

Protecting the Pets in Your Community

by Sarah Collinge

Do you suspect an owner is mistreating an animal?

Before making an accusation, look more closely at the situation to determine whether neglect or abuse is occurring. Remember, aggressive, timid, and fearful behavior by an animal may occur for many reasons other than neglect or abuse.

“It’s almost impossible to make conclusions based on a pet’s behavior alone,” says Kirsten Collins, who works for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Look for physical signs that the animal has experienced mistreatment.

- **Is the animal’s collar too tight?**



An animal’s collar is too tight if it is embedded into the animal’s neck or is causing a wound. Not increasing the size of the collar as the animal grows can lead to injury.

- **Does the animal show signs of untreated illness?**



When an animal is sick, it needs veterinary care. Animals who are sick and are not taken to the veterinarian for treatment are being neglected. Look for signs of wounds, limping, and severe flea or tick infestation.

- **Is the animal being properly nourished with food and water?**

If an animal is underweight, it may be due to a lack of food and/or water.

- **Does the animal show a lack of grooming?**

Animals need to be groomed to stay healthy. You can tell when an animal hasn’t been properly groomed because their fur is matted and/or dirty. The animal’s nails are overgrown.

- **Is the animal given a proper shelter to protect it from the elements?**



Animals need protection from extreme heat, cold, and dampness when outdoors. Animals need a proper shelter that is regularly cleaned and allows room for the animal to stand and turn.

- **Is the owner physically abusing the animal?**

If an owner intentionally inflicts physical pain on an animal, this is considered abuse.

If you have evidence that an animal is being neglected or abused, it is your responsibility to report this mistreatment to the authorities. Do the right thing—protect the pets in your community by calling your local animal control!

For more information visit:

Americanhumane.org

Aspca.org

Humanesociety.org

Spc.org