

WHAT IS DOG FIGHTING?

Dog fighting is a sadistic "contest" in which two dogs—specifically bred, conditioned, and trained to fight—are placed in a pit (generally a small arena enclosed by plywood walls) to fight each other for the spectators' entertainment and gambling. Fights average nearly an hour in length and often last more than two hours. Dogfights end when one of the dogs will not or cannot continue. In addition to these dogfights, there are reports of an increase in unorganized street fights in urban areas.



PENALTIES IN INDIANA FOR DOG FIGHTING

Spectator at dog fight: Class A misdemeanor— max 1 year imprisonment and max \$5,000 fine

Possession of dogs for fighting: Class D Felony— 6 months to 3 years imprisonment and maximum of \$10,000 fine

All material in this document provided by the Humane Society of the United States.

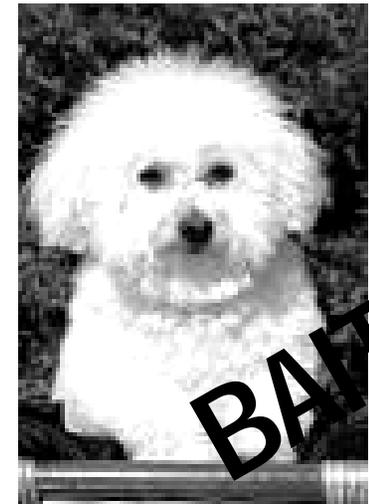
1801 Kentucky Street
Michigan City, IN 46360

MC Animal Care & Control

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Dog Fighting

For more information about animal cruelty, animal care, and Michigan City's animal cruelty task force, please visit us at www.mc-animalcare&control.com.



219/873-1500

It is estimated that more than 100,000 people in the US fight dogs for a few dollars.¹

How does it cause animal suffering?

The injuries inflicted and sustained by dogs participating in dogfights are frequently severe, even fatal. The American pit bull terriers used in the majority of these fights have been specifically bred and trained for fighting and are unrelenting in their attempts to overcome their opponents. With their extremely powerful jaws, they are able to inflict severe bruising, deep puncture wounds and broken bones. Dogs used in these events often die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, exhaustion, or infection hours or even days after the fight. Other animals are often sacrificed as well. Some owners train their dogs for fights using smaller animals such as cats, rabbits or small dogs. These "bait" animals are often stolen pets or animals obtained through "free to good home" advertisements.

Are there other concerns?

Yes. Numerous law enforcement raids have unearthed many disturbing facets of this illegal "sport." Young children are sometimes present at the events, which can promote insensitivity to animal suffering, enthusiasm for violence and a lack of respect for the law. Illegal gambling is the norm at dogfights. Dog owners and spectators wager thousands of dollars on their favorites. Firearms and other weapons have been found at dogfights because of the large amounts of cash present. And dog fighting has been connected to other kinds of violence—even homicide, according to newspaper reports. In addition, illegal drugs are often sold and used at dogfights.

What other effects does the presence of dog fighting have on people and animals in a community?

Dogs used for fighting have been bred for many generations to be dangerously aggressive toward

other animals. The presence of these dogs in a community increases the risk of attacks not only on other animals but also on people. Children are especially at risk, because their small size may cause a fighting dog to perceive a child as another animal.



Why should dog fighting be a felony offense?

There are several compelling reasons. Because dog fighting yields such large profits for participants, the minor penalties associated with misdemeanor convictions are not a sufficient deterrent. Dogfighters merely absorb these fines as part of the cost of doing business. The cruelty inherent in dog fighting should be punished by more than a slap on the hand. Dog fighting is not a spur-of-the-moment act; it is a premeditated and cruel practice.

Those involved in dog fighting go to extensive lengths to avoid detection by law enforcement, so investigations can be difficult, dangerous, and expensive. Law enforcement officials are more inclined to investigate dog fighting if it is a felony. As more states make dog fighting a felony offense, those remaining states with low penalties will become magnets for dogfighters.

1—*A Nation In The Ring* (online information) - The Humane Society of the United States

Should being a spectator also be a felony?

Yes. Spectators provide much of the profit associated with dog fighting. The money generated by admission fees and gambling helps keep this "sport" alive. Because dogfights are illegal and therefore not widely publicized, spectators do not merely happen upon a fight; they seek it out. They are willing participants who support a criminal activity through their paid admission and attendance.

What can I do to help stop dog fighting?

The Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org) encourage you to write letters to the media to increase public awareness of the dangers of dog fighting and to law enforcement officials or prosecutors and judges to urge them to take the issue seriously.

You may want to display the HSUS dog fighting poster in your community. For free posters, please include your name and address in an email to officeservices@hsus.org along with the number of posters you would like to receive, and the HSUS will send their catalog to you as well.

If you suspect that dog fighting is going on in your own neighborhood, alert the MC Animal Care & Control Department at 219/873-1500 between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m. and the Michigan City Police Department at 219/874-3211 at all other times.

Visit www.hsus.org/hsus_field/animal_fighting_the_final_round/ for The

Final Round brochure from the Humane Society of the United States.

