



# Understanding the Role of the AKC When Breeder Harassment is Suspected

The American Kennel Club (AKC), founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit purebred dog registry and club of clubs dedicated to promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function, advocating for the purebred dog as a family companion, advancing canine health and well-being, working to protect the rights of all dog owners, and promoting responsible dog ownership.

The AKC Government Relations Department (AKC GR) works to protect the rights of dog owners, promote responsible dog ownership and ensure that laws governing dog ownership and breeding are reasonable, enforceable and non-discriminatory. GR further identifies its mission as educating and informing responsible dog owners and breeders about the issues that impact them as well as monitoring and positively impacting legislation that affect them.

AKC is concerned about reports of the targeting of breeders and responsible dog owners; and has established a taskforce on breeder harassment. By collecting and analyzing reports of intimidation, property damage, or attack, the taskforce on breeder harassment will facilitate interdepartmental collaboration at AKC and develop educational materials, resources, and policy initiatives designed to prevent and end future harassment of breeders.

## Club Member and Breeder Expectations When Harassment Is Suspected:

When harassment is suspected, a community's natural reaction is to expect AKC GR's help with an incident involving the government. However, AKC GR does not practice law; therefore, it is not appropriate for any AKC staff to provide counsel relative to incidents that may result in disciplinary investigation by the AKC.

## AKC's Responsibilities:

The AKC is committed to specific values, such as the proper care and treatment of dogs, and has zero tolerance for animal cruelty. Under AKC Bylaws, Article XII and XIV, the AKC is required to investigate whenever conduct is **alleged** to be harmful to the best interests of purebred dogs or purebred dog events. This is an administrative practice adopted to protect dogs' best interests. The AKC [discipline guidelines](#) include definitions of offenses that constitute abuse, cruelty, improper treatment, and neglect, all of which warrant penalties, such as fines, temporary referral, or suspension of AKC event or registration privileges.

Formal charges against an individual alleging abuse, cruelty, improper treatment, or neglect are treated by AKC as extremely serious. Upon receipt of information that a person has been charged or accused, or that a person's dogs have been seized, the AKC will send notice of placement on "temporary referral" in accordance with the [AKC's Registration Referral and Cancellation policy](#), affecting all dogs owned or co-owned by that person. Temporary referral means that the person should not breed, sell, or transfer dogs with the expectation that AKC paperwork will be provided. This status protects the integrity of the AKC registry pending the conclusion of any investigation. If AKC determines that no violation has occurred and no action will be taken to cause a suspension of privileges, the temporary referral is then removed, and all pending applications processed. Proof that no violation has occurred can be demonstrated by submitting to AKC court or administrative records evidencing the disposition of charges.