



# Using Animal Cruelty Incidents to Assess Risk When Responding to Domestic Violence Incidents\*

Recognizing the Link Between Domestic  
Violence and Animal Abusers

\*Source: Intimate Partner Violence and Pet Abuse - Andrew M. Campbell, Shannon L. Thompson, Tara L. Harris, and Sara E. Wiehe 2018





## How was this study done?

- In 2018, a major study was conducted in Marion County, Indiana, which includes the Indianapolis metropolitan area. Incidents of domestic violence in this area are **8x** the national rate.
- Its purpose was to study the connection between Intimate Partner Violence and Pet Abuse.
- The study collected information from responding Law Enforcement Officers and Victim reports from the scene.
- A total of 3,416 domestic violence officer information sheets were analyzed for this study, involving 3,477 suspects, 3,476 victims, and 3,191 witnesses.





## What does this study tell us?

- A comparison was made between suspects with only a history of domestic violence and those that also had a history of animal abuse to see if animal abuse was an indicator of other abuse crimes. Some examples:

### Of criminals with a

- History of Rape
  - 8% were DV only suspects
  - 26% were DV and animal abuse suspects
- History of Strangulation Attempt
  - 47% were DV only suspects
  - 76% were DV and animal abuse suspects
- History of threatening to kill victim
  - 35% were DV only suspects
  - 78% were DV and animal abuse suspects

The study also showed that when suspects have a history of animal abuse, **victims are more likely to wait to call 911.**





Recognizing that DV incidents are some of the most dangerous for **Law Enforcement**, here are some examples of how this information could be used to assess risk ...

- Increase situational awareness to include signs of animal abuse.
- Include question regarding any history of animal abuse on existing Risk Assessment checklists / worksheets
- Collect risk assessment information on perpetrators from domestic violence victims to include with incident report
- Partner with **A Way Out** to receive copies of perpetrator information sheets provided to Sheriff Deputies prior to serving PFA notifications.
- Partner with animal cruelty enforcement officers, Teacher's Pet, Potter County Animal Assistance Project and local veterinarians to request notifications of suspected cases of animal cruelty.





## Sources:

- ***Intimate Partner Violence and Pet Abuse: Responding Law Enforcement Officers' Observations and Victim Reports From the Scene*** - Andrew M. Campbell, Shannon L. Thompson, Tara L. Harris, and Sarah E. Wiehe,

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- ***Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Guidelines 2017*** -  
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of  
Public Safety & Security

