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States' Animal Cruelty Statutes

State of South Carolina

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States' Animal Cruelty Statutes

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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§ 47-1-10. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Animal" means a living vertebrate creature except a homo sapien.
- (2) "Sustenance" means adequate food provided at suitable intervals of quantities of wholesome foodstuff suitable for the species and age, sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of nutrition to allow for proper growth and weight and adequate water provided with constant access to a supply of clean, fresh, and potable water provided in a suitable manner for the species.
- (3) "Shelter" means shelter that reasonably may be expected to protect the animal from physical suffering or impairment of health due to exposure to the elements or adverse weather.

§ 47-1-20. Acts of agents imputed to corporations.

The knowledge and acts of agents and persons employed by corporations in regard to animals transported, owned or employed by or in the custody of such corporations shall be held to be the acts and knowledge of such corporations.

§ 47-1-40. III-treatment of animals generally.

(A) Whoever knowingly or intentionally overloads, overdrives, overworks, ill-treats any animal, deprives any animal of necessary sustenance or shelter, inflicts unnecessary pain or suffering upon any animal, or by omission or commission knowingly or intentionally causes these things to be done, for every offense is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be punished by imprisonment not exceeding sixty days or by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or both, for a first offense; by imprisonment not exceeding ninety days or by a fine not exceeding eight hundred dollars, or both, for a second offense; or by imprisonment not exceeding two years or by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, or both, for a third or subsequent offense. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a first offense under this subsection shall be tried in magistrate's or municipal court.

(B) Whoever tortures, torments, needlessly mutilates, cruelly kills, or inflicts excessive or repeated unnecessary pain or suffering upon any animal or by omission or commission causes the acts to be done for any of the offenses is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be punished by imprisonment of not less than one hundred eighty days and not to exceed five years and by a fine of five thousand dollars.

(C) This section does not apply to fowl, accepted animal husbandry practices of farm operations and the training of animals, the practice of veterinary medicine, agricultural practices, forestry and silvacultural practices, wildlife management practices, or activity authorized by Title 50.

§ 47-1-50. Cruel work; carriage in vehicles; penalties.

(A) An owner, a possessor, or a person having the charge or custody of an animal may not:

- (1) cruelly drive or work it when unfit for labor;
- (2) carry it, or cause it to be carried, in or upon a vehicle or otherwise in an unnecessarily cruel or inhumane manner.

(B) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be punished for each offense in the manner prescribed in Section 47-1-40(A).

§ 47-1-60. Cutting muscles of tails of horses, asses, mules, mares, or geldings prohibited.

Any person who (a) cuts the tissue or muscle of the tail of any horse, ass, mule, mare or gelding, or otherwise operates upon it in any manner for the purpose or with the effect of altering the natural carriage of the tail, except when such cutting or operation is necessary for the health or life of the animal, as certified to in writing by a licensed veterinarian, (b) causes, procures or knowingly permits such cutting or operation to be done or (c) assists in or is voluntarily present at such cutting or operation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Any person convicted of violating any of the provisions of this section shall be fined not less than fifty nor more than one hundred dollars or imprisoned not less than fifteen nor more than thirty days.

§ 47-1-70. Abandonment of animals; penalties; hunting dog exception.

(A) A person may not abandon an animal. As used in this section "abandonment" is defined as deserting, forsaking, or intending to give up absolutely an animal without securing another owner or without providing the necessities of life. "Necessities of life" includes:

- (1) adequate water which means a constant access to a supply of clean, fresh, and potable water provided in a suitable manner for the species;
- (2) adequate food which means provision at suitable intervals of quantities of wholesome foodstuff suitable for the species and age, sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of nutrition to allow for proper growth and weight;
- (3) adequate shelter which means shelter that reasonably may be expected to protect the animal from physical suffering or impairment of health due to exposure to the elements or adverse weather.

(B) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not less than two hundred nor more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both. Offenses under this section must be tried in the magistrate's or municipal court.

(C) A hunting dog that is positively identifiable in accordance with Section 47-3-510 or Section 47-3-530 is exempt from this section.

§ 47-1-75. Immunity from civil and criminal liability.

Any person, including a person licensed to practice veterinary medicine, or an animal control officer or agent of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or any society incorporated for that purpose, who in good faith and without compensation for services

provided, acting without malice, recklessness, or gross negligence, renders emergency care or treatment to a domestic animal which is abandoned, ill, injured, or in distress related to an accident or disaster shall not be liable or subject to any civil or criminal liability for any injuries or harm to such animal resulting from the rendering of such care or treatment, or any act or failure to act to provide or arrange for further medical treatment or care for such animal.

§ 47-1-80. Destruction of abandoned infirm animal.

Any agent or officer of the Department of Health and Environmental Control or police officer or officer of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or of any society duly incorporated for that purpose may lawfully destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any animal found abandoned and not properly cared for, appearing to be glandered, injured or diseased past recovery for any useful purpose.

§ 47-1-90. Overloading and length of confinement of animals in railroad cars.

No railroad company in the carrying or transportation of animals shall overload the cars nor permit the animals to be confined in cars for a longer period than thirty-six consecutive hours without unloading them for rest, water and feeding for a period of at least five consecutive hours, unless prevented from so unloading by storm or other accidental causes beyond the control of such railroad company; *provided, however,* that when animals shall be carried in cars in which they can and do have proper food, water and space and opportunity for rest, the foregoing provisions in regard to their being unloaded shall not apply.

In estimating such confinement the time during which the animals have been confined without such section to prohibit their continuous confinement beyond the period of thirty-six hours, except upon the contingencies hereinbefore stated.

§ 47-1-100. Care of animals unloaded during transit.

Animals unloaded as required by § 47-1-90 shall be properly fed, watered and sheltered during such rest by the owner or person having the custody thereof or, in case of his default in so doing, then by the railroad company transporting such animals at the expense of the owner or person in custody thereof; and the company shall, in such case, have a lien upon such animals for food, care and custody furnished and shall not be liable for any detention of such animals.

§ 47-1-110. Violations of §§ 47-1-90 and 47-1-100.

Any company or the owner or custodian of such animals who shall fail to comply with the provisions of §§ 47-1-90 and 47-1-100 shall, for each and every such offense, if found guilty, be fined not less than fifty nor more than five hundred dollars, in any court of competent jurisdiction.

§ 47-1-120. Custody of animals in charge of arrested persons.

When a person arrested is, at the time of the arrest, in charge of an animal, an agent of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or of any society incorporated for that purpose, may take charge of the animal and deposit the animal in a safe place of custody or deliver the animal into the possession of the police or sheriff of the county or place where the arrest was made, who shall assume the custody of the animal; and all necessary expenses incurred in taking charge of the animal shall be a lien thereon.

§ 47-1-125. Coloring or dying animals prohibited; sale or distribution of certain young animals prohibited; penalty.

(1) It is unlawful for any person to dye or color artificially any animal or fowl, including but not limited to rabbits, baby chickens, and ducklings, or to bring any dyed or colored animal or fowl into this State.

(2) It is unlawful for any person to sell, offer for sale or give away as merchandising premiums, baby chickens, ducklings or other fowl under four weeks of age or rabbits under two months of age to be used as pets, toys or retail premiums.

(3) This section shall not be construed to apply to any animal or fowl, including but not limited to rabbits, baby chickens and ducklings to be used or raised for agricultural purposes by persons with proper facilities to care for them or for poultry or livestock exhibitions.

(4) Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than thirty days.

§ 47-1-130. Arrest for violation of laws prohibiting cruelty to animals.

Any person violating the laws in relation to cruelty to animals may be arrested and held, without warrant, in the same manner as in the case of persons found breaking the peace.

§ 47-1-140. Care of animals after arrest of person in charge.

The person making the arrest, with or without warrant, shall use reasonable diligence to give notice to the owner of the animals found in the charge or custody of the person arrested, if the person is not the owner, and shall care and provide properly for the animals. The person making such arrest shall have a lien on the animals for the expense of such care and provision. But if such person making the arrest be an agent of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or other society incorporated for that purpose, the provisions of Section 47-1-120 shall apply in lieu of the provisions of this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an animal may be seized preceding an arrest and pursuant to Section 47-1-150.

§ 47-1-150. Issuance of search warrant; purpose of section; motions regarding custody of animal; notice; care, disposal of, or return of animal.

(A) When complaint is made on oath or affirmation to any magistrate authorized to issue warrants in criminal cases that the complainant believes and has reasonable cause to believe that the laws in relation to cruelty to animals have been or are being violated in any particular building or place, such magistrate, if satisfied that there is reasonable cause for such belief, shall issue a search warrant authorizing any sheriff, deputy sheriff, deputy state constable, constable or police officer to search such building or place; but no search shall be made after sunset, unless specially authorized by the magistrate upon satisfactory cause shown. If an animal is seized pursuant to this section and the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals, or other society incorporated for that purpose is involved with the seizure, the animal may be held pending criminal disposition of the case at a facility maintained or contracted by that agency.

(B) The purpose of this section is to provide a means by which a neglected or mistreated animal can be:

(1) removed from its present custody, or

(2) made the subject of an order to provide care, issued to its owner by the magistrate or municipal judge, any law enforcement officer, or any agent of the county or of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or any society incorporated for that purpose and given protection and an appropriate and humane disposition made.

(C) Any law enforcement officer or any agent of any county or of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or any society incorporated for that purpose may move before a magistrate for an order to:

(1) lawfully take custody of any animal found neglected or cruelly treated by removing the animal from its present location if deemed by the court that removal is necessary to prevent further suffering or ill-treatment, or

(2) order the owner of any animal found neglected or cruelly treated to provide certain care to the animal at the owner's expense without removal of the animal from its present location, and shall forthwith petition the magistrate or municipal judge of the county or municipality wherein the animal is found for a hearing, to be set within twenty-four hours after the date of seizure of the animal or issuance of the order to provide care and held not more than two days after the setting of such date, to determine whether the owner, if known, is able to provide adequately for the animal and is fit to have custody of the animal. The hearing shall be concluded, and the court order entered the date the hearing is commenced. No fee shall be charged for the filing of the petition. Nothing herein is intended to require court action for the taking into custody and making proper disposition of stray or abandoned animals as lawfully performed by animal control agents.

(D) The officer or agent of any county or of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or of any society incorporated for that purpose, taking charge of any animal pursuant to the provisions of this section shall have written notice served prior to the hearing set forth in subsection (C)(2), upon the owner of the animal, if he is known and is residing in the county where the animal was taken. The sheriff of the county shall not charge a fee for service of such notice. If the owner of the animal is known but is residing outside of the county wherein the animal was taken, notice of the hearing shall be by publication.

(E) If any seized animal held by court order at the owner's premises is removed without notification to the investigating agency, or if an animal becomes sick or dies, and the owner or custodian fails to immediately notify the investigating agency, the owner must be held in contempt of court and fined up to the penalties provided by law.

(F) The officer or agent of any county or of the South Carolina Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or of any society incorporated for that purpose, taking charge of an animal as provided for in this section shall provide for the animal until either:

(1) The owner is adjudged by the court to be able to provide adequately for, and have custody of, the animal, in which case the animal shall be returned to the owner upon payment for the care and provision of the animal while in the agent's or officer's custody; or

(2) The animal is turned over to the officer or agent as provided in Section 47-1-170 and a humane disposition of the animal is made.

(G) If the court determines that the owner is able to provide adequately for, and have custody of the animal, the order shall provide that the animal in possession of the officer or agent be claimed and removed by the owner within seven days after the date of the order.

§ 47-1-160. Disposition of fines.

All fines collected for violations of this chapter must be distributed as follows:

(1) If the trial court finds that there was a nonprofit animal humane organization in the municipality or county materially involved in or aiding in the prosecution of the violation, one-half of the fine must be distributed to the nonprofit animal humane organization and the remaining one-half must be distributed as is otherwise provided by law.

(2) If there is no finding of material involvement or aiding in the prosecution of the violation by a nonprofit animal humane organization, the fine must be distributed as is provided by law.

§ 47-1-170. Penalties for violations of chapter.

The owner or person having charge or custody of an animal cruelly used who is convicted of any violation of this chapter forfeits ownership, charge, or custody of the animal and at the discretion of the court, the person who is charged with or convicted of a violation of this chapter must be ordered to pay costs incurred to care for the animal and related expenses.

§ 47-1-200. Requirements for transfer of animals and importation or exportation of dog or cat; penalties for violations.

(A) During transportation, an animal must not be confined in one area for more than twenty-four consecutive hours without being adequately exercised, rested, fed, and watered. The time may be extended reasonably when an act of God causes a delay. The animal must be provided adequate space and ventilation.

(B) A dog or cat under eight weeks of age must not be imported or exported without being accompanied by its dam.

(C) A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not less than two hundred nor more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than thirty days, or both.

§ 47-1-210. Live animals as prizes; exceptions; penalties.

(A) It is unlawful to give away a live animal including, but not limited to, a fish, bird, fowl, or reptile, as a prize for, or as an inducement to enter, any contest, game, or other competition, or as an inducement to enter a place of amusement, or for these species to be used as an incentive to enter into any business agreement if the offer made was for the purpose of attracting trade.

(B) Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit an auction or raffle of a live animal including, but not limited to, a fish, bird, fowl, or reptile. Further, the giving away or the testing of game or fowl for breeding purposes only is lawful and is not prohibited by this section as an incentive to enter into a business agreement if the person giving away or testing game or fowl is engaged in that trade.

(C) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be punished for each separate offense by a fine not to exceed three hundred dollars or imprisonment not to exceed thirty days, or both.

(D) This section does not apply when a live animal is given away as follows:

- (1) by individuals or organizations operating in conjunction with a cooperative extension education program or agricultural vocational program sanctioned by the State Department of Education or local school districts;
- (2) by individuals or organizations operating in conjunction with field trials approved by the Department of Natural Resources; or
- (3) by kennels that advertise in national publications in regard to dogs that are registered with the United Kennel Club or the American Kennel Club.

16-27-10. Short title.

This chapter is known and may be cited as "The Animal Fighting and Baiting Act".

§ 16-27-20. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

- (a) "Animal" means any live vertebrate creature, domestic or wild.
- (b) "Fighting" means an attack with violence by an animal against another animal or a human.
- (c) "Baiting" means to provoke or to harass an animal with one or more animals with the purpose of training an animal for, or to cause an animal to engage in, fights with or among other animals or between animals and humans.
- (d) "Person" means every natural person or individual and any firm, partnership, association, or corporation.

§ 16-27-30. Acts or omissions constituting felonies; penalties.

Any person who:

- (a) owns an animal for the purpose of fighting or baiting;
- (b) is a party to or causes any fighting or baiting of any animal;
- (c) purchases, rents, leases, or otherwise acquires or obtains the use of any structure, facility, or location for the purpose of fighting or baiting any animal; or
- (d) knowingly allows or permits or makes available any structure, facility, or location to be used for the purpose of fighting or baiting any animal is guilty of a felony and upon conviction must be punished by a fine of five thousand dollars or imprisoned for five years, or both.

§ 16-27-40. Acts constituting misdemeanors upon conviction of first or second offense and constituting felonies upon conviction of third or subsequent offense; penalties.

Any person who:

- (a) is present at any structure, facility, or location where preparations are being made for the purpose of fighting or baiting any animal with knowledge that those preparations are being made, or
- (b) is present at any structure, facility, or location with knowledge that fighting or baiting of any animal is taking place or is about to take place there is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction for a first offense must be punished by a fine of five hundred dollars or imprisonment for six months, or both, and for a second offense by a fine of one thousand dollars or imprisonment for one year, or both. Any person convicted of a third or subsequent offense is guilty of a felony and must be punished by a fine of five thousand dollars or imprisonment for five years, or both.

§ 16-27-50. Applicability of cruelty provisions; presumption of cruelty.

(A) The provisions of Section 47-1-150 apply to this chapter.

(B) For purposes of a hearing to determine whether the owner is able to provide adequately for the animal and is fit to have custody of the animal, any animal found to be owned, trained, possessed, purchased, sold, transported, or bred in violation of this chapter must be considered cruelly treated and the owner must be deemed unfit.

§ 16-27-55. Forfeiture of property of one found in violation of act.

(A) A person who violates a provision of this chapter is subject to forfeiture of:

- (1) property, both real and personal, which is knowingly used to engage in a violation or to further a violation of this chapter; and
- (2) monies, negotiable instruments, securities, or other things of value furnished or intended to be furnished by a person to engage in or further a violation of this chapter.

(B) Property subject to forfeiture pursuant to the provisions of this chapter may be seized by the appropriate law enforcement agency with a warrant properly issued by a court with jurisdiction over the property. Property may be seized without a warrant if the:

- (1) seizure is incident to an arrest or a search with a search warrant or an inspection under an administrative inspection warrant;
- (2) property subject to seizure was the subject of a prior judgment in favor of the State in a criminal injunction or forfeiture proceeding pursuant to the provisions of this chapter;
- (3) law enforcement agency has probable cause to believe that the property is directly or indirectly dangerous to health or safety; or
- (4) law enforcement agency has probable cause to believe that the property was used or is intended to be used in violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(C) Forfeiture proceedings instituted pursuant to the provisions of this section are subject to the procedures and requirements for forfeiture as set out in Section 44-53-530.

(D) Property taken or detained pursuant to the provisions of this section is not subject to replevin but is considered to be in the custody of the law enforcement agency making the seizure subject only to an order of the court having jurisdiction over the forfeiture proceedings.

(E) For purposes of this section, when the seizure of property subject to forfeiture is accomplished as a result of a joint effort by more than one law enforcement agency, the law enforcement agency initiating the investigation is considered to be the agency making the seizure.

(F) A law enforcement agency seizing property pursuant to the provisions of this section shall take reasonable steps to maintain the property. Equipment and conveyances seized must be removed to an appropriate place for storage. Monies seized must be deposited in an interest bearing account pending final disposition by the court unless the seizing agency determines the monies to be of an evidential nature and provides for appropriate security in another manner.

(G) When property, monies, negotiable instruments, securities, or other things of value are seized pursuant to the provisions of subsection (A), the law enforcement agency making the seizure, within ten days or a reasonable period of time after the seizure, shall submit a report to the appropriate prosecuting agency.

- (1) The report must include the following information:

- (a) a description of the property seized;
- (b) the circumstances of the seizure;
- (c) the present custodian and where the property is being stored or its location;
- (d) the name of the owner of the property;
- (e) the name of any lienholders of the property; and
- (f) the seizing agency.

(2) If the property is a conveyance, the report must include the:

- (a) make, model, serial number, and year of the conveyance;
- (b) person in whose name the conveyance is registered; and
- (c) name of any lienholders.

(3) In addition to the report provided for in items (1) and (2) of this subsection, the appropriate law enforcement agency shall prepare for dissemination to the public, upon request, a report providing the following information:

- (a) a description of the quantity and nature of the property and money seized;
- (b) the seizing agency;
- (c) the make, model, and year of a conveyance; and
- (d) the law enforcement agency responsible for the property or conveyance seized.

(H) Property or conveyances seized by a law enforcement agency may not be used by officers or employees of the agency for personal purposes.

(I)(1) An innocent owner or a manager or owner of a licensed rental agency or a common carrier or carrier of goods for hire may apply to the court of common pleas for the return of an item seized pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. Notice of hearing or rule to show cause accompanied by copy of the application must be directed to all persons and agencies entitled to notice as provided in Section 44-53-530. If the court denies the application, the hearing may proceed as a forfeiture hearing held pursuant to the provisions of Section 44-53-530.

(2) The court may return a seized item to the owner if the owner demonstrates to the court by a preponderance of the evidence:

- (a) in the case of an innocent owner, that the person or entity was not a consenting party to, or privy to, or did not have knowledge of, the use of the property which made it subject to seizure and forfeiture; or
- (b) in the case of a manager or an owner of a licensed rental agency, a common carrier, or a carrier of goods for hire, that an agent, servant, or employee of the rental agency or of the common carrier or carrier of goods for hire was not a party to, or privy to, or did not have knowledge of, the use of the property which made it subject to seizure and forfeiture.

(3) If the licensed rental agency demonstrates to the court that it has rented the seized property in the ordinary course of its business and that the tenant or tenants were not related within the third degree of kinship to the manager or owner, or any agents, servants, or employees of the rental agency, then it is presumed that the licensed rental agency was not a party to, or privy to, or did not have knowledge of, the use of the property which made it subject to seizure and forfeiture.

(4) The lien of an innocent person or other legal entity, recorded in public records, continues in force upon transfer of title of a forfeited item, and a transfer of title is subject to the lien if the lienholder demonstrates to the court by a preponderance of the evidence that he was not a

consenting party to, or privy to, or did not have knowledge of, the involvement of the property which made it subject to seizure and forfeiture.

§ 16-27-60. Inapplicability of chapter to certain activities and to game fowl.

(a) The provisions of Section 16-27-30 do not apply to any person:

- (1) using any animal to pursue or take wildlife or to participate in hunting in accordance with the game and wildlife laws of this State and regulations of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources;
- (2) using any animal to work livestock for agricultural purposes;
- (3) properly training or using dogs for law enforcement purposes or protection of persons and private property.

(b) The provisions of this chapter do not apply to game fowl.

§ 16-27-70. Relationship to other laws.

The provisions of this chapter are cumulative and not in lieu of any other provision of law.

§ 16-27-80. Applicability of chapter to hunting dogs and certain events.

(A) This chapter does not apply to dogs used for the purpose of hunting, including, but not limited to, hunting on shooting preserves or wildlife management areas authorized pursuant to Title 50, or to dogs used in field trials, including events more commonly known as "water races", "treeing contests", "coon-on-a-log", "bear-baying", or "fox-pen-trials". Such "fox-pen-trials" must be approved by permit for field trials by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

(B) Except as otherwise provided in Section 16-27-60, this chapter applies to events more commonly known as "hog-dog fights", "hog-dog rodeos", or "hog-dogging" in which bets are placed, or cash, points, titles, trophies, or other awards are given based primarily on the ability of a dog to catch a hog using physical contact in the controlled environment of an enclosure.