



## Animal Abuse Registration Act Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the New York City Animal Abuse Registration Act?

It is a law that

- Requires people convicted of an animal abuse crime to register with the New York City Animal Abuse Registry.
- Prohibits those required to register from owning, possessing, residing with, having custody of, or intentionally engaging in *any* physical contact with *any* animal.
- Requires employees of certain animal-related businesses or organizations to check the registry and refuse to sell or transfer ownership of an animal to anyone listed.

### Who must be listed on the registry?

A person must register if he or she was convicted of an animal abuse crime after October 2, 2014, and

- Resides in New York City
- Was at least 18 years old at the time of conviction
- Was released from incarceration less than five years ago or, if there was no incarceration, was sentenced less than five years ago

### What is an animal abuse crime?

The act defines an animal abuse crime as a conviction for

- Animal fighting, as defined in New York State (NYS) Agriculture and Markets Law Section 351;
- Overdriving, torturing or injuring animals; failure to provide proper sustenance, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 353;
- Aggravated cruelty to animals, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 353;
- Electrocution of fur-bearing animals, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 353(c);
- Abandonment of animals, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 355;
- Failure to provide proper food and drink to an impounded animal, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 356;
- Poisoning or attempting to poison animals, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 360;
- Interference with or injury to certain domestic animals, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Section 361;
- Harming a service animal in the first degree, as defined in NYS Penal Code Section 242.15; or
- An offense in any other jurisdiction which includes all of the essential elements of any crime listed above.

### How does registration work?

People who need to register should call 311 and ask for the Animal Abuse Registry or email [animalabuseregistry@health.nyc.gov](mailto:animalabuseregistry@health.nyc.gov) within five days of being released from incarceration or within five days of sentencing, if there was no incarceration. The Health Department will schedule an in-person appointment.

People who are appealing a conviction do not need to register.

### **What information is required for registration?**

The Health Department will take a photograph of the registrant and will collect this information:

- Name and all aliases
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Complexion
- Race or ethnicity
- Height and weight
- Eye color
- Home address and/or expected place of residence
- Driver's license or non-driver photo ID card number
- Description of the animal abuse crime
- Conviction date
- Sentence imposed

The registrant must contact the Health Department to update information

- Each year, within 20 days of the first registration date
- Within five days of any change in information

### **How long does a person stay on the registry?**

- Five years following release from incarceration or sentencing date, whichever is later, or
- Ten years following the date of any subsequent animal abuse crime

### **Which groups must check the registry before transferring an animal?**

- Animal rescue groups working in New York City
- Animal shelters operating in New York City
- Dog and cat protective associations incorporated in New York State
- Humane societies incorporated in New York State
- Societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals incorporated in New York State
- Pet shops in New York City
- Veterinarians working in New York City

### **How can these groups check the registry?**

To get access to the registry, visit [nyc.gov/health/animalabuserregistry](http://nyc.gov/health/animalabuserregistry) and select the button "Access the Registry". Registration is required.

All groups required by law to check the registry must do so *before* they transfer any animal to an individual either by sale or adoption.

### **Who else has access to registry information?**

Law enforcement agencies and the district attorney offices in New York City also have access to registry information.

### **What are the limitations on registry use?**

Registry information may only be used to comply with the New York City Animal Abuse Registration Act, *not* for any other purpose.

### **What is the punishment for violating the act?**

People who fail to register as required or who interact with an animal when prohibited may be punished with up to a year in jail, a fine of up to \$1,000 or both.