



**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

June 19, 2026

Tiffany Jourdain  
Inner Knowing Canine Connections  
101 Eastwood Ave.  
Swannanoa, NC 28778  
And via email:  
[tiffany@innerknowingcanineconnections.com](mailto:tiffany@innerknowingcanineconnections.com).

**NOTICE of CIVIL PENALTY**

**Re: CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT for VIOLATION of NC GENERAL STATUTE § 19A-28**

**AWS-CP-2026-8**

**Facility: Inner Knowing Canine Connections**  
**License Number: Unlicensed**

Dear Ms. Jourdain:

Pursuant to NCGS § 19A-40, I am issuing this notice that you as owner and operator of Inner Knowing Canine Connections (“the kennel”) are hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$5,000.00 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](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

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE

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

IN THE MATTER OF )  
 )  
TIFFANY JOURDAIN, )  
 )  
OWNER OF )  
 )  
INNER KNOWING )  
 )  
CANINE CONNECTION )

NOTICE of VIOLATION and  
ASSESSMENT of CIVIL PENALTY  
for VIOLATION of N.C. GENERAL  
STATUTE (“NCGS”) § 19A-28.

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, Inner Knowing Canine Connections (“the kennel”), owned and operated by Tiffany Jourdain, was a boarding kennel that was not licensed with AWS as a boarding kennel pursuant to NCGS § 19A-28.
2. On May 4, 2026, AWS received information from the Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office that 2 dogs (Huskies named Melo and Pneuma) died while being boarded at the kennel. Based on this information, AWS opened an investigation. The investigation centered on possible violation(s) of the N.C. Animal Welfare Act (“AWA”) as these statutes and associated regulations are the extent of the jurisdiction of AWS.
3. The investigation found the following:
  - a. On May 5, 2026, AWS Veterinary Program Specialist James (“Inspector James”) attempted to conduct a site visit at the kennel. At the time of the first attempted contact, no one was present, so an information packet and door hanger were left. Later the same day, during the second attempted contact, the owner, Tiffany Jourdain, was present. Ms. Jourdain stated that the boarding of the 2 Huskies that died was a one-time occurrence to help someone in need;
  - b. During the May 5, 2026, site visit, Ms. Jourdain stated that one dog on the premises was there for boarding/training and the other 13 dogs were her personal dogs. Inspector James noted that when she brought the dogs into the house from the outside and put them into their crates, no water was provided for the dogs. Ms. Jourdain stated that she did not provide water for the dogs while they were crated, because the dogs made such a mess in the crates and they had access to water while they were outside;
  - c. During the May 5, 2026 site visit, Ms. Jourdain stated that the outbuilding in the back yard was a chicken coop and was not used for the housing of the dogs. Information obtained later from the Sheriff’s Office indicated that this outbuilding was where dogs were housed while boarding at the kennel;

- d. During the May 5, 2026 site visit, Ms. Jourdain acknowledged that she had spoken with AWS staff in 2022 concerning the AWA and its rules;
  - e. On May 6, 2026, Ms. Jourdain emailed to Inspector James a written statement detailing that the 2 dogs that died were present for boarding (not training), because of an “emergency situation,” and that she would not be offering boarding or daycare services; and
  - f. On May 7, 2026, Ms. Jourdain was arrested by the Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office on charges related to the deaths of the 2 Huskies.
4. During the course of the investigation, AWS was contacted by several members of the public with first-hand information concerning this kennel. The information included:
- a. Solicitation for boarding – an email to a client from Ms. Jourdain, Inner Knowing Canine Connections, dated January 17, 2024 states the following:
    - i. “Boarding with me provides a happy, safe, and enjoyable environment for your pup;”
    - ii. “This unique approach to boarding offers a much safer and more enriching alternative to the traditional boarding kennel;”
    - iii. “Leave a 5 star google review and get a FREE night of boarding;”
    - iv. “Looking ahead, I am eager to continue our work together and excited to see what the new year has in store for us. Whether it’s board and train, boarding, or in-home training...;”
  - b. Pickles – Pickles’ owner stated that Pickles had initially boarded and trained at the kennel for the first stay but then only boarded at the kennel many times until Hurricane Helene. The dog’s owner provided texts between her and Ms. Jourdain discussing boarding Pickles at the kennel;
  - c. Beau – Beau was boarded at the kennel for 2 weeks in December 2025. The receipt states “board and train,” but the dog’s owner states that the dog was only there for boarding;
  - d. LuLu – Lulu’s owner provided a copy of the Venmo transaction for \$120.00 for dog boarding dated March 27, 2026;
  - e. Tilley – Tilley, a German Shepherd, was left for boarding at the kennel on May 3, 2026. The owner was contacted by the kennel requesting payment for the boarding stay while the dog was still at the kennel. The day after making the payment, Tilley’s owner found out that Ms. Jourdain had been arrested;
  - f. Melo and Pneuma – These are the two Huskies that died while boarding at the kennel. Melo’s owner provided texts dated November 9, 2023 from Ms. Jourdain confirming that “we can absolutely do just boarding as well.” The owner of these dogs confirmed that she had boarded the dogs at the kennel’s previous location as well as at the current location; and
  - g. Maverick – Maverick was left for boarding only at the kennel on May 6, 2026. This is one day after the AWS site visit and the same day that Ms. Jourdain emailed the statement to AWS declaring that she was not boarding animals. Maverick was picked up by a family friend once the owner was contacted by the Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office. Maverick’s owner stated that he had boarded his dog at the kennel several times previously.
5. A review of AWS documentation revealed the following:
- a. Ms. Jourdain was the owner of a boarding kennel with a valid AWS boarding kennel license from July 13, 2017 until June 10, 2021. Ms. Jourdain, as the owner of this boarding kennel with a valid AWS boarding kennel license, was aware of the AWA and its associated rules including the statute requiring boarding kennels to be licensed;
  - b. On November 24, 2022, Ms. Jourdain contacted AWS inquiring about how to get a copy of the

AWA and its rules as she was moving back to NC and wanted to get her property licensed as a boarding kennel. There was no further contact from her concerning licensing of a boarding kennel; and

- c. Ms. Jourdain has not had a valid boarding kennel license from AWS since June 10, 2021. No boarding kennel license has ever been issued to any kennel at the address of 101 Eastwood Avenue, Swannanoa, NC 28778.

### 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 Tiffany Jourdain as the owner of Inner Knowing Canine Connection kennel willfully and knowingly violated the following provision:

NCGS §19A-28 for operating a boarding kennel without obtaining a license granted by the AWS Director to operate such an establishment. This willful violation resulted in the death of 2 dogs.

### CIVIL PENALTY

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 violation listed above.

Accordingly, Tiffany Jourdain, as owner and operator of Inner Knowing Canine Connection, is hereby assessed a civil penalty for the following willful violation:

\$5,000.00 for the willful violation of NCGS § 19A-28 for operating a boarding kennel without obtaining a license granted by the AWS Director to operate such an establishment. This violation resulted in the death of 2 dogs.

**\$5,000.00 TOTAL AMOUNT ASSESSED**

Pursuant to NC General Statute § 19A-33, operation of a boarding kennel without a valid license constitutes a Class 3 misdemeanor with each day of operation constituting a separate offense. In addition, operation of a boarding kennel without a valid license is a violation of the NC Animal Welfare Act and may result in the assessment of a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00 per violation pursuant to NC General Statute § 19A-40 and/or the suspension, revocation, or denial of a license pursuant to NC General Statute § 19A-30.

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



June 19, 2026

Date

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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-33. Penalty for operation of pet shop, kennel or auction without license.**

Operation of a pet shop, kennel, or public auction without a currently valid license shall constitute a Class 3 misdemeanor subject only to a penalty of not less than five dollars (\$5.00) nor more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), and each day of operation shall constitute a separate offense.

**§ 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.