

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS ARE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS



CAPS TIPS

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Your Partners for Safe Neighborhoods

ANIMAL CRUELTY

Most experts agree that cruelty to animals is a prime indicator of behavior that will most likely lead to acts of violence against people. Animal cruelty can take many forms and can be an indicator of other criminal activity in your neighborhood. These tips are designed to help you and your neighbors to understand the effect animal cruelty can have on your community, recognize signs of animal cruelty and identify the resources available to stop these inhumane practices.

Dog and Other Animal Fighting: Dog fighting and other animal fighting -- like cock fighting -- have become problems in many Chicago neighborhoods. Not only is animal fighting one of the cruelest forms of animal abuse, it is almost always connected with other criminal activities, like gambling, gang activity, drug trafficking, child abuse and domestic violence. The injuries sustained by animals during fights are most often fatal. Animals that do survive the actual fight often die later of blood loss, shock, dehydration or infection. Owners often train dogs to fight by using smaller animals as bait -- cats, rabbits and other pets. These animals are often stolen pets or animals advertised as "free to good homes." Police have also found that often children are allowed or forced to attend organized animal fights. This can promote violence in our children.

Recognizing Signs of Animal Fighting: Some signs that might indicate there is dog fighting occurring in your neighborhood include: people walking their dogs with large heavy chains, such as bike chains, and spike collars; dogs with fresh wounds or numerous scars; people transporting dogs in the trunks of their cars; dogs that are overly aggressive towards people or other animals, particularly dogs that are fierce without any provocation; and people leaving dogs in empty apartments or abandoned buildings.

Tools to Combat Animal Fighting: The City has established a variety of avenues for combating animal cruelty and animal fighting. The Commission on Animal Care and Control works closely with the Chicago Police Department to help investigate allegations of animal cruelty and animal fighting. Animal Control inspectors, officers and veterinarians, as well as equipment and vehicles are available to assist in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of offenders. The David R. Lee Animal Care Center also provides shelter for animals confiscated during investigations. In addition, the Chicago Police Department has created a special detail dedicated to addressing animal fighting and related criminal activity.

Get Involved with Your District Court Advocacy Subcommittee: Animal fighting in Illinois is a felony, punishable by up to three years in jail. Simply attending an animal fight is a misdemeanor. To help curb these crimes, you and your neighbors should attend the court hearings for people arrested both for animal fighting and attendance at animal fights. Your participation in these court hearings will help let everyone involved in the judicial system know that these crimes must be taken seriously.

Make the Right Call: If you have information about animal fighting in progress, call 911. If you have other information about animal cruelty or animal fighting that may be occurring in your neighborhood, call 311, Chicago's Other Helpline.

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