



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

August 9, 2021

Meghan S. Williams
Owner
Shiptown @ Commonwealth
222 Rampart Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28203

NOTICE of CIVIL PENALTY

Re: CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT for VIOLATIONS of TITLE 02 N.C. ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (NCAC) CHAPTER 52J SECTIONS .0102(1) and .0206.

AWS-CP-2021-14

Facility: Shiptown @ Commonwealth
License No. 11430

Dear Ms. Williams:

Pursuant to NCGS § 19A-40, I am issuing this notice that Meghan S. Williams, as owner of Shiptown @ Commonwealth, is hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$1,000.00 as provided in the enclosed Notice of Violation.

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

1. Pay the civil penalty assessment; or
2. File a written petition for a contested case hearing with the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings to appeal the penalty assessment.

Pursuant to NCGS § 150B-22, either party to a dispute may initiate informal settlement negotiations at any time. To negotiate a settlement of this assessment, you may contact me by telephone at (919) 707-3280. 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:

Ms. Tina Hlabse
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 black ink that reads "Patricia Norris DVM, MS". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Patricia Norris, DVM, MS
Director, Animal Welfare Section

Attachment: Notice of Violations, Assessment of Civil Penalty

cc: Michael Martin, DVM, State Veterinarian
Tina Hlabse, General Counsel, NCDA&CS
Christina L. Waggett, Assistant Commissioner, NCDA&CS
Christopher R. McLennan, Assistant Attorney General

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WAKE

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
MEGHAN S. WILLIAMS	)	for VIOLATIONS of 02 N.C.
	)	ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ("NCAC")
OWNER of	)	CHAPTER 52J SECTIONS .0102(1) and
	)	.0206.
SHIPTOWN @ COMMWEALTH	)	
	)	

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, Shiptown @ Commonwealth located at 1421 Iris Drive, Charlotte, NC ("the kennel") was a boarding kennel, licensed pursuant to NCGS § 19A-28.
2. On September 9, 2020, AWS Animal Health Technician Jay Blatche ("Inspector Blatche") conducted a Facility Compliance Inspection ("FCI") of the kennel. The FCI report was marked as "Contingently/Conditionally Approved" due to violations of the NC Animal Welfare Act ("AWA") and its associated rules. The findings of the September 9, 2020 FCI included:
 - a) the kennel did not maintain the records required by 02 NCAC 52J .0102(1) – (3) on site and the records were not available for review upon request in violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0103; and
 - b) 3 dogs in primary enclosures did not have access to any water in violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0206, which requires animals to have continuous access to fresh water;
 - c) in the General Comments section of the FCI Inspector Blatche reminded the kennel that "dogs must have continuous water at all times."
3. On July 30, 2021, Inspector Blatche conducted a FCI of the kennel. The FCI report was marked as "Disapproved" due to severity and repetitive nature of the violations. The findings of the July 30, 2021 FCI include:
 - a. The kennel did not maintain records of the date of entry and signature and address of the individual to whom the animal is released and the date of release in violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0102(1);
 - b. Inspector Blatche noted that 4 dogs, Louis, Bailey, Aubree and Andie, were housed in individual primary enclosures without water in violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0206;
 - c. When asked by Inspector Blatche why the dogs did not have water, kennel staff member replied that they did not have water because the dogs may tip over the water bowls;
 - d. At no point during this FCI were these dogs provided with access to any water.
4. The FCIs referenced in this Notice were made available to the kennel owners and can be found on the AWS website at: <http://www.ncagr.gov/vet/aws/>.

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 this investigation, AWS concludes that the kennel, either by act or omission, violated the following provisions:

02 NCAC 52J .0102(1) for failing to maintain records of the date of entry and signature and address of the individual to whom the animal is released and the date of release; and

02 NCAC 52J .0206 for failing to allow 4 dogs to have continuous access to fresh water.

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

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, Meghan S. Williams, as owner of Shiptown @ Commonwealth, is hereby assessed a civil penalty for the following violations:

\$200.00 for violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0102(1) for failure to maintain records of the date of entry and signature and address of the individual to whom the animal is released and the date of release; and

\$800.00 for violation of 4 violations (\$200.00 per violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0206 for failing to provide continuous access to fresh water on July 30, 2021.

\$1,000.00 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 license 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.

August 9, 2021
Date

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

Appendix

REFERENCED LAWS AND REGULATIONS

§ 19A-28. License required for public auction or boarding kennel.

No person shall operate a public auction or a boarding kennel unless a license to operate such establishment shall have been granted by the Director. Application for such license shall be made in the manner provided by the Director. The license period shall be the fiscal year and the license fee shall be seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for each license period or part thereof beginning with the first day of the fiscal year.

§ 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 .0102 RECORDS; BOARDING KENNELS

Operators of boarding kennels shall maintain records of all dogs and cats showing the following:

- (1) name and address of owner or person responsible for animal, the date of entry and signature and address of individual to whom animal is released and the date of release;

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984;

02 NCAC 52J .0206 WATERING

Animals shall have continuous access to fresh water, except as might otherwise be required to provide adequate veterinary care. Watering receptacles shall be durable and kept clean and sanitized. Damaged receptacles shall be replaced.

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