

[RCWs](#) > [Title 16](#) > [Chapter 16.52](#) > [Section 16.52.011](#)[Beginning of Chapter](#) << [16.52.011](#) >> [16.52.015](#)**RCW 16.52.011****Definitions—Principles of liability.**

(1) Principles of liability as defined in chapter [9A.08](#) RCW apply to this chapter.

(2) The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Abandons" means the knowing or reckless desertion of an animal by its owner or the causing of the animal to be deserted by its owner, in any place, without making provisions for the animal's adequate care.

(b) "Animal" means any nonhuman mammal, bird, reptile, or amphibian.

(c) "Animal care and control agency" means any city or county animal control agency or authority authorized to enforce city or county municipal ordinances regulating the care, control, licensing, or treatment of animals within the city or county, and any corporation organized under [RCW 16.52.020](#) that contracts with a city or county to enforce the city or county ordinances governing animal care and control.

(d) "Animal control officer" means any individual employed, contracted, or appointed pursuant to [RCW 16.52.025](#) by an animal care and control agency or humane society to aid in the enforcement of ordinances or laws regulating the care and control of animals. For purposes of this chapter, the term "animal control officer" shall be interpreted to include "humane officer" as defined in (g) of this subsection and [RCW 16.52.025](#).

(e) "Euthanasia" means the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves instantaneous unconsciousness and immediate death, or by a method that causes painless loss of consciousness, and death during the loss of consciousness.

(f) "Food" means food or feed appropriate to the species for which it is intended.

(g) "Humane officer" means any individual employed, contracted, or appointed by an animal care and control agency or humane society as authorized under [RCW 16.52.025](#).

(h) "Law enforcement agency" means a general authority Washington law enforcement agency as defined in [RCW 10.93.020](#).

(i) "Livestock" includes, but is not limited to, horses, mules, cattle, sheep, swine, goats, and bison.

(j) "Malice" has the same meaning as provided in [RCW 9A.04.110](#), but applied to acts against animals.

(k) "Necessary food" means the provision at suitable intervals of wholesome foodstuff suitable for the animal's age, species, and condition, and that is sufficient to provide a reasonable level of nutrition for the animal and is easily accessible to the animal or as directed by a veterinarian for medical reasons.

(l) "Necessary water" means water that is in sufficient quantity and of appropriate quality for the species for which it is intended and that is accessible to the animal or as directed by a veterinarian for medical reasons.

(m) "Owner" means a person who has a right, claim, title, legal share, or right of possession to an animal or a person having lawful control, custody, or possession of an animal.

(n) "Person" means individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, or other legal entities, and agents of those entities.

(o) "Similar animal" means: (i) For a mammal, another animal that is in the same taxonomic order; or (ii) for an animal that is not a mammal, another animal that is in the same taxonomic class.

(p) "Substantial bodily harm" means substantial bodily harm as defined in [RCW 9A.04.110](#).

## NOTES:

**Reviser's note:** The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

**Finding—Intent—1994 c 261:** "The legislature finds there is a need to modernize the law on animal cruelty to more appropriately address the nature of the offense. It is not the intent of this act to remove or decrease any of the exemptions from the statutes on animal cruelty that now apply to customary animal husbandry practices, state game or fish laws, rodeos, fairs under chapter 15.76 RCW, or medical research otherwise authorized under federal or state law. It is the intent of this act to require the enforcement of chapter 16.52 RCW by persons who are accountable to elected officials at the local and state level." [ 1994 c 261 § 1.]

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