

COMMUNITY RESOURCES*

Regina Humane Society – Safe Places

www.reginahumanesociety.ca/programs-services/outreach/safe-places

New Hope Dog Rescue Animal Safe Keeping Program

www.newhoperescue.org/animal-safekeeping

Southwest Crisis Services Animal Safe Keeping Program

www.swcrisis.ca/copy-of-safe-shelter

Saskatoon SPCA Pet Safekeeping Program

Phone: 306-374-7387

Melfort Area Safe Haven Program

Phone: 306-752-7722

PATHS

www.pathssk.org

Saskatchewan SPCA

306-382-7722

saskspca.ca

violencelink.ca

S.T.O.P.S. To Violence

www.stopstoviolence.com/whoweare

This organization provides network of resources for women who are fleeing domestic abuse.

Humane Canada

www.humanecanada.ca/our-work/focus-areas/animals-and-the-law/

This website provides a list of all federal and provincial animal protection acts in Canada. It also discusses past and Current Bills related to animal protection that the society is trying to implement in Canada.

Animal Protection Services Saskatchewan

www.animalprotectionservices.ca/annual-reports/

Animal Protection Services Saskatchewan collects reports and investigates animal abuse. This website also lists the animal reports of animal violence and abuse in Saskatchewan and has the cases/punishments of recent animal abusers.

Animal Justice

www.animaljustice.ca/about-us

Animal Justice is an animal law advocacy organization. This organization has a collection of lawyers that are specifically dedicated to animal abuse cases.

*For more information regarding the above resources, please speak with reception.

To help determine if a protection order is right for you, contact your local police service, victim services program, or mobile crisis unit

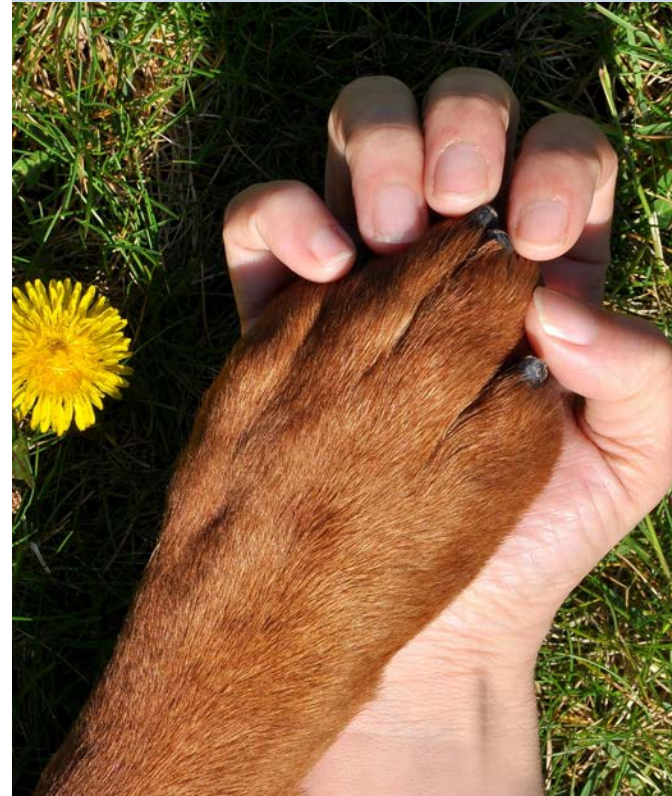


PO Box 37, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3K1
1.877.382.7722 or 306.382.7722
saskspca.ca | info@saskspca.ca



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WHAT ABOUT my PETS?



LEAVING INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE WITH YOUR PETS



THE LINK

There has been extensive research demonstrating a connection between intimate partner violence and animal abuse. This connection is referred to as “the Link” in research and other jurisdictions’ common law. The exploration into “the Link” is based on research that reveals the frequent occurrence of survivors of intimate partner violence who own pets experiencing their pets being mistreated, threatened, harmed, and potentially killed. There is evidence that intimate partner violence and animal abuse rarely occur in isolation of each other and results in the abusive partner continuing to harm the survivor and their pets.

Harm or threats to harm a pet can be used by the aggressor as a tool to control and or retaliate against the person experiencing the abuse:

- Fear of violence or neglect toward a pet could prevent them from leaving an unsafe situation
- Coerce them into returning to the home
- Force them to remain silent through threats to harm the animals if the violent behaviour is reported
- Risk of violence if person experiencing abuse returns to care for, retrieve, or visit their pet

“The Link” establishes the emotional and psychological connection between humans and animals. Pets are often seen as part of the family, making it difficult for those experiencing abuse to leave the home knowing their pet is left behind. A study conducted by the Alberta SPCA in 2012 found that over half of the women in emergency shelters who owned pets, delayed leaving their abusive partner out of fear that their pets would be harmed. A recent study in 2020 conducted by Crystal Giesbrecht from the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) also concluded that 90% of intimate partner violence professionals and 93% of animal welfare professionals agreed that an individual’s planning and decision to leave an abusive relationship was impacted by fears for the safety and safekeeping of their animals.

As of 2018, Statistics Canada reported Saskatchewan having the highest rate of police-reported interpersonal violence of all Canadian provinces. There are few resources available for those attempting to leave an abusive situation that accommodate pets, and separation can be detrimental for both human and pet. Provincial legal reform should recognize “The Link”, with the objective of making it easier for those experiencing abuse to escape violent conditions and ensure the safety of their pets in the process, ideally through preventative measures.

LEGISLATION

With the current legal notion of animals being considered and treated as property, there are legal options available that include the protection of property for victims leaving interpersonal violence situations that may be applied to animals and pets.

Emergency Intervention Orders ("EIO")

"EIOs" are used for the immediate protection of victims in serious or urgent situations of interpersonal violence, including the presence of immediate danger to persons or property. "EIOs" take effect immediately, subject to the aggressor receiving notice of the order.

Saskatchewan’s *Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* (VIVA) defines “interpersonal violence” to include:

- any intentional or reckless act or omission that causes bodily harm or damage to property
- any act or threatened act that causes a reasonable fear of bodily harm or damage to property

Victims of interpersonal violence can apply for an "EIO" in situations of:

- persons who have resided together or who are residing together in a family relationship, spousal relationship or intimate relationship
- persons who are the parents of one or more children, regardless of their marital status or whether they have lived together at any time
- persons who are in an ongoing caregiving relationship, regardless of whether they have lived together at any time

An "EIO" may also be subject to any terms that the designated justice of the peace considers appropriate to provide immediate protection. Such terms may be implemented to protect or remove animals from imminent harm. Only the person applying for the "EIO" needs to be present and provide information.

Victim's Assistance Orders ("VAO")

"VAOs" are issued by a judge in non-emergency situations of interpersonal violence. VAOs can contain all of the terms in an "EIO" and also include provisions granting temporary possession of specified personal property, as well as preventing the aggressor from taking or damaging property that the victim may have an interest in. While these provisions do not exclusively safeguard pets, they may be applied to protect them as the property of the victim, if their concern for the animal is related to their own protection. Other remedies to ensure the protection of pets include the ability to order that a pet be returned to and be the exclusive possession of one party. This may be ordered concurrently with an exclusive possession of the house order or a family law restraining order for a fixed period of time.

Peace Bonds / No Contact Orders

The *Criminal Code* outlines peace bonds/no contact orders being issued when any person fears on reasonable grounds that another person will cause personal injury to them/their intimate partner/child or will damage their property. Specific, reasonable conditions may be imposed by a judge to prevent such harm and ensure the aggressor keeps the peace and is of good behaviour. Obtaining a peace bond may take several weeks or even months, so peace bonds do not deal with emergencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Saskatchewan’s laws surrounding animals are limited and have been recognized as deficient compared to the rest of Canada. Given this, it is essential that Saskatchewan continues to improve its legislation surrounding animal welfare and protection.

Saskatchewan legislation needs clarity regarding the status of pets and the relationship between pets and interpersonal violence

- *The Children's Law Act* 2020 amendments has defined family violence to include “threats to kill or harm an animal or to damage property; and the killing or harming of an animal or the damaging of property”
- Similar language needs to be reflected in *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* as well
- Harm or threats to harm pets can prevent victims from leaving their abusers

Saskatchewan should adopt a legal definition of animals as more than mere property

- Recognition of animals as sentient beings has been applied in law in many jurisdictions, including Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, and Quebec
- If this perspective were recognized in Saskatchewan, awareness of pets' involvement in situations of interpersonal violence could increase, and assist in removing barriers to easily allow pets to be protected in emergency intervention orders

Saskatchewan needs to make clear allowances for the inclusion of pets in emergency intervention orders

- Currently, *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* does not explicitly mention animals whatsoever
- Creating an independent, specific category for pets' inclusion in protection orders outside the realm of property would lessen the risk of harm to pets, and empower victims to leave an unsafe situation knowing their pets will be protected in a streamlined process

