causing loss of hair, scaly skin, bumps, rashes, or matting
- Collar so tight that it is causing an indentation or is embedded in the animal's neck

Animal's Environment

- Tied up for long periods of time without adequate food, water, or shelter
- Kept outside during severe weather conditions
- Always chained or caged
- Kept in area littered with feces, garbage, broken glass, or other harmful materials

Human Interactions with Animal

- History of multiple pets in a short period of time
- Pet(s) appear fearful of one or more household members
- Family members observed kicking, striking, shoving, or otherwise harming the animal

If You See Signs of Abuse or Neglect

If what you observe or are told causes concern for the well-being of the pet(s), assess whether the family would be open to suggestions, such as “Your dog looks very thin. A lot of things could account for that. Has he been to see a vet recently?” If the family is not open to suggestion, or if questioning family members would be unsafe, report your concerns to law enforcement, animal control, or your local animal cruelty hotline.

Notes:
