

HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL
ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATION

COMPILED BY THE
MINNESOTA HUMANE SOCIETY

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GENERAL PROTOCOL TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN CONDUCTING INVESTIGATIONS AS AN APPROVED HUMANE INVESTIGATOR

- I. Know your statutes on Animal Welfare and standards of care thoroughly.
- II. If unfamiliar with a species and the husbandry required, seek assistance from someone who has such knowledge and experience.
- III. Learn to observe details carefully. Do not get "just a general picture".
- IV. Be familiar with the Federal Animal Welfare Act and local laws regarding animal control, etc.
- V. Upon receiving a complaint:
 1. Get names, addresses, phone numbers of complainants or witnesses, and alleged offenders. Note any unusual aspects of the case such as divorce situation, prolonged illness, advancing age, etc., of alleged offender.
 2. Make contact with the alleged offender:
 - a. State you have received a complaint relative to _____.
 - b. Show copy of the statutes and specify violated portion.
 - c. Request to see the animal involved.
 - d. If complaint is valid, take a photograph. (Use of black and white film normally renders a more serious mood to an animal in distress than does color.)
 - e. If complaint is valid in your opinion, explain reason for investigation, thank owner and depart.
- f. Any discussion must be held by owner only, not children, neighbors, or other persons.
3. The health and condition of the animal are the main factors in determining whether the case is critical or non-critical. Evaluate the nutrition being offered the animal. Keep in mind the weather and its effect. If the present condition of the animal is continued for any length of time and could be considered very harmful, the case is critical. Depend on your instinct.
- VI. In the event of a serious complaint:
 1. Give the owner the option to relinquish the animal.
 - a. A form provided by your Humane Society should be signed by you and the owner (necessary for protection should the owner later change his mind). (See attached example Surrender Form.)
 2. If owner will not relinquish the animal, but is willing to attempt correction, make suggestions to improve the situation.
 3. Issue a 48 hour notice in verbal as well as written form. Such form should be provided by your humane society or through the State Society.
 4. State that you will return.

REGULATIONS PURSUANT TO APPROVED HUMANE INVESTIGATORS

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Persons, when submitting an application for appointment as an Approved Humane Investigator, will furnish the following information: name, address of the Humane Society with whom they are affiliated, a brief resume of their experience and education, both practical and formal, relative to the humane care of animals.

duties and investigations in an official dignified manner.

- b. The applicant to assist a Humane Society Investigator or an Approved Human Investigator with an investigation to gain knowledge in procedural policy necessary in investigations.

II. QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications for appointment as an Approved Humane Investigator shall include:

- A. Membership in or employment by a humane society as defined by Minnesota State Statutes 343.10, or be a State of Minnesota licensed Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, or a duly sworn peace officer, or law enforcement agent.

- B. Responsibility to his or her organization but compliance with all administrative rules and regulations issued by the State of Minnesota Humane Society.

- C. Demonstration of satisfactory knowledge of all statutes on animal abuse and standards of care, and its applications by oral and written examination to be given by the State Society at its discretion.

1. Knowledge of how to conduct and complete an investigation, including legally guided knowledge of how to file charges if required.

2. Satisfactory knowledge by documented experience and/or formal training of what constitutes proper care and husbandry of animals. A particular species may be designated.

3. The State Humane Society may require prior to approval of an applicant as an Approved Humane Investigator:

- a. Additional information as necessary to ascertain if the applicant for Approved Humane Investigator has satisfactory aptitude to perform the

4. An Approved Humane Investigator shall comply with the following:

- a. Cooperation whenever possible with other Approved Humane Investigators or law enforcement authorities if requested, to aid in an investigation of complaints relative to the care and treatment of animals;

- b. Conduct and actions shall be such as to avoid any undesirable publicity for county humane societies or the State Humane Society;

- c. Except when so authorized by the State Society, no Approved Humane Investigator shall represent themselves, at any stage in the conduct of an investigation, as acting directly in behalf of or as an agent of the State Society.

5. The appointment as an Approved Humane Investigator may be terminated following hearing for:

- a. Material misstated in the original application;

- b. Willful disregard or violation of State Statutes or regulations issued pursuant thereto;

- c. Conviction of any crime, an essential element of which is misstatement, fraud, or dishonesty or conviction of any felony, if the State Society determines, after investigation, that such person has not been sufficiently rehabilitated to warrant the public trust;

- d. Pursuing a continued course of misrepresentation or false statements regarding investigations relative to humane care of animals;
 - e. Failure to perform their investigational duties and enforcement of the statutes and/or regulations pursuant to animal care.
- 6. All Approved Humane Investigators shall prepare and submit to the State Society an annual report on forms furnished by the Society. It shall contain the species and numbers of animals involved, and total number of investigations performed that calendar year.

HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATION

I. INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is to be an operational guideline to aid law enforcement agents, Humane Society investigators and all of those interested in becoming a State of Minnesota Humane Investigator to professionally and successfully conduct investigations of alleged violations of State of Minnesota Statutes.

Anti-cruelty statutes provide means by which perpetrators of crimes against animals can be investigated and when necessary brought to justice.

It is imperative to stress here that every effort be made to correct a situation before prosecution is attempted. More than 80 percent of all cruelty complaints are due to owner ignorance. (Many are unjustified complaints to begin with, being neighborhood disputes or over-zealousness; still, every complaint must be verified.) The key to a successful investigation is common sense, and professionalism.

II. THE INVESTIGATOR:

A. Image: (A profile of a good humane investigator)

1. **Know Your Authority and Jurisdiction:** Under Minnesota State Statutes, a humane investigator has little more power than a private citizen regarding the enforcement of State Statutes. You do have the right to go to your local law enforcement agency and request assistance for the enforcement of state law. You do not have the power of enforcement yourself.

2. **Know All Laws Pertinent to Animal Abuse Thoroughly!** Copies of State of Minnesota humane statutes are available to you upon request. This is especially important when you go to your law enforcement agencies to request their aid. No act or omission is criminal or punishable as such unless, at the time, there is valid statute declaring that act or omission a crime and describing a penalty for such violation.

3. **Professionalism:** Your attitude and appearance must reflect professionalism if you are to command respect and credibility.

- a. **Introduction:** (First impression is the strongest.) A person is not legally entitled to act as an investigator unless he or she has been officially authorized by the appropriate agency. An applicant for a state Approved Humane Investigator license must submit a resume and be affiliated with a county humane society, law enforcement agency or be a licensed D.V.M.

Upon receiving a complaint on an alleged violation of state anti-cruelty law, the investigator should go to that location and identify him/herself to the owner of the animal. Do not speak to the neighbors or to children. State the nature of your visit and ask if you may see the animal in question. If no one is at home, do not enter the property, other than to and from the front door of the house. If you are sure that someone is at home in the rear of the

house, you may walk directly to other entrance. Any evidence you obtain at this time will be inadmissible since you have no permission to be on said property. If, however, you can observe the animal in question from public access (i.e., road or sidewalk) that observation can be used to obtain a warrant on probable cause.

- b. **Statutes:** Always bring a copy of your anti-cruelty statutes with you and upon verification of complaint, indicate to owner the appropriate section of which he/she is in violation.
- c. **Maintain Your Integrity:** Always do what you say you are going to do. If you ask the owner to correct a situation and tell the owner you are going to stop back, make sure you do.

Always make sure you separate emotion from fact. Tell it like it is, be honest and specific. Don't ever make threats such as, "If you don't build a dog house, I'll have you locked up."

Just explain what the violation really is and what the owner is expected to do to come into conformation with state law. Be as helpful as possible by offering advice and assistance where possible.

Your appearance is important as well. Always be neat, courteous and professional. A clip board or note book will aid your image. Stand erect and look directly at the individual you are speaking to. Speak clearly, politely, but with professional firmness.

III. THE COMPLAINT

Generally speaking, the complaints most organizations receive may be divided into three general classifications: 1) Vindictive; 2) Misguided; 3) Legitimate. Vindictive and misguided complaints probably represent the greatest percentage of complaints received by humane organizations and law enforcement agencies. A misguided complaint is one in which the complainant is incorrect in his/her belief that a violation has occurred, but sincerely believes that there is something wrong. A vindictive complaint is an unjust complaint given to cause harassment, or embarrass-

ment. A legitimate complaint is one in which the complaint has some basis in fact.

Remember that all complaints should be treated as legitimate until they have been proven otherwise. It is essential that they receive prompt and adequate handling.

Information regarding violation of cruelty is generally received in one of five ways: 1) Letters; 2) Telephone calls; 3) Personal visits to your office or society; 4) Encountered in course of duties; and 5) Referrals from veterinarians, police or State Humane Society.

A. Things to Remember in Handling Complaints:

1. The person taking the complaint must be polite and understanding, yet must try to get all necessary information required to conduct the investigation.
2. Make every effort to obtain the name and phone number of the individual making the complaint. Complaint forms should include: Who? What is going on? Where? (Exact location both to street and premises) When? How long?

Be sure to stress that all information received on complaints is confidential and will not be released without court order. This is to aid in obtaining the name and phone number of the individual making the complaint.

B. **Complaint Form:** Accurate, detailed record keeping of complaints and case histories is vitally important. Some sort of coding order may be helpful. You might also consult your local law enforcement agency to see how they keep records — also a good excuse for you to introduce yourself to them as the county society investigator. If someone other than the investigator receives complaints, that individual must be thoroughly briefed on your methods and procedures. Ideally, all information, both past and present, should be presented to the investigating officer along with current complaint.

The complaint form should include the following basic data:

1. Date received
2. Nature of complaint
3. Location of animal(s)
4. Name and address of suspect

5. Date and time of alleged violation
6. Name, address and telephone number of complaint and witnesses
7. Special circumstances: weather conditions, temperature, wind chill factor
8. Any additional facts pertinent to the investigation
9. Person who takes complaint
10. Complaint number (for example, see Minnesota Humane Society sample complaint form)

C. **The Investigation:** The term "investigate" simply means to examine and observe by systematic inquiry. In other words, the investigator's job is primarily to seek and discover the facts and then decide what course of action seems most appropriate. If you will take care of your facts, the law will usually take care of itself.

1. **Tools of the Trade:** A systematic and analytical approach must be taken. Documentation and accurate notes of all actions and observations are extremely important.

a. **Observation:** Your eyes, ears and nose are all integral tools of observation. What you saw during the investigation, i.e., cages, condition of animals and premises, surrounding property, access to food and water, etc., are all part of your report. Listen very carefully to the suspect. Take notes of what he or she says, i.e., vet visits, other trouble the individual has had prior to your arrival, etc. Also listen to the animals, breathing, crying, etc. Your nose, what you smell, is also admissible evidence. Remember, be alert!

b. **Written Report:** In addition to the information contained on the initial complaint, the investigator must make notes, to be included in his final report. These should include: date and time of investigation, conditions found upon arrival, suspect's comments relative to the allegations, investigator's comments to the suspect and recommendations made to the suspect.

Good report writing is dependent upon the investigator being entirely objective. There are five principals to good report writing: Accuracy, Completeness, Brevity, Fairness, and Format.

In order to be accurate the investigator must be honest. All information must be supported by fact. Avoid hearsay at all costs.

Completeness means reporting all the facts learned which may have a bearing on the case. If you know that certain information is lacking in the report, say so. Nothing must be taken for granted or assumed in writing a report.

Brevity demands that all irrelevant and unessential material be eliminated from the report. Don't worry about the shortness of the report, but only its completeness.

Fairness is the fourth essential in good report writing. The investigator must make every effort to be unbiased and not let his or her emotions get in the way of what is actual fact. Remember the court is not concerned with what is morally right.

Format refers to the arrangement of the materials presented and the visual form the report takes. All reports should be printed from notes taken during the investigation, and then typed. Make sure spelling is correct. Devise a standard report form - consistent use will result in familiarizing interested parties with your procedure and also insure no pertinent details are left out.

Never throw anything away. Your field notes should be kept in the case file as well. These field notes may come in handy in court.

c. **Photography As Evidence:**

1) **Probable cause:** In cruelty or neglect cases where the animals can be observed from public access, photos may be taken to be used as probable cause for the issuance of a search and seizure warrant, if necessary. Remember, prior to the issuance of a warrant, evidence can only be obtained from the public roadway or sidewalk. Never enter the premises to obtain photographic evidence. This could result in the

loss of the case as well as charges directed at you and/or the Society for illegal search and violation of an individual's constitutional right to privacy.

If you feel the complaint is justified and a warrant is required to remove the animals, the best source of probable cause is an instant-type camera. These are usually inexpensive and easy to use. The main advantage is you get your evidence in minutes. This is your justification for probable cause for the issuance of a warrant.

2) **Photography as Evidence:** Subsequent to the issuance of the warrant, photos may be taken as evidence on the property where the animals are located. Generally, the following guidelines regarding criminal photography should be followed:

- a) Black and white photos are by far preferable to color. Black and white normally renders a more serious mood to an animal cruelty complaint. Processing black and white is usually faster, more predictable and is cheaper. Additionally, black and white photos are easier to reproduce in newsletters, newspapers, etc.
- b) Identification of photos is an absolute must. It is advisable to keep a record of each photo taken on a separate sheet of paper for your records. A 5"x7" index card with the case #, photo #, date, individual's name, plus any other information, should be made for each photo. If possible, a record, including photos of a thermometer reading, ruler or other apparent means of identification regarding weather conditions, size of animal, etc., should be included in your series of photos.

After processing, immediately identify each photo with the corresponding index card and label the photo number and

case file on the back of the photo. (With processed film, especially if it is a very serious case, it is a good idea to get a statement from the film processor that the film was developed or shot with no alterations or retouching of any kind.)

- c) What and how to shoot is also important. The animals should be shot from front and rear and from the top looking down if possible. This is especially important with very thin animals. In the case of wounds or lacerations, a whole body shot followed by a close-up is preferable.

The physical environment where the animal is confined is also important in deciding the outcome of a court case. Photos should be taken of the animal in its environment with care to show fecal material, lack of food and water (i.e., empty dishes, etc.). Also the surrounding area should be photographed. If an animal is housed in a dog house within a junk yard, for example, both the dog house and surrounding junk should be shot.

IV. THE LEGAL PROCESS

A. **The Warrant:** Once you have verified that there is an abuse or neglect situation which is a violation of state statutes, the following basic procedures should be followed:

1. Notify the State Society of the violation.
2. Enlist the aid of a local peace officer or sheriff's department to accompany you to the site. Explain to law enforcement officials what statute has been violated and present your photographic evidence.

*NOTE: Before following the above procedure of marking the back of each photo, be certain to discuss this matter with your county prosecutor or attorney. Some prosecutors do not want photos introduced as evidence which have been marked in any way except as an exhibit of the court. If this is the case, you would do best to order two sets of prints, one for court and one for your case files.

Note: At this time, every effort should be made to try and correct the situation through education and counseling if it has not been done on your initial visit.

3. If corrective action cannot be achieved in this manner, or the life of the animal is in grave danger, ask the law enforcement officer to obtain a warrant to remove the animal(s) from the site.
4. Accompany the law enforcement officer to the court house or to the prosecuting attorney's office and present your evidence and description of the situation to the prosecuting attorney. Make sure that the individual who owns or has charge of the animals in question is charged with the correct violation.

Note: It is important that you, the investigator, present only the facts and nothing more. Do not add embellishments to the situation. Report only what you know to be true and factual.

5. Assuming you obtain the warrant, you should then seek to enlist the aid of a local veterinarian to accompany you and the law enforcement personnel back to the site. If you cannot get a veterinarian to accompany you, make arrangements to bring the animal(s) directly to the veterinarian's office for evaluation. His or her written evaluation and diagnosis is essential to a successful prosecution.
6. Before serving the warrant, you must have some place to house the animal(s). Such arrangements can be made with your local veterinarian or in the case of large animals, county fairgrounds or private boarding facilities could be utilized.

The expenses of the investigation authorized by state statutes, including the fee of the veterinarian, the expenses of keeping or disposing of any animal taken into custody pursuant to the investigation and all other expenses reasonable, incident to such investigation, shall be paid by the county treasurer from the county's general fund. If the person alleged to have violated state statutes is found guilty of the violation, the county shall have judgment against the guilty person for the total amount of the expenses (Minnesota Statutes 346.216).

7. Upon a proper determination by a licensed Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, any animal taken into custody following an investigation may be immediately disposed of when such animal is suffering and is beyond cure through reasonable care and treatment. The expenses of such disposal shall be paid by the county treasurer in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 346.216.

V. PUBLICITY

Utilization of the media in cruelty cases serves two very important functions. First, media coverage shows the community that your Society is busy aiding in the welfare of animals by the enforcement of state statutes. Your credibility as a community service organization is enhanced each time the public reads about your agency. Secondly, media coverage of investigation serves a very important role as an educational tool. It lets potential animal abusers know that someone will act to correct a situation and that there are laws relating to the abuse and neglect of animals in our state.

The media can be the most important weapon against neglect and abuse you have, but using it wisely and at the correct time is of paramount importance! The following suggestions should help you in the efficient use of the media:

1. Before contacting the media regarding a case, always talk to the prosecuting attorney. Never call the media unless you have a case which is airtight.
2. Give the media only the facts. Never try to embellish the story with "this is the worst case I have ever seen." This only serves to undermine your credibility. You must always present yourself in a professional manner. The use of sensationalism is not professional.
3. Never, ever exaggerate the conditions or the facts to the press. If you do this and they find out, which they will, the media will never trust you again and, indeed, may not want to cover any story which you have been involved in.
4. Never release any information prior to the serving of the warrant and the subsequent removal of the animals.
5. Develop good media contacts. It is a good

idea for you to personally visit your local radio, newspaper and TV station news directors to introduce yourself. The news director can let you know which reporter will be supportive and interested in covering animal-related stories. Thereafter, you should make every effort to use the same reporter for all your investigations and special events.

VI. PREPARATION FOR COURT APPEARANCE

One of the more neglected aspects in the training of investigators is the work of the procedure in the courtroom and on the witness stand. Appearances in court are part and parcel of the problem of law enforcement. It is in contested court cases that the investigator must prove his worth. Failure in testifying properly when on the witness stand may make worthless all the good work done before. This in no way lessens the importance of a good investigation, for the courtroom is the final test. Here the public is made fully aware of the investigation. The public forms its opinion not only upon the substance of the officer's testimony, but also upon his conduct on the witness stand.

If you think that testifying in court is a simple matter, you are due for a surprise. Confronting a skillful defense counsel in the courtroom can be a most trying encounter.

To prepare yourself for the witness stand, you must make yourself familiar with the case no matter how long ago the investigation occurred. Never let yourself be caught in the position of having to testify about a case which was investigated a long time before without a careful, thorough review of the case and the information within your knowledge. If you fail to review the case carefully, or rely on your memory alone, your testimony will result in confusion, inconsistencies, omission of material facts, and inaccuracies. It will reflect disrespect on you and your organization.

When you are on the witness stand, you are on the spot because you are an enforcement agent. You are looked upon as an interested party -- often as biased and prejudiced. The defense counsel may force these ideas, and accentuate the one that is most effective on the jury.

While on the witness stand you should follow these points of conduct:

1. **Tell the Truth:** Your purpose in testifying

is to assist the court in arriving at the true facts so that a just decision can be made. Relate the facts as you know them. That is your sole function on the witness stand.

2. **Don't Be Fearful:** This statement may seem strange, but the courtroom is a most formal setting. The fact that you are in the courtroom, the center of all eyes, may make you self-conscious, ill at ease, or even timid. Maintain your poise. Look squarely at the lawyers, the judge, and the jury. Tell the facts; telling them gives confidence. Take your time in answering questions.

3. **Be Prepared:** Refresh your memory about all the facts relative to the case. Visualize your testimony as a chain of events in order of occurrence. Do not memorize notes, but use them as a memory refresher. If you have the facts well in hand, your presentation will be interesting and acceptable.

4. **Listen to the Question:** Be sure you understand the question before attempting to answer it. Failure to get the precise meaning of the question is usually a constant source of embarrassment to the witness. This is recognized by some attorneys who harass the witness by asking questions in a low voice, making it necessary for the witness to ask that questions be restated. The attorney uses the request for continuous restatements to imply that the witness doesn't know what is going on. It is a means to discredit the witness. The witness can turn to the judge and request that he ask the attorney to speak so that he can be heard, or ask a question in a more understandable way.

5. **Be Frank, Modest, Natural:** Always be yourself. Speak in a steady, clear, conversational voice. Nothing impresses a judge or jury more than modesty. Frankness, modesty, and naturalness are qualities that people like, especially in court.

6. **Do Not Volunteer:** There is always the temptation to go beyond the statement of facts. Keep in mind that you are not called upon to make a speech. Your only duty is to answer the questions truthfully, and briefly. Do not argue the facts or draw conclusions from them.

7. **Keep Control of Emotions:** If you lose

your temper on the witness stand, you discredit yourself and prejudice the case. Ignore insults, attempted badgering, or the like. If the judge permits these tactics by counsel, there is nothing you can do but take it. Retain your poise and remain calm. Conserve your mental resources for answering questions in a dignified manner. Do not rise to the bait of the attorney who is trying to get you to lose your temper.

8. **Be Courteous:** Even though a question may be ridiculous or absurd, and the judge permits it to stand, answer it without any demonstration of contempt or sarcasm.
9. **Be Heard:** At all times speak so that the judge and jury can hear you. Testimony is valueless unless it can be heard. Don't make it necessary to be told to speak up. Don't shout, but don't make it appear that you and the attorney are holding a secret session. The judge and jury resent it. Remember that a trial is a public hearing and the defendant's liberty is at stake.
10. **Watch Appearances:** Sit erect on the witness stand. Sprawling or slouching creates a bad impression. Don't lean forward with elbows on knees. Be comfortable but erect. Testify in a businesslike way. Dress neatly.
11. **Trial:** An interrogation of a witness usually commences with the prosecuting attorney asking, "Now while you were in the vicinity of the location detailed in the complaint at (here the time of day and date are inserted), tell us in your own words what you observed."

It is here that you repeat the facts contained in the complaint exactly as you observed them. If notes or memoranda of any kind are to be referred to, it is necessary to ask permission of the court. This permission is usually granted. After you have refreshed your memory, look up and answer the question. Try not to read the answer. Look at it, digest it, and answer the question.

In some instances you may be inclined to introduce into the testimony a few details which you did not actually see but which you believe will help the case. This tendency may crop up when you are certain that the defendant is guilty, but you are

aware of a small loophole through which the defendant may escape punishment. **DON'T DO IT.** If you have done your job properly there is no need for it.

12. **Cross-Examination:** To familiarize yourself with courtroom procedure, attend a number of trials. This will also help you understand the atmosphere of the court, and give you a chance to observe the tactics of defense attorneys. It is the duty (to his client) of the defense attorney to question you on your story. Generally the defense attorney will try to demonstrate that a witness could not have recorded the events which he claims to have seen. Defense attorneys will try to work on a witness, get him excited and confused, then pound away at any discrepancy in his story. Remember that usually their only chance of beating the case is to discredit the witness.

When you are undergoing cross-examination, be responsive to all questions, but no more. Don't be talkative. Do not be evasive. If questions can be answered "yes" or "no" give that answer. "I believe so," and "I think not" are not proper answers. Remember, the less you say the less you can be cross-examined.

Many officers make too great an effort to appear alert. They may even answer questions before the questioner has finished asking the question. Again, don't do it. An alert appearance is readily secured just by not slouching in the witness chair, and by answering the question in a normal tone of voice. Take an adequate amount of time to understand the question before answering it. A short question not appearing to be of great importance may seem to require an immediate answer. But, such a question on cross-examination may be what is called a "zinger," or in other words, a question to trap you. If the question isn't clear then ask that it be repeated. If the answer is not known, admit it freely by stating "I do not know," or "I can't remember," or, "I didn't see that." If possible add the reason for not knowing or remembering. Above all, don't become excited or panic if you don't know the answer to a question.

In summary, the object of cross-examination is to test the witness:

- a. Opportunity for observation
- b. Attentiveness in observing
- c. Train of recollections
- d. Disposition to speak the truth

The witness who can withstand a rugged cross-examination without altering his basic testimony is a good witness.

13. **Expert Testimony:** There are many subjects for which expert testimony is not required. However, when possible it is advisable to have a veterinarian testify in cases involving animals. A veterinarian's testimony will be admitted as that of an expert, and as being unbiased. The supporting testimony of an expert will usually help your case. Some courts will pay for costs of an expert while he is testifying.

Sometimes a humane officer is presented as an expert. The defense attorney may ask you if you are an expert. Be very sure you qualify in background knowledge and training before you assume the role of an expert and then deal only with matters you are qualified to judge — do not get involved in matters of medical treatment, nutrition or the like unless you have a degree in such studies to back you up.

The judge or jury is expected to decide the case on the basis of the facts presented during the course of the trial. It has no other basis for a decision. Justice is dependent upon the presentation of all the facts. The absence of some of the facts may result in the drawing of unfounded conclusions. No court is willing to judge a defendant guilty unless completely convinced that the accused is guilty beyond all reasonable doubt. It will be up to you, the investigator, to supply all the facts necessary to win the case once you have decided to prosecute.

SUMMARY

In summary, remember the following points:

1. Know your laws.
2. Obtain official appointment.
3. Receive proper training (this includes training in the animal care field).
4. Remember the essentials of investigation — Who? What? When? Where? How?
5. Gain the cooperation of the prosecutor and other enforcement agencies.
6. Keep the complainant informed of your progress.
7. Remember that education is better than prosecution.