

N.J.S.A. 4:22-17

4:22-17. Cruelty; level of criminal offense

Effective: August 1, 2018

a. It shall be unlawful to:

- (1) Overdrive, overload, drive when overloaded, overwork, abuse, or needlessly kill a living animal or creature;
- (2) Cause or procure, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature, any of the acts described in paragraph (1) of this subsection to be done;
- (3) Inflict unnecessary cruelty upon a living animal or creature, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature; or leave the living animal or creature unattended in a vehicle under inhumane conditions adverse to the health or welfare of the living animal or creature; or
- (4) Fail, as the owner or as a person otherwise charged with the care of a living animal or creature, to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care.

b. (1) A person who violates subsection a. of this section shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense. Notwithstanding the provisions of [N.J.S.2C:43-3](#) to the contrary, for every conviction of an offense pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection a. of this section, the person shall be fined not less than \$250 nor more than \$1,000, or be imprisoned for a term of not more than six months, or both, in the discretion of the court; and for every conviction of an offense pursuant to paragraph (3) or (4) of subsection a. of this section, the person shall be fined not less than \$500 nor more than \$2,000, or be imprisoned for a term of not more than six months, or both, in the discretion of the court.

(2) If the person who violates subsection a. of this section has a prior conviction for an offense that would constitute a violation of subsection a. of this section, the person shall be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.

(3) A person who violates subsection a. of this section shall also be subject to the provisions of subsections e. and f. and, if appropriate, subsection g., of this section.

(4) The action for the penalty prescribed in this subsection shall be brought in the municipal court of the municipality wherein the defendant resides or where the offense was committed, except that the municipality may elect to refer the offense to the county prosecutor to determine if the offense should be handled in the Superior Court or in municipal court.

c. It shall be unlawful to purposely, knowingly, or recklessly:

(1) Torment, torture, maim, hang, poison, unnecessarily or cruelly beat, cruelly abuse, or needlessly mutilate a living animal or creature;

(2) Cause bodily injury to a living animal or creature by failing to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care, whether as the owner or as a person otherwise charged with the care of the living animal or creature;

(3) Cause or procure an act described in paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection to be done, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature; or

(4) Use, or cause or procure the use of, an animal or creature in any kind of sexual manner or initiate any kind of sexual contact with the animal or creature, including, but not limited to, sodomizing the animal or creature. As used in this paragraph, "sexual contact" means any contact between a person and an animal by penetration of the penis or a foreign object into the vagina or anus, contact between the mouth and genitalia, or by contact between the genitalia of one and the genitalia or anus of the other. This term does not include any medical procedure performed by a licensed veterinarian practicing veterinary medicine or an accepted animal husbandry practice.

d. (1) A person who violates paragraph (1), (2), (3) or (4) of subsection c. of this section shall be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree, except that the person shall be guilty of a crime of the third degree if:

(a) the animal or creature dies as a result of the violation;
(b) the animal or creature suffers serious bodily injury as a result of the violation; or
(c) the person has a prior conviction for an offense that would constitute a violation of paragraph (1), (2), (3) or (4) of subsection c. of this section.

(2) A person who violates any provision of subsection c. of this section shall also be subject to the provisions of subsections e. and f. and, if appropriate, subsection g., of this section.

(3) The action for the penalty prescribed in this subsection shall be brought in the Superior Court.

e. For a violation of this section, in addition to imposing any other appropriate penalties established for a crime of the third degree, crime of the fourth degree, or disorderly persons offense, as the case may be, pursuant to Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes, the court shall impose a term of community service of up to 30 days, and may direct that the term of community service be served in providing assistance to a county society for the prevention of cruelty to animals or any other recognized organization concerned with the prevention of cruelty to animals or the humane treatment and care of animals, or to a municipality's animal control or animal population control program.

f. The court also shall require any violator of this section to pay restitution, including but not limited to, the monetary cost of replacing the animal if the animal died or had to be euthanized because of the extent of the animal's injuries, or otherwise reimburse any costs for food, drink, shelter, or veterinary care or treatment, or other costs, incurred by the owner of the animal, if the owner is not the person committing the act of cruelty, or incurred by any agency, entity, or organization investigating the violation, or providing shelter or care for the animal or animals, including but not limited to a county society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, any other recognized organization concerned with the prevention of cruelty to animals or the humane treatment and care of animals, a local or State governmental entity, or a kennel, shelter, pound, or other facility providing for the shelter and care of the animal or animals involved in the violation.

g. If a juvenile is adjudicated delinquent for an act which, if committed by an adult, would constitute a disorderly persons offense, crime of the fourth degree, or crime of the third degree pursuant to this section, the court also shall order the juvenile to receive mental health counseling by a licensed psychologist or therapist named by the court for a period of time to be prescribed by the licensed psychologist or therapist.

Amended by L.1995, c. 355, § 2, eff. Jan. 5, 1996; L.1996, c. 64, § 1, eff. July 12, 1996; L.2000, c. 162, § 1, eff. Dec. 7, 2000; L.2001, c. 229, § 1, eff. Aug. 27, 2001; L.2003, c. 232, § 1, eff. Jan. 9, 2004; L.2005, c. 105, § 1, eff. June 29, 2005; L.2013, c. 88, § 2, eff. Aug. 7, 2013; L.2015, c. 133, § 1, eff. Nov. 9, 2015; L.2017, c. 331, § 10, eff. Aug. 1, 2018.

N.J.S.A. 4:22-26

4:22-26. Acts constituting cruelty in general; penalty

Effective: August 1, 2018

A person who shall:

a. (1) Overdrive, overload, drive when overloaded, overwork, abuse, or needlessly kill a living animal or creature, or cause or procure, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature, any such acts to be done;

(2) Torment, torture, maim, hang, poison, unnecessarily or cruelly beat, cruelly abuse, or needlessly mutilate a living animal or creature, or cause or procure, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature, any such acts to be done;

(3) Cause the death of, or serious bodily injury to, a living animal or creature from commission of any act described in paragraph (2), (4), or (5) of this subsection, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature, or otherwise cause or procure any such acts to be done;

(4) Fail, as the owner or a person otherwise charged with the care of a living animal or creature, to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care, or otherwise cause or procure such an act to be done; or

(5) Cause bodily injury to a living animal or creature from commission of the act described in paragraph (4) of this subsection;

b. (Deleted by amendment, [P.L.2003, c. 232](#))

c. Inflict unnecessary cruelty upon a living animal or creature, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature; or leave the living animal or creature unattended in a vehicle under inhumane conditions adverse to the health or welfare of the living animal or creature;

d. Receive or offer for sale a horse that is suffering from abuse or neglect, or which by reason of disability, disease, abuse or lameness, or any other cause, could not be worked, ridden or otherwise used for show, exhibition or recreational purposes, or kept as a domestic pet without violating the provisions of article 2 of chapter 22 of Title 4 of the Revised Statutes;

e. Keep, use, be connected with or interested in the management of, or receive money or other consideration for the admission of a person to, a place kept or used for the purpose of fighting or baiting a living animal or creature;

f. Be present and witness, pay admission to, encourage, aid or assist in an activity enumerated in subsection e. of this section;

g. Permit or suffer a place owned or controlled by him to be used as provided in subsection e. of this section;

h. Carry, or cause to be carried, a living animal or creature in or upon a vehicle or otherwise, in a cruel or inhumane manner;

i. Use a dog or dogs for the purpose of drawing or helping to draw a vehicle for business purposes;

j. Impound or confine or cause to be impounded or confined in a pound or other place a living animal or creature, and shall fail to supply the living animal or creature during such confinement with a sufficient quantity of good and wholesome food and water;

k. Abandon a maimed, sick, infirm or disabled animal or creature to die in a public place;

l. Willfully sell, or offer to sell, use, expose, or cause or permit to be sold or offered for sale, used or exposed, a horse or other animal having the disease known as glanders or farcy, or other contagious or infectious disease dangerous to the health or life of human beings or animals, or who shall, when any such disease is beyond recovery, refuse, upon demand, to deprive the animal of life;

m. Own, operate, manage or conduct a roadside stand or market for the sale of merchandise along a public street or highway; or a shopping mall, or a part of the premises thereof; and keep a living animal or creature confined, or allowed to roam in an area whether or not the area is enclosed, on these premises as an exhibit; except that this subsection shall not be applicable to: a pet shop licensed pursuant to P.L.1941, c. 151 ([C.4:19-15.1 et seq.](#)); a person who keeps an animal, in a humane manner, for the purpose of the protection of the premises; or a recognized breeders' association, a 4-H club, an educational agricultural program, an equestrian team, a humane society or other similar charitable or nonprofit organization conducting an exhibition, show or performance;

n. Keep or exhibit a wild animal at a roadside stand or market located along a public street or highway of this

State; a gasoline station; or a shopping mall, or a part of the premises thereof;

o. Sell, offer for sale, barter or give away or display live baby chicks, ducklings or other fowl or rabbits, turtles or chameleons which have been dyed or artificially colored or otherwise treated so as to impart to them an artificial color;

p. Use any animal, reptile, or fowl for the purpose of soliciting any alms, collections, contributions, subscriptions, donations, or payment of money except in connection with exhibitions, shows or performances conducted in a bona fide manner by recognized breeders' associations, 4-H clubs or other similar bona fide organizations;

q. Sell or offer for sale, barter, or give away living rabbits, turtles, baby chicks, ducklings or other fowl under two months of age, for use as household or domestic pets;

r. Sell, offer for sale, barter or give away living baby chicks, ducklings or other fowl, or rabbits, turtles or chameleons under two months of age for any purpose not prohibited by subsection q. of this section and who shall fail to provide proper facilities for the care of such animals;

s. Artificially mark sheep or cattle, or cause them to be marked, by cropping or cutting off both ears, cropping or cutting either ear more than one inch from the tip end thereof, or half cropping or cutting both ears or either ear more than one inch from the tip end thereof, or who shall have or keep in the person's possession sheep or cattle, which the person claims to own, marked contrary to this subsection unless they were bought in market or of a stranger;

t. Abandon a domesticated animal;

u. For amusement or gain, cause, allow, or permit the fighting or baiting of a living animal or creature;

v. Own, possess, keep, train, promote, purchase, or knowingly sell a living animal or creature for the purpose of fighting or baiting that animal or creature;

w. Gamble on the outcome of a fight involving a living animal or creature;

x. Knowingly sell or barter or offer for sale or barter, at wholesale or retail, the fur or hair of a domestic dog or cat or any product made in whole or in part from the fur or hair of a domestic dog or cat, unless such fur or hair for sale or barter is from a commercial grooming establishment or a veterinary office or clinic or is for use for scientific research;

y. (1) Knowingly sell or barter, or offer for sale or barter, at wholesale or retail, for human consumption, the flesh of a domestic dog or cat, or any product made in whole or in part from the flesh of a domestic dog or cat;

(2) Knowingly slaughter a horse for human consumption;

(3) Knowingly sell or barter, or offer for sale or barter, at wholesale or retail, for human consumption, the flesh of a horse, or any product made in whole or in part from the flesh of a horse, or knowingly accept or publish newspaper advertising that includes the offering for sale, trade, or distribution of any such item for human consumption;

(4) Knowingly transport a horse for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption;

(5) Knowingly transport horsemeat, or any product made in whole or in part from the flesh of a horse, for the purpose of human consumption;

z. Surgically debark or silence a dog in violation of section 1 or 2 of [P.L.2002, c. 102 \(C.4:19-38 or C.4:19-39\)](#);

aa. Use a live pigeon, fowl or other bird for the purpose of a target, or to be shot at either for amusement or as a test of skill in marksmanship, except that this subsection and subsections bb. and cc. shall not apply to the shooting of game;

bb. Shoot at a bird used as described in subsection aa. of this section, or is a party to such shooting; or

cc. Lease a building, room, field or premises, or knowingly permit the use thereof for the purposes of subsection aa. or bb. of this section--

Shall forfeit and pay a sum according to the following schedule, to be sued for and recovered, with costs, in a civil action by any person in the name of the municipality or county wherein the defendant resides or where the offense was committed:

For a violation of subsection e., f., g., u., v., w., or z. of this section or of paragraph (3) of subsection a. of this section, or for a second or subsequent violation of paragraph (2) or (5) of subsection a. of this section, a sum of not less than \$3,000 nor more than \$5,000;

For a violation of subsection l. of this section, for a first violation of paragraph (2) or (5) of subsection a. of this section, a sum of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$3,000;

For a violation of paragraph (4) of subsection a. of this section, or subsection c. of this section, a sum of not less than \$500 nor more than \$2,000;

For a violation of subsection x. or paragraph (1) of subsection y. of this section, a sum of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000 for each domestic dog or cat fur or fur or hair product or domestic dog or cat carcass or meat product sold, bartered, or offered for sale or barter;

For a violation of paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of subsection y. of this section, a sum of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000 for each horse slaughtered or transported for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption, or for each horse carcass or meat product transported, sold or bartered, or offered or advertised for sale or barter;

For a violation of subsection t. of this section, a sum of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, but if the violation occurs on or near a highway, a mandatory sum of \$1,000;

For a violation of subsection d., h., j., k., aa., bb., or cc. of this section or of paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this section, a sum of not less than \$250 nor more than \$1,000; and

For a violation of subsection i., m., n., o., p., q., r., or s. of this section, a sum of not less than \$250 nor more than \$500.

Amended by L.1949, c. 294, p. 895, § 1; L.1951, c. 270, p. 935, § 1; L.1953, c. 5, p. 48, § 63; L.1954, c. 175, p. 683, § 1; L.1974, c. 18, § 1, eff. April 11, 1974; L.1977, c. 229, § 2, eff. Sept. 20, 1977; L.1983, c. 103, § 1, eff. March 14, 1983; L.1989, c. 35, § 2, eff. March 7, 1989; L.1991, c. 108, § 2, eff. April 19, 1991; L.1998, c. 105, § 3, eff. Sept. 14, 1998; L.1999, c. 307, § 3, eff. Jan. 4, 2000; L.2000, c. 162, § 2, eff. Dec. 7, 2000; L.2001, c. 229, § 4, eff. Aug. 27, 2001; L.2002, c. 102, § 8, eff. Nov. 20, 2002; L.2003, c. 232, § 3, eff. Jan. 9, 2004; L.2005, c. 105, § 2, eff. June 29, 2005; L.2005, c. 372, § 16, eff. Jan. 12, 2006; L.2012, c. 52, § 2, eff. Sept. 19, 2012; L.2013, c. 88, § 3, eff. Aug. 7, 2013; L.2017, c. 331, § 13, eff. Aug. 1, 2018.