

National Sheriffs' Association  
National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse  
[www.sheriffs.org/nlecaa](http://www.sheriffs.org/nlecaa)

Dear Sheriff,

The National Sheriffs' Association has launched the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse (NLECAA) to assist you and your staff. Overwhelming scientific research demonstrates the close relationship between animal cruelty and other types of crimes, including interpersonal violence, property crimes, and drug offenses. Animal cruelty is a serious crime and public safety issue within our communities.

With the growing rise in animal abuse crimes and officer-dog encounters, the need for greater law enforcement awareness and understanding of animal cruelty and animal behavior has become increasingly apparent. Due to a demonstrated link between animal cruelty and other crimes, awareness and understanding of the nature of animal abuse is imperative.

Law enforcement plays a unique role in the prevention of, and response to, animal abuse. As a result, steps are currently being taken by law enforcement to better protect communities from animal cruelty offenders. Last month, FBI Director James Comey signed off on the inclusion of animal cruelty offenses in the Uniform Crime Report. It's the first time animal cruelty data will be included in federal crime reports and it affirms, at high levels of law enforcement, that animal cruelty is a serious crime.

Recognizing the serious nature of animal cruelty crimes and implications for public safety, the National Sheriffs' Association founded the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse. NLECAA was created to serve as an information clearinghouse and forum on animal abuse issues, including the link between animal cruelty and other crimes such as domestic violence, and officer-dog encounters. The goal of the center is to provide law enforcement with the resources to develop a better understanding of animal cruelty and animal behavior. By having a greater understanding, law enforcement officers will have the tools to be proactively involved in the prevention of animal cruelty and enforcement of animal abuse laws.

A variety of state and local resources, including animal cruelty and protection laws, training opportunities, and resources to better understand animal behavior and deal with canine encounters will be available through NLECAA.

Kind Regards,

John Thompson  
National Sheriffs' Association