



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

**North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**
Veterinary Division

Christina L. Waggett
Assistant Commissioner
for Consumer Protection

Michael Martin, DVM
State Veterinarian

September 17, 2026

Interim Sheriff Arlo Norman
Washington County Sheriff's Office
120 Adams Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

NOTICE of CIVIL PENALTY and NOTICE of WARNING

**Re: CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT for VIOLATIONS of TITLE 02 N.C. ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ("NCAC") CHAPTER 52J SECTIONS .0101(1) – (6); .0206(a); .0209(7)(a); and .0210(h) and
NOTICE of WARNING for VIOLATION of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(a) and (d)(1).**

AWS-CP-2026-17

**Facility: Washington County Animal Shelter
Registration Number: 107**

Dear Sheriff Norman:

Pursuant to NCGS § 19A-40, I am issuing this notice that the Washington County Sheriff's Office, as the operator of Washington County Animal Shelter ("the shelter"), is hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$5,600.00 as provided in the enclosed Notice of Violation.

With regard to the civil penalty, within 60 days from the date of this Notice, you must do one of the following:

1. Pay the civil penalty assessment;
2. File a written petition for a contested case hearing with the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings to appeal the penalty assessment; or
3. Pursuant to NCGS § 150B-22, initiate informal settlement negotiations. To negotiate a settlement of this assessment, you may contact me by telephone at (919) 707-3280 or email Patricia.Norris@ncagr.gov. Settlement offers do not extend the 60-day deadline for payment or filing of a contested case petition.

Additional information about your options is provided below:

PAYMENT

To pay the penalty, please send your payment by check or money order made payable to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to:

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Dr. Patricia Norris
Director, Animal Welfare Section
1030 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1030

APPEAL

If you file a contested case petition, it must be in writing and in the form prescribed by NCGS § 150B-23. The petition must be filed with the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings ("OAH") within 60 days from the date of this document. Additionally, the petition must be accompanied by a filing fee of twenty dollars (\$20.00). Payment can be made by cash, money order, certified check or check drawn on an attorney's trust account. Make checks payable to: Office of Administrative Hearings. File the petition and one copy with:

Office of Administrative Hearings
6714 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6714

Any questions about filing a petition may be directed to the Clerk of OAH by telephone at 919-431-3000.

You must serve NCDA&CS by mailing a copy of the petition to:

Mr. Jonathan Lanier
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Registered Agent and General Counsel
1001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001

Payment of the penalty will not foreclose further enforcement action against you for any new violation. If the violations which resulted in the assessment are of a continuing nature, NCDA&CS reserves the right to assess additional civil penalties in the future or take other enforcement action against you.

Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia Norris DVM MS".

Patricia Norris, DVM, MS
Director, Animal Welfare Section

Attachment: Notice of Violations, Assessment of Civil Penalty

cc: Michael Martin, DVM, State Veterinarian
Jonathan Lanier, General Counsel, NCDA&CS
Christina L. Waggett, Assistant Commissioner, NCDA&CS
Allyson Barkley, Assistant Attorney General

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WASHINGTON

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER
SERVICES, VETERINARY DIVISION
ANIMAL WELFARE SECTION

IN THE MATTER of	)	NOTICE of VIOLATION and
	)	ASSESSMENT of CIVIL PENALTY
WASHINGTON COUNTY	)	for VIOLATIONS of TITLE 02 NC
	)	ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ("NCAC") CHAPTER
SHERIFF'S OFFICE	)	52J SECTIONS .0101(1) – (6); .0206(a); .0209(7)(a);
	)	.0210(h); and NOTICE of WARNING for
OPERATOR OF WASHINGTON	)	VIOLATION of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(a) and (d)(1).
	)	
COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER	)	
	)	

Acting pursuant to NCGS § 19A-40, Dr. Patricia Norris, Director, Animal Welfare Section ("AWS"), North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ("NCDA&CS") makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times pertinent to this matter, the Washington County Animal Shelter ("the shelter"), owned and operated by the Washington County Sheriff's Office, was an animal shelter registered pursuant to NCGS §19A-26.
2. On August 17, 2026, a Facility Compliance Inspection ("FCI") of the shelter was conducted. The inspection was marked as "Disapproved" due to multiple violations of the AWA and its associated rules. The following violations were noted:
 - a. In violation of 02 NCAC .0101(1) – (6), the records were missing required information and no shelter records existed for the 12 cats and 3 dogs that had been impounded the previous week due to an alleged hoarding situation and were currently housed at the shelter;
 - b. In violation of 02 NCAC .0103, the shelter could not produce required records upon request;
 - c. In violation of 02 NCAC .0210(d), 2 dogs reportedly impounded on August 12, 2026 with extensive hair loss had not received veterinary care in a timely manner as they had not yet been evaluated by a veterinarian. No records existed for these 2 dogs and therefore there was no record of any veterinary care or preventative medical treatment provided by the shelter;
 - d. In violation of 02 NCAC .0210(d), 7 of the cats reportedly impounded on August 12, 2026 that were exhibiting easily visible signs of upper respiratory infections ("URI") had not received veterinary care. The other 4 cats impounded on August 12, 2026 had been taken to the veterinary clinic the morning of the FCI. The shelter director explained the reason all the animals had not been taken in for examination was that the veterinarian would only see a few animals at a time. No shelter records existed for these 12 cats (the cat impounded on August 10, 2026 was not showing signs of an illness). The veterinary clinic did not provide the shelter the medical notes/records for the 4 cats seen that day;
 - e. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0210(h), the shelter had not vaccinated the dog (Intake #D-26-125) for rabies. The dog was impounded on July 28, 2026. The shelter was previously cited for

this violation in the July 8, 2025 and August 4, 2025 FCI reports. The shelter was assessed a Civil Penalty for this violation on August 13, 2025. AWS Inspector reminded the shelter director of the requirement for rabies vaccination;

- f. In violation of NCGS § 19A-32.1(j), the shelter failed to maintain the records required by the AWA rules; and
- g. AWS Inspector Lynn requested the medical notes/records for the 4 cats directly from the veterinary clinic and was informed that the medical notes/records had not been entered by the veterinarian and were not available.

3. On August 26, 2026, a follow-up site visit of the shelter was conducted. The following was noted during this site visit:

- a. Intake records for all animals currently housed at the shelter were present;
- b. The shelter director stated that all animals that had been seized from the hoarding situation had been examined by the veterinarian. According to the shelter director, no treatment for the URI was prescribed by the veterinarian. No medical records were present in the shelter records for these animals;
- c. In violation of 02 NCAC .0206(a), 6 cats did not have access to water. At the time of the FCI, the bowls were not overturned, and the volunteers had already cleaned, fed and watered for the morning;
- d. In violation of 02 NCAC .0207(a), the shelter failed to properly clean the primary enclosures as the kennels that the shelter director indicated had already been cleaned that morning were visibly soiled with dried nasal discharge, grime and fecal matter. This observation was made at 9:37 am and the volunteers had cleaned at 7:00 am;
- e. Observation showed no improvement in the medical conditions of the 11 cats that were visibly ill during the August 17, 2026 FCI. The shelter had not taken any of the animals for a re-evaluation, nor were any rechecks scheduled; and
- f. AWS Inspector Lynn requested the medical notes/records directly from the veterinary clinic for the all the shelter animals seen from August 18-26, 2026. The veterinary clinic staff informed her the veterinarian was on vacation. The medical notes/records had not been entered by the veterinarian yet and so therefore, they were not available.

4. On September 2, 2026, a subsequent follow-up site visit of the shelter was conducted. The following was noted during this site visit:

- a. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(d)(1), the shelter failed to properly sanitize the primary enclosures as a large accumulation of litter debris was present in unoccupied cat kennels and hair and fecal matter were present on the enclosure walls despite the assurance from the shelter director that the volunteers had already cleaned/sanitized these enclosures;
- b. In violation of 02 NCAC .0209(7)(a), the shelter failed to document the daily enrichment and socialization that the shelter director stated was being provided to the dog with the intake #D-26-15;
- c. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0210(h), the shelter had not vaccinated the 11 cats or 2 dogs impounded on August 12, 2026 for rabies. This violation was despite the reminder given to the shelter director on August 17, 2026 about the requirements for rabies vaccination. When asked why the shelter failed to vaccinate the animals, he responded that they were waiting to decide the final disposition of the animals.

CONCLUSIONS

To the extent that the Findings of Fact contain Conclusions of Law, or that the Conclusions of Law are Findings of Fact, they should be so considered without regard to the given labels. Based on the findings of the AWS investigation, AWS finds that the shelter violated the following provisions:

02 NCAC 52J .0101(1) – (6) for failure to maintain records of the intake and subsequent care of 15 animals impounded August 10-12, 2026 as noted on August 17, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0206(a) for failure to provide continuous access to water to 6 cats as noted on August 26, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0207(a) for failure to properly clean the primary enclosures a minimum of twice daily as noted on August 26, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0207(d)(1) for failure to properly sanitize empty primary enclosures prior to the introduction of an animal as noted on September 2, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0209(7)(a) for failure to document the daily interactions and enrichment of the long-term care dog #D-26-15 as noted on September 2, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0210(h) for failure to vaccinate 14 animals that were older than 4 months and had been housed at the shelter for more than 15 days for rabies as noted on August 17, 2026 and September 2, 2026. This is the SECOND violation of this rule.

Pursuant to NCGS §§ 19A-30 and 19A-40, these violations can result in the suspension, revocation, or refusal to renew a registration for any animal shelter and/or the assessment of a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 per violation.

CIVIL PENALTIES

As required by NCGS § 19A-40, in determining the amount of the civil penalty, I have considered the degree and extent of harm caused by the violations listed above.

Accordingly, Washington County Sheriff's Office, as the owner and operator of the Washington County Animal Shelter, is hereby assessed a civil penalty for the following violations:

\$1,500.00 for 15 violations (\$100.00 for each violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0101(1) – (6) for failure to maintain records of the intake and subsequent care of 15 animals impounded August 10-12, 2026 as noted on August 17, 2026.

\$1,200.00 for 6 violations (\$200.00 for each violation) 02 NCAC 52J .0206(a) for failure to provide continuous access to water to 6 cats as noted on August 26, 2026.

\$100.00 for violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0209(7)(a) for failure to document the daily interactions and enrichment of the long-term care dog #D-26-15 as noted on September 2, 2026.

\$2,800.00 for 14 violations (\$200.00 for each violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0210(h) for failure to vaccinate 14 animals that were older than 4 months and had been housed at the shelter for more than 15 days for rabies as noted on August 17, 2026 and September 2, 2026. This is the SECOND violation of this rule.

\$5,600.00 TOTAL AMOUNT ASSESSED

Continued or future violation of the statutes or regulations referenced in this letter will be considered a willful disregard or violation of the N.C. Animal Welfare Act and the rules issued pursuant thereto. Such willful disregard or violation may result in action against your facility's registration pursuant to NCGS § 19A-30 and/or the assessment of a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00 per violation under NCGS § 19A-40.

NOTICE of WARNING

As to the remaining violations of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(a) and (d)(1), this Warning Letter serves as written notice indicating in which respects the shelter may have violated the NC Animal Welfare Act and the rules issued pursuant thereto.

Continued or future violations of these statutes or regulations will be considered a willful disregard or violation of the N.C. Animal Welfare Act and the rules issued pursuant thereto. Such a willful disregard or violation may result in action against your facility's registration pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 19A-30 and/or the assessment of a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00 per violation under N.C. General Statute § 19A-40.

(See Appendix for text of referenced General Statutes and Administrative Code)

September 17, 2026
Date



Patricia Norris, DVM, MS
Director, Animal Welfare Section
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Appendix

REFERENCED STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

§ 19A-26. Certificate of registration required for animal shelter.

No person shall operate an animal shelter unless a certificate of registration for such animal shelter shall have been granted by the Director. Application for such certificate shall be made in the manner provided by the Director. No fee shall be required for such application or certificate. Certificates of registration shall be valid for a period of one year or until suspended or revoked and may be renewed for like periods upon application in the manner provided.

§ 19A-30. Refusal, suspension or revocation of certificate or license.

The Director may refuse to issue or renew or may suspend or revoke a certificate of registration for any animal shelter or a license for any public auction, kennel, pet shop, or dealer, if after an impartial investigation as provided in this Article he determines that any one or more of the following grounds apply:

- (1) Material misstatement in the application for the original certificate of registration or license or in the application for any renewal under this Article;
- (2) Willful disregard or violation of this Article or any rules issued pursuant thereto;
- (3) Failure to provide adequate housing facilities and/or primary enclosures for the purposes of this Article, or if the feeding, watering, sanitizing and housing practices at the animal shelter, public auction, pet shop, or kennel are not consistent with the intent of this Article or the rules adopted under this Article;
- (4) Allowing one's license under this Article to be used by an unlicensed person;
- (5) Conviction of any crime an essential element of which is misstatement, fraud, or dishonesty, or conviction of any felony;
- (6) Making substantial misrepresentations or false promises of a character likely to influence, persuade, or induce in connection with the business of a public auction, commercial kennel, pet shop, or dealer;
- (7) Pursuing a continued course of misrepresentation of or making false promises through advertising, salesmen, agents, or otherwise in connection with the business to be licensed;
- (8) Failure to possess the necessary qualifications or to meet the requirements of this Article for the issuance or holding of a certificate of registration or license.

The Director shall, before refusing to issue or renew and before suspension or revocation of a certificate of registration or a license, give to the applicant or holder thereof a written notice containing a statement indicating in what respects the applicant or holder has failed to satisfy the requirements for the holding of a certificate of registration or a license. If a certificate of registration or a license is suspended or revoked under the provisions hereof, the holder shall have five days from such suspension or revocation to surrender all certificates of registration or licenses issued thereunder to the Director or his authorized representative.

A person to whom a certificate of registration or a license is denied, suspended, or revoked by the Director may contest the action by filing a petition under G.S. 150B-23 within five days after the denial, suspension, or revocation.

Any licensee whose license is revoked under the provisions of this Article shall not be eligible to apply for a new license hereunder until one year has elapsed from the date of the order revoking said license or if an appeal is taken from said order of revocation, one year from the date of the order or final

judgment sustaining said revocation. Any person who has been an officer, agent, or employee of a licensee whose license has been revoked or suspended and who is responsible for or participated in the violation upon which the order of suspension or revocation was based, shall not be licensed within the period during which the order of suspension or revocation is in effect.

§ 19A-40. Civil Penalties.

The Director may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Director shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation. The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

02 NCAC 52J .0101 RECORDS; ANIMAL SHELTERS, ETC.

Operators of all animal shelters, pet shops, public auctions, and dealers shall maintain records on all dogs and cats showing the following:

- (1) origin of animals (including names and addresses of consignors) and date animals were received;
- (2) description of animals including species, estimated age, sex, breed or breed type, and color markings;
- (3) location of animal, including complete address and contact information, if not kept at the licensed or registered facility;
- (4) disposition of animals including name and address of person to whom animal is sold, traded, transferred, or adopted, and the date and time of such transaction; name and address of intermediary transporter if used; in the event of death, the record shall show the date, signs of illness, and cause of death if identified; if euthanized, the record shall show date and type of euthanasia;
- (5) record of veterinary care including medications, treatments, procedures, and immunizations. The record shall include: diagnosis(es), diagnostic testing and results, date and time of administration or procedure, description of medication and initials of person administering any product, medication or procedure. The description of the medication shall include the name, strength or concentration, dosage, and dosing regimen. The dosage regimen shall include the frequency, duration to include the number of dosages or days to be given and the reason for the administration; and
- (6) all records shall be created and/or updated within 48 hours of the occurrence of procedures, including but not limited to intake, change of location, medication or treatment administration and/or disposition. The record shall be accurate; creation of a misleading record or deliberate or non-incidental falsification of a record including medication administration documentation during or after an investigation or inspection shall be considered a violation of this regulation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. January 1, 2005; April 1, 1985; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.

02 NCAC 52J .0103 INSPECTION OF RECORDS

All operators of animal shelters, pet shops, boarding kennels, public auctions, and persons operating as dealers shall make all required records available to the Director or his or her authorized representative on request, during the business and cleaning hours listed on the license application and/or during an inspection

of the facility or an investigation. The operator must be able to match each animal to its record upon request. Records shall be maintained for a period of one year after the animal is released from a boarding kennel or sold from a pet store or public auction. Animal shelters shall maintain records required by the Animal Welfare Act or this Subchapter for a period of three years after the disposition of the animal.

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; 19A-25; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. January 1, 2005; April 1, 1985; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.

02 NCAC 52J .0206 WATERING

(a) Animals shall have continuous access to fresh, potable water, except as might otherwise be required to provide adequate veterinary care.

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. January 1, 2005; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.

02 NCAC 52J .0207 SANITATION

(a) Waste shall be removed from primary enclosures, exercise areas and common areas to prevent contamination of the dogs or cats contained therein and to reduce disease hazards and odors. Enclosures and exercise areas for dogs and cats shall be properly cleaned a minimum of two times per day. The animal must be able to walk or lie down without coming in contact with any waste or debris.

(d) Sanitation shall be as follows:

- (1) prior to the introduction of dogs or cats into empty primary enclosures previously occupied, enclosures and accessories shall be sanitized in the manner provided in Subparagraph (d)(3) of this Rule;

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. January 1, 2005; April 1, 1985; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.

02 NCAC 52J .0209 CLASSIFICATION AND SEPARATION

Animals housed in the same primary enclosure or confined to an exercise area shall be maintained in compatible groups, with the following additional restrictions:

- (7) Animals in long term care must be provided with human interaction other than interaction for enclosure cleaning, same species social interaction, opportunity for play and exercise, and environmental enrichment daily. The provision of these daily interactions and enrichment shall be adequate for the animal's species, age, size and behavior needs. In addition:

- (a) The provision of the daily social interactions and enrichment shall be documented in the animal's records and the records maintained for three years; and

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. January 1, 2005; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.

02 NCAC 52J .0210 VETERINARY CARE

(d) Each dog and cat shall be observed daily by the animal caretaker who has been adequately trained or is experienced in animal care or is under the direct supervision of a person who has such training or experience. Sick or diseased, injured, lame, or blind dogs or cats shall be provided with adequate veterinary care in a timely manner or be euthanized, provided that the euthanasia shall not affect compliance with any

state or local law requiring the holding, for a specified period, of animals suspected of being diseased. If an animal cannot be euthanized due to a required holding period and does not meet the criteria of G.S. 19A-32.1(b)(2), then adequate veterinary care shall be provided to the animal.

(h) All animals in a licensed or registered facility shall be in compliance with the North Carolina rabies law, G.S. 130A, Article 6, Part 6. This subsection shall not apply to animals which have been in the facility less than 15 days.

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. March 23, 2009; January 1, 2005; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.