



## VIRGINIA LAW

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## Article 2. Animal Welfare.

**§ 3.2-6503. Care of companion animals by owner; penalty.**

A. Each owner shall provide for each of his companion animals:

1. Adequate feed;
2. Adequate water;
3. Adequate shelter that is properly cleaned;
4. Adequate space in the primary enclosure for the particular type of animal depending upon its age, size, species, and weight;
5. Adequate exercise;
6. Adequate care, treatment, and transportation; and
7. Veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or disease transmission.

The provisions of this section shall also apply to every public or private animal shelter, or other releasing agency, and every foster care provider, dealer, pet shop, exhibitor, kennel, groomer, and boarding establishment. This section shall not require that animals used as food for other animals be euthanized.

B. Violation of this section is a Class 4 misdemeanor. A second or subsequent violation of subdivision A 1, 2, 3, or 7 is a Class 2 misdemeanor and a second or subsequent violation of subdivision A 4, 5, or 6 is a Class 3 misdemeanor.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.38; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.68; 1991, c. 348; 1993, c. 174; 1996, c. [249](#); 1998, c. [817](#); 2002, c. [787](#); 2003, c. [1007](#); 2008, c. [860](#); 2010, c. [875](#); 2014, c. [148](#).

**§ 3.2-6503.1. Care of agricultural animals by owner; penalty.**

A. Each owner shall provide for each of his agricultural animals:

1. Feed to prevent malnourishment;
2. Water to prevent dehydration; and

3. Veterinary treatment as needed to address impairment of health or bodily function when such impairment cannot be otherwise addressed through animal husbandry, including humane destruction.

B. The provisions of this section shall not require an owner to provide feed or water when such is customarily withheld, restricted, or apportioned pursuant to a farming activity or if otherwise prescribed by a veterinarian.

C. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that there has been no violation of this section if an owner is unable to provide feed, water, or veterinary treatment due to an act of God.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply to agricultural animals used for bona fide medical or scientific experimentation.

E. A violation of this section is a Class 4 misdemeanor.

2011, cc. [754](#), [886](#).

**§ 3.2-6504. Abandonment of animal; penalty.**

No person shall abandon or dump any animal. Violation of this section is a Class 3 misdemeanor.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the release of an animal by its owner to a public or private animal shelter or other releasing agency.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.43; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.73; 1993, c. 174; 2002, cc. [351](#), [787](#); 2003, c. [1007](#); 2008, c. [860](#); 2014, c. [148](#).

**§ 3.2-6504.1. Civil immunity; forcible entry of motor vehicle to remove unattended companion animal.**

No law-enforcement officer as defined in § [9.1-101](#), firefighter as defined in § [65.2-102](#), emergency medical services personnel as defined in § [32.1-111.1](#), or animal control officer who in good faith forcibly enters a motor vehicle in order to remove an unattended companion animal that is at risk of serious bodily injury or death shall be liable for any property damage to the vehicle entered or injury to the animal resulting from such forcible entry and removal of the animal, unless such property damage or injury results from gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

2016, c. [679](#).

**§ 3.2-6505. Disposal of animals by means of decompression chamber and use of gas chamber for companion animals prohibited.**

A. No animal shall be euthanized pursuant to the provisions of this chapter by means of a high altitude decompression chamber.

B. No companion animal shall be euthanized pursuant to the provisions of this chapter by means of a gas chamber.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.47; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.77; 2008, cc. [8](#), [860](#).

**§ 3.2-6506. Exceptions regarding veterinarians.**

Sections [3.2-6503](#), [3.2-6504](#), [3.2-6508](#) through [3.2-6519](#), [3.2-6557](#), [3.2-6559](#), [3.2-6561](#), [3.2-6564](#), [3.2-6565](#), and [3.2-6574](#) through [3.2-6580](#) shall not apply to: (i) a place or establishment that is operated under the immediate supervision of a duly licensed veterinarian as a hospital or boarding establishment where animals are harbored, boarded and cared for incident to the treatment, prevention, or alleviation of disease processes during the routine practice of the profession of veterinary medicine; or (ii) animals boarded under the immediate supervision of a duly licensed veterinarian.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.44; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.74; 1993, cc. 174, 959; 2008, c. 860.

### § 3.2-6507. Injured or sick animal; action by veterinarian.

A. If a licensed veterinarian is called or by his own action comes upon an animal that is sick or injured and the owner of such animal cannot be immediately located, then the licensed veterinarian, in his professional judgment, may treat, hospitalize or euthanize the animal without the permission of the owner. The veterinarian shall make such reports and keep such records of such sick or injured animals as may be prescribed by the Board of Veterinary Medicine, including the information required under subsection B of § 3.2-6557.

B. In no event shall a licensed veterinarian who has acted in good faith and properly exercised professional judgment regarding an animal be subject to liability for his actions in: (i) acting in accordance with subsection A; or (ii) reporting cases of suspected cruelty to animals.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.46; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.76; 1999, c. 620; 2008, c. 860.

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