

## **Ten Things Teens Can Do to Help Stop Animal Cruelty**

Whether it's a case of animal neglect or a malicious act of animal cruelty, you can help protect all animals – both big and small. Why should you care? Because it's the right thing to do and because cruelty to animals is illegal in all 50 states. And – people who harm animals may also harm people. Helping stop animal cruelty helps everyone in your community. Here are 10 ways you can help spread kindness and compassion in your community.

### **1. Get help for the animal**

If you see someone hurting an animal or if you know of someone with an animal that looks sick, injured – or deprived of adequate food, water or shelter, get help. Tell a trusted adult or call your local police department or neighborhood animal shelter. Do not try to help the animal yourself; this can put you in danger.

### **2. Get the facts**

Write everything down. As an eyewitness, you'll need to provide the date, time, address, and any other details you can remember, including descriptions of the animal, the type of cruelty, and the person who may be responsible for it.

### **3. Get the word out**

Educate your friends, family, and teachers about animal cruelty and its connection to human violence by sharing information and materials from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) First Strike® campaign. For information, call 1-888-213-0956, visit [www.hsusfirststrike.org](http://www.hsusfirststrike.org), or write to us at First Strike, The HSUS (2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037).

### **4. Be a role model.**

Let your actions be a guide and serve as a role model to your friends and classmates. Be kind to all living beings and let others know that hurting animals is wrong. Speak up for animals and urge others to do the same.

### **5. Be a responsible pet owner.**

Don't let your cat or dog roam. Cats are safest indoors. When outdoors, a dog should be walked on a leash or supervised in a fenced yard. It's up to you to keep your pets safe and out of harm's way! Part of responsible dog ownership is making sure your dog knows basic canine obedience. Find a local dog trainer to help.

### **6. Keep a lookout.**

If you see a stray or injured animal, contact your local animal care and control agency or your local police. Be sure you are able to provide a description of the animal and the location.

### **7. Make the 'Net work.**

If you find a website that promotes animal abuse, report the website to an adult or the proper authorities. Be on the lookout for non-reputable dog breeders but be sure not to accuse a breeder of acting inappropriately without the warranted facts. You can seriously damage a breeder's reputation.

**8. Stop animal cruelty before it begins.**

Teach elementary school children in your community to be kind to animals. There are many good resources online. One good resource is KindNews - <https://redrover.org/readers/kind-news-magazine/>

**9. Start a club and volunteer.**

Start an animal protection club at your school. Reach out to your local dog shelter and ask if they have a way for you and your friends to volunteer. You may be needed to help walk or groom a shelter dog or help keep the kennel area clean. Learning to volunteer in your youth can mean that you continue to volunteer in your community for a lifetime!

**10. Schedule a certified therapy dog visit.**

Call your local therapy dog organization and schedule a therapy dog visit for your classroom or school (be sure to check with your school first to make sure they will approve the visit). Therapy dogs are calm and kind friends – and reading to a certified therapy dog is a great way to spend some quality time with a dog while at school. If you live in Erie, PA – reach out to Therapy Dogs United at (814) 456-DOGS or [www.therapydogsunited.org](http://www.therapydogsunited.org) to find out more.

Remember, it's always best to reach out to a trusted adult with any information you find – do not act alone. Consult with a parent or caregiver first and work together to form an action plan to help keep the four-legged friends in your neighborhood and community healthy and safe.