CHAPTER 717B

INJURY TO ANIMALS OTHER THAN LIVESTOCK

Injury to livestock, see chapter 717

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717B.1 Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

1. *"Animal"* means a nonhuman vertebrate. However, *"animal"* does not include any of the following:

a. Livestock, as defined in section 717.1.

b. Any game, fur-bearing animal, fish, reptile, or amphibian, as defined in section 481A.1, unless a person owns, confines, or controls the game, fur-bearing animal, fish, reptile, or amphibian.

c. Any nongame species declared to be a nuisance pursuant to section 481A.42.

2. *"Animal care provider"* means a person designated by a local authority to provide care to an animal which is rescued by the local authority pursuant to section 717B.5.

3. Unless the context otherwise requires, *"book"*, *"list"*, *"record"*, or *"schedule"* kept by a county auditor, assessor, treasurer, recorder, sheriff, or other county officer means the county system as defined in section 445.1.

4. *"Dispositional expenses"* means expenses incurred by a local authority in rescuing an animal as provided in section 717B.5, maintaining the animal until the conclusion of a dispositional proceeding as provided in section 717B.4, or disposing of the animal as provided in section 717B.4.

5. *"Law enforcement officer"* means a regularly employed member of a police force of a city or county, including a sheriff, who is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the criminal laws of this state.

6. *"Local authority"* means a city as defined in section 362.2 or a county as provided in chapter 331.

7. *"Maintenance"* means to provide on-site or off-site care to neglected animals.

8. *"Responsible party"* means a person who owns or maintains an animal.

9. *"Threatened animal"* means an animal that is abused as provided in section 717B.2, neglected as provided in section 717B.3, or tortured as provided in section 717B.3A.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §12; 2000 Acts, ch 1148, §1; 2002 Acts, ch 1119, §200, 201; 2002 Acts, ch 1130, §2; 2013 Acts, ch 90, §201

Referred to in **§717D.1**, **§717F.7**, **§717F.10**

717B.2 Animal abuse.

A person is guilty of animal abuse if the person intentionally injures, maims, disfigures, or destroys an animal owned by another person, in any manner, including intentionally poisoning the animal. A person guilty of animal abuse is guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor. This section shall not apply to any of the following:

1. A person acting with the consent of the person owning the animal, unless the action constitutes animal neglect as provided in section 717B.3.

2. A person acting to carry out an order issued by a court.

3. A licensed veterinarian practicing veterinary medicine as provided in chapter 169.

4. A person acting in order to carry out another provision of law which allows the conduct.

5. A person taking, hunting, trapping, or fishing for a wild animal as provided in chapter 481A.

6. A person acting to protect the person's property from a wild animal as defined in section 481A.1.

7. A person acting to protect a person from injury or death caused by a wild animal as defined in section 481A.1.

8. A person reasonably acting to protect the person's property from damage caused by an unconfined animal.

9. A person reasonably acting to protect a person from injury or death caused by an unconfined animal.

10. A local authority reasonably acting to destroy an animal, if at the time of the destruction, the owner of the animal is absent or unable to care for the animal, and the animal is permanently distressed by disease or injury to a degree that would result in severe and prolonged suffering.

11. A research facility, as defined in section 162.2, provided that the research facility performs functions within the scope of accepted practices and disciplines associated with the research facility.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §13; 2008 Acts, ch 1058, §20
Referred to in **§162.10A**, **§717B.1**

717B.3 Animal neglect.

1. A person who impounds or confines, in any place, an animal is guilty of animal neglect if the person does any of the following:

a. Fails to supply the animal during confinement with a sufficient quantity of food or water.

b. Fails to provide a confined dog or cat with adequate shelter.

c. Tortures, deprives of necessary sustenance, mutilates, beats, or kills an animal by any means which causes unjustified pain, distress, or suffering.

2. This section does not apply to a research facility, as defined in section 162.2, provided that the research facility performs functions within the scope of accepted practices and disciplines associated with the research facility.

3. A person who negligently or intentionally commits the offense of animal neglect is guilty of a simple misdemeanor. A person who intentionally commits the offense of animal neglect which results in serious injury to or the death of an animal is guilty of a serious misdemeanor.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §14; 95 Acts, ch 49, §25; 2008 Acts, ch 1058, §21; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §147
Subsection 1 amended

717B.3A Animal torture.

1. A person is guilty of animal torture, regardless of whether the person is the owner of the animal, if the person inflicts upon the animal severe physical pain with a depraved or sadistic intent to cause prolonged suffering or death.

2. This section shall not apply to any of the following:

a. A person acting to carry out an order issued by a court.

b. A licensed veterinarian practicing veterinary medicine as provided in chapter 169.

c. A person carrying out a practice that is consistent with animal husbandry practices.

d. A person acting in order to carry out another provision of law which allows the conduct.

e. A person taking, hunting, trapping, or fishing for a wild animal as provided in chapter 481A.

f. A person acting to protect the person's property from a wild animal as defined in section 481A.1.

g. A person acting to protect a person from injury or death caused by a wild animal as defined in section 481A.1.

h. A person reasonably acting to protect the person's property from damage caused by an unconfined animal.

i. A person reasonably acting to protect a person from injury or death caused by an unconfined animal.

j. A local authority reasonably acting to destroy an animal, if at the time of the destruction, the owner of the animal is absent or unable to care for the animal, and the

animal is permanently distressed by disease or injury to a degree that would result in severe and prolonged suffering.

k. A research facility, as defined in section 162.2, provided that the research facility performs functions within the scope of accepted practices and disciplines associated with the research facility.

3. *a.* The following shall apply to a person who commits animal torture:

(1) For the first conviction, the person is guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor. The sentencing order shall provide that the person submit to psychological evaluation and treatment according to terms required by the court. The costs of the evaluation and treatment shall be paid by the person. In addition, the sentencing order shall provide that the person complete a community work requirement, which may include a work requirement performed at an animal shelter or pound, as defined in section 162.2, according to terms required by the court.

(2) For a second or subsequent conviction, the person is guilty of a class "D" felony. The sentencing order shall provide that the person submit to psychological evaluation and treatment according to terms required by the court. The costs of the psychological evaluation and treatment shall be paid by the person.

b. The juvenile court shall have exclusive original jurisdiction in a proceeding concerning a child who is alleged to have committed animal torture, in the manner provided in section 232.8. The juvenile court shall not waive jurisdiction in a proceeding concerning an offense alleged to have been committed by a child under the age of seventeen.

2000 Acts, ch 1152, §3; 2008 Acts, ch 1058, §22
Referred to in **§162.10A**, **§232.8**, **§717B.1**

717B.4 Dispositional proceedings.

1. Upon a petition brought by a local authority, a court in the county where an animal is maintained by a responsible party or a local authority shall determine if the animal is a threatened animal and order its disposition after a hearing.

a. The matter shall be heard within ten days from the filing of the petition for disposition by the local authority.

b. If the animal has been rescued, the court may order that the animal be placed under the custody of the local authority and maintained in the same manner as a rescued animal under section 717B.5.

c. The court may continue the hearing for up to thirty days upon petition by the responsible party. However, the court shall not grant a continuance unless the animal is maintained by the local authority. The responsible party must post a bond or other security with the local authority as a condition of the continuance. The amount of the bond or other security shall be determined by the court, which shall not be more than the amount sufficient to provide maintenance of the animal for thirty days. The court may grant a subsequent continuance upon petition by the responsible party. The continuance shall be for not more than thirty days. The responsible party must post a new bond or security as a condition of the subsequent continuance in the same manner as the original bond or security or as otherwise ordered by the court. However, the court shall order the immediate disposition of the animal if the animal is permanently distressed by disease or injury to a degree that would result in severe or prolonged suffering.

2. The hearing to determine if the animal is a threatened animal for purposes of disposition shall be a civil proceeding. If the case is related to a criminal proceeding, the disposition shall not be part of that proceeding and shall not be considered a criminal penalty imposed on a person found in violation of this chapter.

3. If the court determines that an animal is not a threatened animal, the court shall order that the animal be returned to the custody of the responsible party. If the court determines that an animal is a threatened animal, the court shall order the local authority to dispose of the threatened animal in any manner deemed appropriate for the welfare of the animal. In addition, all of the following apply:

a. The court may order the responsible party to pay an amount which shall not be more than the dispositional expenses incurred by the local authority. The court may also award the

local authority court costs, reasonable attorney fees and expenses related to the investigation and prosecution of the case, which shall be taxed as part of the costs of the action.

b. If a bond or other security was posted as a condition for a continuance of a disposition hearing as provided in this section, the local authority may use the posted amount to offset the local authority's dispositional expenses.

c. If any moneys are realized from the disposition of a threatened animal, the moneys shall be used to offset the local authority's dispositional expenses before satisfying indebtedness secured by any security interest in or lien on the threatened animal.

d. If the threatened animal is owned by more than one responsible party, the amount required to offset the local authority's dispositional expenses shall be prorated among the responsible parties based on the percentage of interest owned in the threatened animal attributable to the responsible parties as the threatened animal's titleholders. For purposes of this paragraph, a responsible party who does not own an interest in the threatened animal shall be deemed to be an owner holding a percentage interest in the animal equal to the largest percentage interest held by a landowner who is attributed an interest as the threatened animal's titleholder. If the responsible party is a landowner, the local authority may submit the amount to reimburse the local authority for its dispositional expenses to the clerk of the county board of supervisors who shall report the amount to the county treasurer. If the threatened animal is owned by more than one landowner, the amount shall be prorated among the landowners based on the percentage of interest owned in the threatened animal attributable to each landowner as the animal's titleholders. The amount shall be placed upon the tax books, and collected with interest and penalties after due, in the same manner as other unpaid property taxes. The county shall reimburse a city within thirty days from the collection of the property taxes.

4. A threatened animal that is ordered by a court to be destroyed under this section shall be destroyed only by euthanasia as defined in section 162.2.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §15; 2002 Acts, ch 1130, §3
Referred to in **§602.6405**, **§717B.1**, **§717B.5**, **§717D.5**, **§717E.5**

717B.5 Rescue of threatened animals.

A local authority may provide for the rescue of an animal as follows:

1. The rescue must be made by a law enforcement officer having cause to believe that the animal is a threatened animal after consulting with a veterinarian licensed pursuant to chapter 169. The law enforcement officer may rescue the animal by entering on public or private property, as provided in this subsection. The officer may enter onto property of a person to rescue the animal if the officer obtains a search warrant issued by a court, or enters onto the premises in a manner consistent with the laws of this state and the United States, including Article I, section 8, of the Constitution of the State of Iowa, or the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

2. *a.* If an animal is rescued pursuant to this section, the local authority shall provide for the maintenance of the animal. The local authority may contract with an animal care provider for the maintenance of the animal. The local authority shall provide the responsible party for the animal with notice of the rescue. The notice may be accomplished by doing any of the following:

(1) Delivering written notice to the responsible party's last known address by the United States postal service or personal service.

(2) Posting a notice in a conspicuous place at the location where the animal was rescued.

b. The notice shall state that the animal has been rescued by the local authority pursuant to this section.

3. Within ten days after the date that an animal is rescued, the local authority shall initiate a dispositional proceeding pursuant to section 717B.4.

4. The local authority shall pay the animal care provider for the animal's maintenance regardless of proceeds received from the disposition of the animal or any reimbursement ordered by a court, pursuant to section 717B.4.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §16; 2002 Acts, ch 1130, §4; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §261
Referred to in **§717B.1**, **§717B.4**

717B.6 Destruction and disposition of wild animals.

A person may humanely destroy a wild animal as defined in section 481A.1, if the wild animal is permanently distressed by injury or disease to a degree that results in severe and prolonged suffering. The destroyed animal shall be subject to disposition as provided by rules adopted by the natural resource commission pursuant to chapter 17A.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §17

717B.7 Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1130, §10. See chapter 717D.

717B.8 Abandonment of cats and dogs — penalties.

A person who has ownership or custody of a cat or dog shall not abandon the cat or dog, except the person may deliver the cat or dog to another person who will accept ownership and custody or the person may deliver the cat or dog to an animal shelter or pound as defined in section 162.2. A person who violates this section is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §19

717B.9 Injury or interference with a police service dog.

1. A person who knowingly, and willfully or maliciously torments, strikes, administers a nonpoisonous desensitizing substance to, or otherwise interferes with a police service dog, without inflicting serious injury on the dog, commits a serious misdemeanor.

2. A person who knowingly, and willfully or maliciously does any of the following commits a class "D" felony:

a. Tortures a police service dog.

b. Injures, so as to disfigure or disable, a police service dog.

c. Sets a booby trap device for purposes of injuring, so as to disfigure or disable, or killing a police service dog.

d. Pays or agrees to pay a bounty for purposes of injury, so as to disfigure or disable, or killing a police service dog.

e. Kills a police service dog.

f. Administers poison to a police service dog.

3. As used in this section, "*police service dog*" means a dog used by a peace officer or correctional officer in the performance of the officer's duties, whether or not the dog is on duty.

4. This section does not apply to a peace officer or veterinarian who terminates the life of such a dog for the purpose of relieving the dog of undue pain or suffering, or to a person who justifiably acts in defense of self or another.

94 Acts, ch 1103, §20; 95 Acts, ch 107, §1