

RCW 16.52.200 Sentences—Forfeiture of animals—Liability for costs—Penalty—Education, counseling. (1) The sentence imposed for a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor violation of this chapter may be deferred or suspended in accordance with RCW 3.66.067 and 3.66.068, however the probationary period shall be two years.

(2) In case of multiple misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor convictions, the sentences shall be consecutive, however the probationary period shall remain two years.

(3) In addition to the penalties imposed by the court, the court shall order the forfeiture of all animals held by law enforcement or animal care and control authorities under the provisions of this chapter if any one of the animals involved dies as a result of a violation of this chapter or if the defendant has a prior conviction under this chapter. In other cases the court may enter an order requiring the owner to forfeit the animal if the court deems the animal's treatment to have been severe and likely to reoccur.

(4) Any person convicted of animal cruelty shall be prohibited from owning, caring for, possessing, or residing with any animals for a period of time as follows:

(a) Two years for a first conviction of animal cruelty in the second degree under RCW 16.52.207;

(b) Permanently for a first conviction of animal cruelty in the first degree under RCW 16.52.205;

(c) Permanently for a second or subsequent conviction of animal cruelty, except as provided in subsection (5) of this section.

(5) If a person has no more than two convictions of animal cruelty and each conviction is for animal cruelty in the second degree, the person may petition the sentencing court in which the most recent animal cruelty conviction occurred, for a restoration of the right to own, care for, possess, or reside with animals five years after the date of the second conviction. In determining whether to grant the petition, the court shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) The person's prior animal cruelty in the second degree convictions;

(b) The type of harm or violence inflicted upon the animals;

(c) Whether the person has completed the conditions imposed by the court as a result of the underlying convictions;

(d) Whether the person complied with the prohibition on owning, caring for, possessing, or residing with animals; and

(e) Any other matters the court finds reasonable and material to consider in determining whether the person is likely to abuse another animal.

The court may delay its decision on forfeiture under subsection (3) of this section until the end of the probationary period.

(6) In addition to fines and court costs, the defendant, only if convicted or in agreement, shall be liable for reasonable costs incurred pursuant to this chapter by law enforcement agencies, animal care and control agencies, or authorized private or public entities involved with the care of the animals. Reasonable costs include expenses of the investigation, and the animal's care, euthanization, or adoption.

(7) If convicted, the defendant shall also pay a civil penalty of one thousand dollars to the county to prevent cruelty to animals. These funds shall be used to prosecute offenses under this chapter and to care for forfeited animals pending trial.

(8) If a person violates the prohibition on owning, caring for, possessing, or residing with animals under subsection (4) of this section, that person:

(a) Shall pay a civil penalty of one thousand dollars for the first violation;

(b) Shall pay a civil penalty of two thousand five hundred dollars for the second violation; and

(c) Is guilty of a gross misdemeanor for the third and each subsequent violation.

(9) As a condition of the sentence imposed under this chapter or RCW 9.08.070 through 9.08.078, the court may also order the defendant to participate in an available animal cruelty prevention or education program or obtain available psychological counseling to treat mental health problems contributing to the violation's commission. The defendant shall bear the costs of the program or treatment.

(10) Nothing in this section limits the authority of a law enforcement officer, animal control officer, custodial agency, or court to remove, adopt, euthanize, or require forfeiture of an animal under RCW 16.52.085. [2020 c 158 s 5; 2016 c 181 s 2; 2011 c 172 s 4; 2009 c 287 s 3; 2003 c 53 s 113; 1994 c 261 s 14; 1987 c 335 s 2.]

Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53: See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

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

Construction—Severability—1987 c 335: See notes following RCW 16.52.085.