

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (SA) INC. REPORTING ANIMAL CRUELTY

These notes are offered as guidance to members of the public wishing to report cases of cruelty to animals.

The telephone number of RSPCA State Headquarters during normal office hours is (08) 8231 6931. For emergency after hours reports telephone (08) 8231 2120. Answer page will take your message and page the RSPCA Duty Inspector.

The Society's other telephone numbers are listed in the telephone book under "Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SA) Inc." and under "RSPCA (SA) Incorporated". Please remember that an immediate response to incidents in remote country areas is difficult to achieve and that the Police have an equal responsibility to police the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and may be nearer. The Society has Honorary Inspectors in various country areas and contact details may be obtained from RSPCA Headquarters.

Members of the public sometimes witness acts of cruelty to animals and, appalled by what they see, telephone the RSPCA to report them. Often however, the information they are able to give is not enough to enable the Inspector assigned to the case to investigate it thoroughly, and even if legal action is warranted, lack of information impedes successful prosecution. So, what should you do if you see or learn of cases of cruelty? Well, quite obviously each case is different, and specific action does not necessarily apply in every case; but, in general terms, here is what you should do.

Firstly, if the cruelty is something which can be stopped immediately, then stop it. If, for example, a horse or a dog is being unmercifully beaten, intervene if you can safely do so. Of course, the sort of person who would mistreat an animal this way would be quite likely to vent his anger on anyone who interferes, and members of the public should use discretion.

Few occasions arise when a camera is readily available, but if there should be one, photographs are useful evidence. You will then want to telephone the RSPCA but before doing so, be ready to give as much of the following information as possible:-

Your own name, address and telephone number. The Society does not take anonymous reports and such details are required for record purposes and to enable re-checking of information.

It is stressed that the policy of the RSPCA is to treat all complaints in strict confidence. Names of reporters are divulged to nobody unless the reporter has no objection.

The name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) involved.

The date, time and place of the offence.

The names and addresses of any witnesses.

The registration number and description of any vehicle involved.

State whether you would be prepared to testify in a court of law.

Then give a detailed description of what you saw, as factually and unemotionally as you are able. This is important, for emotion clouds coherence, and important details may be omitted.

Finally, don't be afraid to get involved in any legal proceedings which may ensue. After all, if you feel strongly enough to report the matter in the first place, you should be prepared to assist us do whatever has to be done to set the matter right and bring offenders to justice.