

CHAPTER 343

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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343.01 PURPOSES; POWERS; COUNTY ORGANIZATION.

Subdivision 1. **Formation authorized.** A state federation of county and district societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals may be created as a corporation under chapter 317A for the purpose provided in section 343.06. The federation may appoint representatives in any county where no active county or district society exists for the purpose of receiving and accounting for funds from any source, and may also appoint agents at large to carry out the work of the federation throughout the state. The federation and all county and district societies may appoint agents for the purpose of investigating or otherwise assisting lawfully empowered officials in the prosecution of persons charged with cruelty to animals. Appointed agents must have training and experience in activities relating to prevention of cruelty to animals or enforcement of laws relating to cruelty to animals. The federation may make bylaws as are necessary to implement its authority under this chapter and under chapter 317A.

Subd. 1a. **Minnesota humane society; continuation confirmed.** The Minnesota humane society, also known as the Minnesota society for the prevention of cruelty, is confirmed and continued as a nonprofit organization under chapter 317A.

Subd. 1b. **Independent organizations; powers of the federated humane societies.** (a) The Minnesota humane society, also known as the Minnesota society for the prevention of cruelty, and the Minnesota federated humane societies are not affiliated with each other or with the state of Minnesota.

(b) The Minnesota federated humane societies have the powers given to it under this chapter.

Subd. 2. **Unauthorized use of names prohibited.** It is unlawful for any organization, association, firm or corporation not named in this chapter to refer to itself as or in any way to use the names Minnesota federated humane societies, Minnesota society for the prevention of cruelty, the Minnesota humane society, or any combination of words or phrases using the above names which would imply that it represents, acts in behalf or is a branch of the society or the federation.

Subd. 3. **Powers and duties.** The federation and the society must each be governed by a board of directors designated in accordance with chapter 317A. The powers, duties, and organization of the federation and the society and other matters for the conduct of the business of the federation and the society are as provided in chapter 317A and in the articles of incorporation and bylaws of each organization.

History: (7927) *RL s 3125; 1971 c 85 s 1; 1975 c 369 s 1; 1977 c 264 s 1; 1983 c 293 s 97; 1985 c 285 s 47; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 394 s 3; 1989 c 304 s 137; 1994 c 634 art 1 s 18-21*

343.02 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5; 1977 c 332 s 17]

343.03 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5; 1977 c 332 s 17]

343.04 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5]

343.05 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5]

343.06 PURPOSE OF FEDERATION.

It shall be the purpose of the state federation of county and district humane societies to assist in the enforcement of the laws for the prevention of wrongs to animals; to assist in the organization of district and county societies and give them representation in the state federation; to aid such societies and agents in the enforcement of the laws for the prevention of wrongs to animals which may now or hereafter exist, and to promote the growth of education and sentiment favorable to the protection of animals.

History: (7930) 1905 c 274 s 3; 1975 c 369 s 4; 1977 c 264 s 2; 1987 c 394 s 4

343.07 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5]

343.08 [Repealed, 1987 c 394 s 14]

343.09 [Repealed, 1977 c 264 s 5]

343.10 COUNTY AND DISTRICT SOCIETIES.

A county society for the prevention of cruelty to animals may be formed in any county and a district society for the prevention of cruelty to animals may be formed in any group of two or more contiguous or noncontiguous counties or parts of counties by not less than seven incorporators. County and district societies shall be created as corporations under chapter 317A and as provided in the bylaws of the state federation.

History: (7934) *RL s 3126*; 1975 c 369 s 7; 1987 c 394 s 5; 1989 c 304 s 137

343.11 ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY, APPROPRIATIONS.

Every county and district society for the prevention of cruelty to animals may acquire, by purchase, gift, grant, or devise, and hold, use, or convey, real estate and personal property, and lease, mortgage, sell, or use the same in any manner conducive to its interest, to the same extent as natural persons. The county board of any county, or the council of any city, in which such societies exist, may, in its discretion, appropriate for the maintenance and support of such societies in the transaction of the work for which they are organized, any sums of money not otherwise appropriated, not to exceed in any one year the sum of \$4,800 or the sum of 50 cents per capita based upon the county's or city's population as of the most recent federal census, whichever is greater; provided, that no part of the appropriation shall be expended for the payment of the salary of any officer of the society.

History: *RL s 3127*; 1913 c 31 s 1; 1955 c 366 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 187 s 1; 1975 c 369 s 8; 1985 c 69 s 1; 1987 c 394 s 6

343.12 DUTIES OF PEACE OFFICERS.

Upon application of any agent appointed by the federation or a county or district society, it shall be the duty of, any sheriff or the agent's deputy or any police officer to investigate any alleged violation of the law relative to cruelty to animals, and to arrest any person found violating those laws. It shall also be the duty of those officers to take possession of any animals in their respective jurisdictions which have been cruelly treated, and deliver the same to the proper officers of the county or district for custody and care.

History: (7936) *RL s 3128*; 1975 c 369 s 9; 1977 c 332 s 15; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 394 s

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

343.20 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Application.** Except as otherwise indicated by the context, for purposes of sections 343.20 to 343.36, the terms defined in this section have the meanings given them.

Subd. 2. **Animal.** "Animal" means every living creature except members of the human race.

Subd. 3. **Torture; cruelty.** "Torture" or "cruelty" means every act, omission, or neglect which causes or permits unnecessary or unjustifiable pain, suffering, or death.

Subd. 4. **Impure milk.** "Impure and unwholesome milk" means all milk obtained from diseased or unhealthy animals, or from animals fed on any substance which is putrefied or fermented.

Subd. 5. **Animal control officer.** "Animal control officer" means an officer employed by or under contract with an agency of the state, county, municipality, or other governmental subdivision of the state which is responsible for animal control operations in its jurisdiction.

History: (10442) *RL s 5151; 1981 c 53 s 1; 1989 c 37 s 1*

343.21 OVERWORKING OR MISTREATING ANIMALS; PENALTY.

Subdivision 1. **Torture.** No person shall overdrive, overload, torture, cruelly beat, neglect, or unjustifiably injure, maim, mutilate, or kill any animal, or cruelly work any animal when it is unfit for labor, whether it belongs to that person or to another person.

Subd. 2. **Nourishment; shelter.** No person shall deprive any animal over which the person has charge or control of necessary food, water, or shelter.

Subd. 3. **Enclosure.** No person shall keep any cow or other animal in any enclosure without providing wholesome exercise and change of air.

Subd. 4. **Low feed.** No person shall feed any cow on food which produces impure or unwholesome milk.

Subd. 5. **Abandonment.** No person shall abandon any animal.

Subd. 6. **Temporary abandonment.** No person shall allow any maimed, sick, infirm, or disabled animal to lie in any street, road, or other public place for more than three hours after receiving notice of the animal's condition.

Subd. 7. **Cruelty.** No person shall willfully instigate or in any way further any act of cruelty to any animal or animals, or any act tending to produce cruelty to animals.

Subd. 8. **Caging.** No person shall cage any animal for public display purposes unless the display cage is constructed of solid material on three sides to protect the caged animal from the elements and unless the horizontal dimension of each side of the cage is at least four times the length of the caged animal. The provisions of this subdivision do not apply to the Minnesota state agricultural society, the Minnesota state fair, or to the county agricultural societies, county fairs, to any agricultural display of caged animals by any political subdivision of the state of Minnesota, or to district, regional or national educational livestock or poultry exhibitions. The provisions of this subdivision do not apply to captive wildlife, the exhibition of which is regulated by section 97A.041.

Subd. 9. **Penalty.** A person who fails to comply with any provision of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. A person convicted of a second or subsequent violation of subdivision 1 or 7 within five years of a previous violation of subdivision 1 or 7 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

Subd. 10. **Restrictions.** If a person is convicted of violating this section, the court shall require that pet or companion animals, as defined in section 346.36, subdivision 6, that have not been seized by a peace officer or agent and are in the custody of the

person must be turned over to a peace officer or other appropriate officer or agent unless the court determines that the person is able and fit to provide adequately for an animal. If the evidence indicates lack of proper and reasonable care of an animal, the burden is on the person to affirmatively demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the person is able and fit to have custody of and provide adequately for an animal. The court may limit the person's further possession or custody of pet or companion animals, and may impose other conditions the court considers appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- (1) imposing a probation period during which the person may not have ownership, custody, or control of a pet or companion animal;
- (2) requiring periodic visits of the person by an animal control officer or agent appointed pursuant to section 343.01, subdivision 1;
- (3) requiring performance by the person of community service in a humane facility; and
- (4) requiring the person to receive behavioral counseling.

History: (10443) *RL s 5152; 1959 c 571 s 1-2; 1974 c 3 s 2; 1981 c 53 s 2; 1986 c 386 art 4 s 24; 1986 c 444; 1990 c 387 s 1; 1990 c 612 s 2; 1993 c 326 art 4 s 10,11*

343.22 INVESTIGATION OF CRUELTY COMPLAINTS.

Subdivision 1. **Reporting.** Any person who has reason to believe that a violation of this chapter has taken place or is taking place may apply to any court having jurisdiction over actions alleging violation of that section for a warrant and for investigation. The court shall examine under oath the person so applying and any witnesses the applicant produces and the court shall take their affidavits in writing. The affidavits must set forth facts tending to establish the grounds for believing a violation of this chapter has occurred or is occurring, or probable cause to believe that a violation exists. If the court is satisfied of the existence of the grounds of the application, or that there is probable cause to believe a violation exists, it shall issue a signed search warrant and order for investigation to a peace officer in the county. The order shall command the officer to proceed promptly to the location of the alleged violation. The order may command that a doctor of veterinary medicine accompany the officer.

Subd. 2. **Police investigation.** The peace officer shall search the place designated in the warrant and, together with the veterinary doctor, shall conduct an investigation of the facts surrounding the alleged violation. The peace officer may retain in custody, subject to the order of the court, any property or things which are specified in the warrant, including any animal if the warrant so specifies. The warrant shall contain the names of the persons presenting affidavits in support of the application and the grounds for its issuance. Service shall be made in accordance with the provisions of sections 626.13, 626.14, and 626.16. The warrant must be executed and returned to the court which issued the warrant within ten days after its date; after the expiration of that time the warrant, unless executed, is void. The officer executing the warrant shall promptly return the warrant to the court, and deliver to it a written inventory of the property or things taken, verified by the certificate of the officer. The warrant and order for investigation issued pursuant to this section and section 343.23 shall have the same force as a warrant issued pursuant to chapter 626.

Subd. 3. **Disposal of animals.** Upon a proper determination by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine, any animal taken into custody pursuant to this section may be immediately disposed of when the animal is suffering and is beyond cure through reasonable care and treatment. All other animals shall be disposed of as provided in section 343.235. The authority taking custody of the animals may recover all costs incurred under this section.

History: 1971 c 647 s 1; 1974 c 299 s 1; 1981 c 53 s 3; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 394 s 8; 1991 c 122 s 1,2

343.23 EXPENSES OF INVESTIGATION.

The expenses of the investigation authorized by section 343.22, including the fee of the doctor of veterinary medicine, the expenses of keeping or disposing of any animal taken into custody pursuant to an investigation, and all other expenses reasonably incident to the investigation shall be paid by the county treasurer from the general fund of the county. If the person alleged to have violated section 343.21 is found guilty of the violation, the county shall have judgment against the guilty person for the amount of the expenses.

History: 1971 c 647 s 2; 1977 c 332 s 16; 1981 c 53 s 4

343.235 DISPOSITION OF SEIZED ANIMALS.

Subdivision 1. **General rule.** An animal taken into custody under section 343.22 or 343.29 may be humanely disposed of at the discretion of the jurisdiction having custody of the animal ten days after the animal is taken into custody, provided that the procedures in subdivision 3 are followed. An animal raised for food or fiber products may not be seized or disposed of without prior examination by a licensed veterinarian pursuant to a warrant issued by a judge.

Subd. 2. **Security.** A person claiming an interest in an animal in custody under subdivision 1 may prevent disposition of the animal by posting security in an amount sufficient to provide for the animal's actual costs of care and keeping. The security must be posted within ten days of the seizure inclusive of the date of the seizure.

Subd. 3. **Notice; right to hearing.** (a) The authority taking custody of an animal under section 343.22 or 343.29 shall give notice of this section by delivering or mailing it to a person claiming an interest in the animal or by posting a copy of it at the place where the animal is taken into custody or by delivering it to a person residing on the property, and telephoning, if possible. The notice must include:

(1) a description of the animal seized; the authority and purpose for the seizure; the time, place, and circumstances under which the animal was seized; and the location, address, telephone number, and contact person where the animal is kept;

(2) a statement that a person claiming an interest in the animal may post security to prevent disposition of the animal and may request a hearing concerning the seizure or impoundment and that failure to do so within ten days of the date of the notice will result in disposition of the animal; and

(3) a statement that all actual costs of the care, keeping, and disposal of the animal are the responsibility of the person claiming an interest in the animal, except to the extent that a court or hearing officer finds that the seizure or impoundment was not substantially justified by law.

The notice must also include a form that can be used by a person claiming an interest in the animal for requesting a hearing under this subdivision.

(b) Upon request of a person claiming an interest in the animal, which request must be made within ten days of the date of seizure, a hearing must be held within five business days of the request, to determine the validity of the seizure and impoundment. If the seizure was done pursuant to a warrant under section 343.22, the hearing must be conducted by the judge who issued the warrant. If the seizure was done under section 343.29, the municipality taking custody of the animal or, in the case of a humane society, the municipality from which the animal was seized, may either (1) authorize a licensed veterinarian with no financial interest in the matter or professional association with either party or (2) use the services of a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. A person claiming an interest in the animal who is aggrieved by a decision of a hearing officer under this subdivision may seek a court order governing the seizure or impoundment within five days of notice of the order.

(c) The judge or hearing officer may authorize the return of the animal, if the judge or hearing officer finds that:

(1) the animal is physically fit; and

(2) the person claiming an interest in the animal can and will provide the care required by law for the animal.

(d) The person claiming an interest in the animal is liable for all actual costs of care, keeping, and disposal of the animal, except to the extent that a court or hearing officer finds that the seizure or impoundment was not substantially justified by law. The costs must be paid in full or a mutually satisfactory arrangement for payment must be made between the municipality and the person claiming an interest in the animal before return of the animal to the person.

History: 1991 c 122 s 4; 1995 c 244 s 7

343.24 CRUELTY IN TRANSPORTATION.

Subdivision 1. **Penalty.** Any person who does any of the following is guilty of a misdemeanor:

(a) carries or causes to be carried, any live animals upon any vehicle or otherwise, without providing suitable racks, cars, crates, or cages in which the animals can both stand and lie down during transportation and while awaiting slaughter;

(b) except as provided in subdivision 2, paragraph (a), carries or causes to be carried, upon a vehicle or otherwise, any live animal having feet or legs tied together, or in any other cruel or inhumane manner;

(c) transports or detains livestock in cars or compartments for more than 28 consecutive hours without unloading the livestock in a humane manner into properly equipped pens for rest, water, and feeding for a period of at least five consecutive hours, unless requested to do so as provided in subdivision 2, paragraph (b), or unless prevented by storm or unavoidable causes which cannot be anticipated or avoided by the exercise of due diligence and foresight; or

(d) permits livestock to be crowded together without sufficient space to stand, or so as to overlie, crush, wound, or kill each other.

Subd. 2. **Exceptions.** (a) A person may carry or cause to be carried, upon a vehicle or otherwise, a cloven-hoofed animal having legs tied together, if:

(1) the person transporting the animal is the animal's owner or an employee or agent of the owner;

(2) the animal weighs 250 pounds or less;

(3) the tying is done in a humane manner and is necessary for the animal's safe transport; and

(4) the animal's legs are tied for no longer than one-half hour.

(b) A person or corporation engaged in transporting livestock may confine livestock for 36 consecutive hours if the owner or person with custody of that particular shipment of livestock requests in writing that an extension be allowed. That written request shall be separate from any printed bill of lading or other railroad form.

History: (10444) RL s 5153; 1921 c 186 s 1; 1981 c 53 s 5; 1998 c 402 s 1

343.25 DOCKING HORSES; PENALTY.

A person who cuts the bony part of a horse's tail for the purpose of docking it, or who causes or knowingly permits the same to be done upon premises of which the person is owner, lessee, or user, or who assists in the cutting is guilty of a misdemeanor. When a horse is found so cut, upon the premises or in the custody of any person, and the wound resulting is unhealed, that fact shall constitute prima facie evidence that the offense was committed by the person. All fines resulting from complaint made by an officer or agent of any society of this state for the prevention of cruelty to animals for any offense specified in this section shall be paid to the society whose officer or agent made the complaint.

History: (10445) RL s 5154; 1981 c 53 s 6; 1986 c 444

343.26 CLIPPED ANIMALS; PENALTY.

No person who has custody of any animal which has had its hair removed by clipping or shearing shall cause or permit the animal to stand on a road, street, or other unsheltered place between November 1 and May 1 within 60 days after the clipping or shearing, unless the animal is blanketed. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

History: (10446) *RL s 5155; 1981 c 53 s 7*

343.27 POISONING ANIMALS.

Any person who unjustifiably administers any poisonous, or noxious drug or substance to any animal, or procures or permits it to be done, or unjustifiably exposes that drug or substance with intent that the drug be taken by any animal, whether the animal is the property of the person or another, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

History: (10448) *RL s 5157; 1979 c 102 s 13; 1981 c 53 s 8; 1986 c 444*

343.28 ANIMAL WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

An owner or person having charge of any animal who knows the animal has any infectious or contagious disease, or knows the animal has recently been exposed to an infectious or contagious disease, who sells or barter the animal, or knowingly permits the animal to run at large or come into contact with any other animal, or with another person without that person's knowledge and permission shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

History: (10450) *RL s 5159; 1980 c 467 s 36; 1981 c 53 s 9*

343.29 EXPOSURE OF ANIMALS; DUTY OF OFFICERS.

Subdivision 1. **Delivery to shelter.** Any peace officer, animal control officer, or agent of the federation or county or district societies for the prevention of cruelty, may remove, shelter, and care for any animal which is not properly sheltered from cold, hot, or inclement weather or any animal not properly fed and watered, or provided with suitable food and drink in circumstances that threaten the life of the animal. When necessary, a peace officer, animal control officer, or agent may deliver the animal to another person to be sheltered and cared for, and furnished with suitable food and drink. In all cases, the owner, if known, shall be immediately notified as provided in section 343.235, subdivision 3, and the person having possession of the animal, shall have a lien thereon for its actual costs of care and keeping and the expenses of the notice. If the owner or custodian is unknown and cannot by reasonable effort be ascertained, or does not, within ten days after notice, redeem the animal by paying the expenses authorized by this subdivision, the animal may be disposed of as provided in section 343.235.

Subd. 2. **Disposal of animals.** Upon a proper determination by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine, any animal taken into custody pursuant to subdivision 1 may be immediately disposed of when the animal is suffering and is beyond cure through reasonable care and treatment. The expenses of disposal shall be subject to the provisions of section 343.23.

History: (10451) *RL s 5160; 1907 c 398 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1974 c 299 s 2; 1981 c 53 s 10; 1987 c 394 s 9; 1989 c 37 s 2; 1991 c 122 s 3; 1995 c 244 s 8*

343.30 INJURY TO BIRDS.

A person who in any manner maliciously maims, kills, or destroys any bird designated as unprotected by section 97A.015, subdivision 52, or who maliciously destroys the nests or eggs of any such bird shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: (10447) *RL s 5156; 1981 c 53 s 11; 1986 c 386 art 4 s 25*

343.31 ANIMAL FIGHTS PROHIBITED.

Any person who (1) promotes or engages in, or is employed at the activity of cockfighting, dogfighting, or violent pitting of one domestic animal against another of the same or a different kind; or (2) receives money for the admission of any person to any place used, or about to be used, for that activity; or (3) willfully permits any person to enter or use for that activity premises of which the permitter is the owner, agent, or occupant; or (4) uses, trains or possesses a dog or other animal for the purpose of participating in, engaging in or promoting that activity is guilty of a felony. Any person who purchases a ticket of admission or otherwise gains admission to that activity is guilty of a misdemeanor.

History: (10449) RL s 5158; 1981 c 22 s 1; 1986 c 444

343.315 LIVE LURE GREYHOUND TRAINING OR RACING.

No person may train a greyhound for racing using a live lure or live bait or conduct a greyhound race using a live lure or live bait.

History: 1991 c 74 s 1

343.32 ARTIFICIALLY COLORED ANIMALS; SALE.

No chick, duckling, gosling, or rabbit that has been dyed or otherwise colored artificially may be sold or offered for sale; raffled; offered or given as a prize, premium, or advertising device; or displayed in any store, shop, carnival, or other public place.

History: 1965 c 620 s 1

343.33 USE AS ADVERTISING DEVICES.

Chicks, ducklings, and goslings younger than four weeks of age shall not be sold or offered for sale; raffled; or offered or given as a prize, premium, or advertising device, in quantity of fewer than 12 birds to an individual person unless sold by a person, firm, partnership or corporation engaged in the business of selling chicks, ducklings, and goslings for agricultural or wildlife purposes.

History: 1965 c 620 s 2; 1981 c 53 s 12

343.34 CARE OF ANIMALS USED AS ADVERTISING DEVICES.

Stores, shops, vendors, and others offering chicks, ducklings, or goslings for sale; raffle; or as a prize, premium, or advertising device; or displaying chicks, ducklings, or goslings to the public; shall provide and operate brooders or other heating devices that may be necessary to maintain the chicks, ducklings, or goslings in good health, and shall keep adequate food and water available to the birds at all times.

History: 1965 c 620 s 3; 1981 c 53 s 13

343.35 VIOLATIONS.

A violation of sections 343.32 to 343.34 is a petty misdemeanor; provided that, after any violation has been called to the attention of the violator by any law enforcement officer, each day on which the violation continues or is repeated constitutes a separate offense.

History: 1965 c 620 s 4; 1981 c 53 s 14

343.36 GREASED PIG CONTESTS AND TURKEY SCRAMBLES.

No person shall operate, run or participate in a contest, game, or other like activity, in which a pig, greased, oiled or otherwise, is released and wherein the object is the capture of the pig, or in which a chicken or turkey is released or thrown into the air and wherein the object is the capture of the chicken or turkey. Any violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

History: 1971 c 649 s 1; 1981 c 53 s 15

343.37 DECOMPRESSION CHAMBERS PROHIBITED.

A person may not use a decompression chamber to destroy an animal. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

History: 1985 c 270 s 1

343.40 DOG HOUSES.

Subdivision 1. **In general.** A person in charge or control of any dog which is kept outdoors or in an unheated enclosure shall provide the dog with shelter and bedding as prescribed in this section as a minimum.

Subd. 2. **Building specifications.** The shelter shall include a moistureproof and windproof structure of suitable size to accommodate the dog and allow retention of body heat. It shall be made of durable material with a solid, moisture-proof floor or a floor raised at least two inches from the ground. Between November 1 and March 31 the structure must have a windbreak at the entrance. The structure shall be provided with a sufficient quantity of suitable bedding material consisting of hay, straw, cedar shavings, blankets, or the equivalent, to provide insulation and protection against cold and dampness and promote retention of body heat.

Subd. 3. **Shade.** Shade from the direct rays of the sun, during the months of June to September shall be provided.

Subd. 4. **Farm dogs.** In lieu of the requirements of subdivisions 2 and 3, a dog kept on a farm may be provided with access to a barn with a sufficient quantity of loose hay or bedding to protect against cold and dampness.

Subd. 5. **Zoning.** All shelters required by this section shall be subject to all building or zoning regulations of any city, township, county, or state.

Subd. 6. **Penalty.** Whoever violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: 1959 c 571 s 2; 1965 c 764 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1981 c 53 s 16; 1998 c 402 s 2