

Overview of Animal Welfare Legislation in Canada

Information curated on 20 January 2022

Jurisdiction	Name of Legislation	Implemented or Last Amended
Canada	Criminal Code	Current to 2021-12-23 and last amended on 2021-08-27
BC	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act	Current to January 19, 2022; last amended 2017-3-14
Alberta	Alberta Animal Protection Act	Current as of November 1, 2010; last amended 2009
Alberta	Alberta Animal Protection Regulations	Current as of January 29, 2021; last amended 2021
Saskatchewan	Animal Protection Act	In force since September 17, 2018
Manitoba	Animal Care Act	This version is current as of January 14, 2022. It has been in effect since May 20, 2021.
Ontario	Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act	Repealed 2019
Ontario	Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019	Current to November 29, 2021 (e-laws currency date)
Quebec	Animal Health Protection Act	Updated to 31 October 2021 (last amendment not listed)
Quebec	Animal Welfare and Safety Act	In force since June 11, 2021
Newfoundland and Labrador	Health and Protection Act • Animal Protection Standards Regulations • Animal Protection Regulations	- Statutes consolidated to Feb. 1, 2021 - Regulations consolidated to Feb. 1, 2021 - Point in Time Statutes Aug. 1/10 to Feb. 1, 2021 - Point in Time Regulations Aug. 1/10 to Feb. 1, 2021
New Brunswick	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Act	Current version: in force since Dec 18, 2020; This statute is current to 2022-01-12
Nova Scotia	Animal Protection Act	Passed 2018, in force from November 12 2019
Prince Edward Island	Animal Welfare Act	Amended 2019; current to December 4, 2020
Yukon	Animal Protection Act	In force since Dec 6, 2012, last update to online version unknown
Northwest Territories	Herd and Fencing Act	Current version: in force since Nov 28, 2014; Last updated from the web site of the Department of Justice of the Northwest Territories Government on 2022-01-14
Northwest Territories	Dog Act	Last amended 2013, posted version current to (unknown)
Northwest Territories	Wildlife Act	In force since November 28, 2014, section 46 - 48 in force since January 1, 2020
Northwest Territories	Species at Risk Act	Came into force in February 2010
Nunavut	The Dog Act	Current version: in force since Mar 10, 2011; Last updated from web site of the Legislation Division of the Justice Department of the Government of Nunavut. on 2022-01-14
Nunavut	Wildlife Act	In force since Sep 18, 2008. Amendments came into force on 2017-06-08 and 2018-06-13.

Note: Animal welfare laws in Canada can pretty fairly be called a patchwork, since provincial and territorial laws are very inconsistent in their level of detail and comprehensiveness and in what standards they set for animal treatment. They vary on everything from duty of care to what counts as inflicting suffering to what enforcement actions are possible when a case of animal cruelty is discovered. The main consistency is provided federally, since animal cruelty is covered in the Criminal Code. But by and large a consistent principle of all of these animal protection laws is that animals are typically considered property, and so harm to them is often conceived of as an economic harm to the owner or someone else, and little of the legislation actually considers it immoral or unethical in its own right to inflict suffering on another living being. Over the last few decades some effort has been put into updating animal welfare laws, but progress has been inconsistent. The most obvious cases of cruelty, like fighting or baiting, are very clearly banned, but in other cases it can be hard to prove that there was intent to cause harm to or neglect an animal, or it can be justified for economic reasons, and there is usually little enforcement or accountability for whoever perpetrated the harm or neglect beyond intervention to get the animals in question out of a harmful or neglectful situation and provide the care they need.

Hughes, E. L., and Meyer, C. (2000). "Animal Welfare Law in Canada and Europe." *Animal Law Review* 6(23). Lewis and Clark Law School. [https://www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/Animal Welfare Law in Canada and Europe.pdf](https://www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/Animal_Welfare_Law_in_Canada_and_Europe.pdf)

Fraser, D., Koralesky, K. E., & Urton, G. (2018). "Toward a harmonized approach to animal welfare law in Canada." *The Canadian Veterinary Journal/La Revue Veterinaire Canadienne* 59(3). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5819020/>

