

ANIMAL NEGLECT

The most common type of animal cruelty is neglect or abandonment - that is, people not providing adequate care for animals in their charge. These types of cases often involve situations where an animal is left without food, water or shelter, or when proper veterinary care was not obtained. In many of these cases, the underlying reason can sometimes be explained by the caretaker's ignorance. This is why many animal control officers and humane law enforcement officers will first attempt to educate the neglectful caretaker, rather than immediately citing them or arresting them.

While ignorance can be blamed in some of these situations, an additional cause that seems to be a major contributor to neglect and abandonment cases is that the pet owner simply does not care. Even people with only the most basic knowledge of animal care can see that an animal has degenerated to the point where it is only skin and bones.

Many times, animals are purchased as pets, and simply forgotten about. Animals in this situation however do not merely gather dust. They are slowly starved or dehydrated to death, literally bled dry due to parasite infestations, or slowly garroted by their own collars.

Body Condition

Purina developed The Body Condition System to help pet owners (and investigators) judge if their pet's appearance is normal or not. The images on the right are numbered to correspond with the descriptions below.

1. EMACIATED: Ribs, backbones, pelvic bones, etc. all prominent from a distance. No visible body fat, obvious loss of muscle mass.
2. VERY THIN: Ribs, backbones, pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
3. THIN: Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Top of backbone visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.
4. UNDERWEIGHT: Ribs easily palpable with no visible fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
5. IDEAL: Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.
6. OVERWEIGHT: Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernable viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
7. HEAVY: Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be absent.
8. OBESE: Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over backbone and base of tail. No waist or abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distension may be present.
9. GROSSLY OBESE: Massive fat deposits on chest, spine, and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and legs. Obvious abdominal distension.



The scale and diagram are available as a printable handout in PDF format for training purposes - [click here to download.](#)

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