

RCW 16.52.205 Animal cruelty in the first degree. (1) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when, except as authorized in law, he or she intentionally (a) inflicts substantial pain on, (b) causes physical injury to, or (c) kills an animal by a means causing undue suffering or while manifesting an extreme indifference to life, or forces a minor to inflict unnecessary pain, injury, or death on an animal.

(2) (a) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when, except as authorized by law or as provided in (c) of this subsection, he or she, with criminal negligence, starves, dehydrates, or suffocates an animal, or exposes an animal to excessive heat or cold and as a result causes: (i) Substantial and unjustifiable physical pain that extends for a period sufficient to cause considerable suffering; or (ii) death.

(b) In determining whether an animal has experienced the condition described in (a) (i) of this subsection due to exposure to excessive heat or cold, the trier of fact shall consider any evidence as to: (i) Whether the animal's particular species and breed is physiologically adaptable to the conditions to which the animal was exposed; and (ii) the animal's age, health, medical conditions, and any other physical characteristics of the animal or factor that may affect its susceptibility to excessive heat or cold.

(c) A person is not guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree by means of exposing an animal to excessive heat or cold if the exposure is due to an unforeseen or unpreventable accident or event caused exclusively by an extraordinary force of nature.

(3) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when he or she:

(a) Knowingly engages in any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal;

(b) Knowingly causes, aids, or abets another person to engage in any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal;

(c) Knowingly permits any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal to be conducted on any premises under his or her charge or control;

(d) Knowingly engages in, organizes, promotes, conducts, advertises, aids, abets, participates in as an observer, or performs any service in the furtherance of an act involving any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal for a commercial or recreational purpose; or

(e) Knowingly photographs or films, for purposes of sexual gratification, a person engaged in a sexual act or sexual contact with an animal.

(4) Animal cruelty in the first degree is a class C felony.

(5) In addition to the penalty imposed in subsection (4) of this section, the court must order that the convicted person not own, care for, possess, or reside in any household where an animal is present, in accordance with RCW 16.52.200.

(6) In addition to the penalties imposed in subsections (4) and (5) of this section, the court may order that the convicted person:

(a) Participate in appropriate counseling at the defendant's expense;

(b) Reimburse the animal shelter or humane society for any reasonable costs incurred for the care and maintenance of any animals taken to the animal shelter or humane society as a result of conduct proscribed in this section.

(7) Nothing in this section prohibits accepted animal husbandry practices or prohibits a licensed veterinarian or certified veterinary technician from performing procedures on an animal that are accepted veterinary medical practices.

(8) If the court has reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of this section has occurred, the court may order the seizure of all animals involved in the alleged violation as a condition of bond of a person charged with a violation.

(9) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Animal" means every creature, either alive or dead, other than a human being.

(b) "Sexual conduct" means any touching by a person of, fondling by a person of, transfer of saliva by a person to, or use of a foreign object by a person on, the sex organs or anus of an animal, either directly or through clothing, or any transfer or transmission of semen by the person upon any part of the animal.

(c) "Sexual contact" means: (i) Any contact, however slight, between the mouth, sex organ, or anus of a person and the sex organ or anus of an animal, or between the sex organ or anus of a person and the mouth of an animal; or (ii) any intrusion, however slight, of any part of the body of the person or foreign object into the sex organ or anus of an animal.

(d) "Photographs" or "films" means the making of a photograph, motion picture film, videotape, digital image, or any other recording, sale, or transmission of the image. [2020 c 158 § 6; 2015 c 235 § 6; 2006 c 191 § 1; 2005 c 481 § 1; 1994 c 261 § 8.]

Finding—Intent—1994 c 261: See note following RCW 16.52.011.