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Animal Cruelty Statutes A State-By-State Analysis

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The following chart presents a state-by-state survey of classifications and penalties for acts of animal cruelty. Because each state differs in its definition of “cruelty,” it is not meant to characterize specific acts as belonging to a certain category and thus meriting a specific punishment in the listed state. Instead, it is a reflection of how the individual states criminalize and punish different levels of animal-abusive criminal behavior. It is important to note that penalties for “fighting” animals or for injuring service animals are typically higher. While these enhanced penalties have not been included in the chart, they may be individually determined by examining each state’s statutes on animal cruelty. [Click here](#) to access the linkable map to the states’ statutes.

The “cruelty ‘plus’” category is named aggravated cruelty in some states, and in others is called animal cruelty in the first degree. Still others do not name it at all but merely define it as consisting of certain acts or a specific mental state. Regardless of the name, the common theme of the statutes is that some acts are more harmful or painful to the animal, and thus the penalty should be higher. It is worth noting, however, that a sizeable minority of states limits this charge to offenses against companion animals, pets, or other specifically delineated categories of animals.

There are several other almost universal traits of animal cruelty statutes that are not included in the chart but, again, are included in the individual language of the [states’ statutes](#). These include the judge’s ability to order psychiatric counseling for the offender, statutory authority to seize the abused animal, and guidelines for the severance of ownership rights from an abusive owner. A final commonality is the judges’ right to prohibit animal ownership for a number of years after the conviction. While not part of a traditional criminal sentence, these components serve to enhance the offender’s penalty for cruelty offenses.



State	"Simple" Cruelty		Cruelty "Plus"		Other
	Classification	Punishment	Classification	Punishment	
Alabama	Class B Misd	< 6 mths and/or < \$3,000	Class C Felony Class A Misdemeanor	1 yr & 1 day -10 yr and/or <\$15,000 < 1 yr and/or < \$6,000	
Alaska	Class A Misd	< 1 yr and/or \$10,000	N/A		
Arizona	Class 1 Misd.	< 6 mths and/or < \$2,500	Class 6 Felony	6 mth - 18mth and/or < \$150,000	
Arkansas	Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$1,000	N/A		
California	(Not labeled)	< 1 yr and/or < \$20,000	* N/A		
Colorado	<i>Initial</i> : Class 1 Misd <i>Subsequent</i> : Class 6 felony	6 mth -18 mth and/or \$500 - \$5,000 1 yr- 18 mth and/or \$1,000 - \$100,000	<i>Initial</i> : Class 6 Felony <i>Subsequent</i> : Class 5 Felony	1 yr- 18 mth and/or \$1,000 - \$100,000 1 yr- 3 yr and/or \$1,000 - \$100,000	
Connecticut	(Not labeled)	< 1 yr and/or < \$1,000	* (Not labeled)	< 5 years and/or < \$5,000	*
DC	(Not labeled)	< 180 days and/or < \$250	* Felony	< 5 years and/or < \$25,000	*
Delaware	Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$2,300	Class F felony	< 3 yrs and/or fines as deemed appropriate	
Florida	1st Degree Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$5,000	+ <i>Initial</i> : 3rd Degree Felony <i>Subsequent</i> : 3rd Degree Felony	< 5 yrs and/or \$10,000 6 mths - 5 yrs and \$5,000- \$10,000	+ +
Georgia	<i>Initial</i> : Misd. <i>Subsequent (injury)</i> : Misd. <i>Subsequent (death)</i> : Misd. of high and agg. nature	< 12 mths and/or \$1,000 < 1 yr and/or \$5,000 3 mth- 12 mth and/or \$10,000	* <i>Initial</i> : (Not labeled) <i>Subsequent</i> : (Not labeled)	1 yr - 5 yrs, and/or < \$ 15,000 1 yr - 5 yrs and/or < \$100,000	* +
Hawaii	Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$2,000	* Class C Felony	< 5 yrs and/or < \$10,000	
Idaho	<i>Initial</i> : Misd. #2: Misd. #3: Misd.	<6 mths and/or \$100-\$5,000 < 9 mths and \$200-\$7,000 <12 mths and \$500 - \$9,000	N/A		
Illinois	<i>Initial</i> : Class A Misd. <i>Subsequent</i> : Class 4 Felony	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,500 < 1 yr and/or < \$25,000	<i>Initial</i> : Class 4 Felony <i>Subsequent</i> : Class 3 Felony	< 1 yr and/or < \$25,000 < 1 yr and/or < \$25,000	"Torture": Class 3 felony - < 1 yr and/or < \$25,000
Indiana	<i>Initial</i> : Class A Misd. <i>Subsequent</i> : Class D Felony	< 1 yr and/or < \$5,000 6 mth - 3 yrs and/or < \$10,000	Class D Felony	6 mth - 3 yrs and/or < \$10,000	Neglect: Class B Misd. - < 180 days and/or < \$1,000
Iowa	Aggravated Misd.	< 2 yrs and/or \$625 - \$6,250	<i>Initial</i> : Aggravated Misd. <i>Subsequent</i> : Class D Felony	< 2 yrs and/or \$625 - \$6,250 < 5 yrs and/or \$750 - \$7,500	<i>Neglect</i> : Simple Misd. - < 30 days and/or \$65-\$625
Kansas	<i>Initial</i> : Class A Non-person Misd. <i>Subsequent</i> : Non-person Felony	< 1 year and/or \$2,500 5 days - 1 yr	Nonperson Felony	30 days - 1 yr and \$500 - \$5,000	* Lower class is basically neglect. Cruelty plus is traditional "cruelty" components
Kentucky	Class A Misd.	< 12 mths and/or \$500	<i>Initial</i> : Class A Misd. <i>Subsequent</i> : Class D felony	< 12 mths and/or \$500 1 yr - 5 yrs and \$1,000- \$10,000	
Louisiana	(Not labeled)	< 6 mths and/or \$1,000; req. 40 hrs. of com. srvc.	* (Not labeled)	1 - 10 years, and/or \$5,000 - \$25,000	*
Maine	<i>Initial</i> : Class D Crime <i>Subsequent</i> : Class C Crime	< 1 yr and/or \$2,000 < 5 yrs and/or \$5,000	Class C	< 5 yrs and/or \$1,000- \$10,000	Civil violation (Initial): Between \$500 and \$2,500; (Subsequent): Between \$1,000 and \$5,000

* * * = Penalty set forth in cruelty statute

" + " = Penalty set forth in combination of cruelty and separate statute



State	"Simple" Cruelty		Cruelty "Plus"		Other
	Classification	Punishment	Classification	Punishment	
Maryland	Misd.	< 90 days and/or < \$1,000	* Felony	< 3 years and/or < \$5,000	*
Massachusetts	(Not labeled)	In state prison < 5 yrs or in house of correction < 2.5 yrs; and/or < \$2,500	* N/A		
Michigan	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	Differs according to number of animals affected	* Felony	< 4 years and/or < \$5,000.00 and/or < 500 hrs com. srvc.	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Felony	Differs according to number of animals affected	*		
Minnesota	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$3,000	* (Not labeled)	< 2 years and/or < \$5,000	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Gross Misd.	< 2 yrs and/or < \$5,000	*		
Mississippi	Misd.	< 6 mths and/or \$1,000	Felony (livestock only)	1 yr - 5 yrs, and/or \$1,500 - \$10,000	*
Missouri	<i>Initial:</i> Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$1,000	N/A		<i>Neglect (Initial):</i> Class C Misd. - < 15 days and/or < \$500
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Class D felony	< 4 yrs and/or < \$5,000			<i>Neglect (Subsequent):</i> Class B Misd. - < 6 mths and/or \$1,000
Montana	(Not labeled)	< 1 yr and/or \$1,000	* (Not labeled)	< 2 years, and/or \$2,500	*
	(Not labeled)	< 2 yrs and/or \$2,500	*		
Nebraska	<i>Initial:</i> Class I Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$1,000	Class IV felony	< 5 yrs and/or \$10,000	
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Class IV felony	< 5 yrs and/or \$10,000			
Nevada	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	2 days - 6 mths; and \$200 - \$1,000 ; and 48 - 120 hours com. srvc.	* N/A		
	<i>Second:</i> Misd.	10 days - 6 mths; and \$500 - \$1,000; and 100 - 200 hrs com. srvc.	*		
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Category C Felony	1 yr- 5 yrs and/or < \$10,000			
New Hampshire	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,000	Class B felony	< 7 yrs and/or < \$4,000	
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Class B felony	< 7 yrs and/or < \$4,000			
New Jersey	<i>Initial:</i> Crime of the 4th degree	< 18 mths and/or < \$10,000; AND <30 days com srvc.	+ Crime of the 3rd Degree	3 yrs - 5 yrs and/or < \$15,000; req. <30 days com srvc.	+ Neglect: Disorderly persons offense- < 6 mths and/or \$250
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Crime of the 3rd degree	3 yrs - 5 yrs and/or < \$15,000; AND <30 days com srvc.	+		
New Mexico	#1-#3: Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$1,000	4th Degree Felony	< 18 mths and/or < \$5,000	
	4+: 4th Degree Felony	< 18 mths and/or < \$5,000			
New York	Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$1,000	Class B Felony	1 yr - 2 yrs and/or < \$5,000	+
North Carolina	Class 1 Misd.	Sentencing Guidelines	Class I felony	Sentencing Guidelines	Maliciously starve: Class A1 Misd. - Sentencing Guidelines
North Dakota	Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,000	N/A		
Ohio	2nd Degree Misd.	< 90 days and/or < \$750	<i>Initial:</i> 1st Degree Misd.	< 180 days and/or < \$1,000	
			<i>Subsequent:</i> 5th Degree Felony	6 mths - 12 mths and < \$2,500	
Oklahoma	Felony	In state pen. < 5 yrs or in county jail < 1 yr; or < \$5000	* N/A		
Oregon	Injury: Class B Misd.	< 6 mths and/or < \$2,500	Class C felony	< 5 yrs and/or < \$125,000	
	Death: Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$6,250			

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State	"Simple" Cruelty		Cruelty "Plus"		Other
	Classification	Punishment	Classification	Punishment	
Pennsylvania	<i>Initial:</i> Summary Offense	< 90 days and/or \$50-\$750	* <i>Initial:</i> 1st Degree Misd.	< 2 yrs and/or > \$1,000	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> 3rd Degree Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,500	<i>Subsequent:</i> 3rd Degree Felony	< 7 yrs and/or < \$15,000	
Rhode Island	(Not labeled)	< 11 mths and/or \$50 - \$500	* (Not labeled)	< 2 yrs and/or < \$1,000; req. 10 hrs com srvc.	*
South Carolina	<i>1st:</i> Misd.	< 60 days and/or \$100- \$500	* Felony	180 days - 5 yrs and \$5,000	*
	<i>2nd:</i> Misd.	< 90 days and/or < \$800	*		
	<i>3 +:</i> Misd.	< 2 yrs and/or < \$2,000	*		
South Dakota	Class 1 Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,000	N/A		
Tennessee	<i>Initial:</i> Class A Misd.	< 11 mths, 25 days and/or < \$2,500	Class E felony	1 yr - 6 yr and/or < \$3,000	
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Class E Felony	1 yr - 6 yr and/or < \$3,000			
Texas	<i>#1 & #2:</i> Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or \$4,000	<i>#1 & #2:</i> State Jail Felony	180 days - 2 yrs and/or < \$10,000	
	<i>3+:</i> State Jail Felony	180 days - 2 yrs and/or < \$10,000	<i>3+:</i> 3rd Degree Felony	2 yr- 10 yr and/or \$10,000	
Utah	<i>Reckless/Neg.:</i> Class C Misd.	< 90 days and/or < \$750	<i>Neg.:</i> Class C Misd.	< 90 days and/or < \$750	
	<i>Int./Knowing:</i> Class B Misd.	< 6 mths and/or < \$1,000	<i>Reckless:</i> Class B Misd.	< 6 mths and/or < \$1,000	
			<i>Int./Knowing:</i> Class A Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,500	
Vermont	<i>Initial:</i> (Not labeled)	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,000	* <i>Initial:</i> (Not labeled)	< 3 yrs and/or \$5,000	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> (Not labeled)	< 2 yrs and/or < \$5,000	* <i>Subsequent:</i> (Not labeled)	< 5 yrs and/or \$7,500	*
Virginia	<i>Initial:</i> Class 1 Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$2,500	Class 6 felony	In prison 1 yr- 5 yrs or jail < 1 yr and/or < \$2,500	
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Class 6 felony	In prison 1 yr- 5 yrs or jail < 1 yr and/or < \$2,500			
Washington	Gross Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$5,000	Class C felony	< 5 yrs and/or < \$10,000	Abandon/Neglect: Misd.- < 90 days and/or \$1,000
West Virginia	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	< 6 mths. and/or \$300 - \$2,000	* Felony	1 yr - 5 yrs and/or \$1,000 - \$5,000	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> Misd.	90 days - 1 yr and/or \$500 - 3,000	*		
Wisconsin	Class A Misd.	< 9 mths and/or < \$10,000	Class I felony	< 3 yrs, 6 mths and/or < \$10,000	
Wyoming	<i>Initial:</i> Misd.	< 6 mths and/or < \$750	* Felony	< 2 yrs and/or < \$5,000	*
	<i>Subsequent:</i> High Misd.	< 1 yr and/or < \$5,000	*		

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" + " = Penalty set forth in combination of cruelty and separate statute