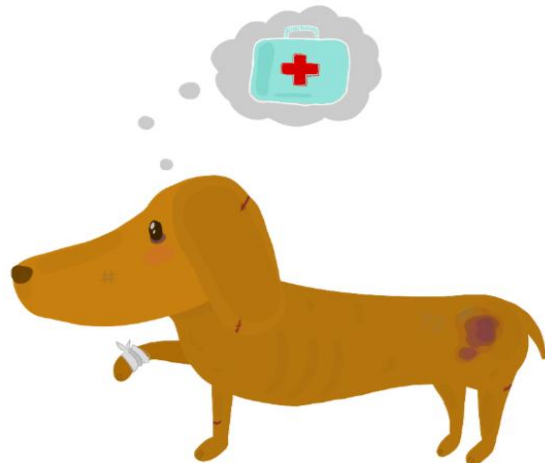




# HOW TO RECOGNIZE A CASE OF ANIMAL CRUELTY OR ABUSE?



For more than 15 years, our efforts have been directed towards the needs of stray animals, those that are always alone, without someone to watch out for them, to provide food and shelter to protect them from the cold or from outside threats.

But what to do when the owners, the people these animals depend on, fail to do their duty or, worse, harm these animals more than if they were to fend for themselves? These are the cases of abuse and animal cruelty.

Many animal lovers have agreed that our country had long needed a real animal protection law.

Now that it exists, do we really know how to recognize the cases that fall under the said law meant to punish abuse and to define animal cruelty?

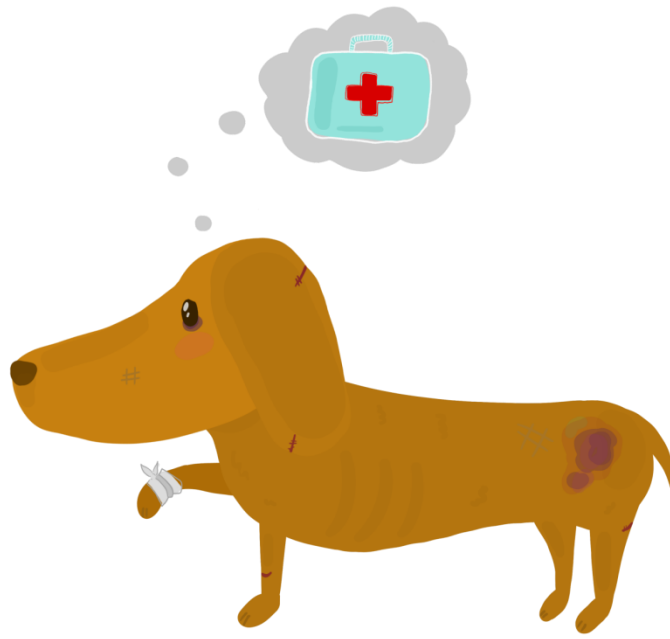
How do we define abuse? Is this a subjective matter or are there aspects anyone can agree on?

## **Here are 10 signs to watch out for**

We have come up with a list of the most common signs of abuse to watch out for, if we wish to be of help for the animals that depend on our voice for protection and respect:

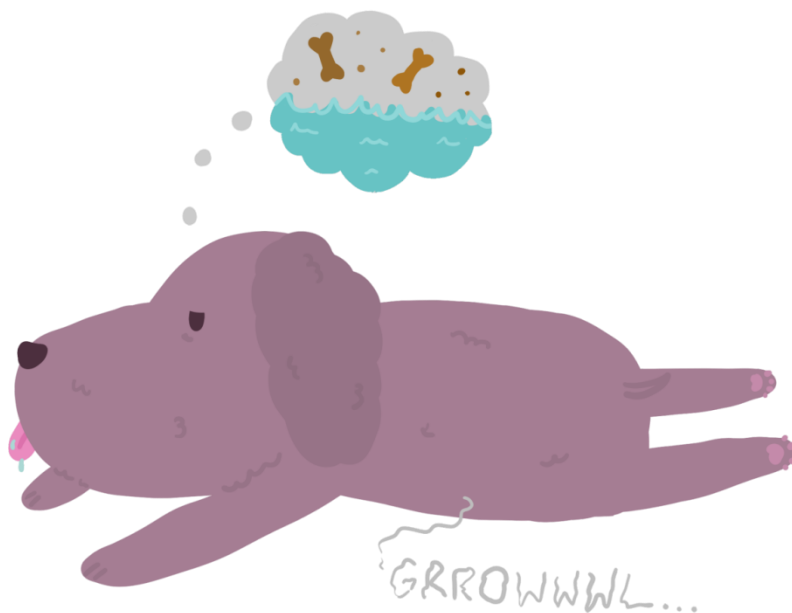
### **1. Poor physical condition and signs of injury**

Here we mention open wounds, scars, infected wounds, flea or tick infestations, malnourishment (you can see its bones through its skin), limping, the animal cannot move around or is in obvious need of medical attention that it is not getting.



## 2. The dog does not seem to have access to food and water

On the street, an animal can still have a chance of finding a source of water or some scraps of food, but in a yard or apartment where its movements are restricted and its options are limited, it cannot find solutions by itself.



### 3. Lack of a shelter to protect from the sun, rain, or snow

It is the case of animals kept solely in the yard, regardless of the weather. If its movements are restricted and it cannot take shelter in any other part of the yard, it is a case of animal cruelty.

We can also include here the cases in which the animal is left alone in a locked car on a hot day with the windows rolled up or is locked on the balcony during a heat wave or in the cold for hours.



#### 4. Its living area is not sanitized

The dog is living in its own excrements and has a high risk of infection.



#### 5. Abandonment or neglect

The people who disregard their responsibilities when it comes to dog ownership by abandoning the animal, are punishable under this law.

Neglect occurs when an owner, although he does not abandon the animal, fails to provide proper living conditions.



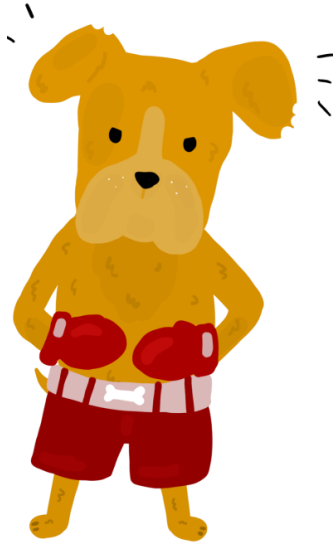
## 6. The animal is tied up

When the animal has a chain or noose around his neck, it suffers physically, since his movements are restricted and his efforts to get free can cause harm. But its suffering can also be psychological. This situation can cause frustration to build up and affect its normal behavior.



## 7. Signs that the animal is being used in organized fights

This is obvious through the fact that body parts are missing – ear or tail most often, has scars – old wound marks, new wounds, open wounds, infected wounds.



## 8. The animal does not exhibit a normal behavior

It is either too shy, or too aggressive; it covers away, especially in the presence of his owner.



## 9. Too many animals gathered on the same property

Sometimes, even the people with the best of intentions can be guilty of acts of cruelty or abuse if their actions have the same negative effect. Too many animals in a crowded space will not have the proper living conditions.

The stress suffered by animals living in overcrowded shelters or in the homes of owners displaying hoarding behavior, is considered animal cruelty.



## 10. The owner has a violent behavior toward the dog

The owner throws objects at the dog or displays any other type of physical abuse such as leash tugging, pushing, or applying physical corrections when the dog is not responding to commands.

The fact that this piece of legislature exists does not mean much for the animals that do not have a voice nor legal expertise and that cannot defend themselves. This law is made strictly for punishing the people who are guilty of abuse, cruelty, or abandonment.



But it cannot be applied without all of us getting involved. Excepting the unlikely case in which an abusive owner might turn himself in, animals cannot speak out for themselves, cannot notify the authorities and, most times, cannot protect themselves from the danger they might be in.



It is our duty to be vigilant and to speak out in the name of those that cannot speak for themselves. When we know that an animal is being abused and we do nothing to stop it, we are (almost) just as guilty as the ones who commit the actual abuse, because our silence keeps up their suffering!

### Disclaimer

These are just our suggestions and pieces of advice, thus they will never replace the instructions given by a professional. ROLDA holds no liability or obligation regarding the health of pets. We highly recommend consulting a specialist in case of any health problems or questions.

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