



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

May 29, 2026

Brent Trout  
Harnett County Manager  
P. O. Box 940  
Lillington, NC 27546  
Via Hand Delivery

**NOTICE of CIVIL PENALTY and NOTICE of WARNING**

**Re: CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT for VIOLATIONS of NC GENERAL STATUTE (“NCGS”) § 19A-32.1(g) and TITLE 02 N.C. ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (“NCAC”) CHAPTER 52J SECTIONS .0418(3),(4) and (8) and .0501(3) and (4) and NOTICE of WARNING for VIOLATIONS of 02 NCAC .0207(d)(8) and (e).**

**AWS-CP-2026-5**

**Facility: Harnett County Animal Services Animal Shelter  
Registration Number: 44**

Dear County Manager Trout:

Pursuant to NCGS § 19A-40, I am issuing this notice that Harnett County, as the owner and operator of the Harnett County Animal Services Animal Shelter (“the shelter”), is hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$19,150.00 as provided in the enclosed Notice of Violation.

With regard to the civil penalty, within 60 days from the date of receipt 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 at [Patricia.Norris@ncagr.gov](mailto: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  
Lindsey Spain, Special Deputy Attorney General



4. On April 29, 2026, Inspector Smith conducted a follow-up FCI of the shelter. The following information was obtained during this FCI:
- a. All 42 dogs euthanized from March 25, 2026 – April 29, 2026 were euthanized by IC injection;
  - b. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0501(2), the records for 41 of the 42 dogs euthanized by IC injection did not indicate that, due to the medical condition of the animal and/or size of the animal IC or IP administration was not practical or humane. One record indicated the CET was unable to find the vein on a young dog. The intake record of this dog indicates that it was a 3-month-old Boxer mix that tested positive for Parvo;
  - c. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0501(3), for 31 of the 42 animals euthanized via IC, the absence of a pain response was not verified and/or documented prior to the administration of the IC injection. The animal records for the remaining 11 animals documented attempts to verify the absence of a pain response but indicate that this verification was ascertained by either an “[lack of an] ocular reflex” or “lack of a heartbeat.” The ocular reflex is checked to verify the level of consciousness of an animal but does not verify a lack of pain response. The lack of a heartbeat is a method of death verification and would not be assessed until after the euthanasia injection. Therefore, the records available reflect that these 11 animals also did not receive an appropriate assessment of their ability to feel pain prior to the administration of the IC injection. An IC injection causes significant pain in an animal that is not unconscious and may be able to feel pain;
  - d. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0501(4), 32 of the 42 shelter animal records did not document a justification for the use of an IC injection rather than an intravenous (“IV”) or intraperitoneal (“IP”) route of administration;
  - e. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(3), the records for 30 animals did not contain documentation that these animals were scanned for a microchip by the CET as preparation for euthanasia;
  - f. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(4), the route of administration of the drugs given for sedation was not documented as required for 24 of the 42 animal records. The record for animal A0060823760 notes that the route of administration for the sedation drug was IC which is an inappropriate route of administration for any sedation medication. In addition, 8 of those 24 records did not document the euthanasia medication;
  - g. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(8), the shelter failed to euthanize 5 cats (A0060693401, A0060774605, A0060862927, A0060821111, A0060818038) in accordance with the rules of NC AWA in that these cats were not administered appropriate amounts of the euthanasia drug for the IP injections;
  - h. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(d)(8), the fans in Kennel B had an accumulation of debris and biological matter. The shelter was previously cited for this violation in the March 24, 2026 FCI report. The Shelter Director relayed that he was waiting for a third party to clean the fans;
  - i. In violation of 02 NCAC 52J .0207(e), the shelter failed to control the growth of weeds and grasses in the cracks in the concrete exercise area. The shelter was previously cited for this violation in the March 24, 2026 FCI report. The Shelter Director stated he had contacted maintenance to attend to the matter and would contact them again; and
  - j. In violation of NCGS §19A-32.1(g), the shelter euthanized 3 owner surrendered dogs on the same day as intake but did not obtain and/or failed to maintain a signed written consent to the disposition of the 3 dogs prior to the end of the expiration of the 72-hour minimum holding

period.

5. A review of previous FCI reports by AWS Veterinary Program Specialist Garner “(Inspector Garner)” for the shelter shows the following:
  - a. The October 12, 2023 FCI report documents the following statements made by Inspector Garner: “IC use and documentation discussed in detail today. The shelter is using the sample document I sent, however the “lack of pain response” is not being adequately documented as “lack of heartbeat” is being put in this area. Shelter Director and I reviewed these documents today & he will address this oversight with his staff;” and
  - b. The September 10, 2024 FCI report documents the following statement made by Inspector Garner: “Discussed the IC instances and documentation during todays [sic] inspection.”

## 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 .0501(2) - (4) for inadequate and/or inappropriate administration of intracardiac euthanasia of 42 dogs from March 25 – April 29, 2026 as noted on April 29, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0418(3) for failure to document the presence or absence of a microchip in 30 animals during the preparation for euthanasia as noted on April 29, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0418(4) for failure to document the route of administration of the drugs given for sedation prior to euthanasia for 24 dogs as noted on April 29, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0418(8) for failure to euthanize 5 cats (A0060693401, A0060774605, A0060862927, A0060821111, A0060818038) in accordance with the rules of NC AWA as these cats were not administered adequate amounts of the euthanasia drug for the intraperitoneal injections as noted on April 29, 2026.

NCGS §19A-32.1(g) for failure to obtain and/or to maintain a signed written consent to the disposition of 3 owner-surrendered dogs prior to the end of the expiration of the 72-hour minimum holding period as noted on April 29, 2026.

02 NCAC 52J .0207(d)(8) for failure to maintain the fans in Kennel B to be free of accumulation of debris and biological matter as noted on April 29, 2026. The shelter was previously cited for this violation in the March 24, 2026 FCI report.

02 NCAC 52J .0207(e) for failure to control the growth of weeds and grasses in the cracks in the concrete exercise area as noted on April 29, 2026. The shelter was previously cited for this violation in the March 24, 2026 FCI report.

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, Harnett County, as the owner and operator of the Harnett County Animal Services Shelter, is hereby assessed a civil penalty for the following violations:

\$10,500.00 for 42 violations (\$250 per violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0501(2) - (4) for inadequate and/or inappropriate administration of intracardiac euthanasia of 42 dogs from March 25 – April 29, 2026 as noted on April 29, 2026.

\$3,000.00 for 30 violations (\$100.00 per violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(3) for failure to document the presence or absence of a microchip in 30 animals for the preparation for euthanasia as noted on April 29, 2026.

\$2,400.00 for 24 violations (\$100.00 per violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(4) for failure to document the route of administration of the drugs given for sedation prior to euthanasia for 24 dogs as noted on April 29, 2026.

\$2,500.00 for 5 violations (\$500.00 per violation) of 02 NCAC 52J .0418(8) for failure to euthanize 5 cats in accordance with the rules of NC AWA as these cats were not administered appropriate amounts of the euthanasia drug for the intraperitoneal injections as noted on April 29, 2026.

\$750.00 for 3 violations (\$250.00) of NCGS §19A-32.1(g) for failure to obtain and/or to maintain a signed written consent to the disposition of 3 owner-surrendered dogs prior to the end of the expiration of the 72-hour minimum holding period as noted on April 29, 2026.

**\$19,150.00 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(d)(8) and (e), 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)

May 29, 2026  
Date



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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-32.1. Minimum holding period for animals in animal shelters; public viewing of animals in animal shelters; disposition of animals.**

(g) An animal that is surrendered to an animal shelter by the animal's owner may be disposed of before the expiration of the minimum holding period in a manner authorized under subsection (f) of this section if the owner provides to the shelter (i) some proof of ownership of the animal and (ii) a signed written consent to the disposition of the animal before the expiration of the minimum holding period.

**§ 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 .0207 SANITATION**

(d) Sanitation shall be as follows:

(8) fans, including floor fans, ceiling fans, wall fans, vent fans, etc. shall be kept clean of accumulated debris, dust and biological material.

(e) Premises (buildings and grounds) shall be kept clean and in good repair in order to protect the animals from injury and to facilitate the prescribed husbandry practices set forth in this Rule. Premises shall remain free of accumulations of trash, junk, waste products, and discarded matter.

*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 .0418 DUTIES**

A Certified Euthanasia Technician shall:

- (1) Prepare animals for euthanasia in accordance with 02 NCAC 52J .0401;
- (2) Scan for a microchip, and attempt to reach the individual(s) or organization associated with the microchip present in the animal unless emergency circumstances preclude such an attempt;
- (3) Document the presence or absence of a microchip in the animal and the attempt to contact the individual(s) or organization associated with the microchip or the emergency circumstance that precluded such an attempt. The documentation of the attempt to contact the owner shall include the date and time of phone call and/or email sent to the individual(s) or organization associated with the microchip. If another method was used to attempt to reach the individual(s) or organization associated with the microchip, the method of the attempt shall be documented;

- (4) Accurately record the facility's identification number of the animal, its species, sex, breed or breed type, description and date, dosages and route of administration for drugs that are administered for sedation and euthanasia and amounts for drugs wasted;
- (8) Euthanize animals in accordance with the rules of this Section; and

*History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. March 23, 2009; Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

## **02 NCAC 52J .0501 INTRACARDIAC INJECTION**

Intracardiac injection for euthanasia shall only be administered under the following conditions:

- (1) due to injury or other medical condition, the animal is unconscious, or the animal has been rendered unconscious by administration of a general anesthetic;
- (2) due to medical condition of the animal and/or size of the animal, intravenous or intraperitoneal administration is not practical or humane;
- (3) the absence of a pain response has been verified prior to the administration of the intracardiac injection and this verification is documented in the animal's record; and
- (4) the justification for an intracardiac injection rather than an intravenous or intraperitoneal route of administration has been documented in the animal's record.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. March 23, 2009; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.*