

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual



Surf Dog Cruelty

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Surf Dog Animal Cruelty

With many activists concerned about virtually “anything” they don’t understand regarding animals, it is important to ensure training or competing surf dogs is not viewed as cruelty. Every state has felony laws criminalizing animal cruelty. State animal protection laws are primarily concerned with companion animals, though there are also some state wildlife protection laws. The federal law was to enable the prosecution of animal cruelty cases that span different states or jurisdictions.

The Federal Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act (PACT)

The Federal Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act (PACT) is a law that bans the intentional crushing, burning, drowning, suffocating, impalement or other serious harm to "living non-human mammals, birds, reptiles, or amphibians."

The law also bans "animal crush videos," meaning any photograph, motion picture film, video or digital recording or electronic image that depicts animal cruelty.

The penalty for violating the law can include a fine, a prison term of up to seven years or both.

Animal Rights Organizations

Intentional cruelty is when an individual purposely inflicts physical harm or injury on an animal. (The ASPCA and other organizations with cruelty investigation authority have arrested individuals who have deliberately maimed, tortured or even killed animals.)

Although many individuals are arrested for intentional cruelty, people who commit even the most heinous crimes against animals are often not prosecuted to the full extent of the law. In states where animal cruelty is considered a misdemeanor, individuals who commit intentional cruelty crimes against animals can receive, at most, one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Often, perpetrators receive no more than probation.

Training and Competitions

Two areas are considered important to prevent cruelty, during training and during competitions. Trainers must help the dog establish a comfortable feeling with the ocean. Gradually get your dog to enjoy water and ocean waves. If the dog has continued fear of the ocean, do not attempt to push them further as that can be intrepid as abuse.

For competitions, all surf dog contest judges prior to assuming their duties shall familiarize themselves with federal and state rules and procedures and if a problem occurs, make their findings in accordance therewith.

Contest judges shall not permit any person who is handling a dog to conduct himself/herself in a disorderly manner to include scolding the dog, nor to interfere in any way with an opponent’s entry. A judge who observes an incident shall report promptly to the head judge who will conduct and investigation for appropriate action. Action may range from disqualification of the individual’s entry to interference scoring on the heat sheet.

In summary, the lesson from this section is to make sure you are actively aware of the types of behaviors or actions that can be considered animal cruelty.