

Federal and Provincial Animal Laws

Federal Law

Criminal Code of Canada

- Sections [445 to 447 of the Criminal Code](#) prohibit wilfully causing unnecessary pain, suffering, or injury to animals.
- Offenses include killing, maiming, wounding, poisoning, or injuring animals; encouraging animal fighting; or willful neglect.
- Penalties can include jail time, fines, or a lifetime ban on animal ownership.

Health of Animals Act

- This federal law regulates the health and humane treatment of animals, mainly addressing diseases, import/export, and humane transport.

Provincial and Territorial Laws

Each province and territory in Canada has its own animal protection statutes. Here is a list including key statutes by region:

Province/Territory	Legislation Name
Alberta	Animal Protection Act
British Columbia	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
Manitoba	Animal Care Act
New Brunswick	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act ; Livestock Operations Act
Newfoundland and Labrador	Animal Health and Protection Act
Northwest Territories	Dog Act
Nova Scotia	Animal Protection Act
Nunavut	Dog Act (Nunavut)
Ontario	Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act , Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act , Livestock Community Sales Act , Dog Owner's Liability Act
Prince Edward Island	Animal Welfare Act
Quebec	Animal Welfare and Safety Act
Saskatchewan	Animal Protection Act
Yukon	Animal Protection Act (Yukon)

Important Notes:

- Provincial animal welfare statutes often address both companion and farm animals but may exempt certain industries (e.g., agriculture, research).
- Enforcement and standards of care may differ. For example, Ontario's Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS, in force since 2020) sets standards of care and carries some of the strongest penalties in Canada, with fines up to \$130,000 and jail time.
- Most provinces' statutes make it an offense to cause "distress" to animals, but typically provide exceptions for activities deemed "reasonable and generally accepted practices" (e.g., for farming or animal use industries).

Federal and provincial/territorial animal cruelty laws are enforced by a combination of police, provincial/territorial ministries, and animal welfare organizations such as the SPCA.