

Enforcement of the new *Animal Protection and Control Act*

The new *Animal Protection and Control Act* establishes requirements for care and control of animals that apply across the Yukon. These will be enforced by Government of Yukon animal protection and control officers.

In addition, the Act authorizes agreements with local governments to appoint Deputy Animal Protection and Control officers. These individuals will work within the community to support people to comply with the new laws.

This does not impact local bylaws; communities continue to define and enforce their bylaws that typically are enforced before territorial legislation.

By expanding the enforcement framework, we enable a more rapid response to animal care and control issues.

Implementation details

- The primary goal of enforcement is to educate and encourage quality animal care and control. Officers will work with owners to bring them into compliance with the new legislation.
- Reports from individuals concerned about poor animal care or animals out of control initiate an inspection and potential enforcement. Such reports from the public are confidential and require information such as what was observed and when.
- The Agriculture Branch will respond to concerns related to care or control of livestock species. Officers in the Animal Health Unit respond to concerns about all other species. Deputy officers may be appointed, following an agreement between a local government and the Government of Yukon.
- The enforcement policy focuses on bringing people into compliance with the new law instead of moving directly to punishment. It is critical to help people understand the importance of the new requirements for care and control of animals and to help them meet those.

- Officers have powers of inspection and investigation and must have reasonable grounds for the actions that they take. This includes the grounds to take custody of animals or to inspect premises. They are expected to apply for warrants from a justice to authorize entry, search or seizure and those warrants are subject to conditions the justice applies.
- When encouragement and education are insufficient to protect an animal, there are tools available to address violations including:
 - Issuing orders;
 - Issuing a ticket;
 - Taking animals into custody, including those at large;
 - Gathering evidence to support the prosecutor to lay charges; and
 - Inspecting operations that keep animals.
- Members of the RCMP are the only officers who are authorised to enter a premises without a warrant. This is unchanged from previous legislation and is only in those situations where all the conditions for obtaining a warrant exist but because of exigent circumstances it is not feasible to appear before a justice to request one.
- Maximum penalties (fines and jail time) for convictions are increased, especially for serious offences such as abuse or animal fighting. There is also a wide range of alternative penalties that includes limitations on animal ownership that can be a lifetime ban.

