

Animal Fighting Penalties

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Clinton D. Okerlund

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill amends provisions related to animal fighting.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- amends the crimes of dog fighting, attending a dog fight or related activity, and game fowl fighting;
- enacts the offense of attending a game fowl fight or related activity; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

76-13-205, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 173

76-13-206, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 173

76-13-207, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 173

ENACTS:

76-13-207.5, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **76-13-205** is amended to read:

76-13-205 . Dog fighting.

(1)(a) As used in this section, "dog fighting paraphernalia" means a breaking stick, treadmill, wheel, hot walker, cat mill, cat walker, jenni, or other item meant to train a dog to fight with another dog.

(b) Terms defined in Sections 76-1-101.5, 76-13-101, and 76-13-201 apply to this

section.

(2) An actor commits dog fighting if the actor:

- (a) owns, possesses, keeps, or trains a dog with the intent to engage the dog in ~~[an exhibition of]~~ fighting with another dog;
- (b) causes a dog to fight with another dog;
- (c) ~~[-or-]~~ causes a dog to injure another dog for amusement or gain;
- ~~[(e)]~~ (d) ties, attaches, or fastens any live animal to a machine or device propelled by any power, for the purpose of causing the animal to be pursued by a dog;
- ~~[(d)]~~ (e) permits ~~[-or allows any act that-]~~ or allows another individual to perform an act that violates Subsection (2)(a), (b), ~~[-or-]~~(c), or (d) on [any] a premises under the actor's ~~[charge]~~ control; or
- ~~[(e)]~~ (f) ~~[-controls, aids, or abets any act that violates-]~~ aids or abets another individual to violate Subsection (2)(a), (b), ~~[-or-]~~(c), ~~[-]~~ or (d).

(3)~~[(a)]~~ A violation of Subsection (2) is a third degree felony.

~~[(b)]~~ A fine imposed for a violation of Subsection (2) may not exceed \$25,000.]

(4) ~~[Possession of a breaking stick, treadmill, wheel, hot walker, cat mill, cat walker, jenni, or other paraphernalia,]~~ An actor's possession of dog fighting paraphernalia is prima facie evidence of a violation of Subsection (2)(a), (b), (c), or (d) if:

- (a) the actor possesses a dog; and
- (b) ~~[-together with-]~~ evidence exists that the paraphernalia is being used or is intended for use in the ~~[-unlawful-]~~ training of ~~[a]~~ the dog to fight with another dog ~~[-together with the possession of any such dog, is prima facie evidence of violation of Subsection (2)(b) or (c)-]~~ .

(5) A fine imposed for a violation of Subsection (2) may not exceed \$25,000.

~~[(5)]~~ (6) ~~[Nothing in this section prohibits any of the following]~~ This section does not prohibit:

- (a) the use of ~~[dogs]~~ a dog for management of livestock by the owner, the owner's employees or agents, or any other person in the lawful custody of livestock;
- (b) the use of ~~[dogs]~~ a dog for hunting; or
- (c) the training of ~~[dogs]~~ a dog or the possession or use of equipment in the training of ~~[dogs]~~ a dog for any purpose not prohibited by law.

Section 2. Section **76-13-206** is amended to read:

76-13-206 . Attending a dog fight or related activity.

(1) Terms defined in Sections 76-1-101.5, 76-13-101, and 76-13-201 apply to this section.

(2) An actor commits attending a dog fight or related activity if the actor ~~[knowingly or]~~

intentionally [is] or knowingly:

(a) is present as a spectator at a place, building, or tenement where preparations are being made for [an exhibition of dog fighting] a dog fight;

(b) is present at a dog [fighting exhibition] fight;

(c) causes or allows an individual under 18 years old to attend a dog fight; or

~~[(e)]~~ (d) is present for any other conduct that would be in violation of Section 76-13-205, Dog fighting.

(3) A violation of Subsection (2) is a class B misdemeanor.

Section 3. Section **76-13-207** is amended to read:

76-13-207 . Game fowl fighting.

(1)(a) As used in this section:

(i) "Game fowl" means a fowl reared or used for fighting other fowl.

(ii) "Promote" means to engage in promoting, producing, or staging events or activities that involve game fowl fighting.

(b) Terms defined in Sections 76-1-101.5, 76-13-101, and 76-13-201 apply to this section.

(2) An actor commits game fowl fighting if the actor intentionally or knowingly:

~~[(a) intentionally causes a game fowl to fight with or attack another game fowl for the purpose of entertainment, sport, or contest; or]~~

~~[(b) promotes any activity that involves game fowl fighting, including promoting an activity that is a violation of Subsection (2)(a).]~~

(a) promotes game fowl fighting;

(b) sells a game fowl;

(c) owns, possesses, keeps, or trains a game fowl with the intent to engage the game fowl in fighting another game fowl;

(d) causes a game fowl to fight with another game fowl;

(e) causes a game fowl to injure another game fowl for amusement or gain;

(f) permits or allows another individual to perform an act that violates Subsection (2)(a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) on a premises under the actor's control; or

(g) aids or abets another individual to violate Subsection (2)(a), (b), (c), (d), or (e).

(3) A violation of Subsection (2) is:

(a) a class B misdemeanor for the first violation;

(b) a class A misdemeanor for the second violation; or

(c) a third degree felony for a third or subsequent violation.

(4) This section does not prohibit the lawful use of livestock by the livestock owner, an employee or agent of the livestock owner, or a person ~~[in the]~~ with lawful custody of livestock.

Section 4. Section **76-13-207.5** is enacted to read:

76-13-207.5 . Attending a game fowl fight or related activity.

(1) Terms defined in Sections 76-1-101.5, 76-13-101, and 76-13-201 apply to this section.

(2) An actor commits attending a game fowl fight or related activity if the actor intentionally or knowingly:

(a) is present as a spectator at a place, building, or tenement where preparations are being made for a game fowl fight;

(b) is present at a game fowl fight;

(c) causes or allows an individual under 18 years old to attend a game fowl fight; or

(d) is present for any other conduct that would be in violation of Section 76-13-207, Game fowl fighting.

(3) A violation of Subsection (2) is a class B misdemeanor.

Section 5. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.