

ONTARIO'S ANIMAL PROTECTION LAW STRONGEST IN CANADA*McGuinty Government Includes Specific Coverage For Law Enforcement Animals***NEWS**

March 2, 2009

Ontario now has the strongest animal protection law in Canada.

The Provincial Animal Welfare Act, which took effect on March 1, 2009:

- Establishes standards of care for all animals.
- Introduces penalties for causing harm to any animal including jail terms of up to two years, fines of up to \$60,000 and a potential lifetime ownership ban.
- Creates a specific offence for causing harm to a law enforcement animal, such as a police horse or dog.

Other key elements include:

- New provincial offences for causing or permitting distress to an animal.
- Authorizing the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) to inspect places where animals are kept for entertainment, exhibition, boarding, sale or hire, including zoos, pet shops and circuses.
- Requiring veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, and protecting them from personal liability for doing so.

The act amends the OSPCA Act and marks the most significant changes to animal legislation in the province since 1919.

QUOTES

"As a society, we won't tolerate neglect or cruelty to any animal. The act recognizes that principle and extends protection to law enforcement dogs and horses that help rescue Ontarians, keep drugs out of our communities or patrol our parks and streets."

– Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister [Rick Bartolucci](#)

"Today is an historic day in animal welfare in our province. The Ontario government has clearly demonstrated their support for the life-saving work of the OSPCA. The society looks forward to working on behalf of Ontarians to address concerns for the well-being and humane treatment of all animals."

– OSPCA Chief Executive Officer Kate MacDonald

QUICK FACTS

- The [OSPCA](#) investigates roughly 17,000 allegations of animal cruelty each year.
- Over 300 dogs and horses are used in law enforcement in the province.
- There are over 60 zoos in Ontario, which is more than all other provinces combined.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about [animal welfare](#) in Ontario.

Find out more about Toronto Police Service's [Mounted Unit and Police Dog Services](#) and the Ontario Provincial Police's [Provincial Emergency Response Team](#).

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