



## TENNESSEE ANIMAL ABUSER REGISTRATION LAW

By: Kristen Miller, Senior Legislative Attorney  
Shannon King, Legislative Research Intern

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### ISSUE

Describe Tennessee's animal abuser registration law.

### SUMMARY

In May 2015, Tennessee passed a first-in-the-nation [animal abuser registration law](#). Under the new law, beginning January 1, 2016, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) must post a publicly accessible list on its [website](#) of anyone convicted of certain serious animal abuse offenses on and after that date. The registry must include the abuser's full legal name and an identifying photograph (Tenn. Code Ann. § 40-39-101 et seq.).

A first-time abuser generally remains on the registry for two years. Abusers with a subsequent conviction stay on the registry for five years following the most recent conviction.

Inclusion on the registry is a penalty that is in addition to applicable criminal fines or imprisonment.

### ***Required Registrants***

The law requires anyone convicted of the following animal abuse crimes to be listed on the registry:

1. intentionally killing or intentionally causing serious physical injury with no justifiable purpose and with conduct that tortures or maims ("aggravated cruelty to animals"),



2. felony animal fighting, or
3. certain sexual activity involving animals.

### ***Registry Contents***

Under Tennessee's law, the following information must be on the registry:

1. the convicted abuser's full legal name,
2. a photograph of the abuser that was taken as part of the booking process, and
3. any other identifying information necessary to properly identify the abuser and exclude innocent people.

The list cannot contain Social Security, driver's license, or other state or federal identification numbers.

### ***Registration Process***

The law requires court clerks, within 60 days after a conviction judgement, to submit to the TBI (1) a copy of the judgement and (2) the date of birth of anyone convicted.

A first-time offender must have his or her name and identifying information on the registry for two years after the conviction date.

A subsequent animal abuse conviction subjects an abuser to having his or her information on the list for five years after the most recent conviction date.

A registrant's name and identifying information must be removed from the registry if his or her applicable animal abuse offense is expunged.

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