

10 Things Teens Can Do to Help Stop Animal Cruelty

Whether it's a case of neglect or a malicious act of cruelty, you can help protect animals. Why should you care? Because it's the right thing to do. Because cruelty to animals is illegal in all 50 states. And because people who harm animals may also harm people. Stopping cruelty to animals helps everyone.

What Can You Do?

1. Get help for the animal. If you see someone hurting an animal or if you know of someone whose animal looks sick, injured, or deprived of adequate food, water, or shelter, get help. Call the police, your local animal shelter, or a trusted adult. *Do not* try to help the animal yourself—that could put *you* in danger.

2. Get the facts. Write everything down. As a witness, you'll need to provide the date, time, location, and any other details you can remember, including descriptions of the animal, the type of cruelty, and the person who may be responsible for it.

3. Get the word out. Educate your friends, family, and teachers about animal cruelty and its connection to human violence by sharing information and materials from The Humane Society of the United States's First Strike™ campaign. For more information, call 1-888-213-0956, or write to us at First Strike, The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

4. Be a role model. Let your actions be a guide. Be kind to animals and let others know that hurting animals is wrong. Speak up for animals and urge others to do the same.

5. Be a responsible pet owner. Don't let your cats and dogs roam. Cats are safest indoors. When outdoors, dogs should be walked on a leash or supervised in a fenced yard. It's up to you to keep your pets safe.

6. Keep a lookout. If you see a stray or injured animal, contact your local animal care and control agency or the police. Provide a description of the animal and the location.

7. Make the 'Net work. If you find an Internet site that promotes animal abuse, urge the service provider that hosts the web site to remove it immediately. You can find the address of the web site's provider at networksolutions.org.

8. Stop cruelty before it begins. Teach elementary schoolchildren in your community to be kind to animals via *KIND News*, a nine-times-a-year newspaper published expressly for kids. The prize-winning publication is produced by The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), the youth service division of The HSUS. NAHEE also produces other publications and has programs like Adopt-a-Classroom. For more information, visit its web sites by following the links on the right.

9. Start a club. Start an animal protection club at your school. Visit the HumaneTeen web site and click on "Start a Club" for tips and activity suggestions.

10. Join the HumaneTeen Network. The HumaneTeen Network is a free online service that provides members with e-mail updates on the latest animal and environmental issues. To join, visit their web site and click on "Join the Network." For more information about animal cruelty, click on "Understanding Animal Cruelty."

If you have questions, call The HSUS First Strike at 1-888-213-0956 or e-mail us at firststrike@hsus.org.