

- *How is police work on animal abuse/neglect cases organized in your country?*

The organisation of investigations of crimes related to animal abuse and neglect is the responsibility of the local police department as well as the National Police Board of Finland. Most animal offences are investigated in so-called daily investigation procedure. Aggravated animal welfare offences may be investigated by some police departments according to the so-called demanding investigation procedure. The general requirement is that the more serious the offence, the more thorough the investigation. In this respect, animal offences are no exception.

In 2018, the Helsinki Police Department established an investigation team, the first in Finland, to investigate crimes against animals that occur on the territory of the police department. This investigation team cooperates with the City of Helsinki's supervising veterinarians, the regional veterinarians, the Food Administration and Customs. During the preliminary investigation, many police departments consult experts who can assess, for example, the pain and harm caused to the animals. However, there is some variation in these consultations between police departments.

- *Which investigation options are available for animal abuse/neglect cases in your country?*

Animal offences are defined in the Finnish Criminal Code and the pre-trial investigation of all offences is defined in the Criminal Investigation Act. Pre-trial investigations are carried out for animal offences on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Criminal Investigation Act. There are no specific pre-trial procedures for animal offences, although cooperation with relevant authorities, such as veterinarians, is important in the investigation.

- *What is the average case processing time for cases regarding animal abuse/neglect in your country?*

The duration of an investigation depends on the individual case and the resources available for the investigation; it is difficult to determine an average duration.

- *Does your country have a special prosecutor for animal abuse/neglect cases?*

Finland has a system of special prosecutors and specialised regional prosecutors. Special prosecutors act as prosecutors in particularly demanding criminal cases in their specialised field and in other criminal cases assigned to them. A special prosecutor must have several areas of expertise, for example 2-4 in his/her own specialisation, which may include environmental, natural resources and animal offences. Special prosecutors can provide expert support to all prosecutors on issues requiring specific expertise.

- *What is the level of punishment for animal abuse/neglect in your country?*

Animal welfare offence ([Criminal Code \(39/1889\) Chapter 17 Section 14](#)): a fine or up to 2 years imprisonment

Aggravated animal welfare offence ([Criminal Code \(39/1889\) Chapter 17 Section 14a](#)): imprisonment for a minimum of 4 months and a maximum of 4 years

Petty animal welfare offence ([Criminal Code \(39/1889\) Chapter 17 Section 15](#)): fine

Animal welfare infringement ([Animal Welfare Act \(1996/247\) Chapter 6 Section 54](#)): fine

- *Does your country disqualify the right to keep animals in case of animal abuse or neglect?*

According to Chapter 17, Section 23 of the Criminal Code, " When a person is sentenced for an aggravated animal welfare offence, the court shall, at the same time, impose a ban on keeping animals on the person...A ban on keeping animals is imposed on the request of the prosecutor."

Chapter 17, Article 23a of the Criminal Code provides for a forfeiture penalty for an animal offence.

*Based on contact with the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, Leading Expert*  
*sources.*

*as well as public*