

Brief Overview

Animal Hoarding is often misunderstood. The people involved believe they are helping the animals but, in reality, they are causing them more suffering. Early intervention is important so that both the people and the animals involved receive the care they need, so they can start living a safe and healthy life. However, even after the situation has been corrected, there needs to be continual follow-up to ensure the hoarding doesn't reoccur.



Additional Resources

- The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium
<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/>
- The Humane Society of the United States
<http://www.hsus.org/ace/352>
- Idaho Humane Society
<http://www.idahohumanesociety.com>
- Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
<http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/oct02/021015a.asp>
- Animal Hoarding: An In-Depth Look
<http://animalhoarding.com/index.htm>
- American Psychiatric Association
<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/hoarding-disorder/what-is-hoarding-disorder>



Animal Services Division

Animal Shelter

4500 West Ox Road
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Animal Hoarding



FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
ANIMAL SERVICES DIVISION

Protecting the lives of both people and animals.



Animal Hoarding

Animal Hoarding is defined as:

- Having more than the typical number of companion animals and
- Failing to provide even minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter and veterinary care, with this neglect often resulting in illness and death from starvation, spread of infectious disease and untreated injury or medical condition.
- Denial of the inability to provide this minimum care and the impact of that failure on the animals, the household, and human occupants of the dwelling.
- Persistence, despite this failure, in accumulating and controlling animals.

Source:

<http://vet.tufts.edu/shelter-medicine-at-cummings-school/hoarding-information-for-shelter-medicine/>

Signs to look for

- They have numerous animals and may not know the total number of animals in their care.
- Their home is deteriorated (i.e., dirty windows, broken furniture, holes in wall and floor, extreme clutter).
- There is a strong smell of ammonia, and floors may be covered with dried feces, urine, vomit, etc.
- Animals are emaciated, lethargic and not well socialized.
- Fleas and vermin are present.
- Individual is isolated from community and usually appears to be disheveled or in need of further assistance.
- Individual insists all animals are happy and healthy—even when there are clear signs of distress and illness.
- Windows may be covered to prevent anyone from seeing in and/or have a dirty film covering them.

Source:

<https://www.aspc.org/animal-cruelty/animal-hoarding/closer-look-animal-hoarding>

The Law

The Virginia State Code, §3.2-6503 defines the responsibility of the owner to provide:

- Adequate food
- Adequate water
- Adequate shelter
- Adequate space
- Adequate exercise
- Adequate care, treatment, and transportation
- Veterinary services to prevent suffering or disease transmission.

The Virginia State Cruelty Code, §3.2-6570, is reserved for serious violations. Convictions can lead to court order counseling programs, jail time, and may result in prohibiting future ownership or possession of animals.

Virginia State Code:

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter65/>



Not all hoarding cases involve numerous animals, sometimes there is just a couple of animals but the amount of gathered material creates a hazard for both the people and the animals.