



NOTICE



The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires that humane care and treatment be provided for certain warm-blooded animals that are exhibited to the public, bred for commercial sale, used in biomedical research or transported commercially. Entities licensed or registered with USDA must provide their animals with adequate care and treatment in the areas of housing, handling, sanitation, nutrition, water, veterinary care and protection from extreme weather and temperatures. The AWA excludes animals raised for food or fiber.

To ensure that AWA standards are being met, inspectors from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conduct routine, comprehensive inspections of licensed and registered facilities and animals – assessing all areas of care and treatment covered by the AWA. These inspections are unannounced, thereby giving inspectors a genuine sense of how licensees and registrants are caring for their animals. The noncompliant items observed by the inspector are documented on an inspection report, and these reports portray the conditions that inspectors found at the time of the inspection. The inspection reports are posted online as public information on APHIS' website.

APHIS' goal is for all AWA-regulated facilities to be in full compliance every day. Inspectors are trained to identify and document all non-compliant items on the inspection reports. In some cases, a licensee or registrant will correct a non-compliant item at the time of inspection and the inspector can document that the item was corrected on the report. Otherwise, the inspector will set a deadline for the non-compliant item to be corrected. At some point after the deadline, a re-inspection will take place. The timing of the re-inspection depends on a number of risk factors, including the nature of the non-compliant item and the overall compliance history of the facility. Although the inspector may follow up to confirm corrective action was taken, corrected non-compliant items will not show up on subsequent inspection reports.

In situations where identified non-compliant items are not corrected within the specified timeframe, APHIS takes appropriate enforcement action. Violations of the AWA can lead to penalties, including official warnings, fines and license suspensions/revocations. Completed APHIS enforcement actions are posted as monthly press releases; these releases can be found at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/index.shtml.