

FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System Tracking

By Claudine Wilkins and Jessica Rock, Founders of Animal Law Source™

In addition to these federal laws, the FBI announced in early 2014 that it was changing its policy regarding the tracking of animal abuse crimes, including reporting on local, state and federal crimes. Previously, the FBI filed animal abuse crimes under the label “other,” which lumped animal abuse crimes in with lesser crimes, which made animal abuse crimes difficult to find and challenging to track. Beginning in 2016, the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)* added an animal cruelty offense category that will be broken down into four subcategories:

- (1) Simple/gross neglect,
- (2) Intentional abuse and torture,
- (3) Organized abuse (dog fighting and cock fighting), and
- (4) Animal sexual abuse.

This change was the result of the combined efforts of the National Sheriff’s Association and the Animal Welfare Institute. Violence towards animals is an early indicator of future violent crime towards humans. Early identification through this improved tracking system may help prevent future violent crimes through recommendation of mental health services.

Because people who are insensitive to the suffering of animals are more likely to be unresponsive to the needs of dependent people in their household (and vice versa), several states have "cross-reporting" laws. Cross-reporting laws are those in which humane officers and/or veterinarians are required to report possible elder and/or child abuse. Also, there can be informal agreements between social welfare agencies where agents are encouraged to report suspected animal cruelty and neglect.

*Georgia is currently not a NIBRS reporting state so Georgia’s animal cruelty cases are not getting reported under this system. However, Georgia is on track to become a NIBRS reporting state in the coming years.

Credit to Kaye Klapper