

# Cockfighting: State laws

Cockfighting is illegal in every state, and all animal fighting that affects interstate commerce is punishable as a federal felony under the Animal Welfare Act. Forty states and the District of Columbia have made cockfighting a felony offense, 43 states and the District of Columbia prohibit being a spectator at cockfights and 20 states prohibit the possession of cockfighting paraphernalia.

State	Penalties	Loophole: Possession of cocks for fighting	Loophole: Being a spectator at a fight	Loophole: Possession of implements
Alabama	Ineffective Law <sup>1</sup>	Legal	Legal	Legal
Alaska	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor <sup>2</sup>	Legal
Arizona	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
Arkansas	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
California	Felony <sup>3</sup>	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Colorado	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
Connecticut	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
Delaware	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
Florida	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
Georgia	Ineffective Law <sup>4</sup>	Legal	Legal	Legal
Hawaii	Misdemeanor	Legal	Legal	Legal
Idaho	Felony <sup>3</sup>	Legal	Legal	Felony
Illinois	Felony	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor
Indiana	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Iowa	Felony	Felony	Felony <sup>5</sup>	Felony
Kansas	Felony	Legal	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Kentucky	Misdemeanor	Legal	Misdemeanor	Legal
Louisiana	Felony <sup>3</sup>	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
Maine	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
Maryland	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Felony
Massachusetts	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
Michigan	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
Minnesota	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Mississippi	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Legal	Legal
Missouri	Felony	Legal	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Montana	Felony	Felony	Legal	Legal
Nebraska	Felony	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor
Nevada	Felony <sup>3</sup>	Felony <sup>3</sup>	Felony <sup>6</sup>	Legal

<sup>1</sup> Only outlaws cockfighting on public property and carries a maximum penalty of \$50.00.

<sup>2</sup> Second or subsequent offense is a misdemeanor.

<sup>3</sup> Second or subsequent offense is a misdemeanor or a felony.

<sup>4</sup> A Georgia court has determined that cockfighting violates the cruelty code, but there is no state cockfighting law that makes it a crime.

<sup>5</sup> Second or subsequent offense is a felony.

<sup>6</sup> Third or subsequent violation is a felony.



State	Penalties	Loophole: Possession of cocks for fighting	Loophole: Being a spectator at a fight	Loophole: Possession of implements
New Hampshire	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
New Jersey	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
New Mexico	Felony <sup>4</sup>	Felony <sup>4</sup>	Legal	Legal
New York	Felony	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
North Carolina	Felony	Legal	Felony	Legal
North Dakota	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
Ohio	Felony	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Oklahoma	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Felony
Oregon	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony <sup>7</sup>
Pennsylvania	Felony	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor
Rhode Island	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
South Carolina	Misdemeanor	Legal	Misdemeanor	Legal
South Dakota	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
Tennessee	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Texas	Felony	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Utah	Felony <sup>6</sup>	Legal	Misdemeanor	Legal
Vermont	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
Virginia	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
Washington	Felony	Felony	Felony	Felony
West Virginia	Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Felony <sup>8</sup>	Legal
Wisconsin	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
Wyoming	Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Legal
	42 Felony 6 Misdemeanor 2 Ineffective Laws	33 Felony 7 Misdemeanor 12 Legal	21 Felony 22 Misdemeanor 7 Legal	13 Felony 12 Misdemeanor 25 Legal
Washington, DC	Felony	Felony	Felony	Legal
American Samoa	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal
Guam	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal
Northern Mariana Islands	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal
Puerto Rico	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal
Virgin Islands	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal

**Note:** While no territory law prohibits cockfighting, possession of cocks for fighting, being a spectator at a cockfight, or possession of cockfighting implements, all of these activities are illegal under federal law, which applies equally to the territories.

<sup>7</sup> Possession of gaffs and slashers is a Class C Felony; possession of all other cockfighting implements is a Class A Misdemeanor.

<sup>8</sup> Third or subsequent violation is a felony.