



Drop box located at the SPCA of Wake County, NC



Drop cage located at the animal control facility in Dunn, North Carolina



Rhett Butler, age 1 year, 6 months. Killed September 13, 1999 after being left in a drop box at the SPCA of Wake County, NC.



Diesel Ken Goodwin, age 2 years. Killed, September 13, 1999, after being left in a drop box at the SPCA of Wake County, NC.

Please take a moment to print the following two petitions and have them signed. Petition one urges state and local officials in North Carolina to end the use of live animal drop off facilities. Petition two asks that mandated holding periods in North Carolina be enforced. Return signed petitions to Mrs. Cindi Kratzer c/o Dr. Pat Haight, 4022 East Broadway Road, Suite 120, Phoenix, AZ 85040.

Wake County, North Carolina

In Garner, North Carolina, a drop box anonymously collects unwanted dogs and cats at the local SPCA of Wake County. An unwanted dog or cat is left in one of five open boxes; the door is closed; and the box automatically locks. The animal is held in this box until a shelter employee removes it. A sign near the box admonishes owners to fill out a form for their "surrendered" pet. Surrendered animals lose their protection under North Carolina animal control laws. These laws require that stray animals with no identification tags be held a minimum of 72 hours before being killed. During that time, animal control employees must make reasonable attempts to find the owner. Wake County laws require that stray animals be held a minimum of 120 hours. Surrendered animals may be destroyed immediately. No safeguards ensure that a person leaving an animal in a drop box has custody of that animal. Recently, the use of a drop box at the SPCA of Wake County ended in a tragic event.

During the night of September 12, 1999, two young male boxers, Rhett Butler and Diesel, were left anonymously in a drop box maintained by the SPCA of Wake County. A hand scribbled note was left in the box with the young dogs. The note contained the following message, "These dogs have been exposed to distemper." An SPCA employee removed Rhett and Diesel from the box the following morning. The employee destroyed both dogs immediately. The employee did not quarantine the dogs. The employee did not check Rhett or Diesel for identification materials such as microchips. One of the dogs carried a microchip implanted under his skin. The chip contained the owner's home telephone number and address. After searching and calling all the local shelters, the owner of the dogs found their location. The dogs had been dumped two counties away from her home in Wake County. Both dogs had been killed and their bodies destroyed. The owner could not recover their bodies for burial or for autopsy. Although employees of the Wake County SPCA made the decision to kill the animals, there is no evidence that either boxer carried distemper. Both animals had received all their appropriate booster shots. The SPCA violated the holding laws of the State of North Carolina and Wake County by killing the dogs before the required holding period had elapsed and by failing to scan either Rhett or Diesel for microchips.

Harnett County, North Carolina and Perquimans County, North Carolina

In other areas of North Carolina, another variant of the live animal drop box is used to collect unwanted animals. This is a drop cage. Drop cages are fenced enclosures frequently protected from the elements only by makeshift plastic covers placed over the top of the cage. At an animal control facility located in Dunn, North Carolina, one single cage serves as the drop off facility. The only protection for animals left inside the cage is a plastic tarp draped over the top of the cage. On one day alone, an observer counted seventeen animals crowded into the single drop cage pictured above. Several of these animals were sick, undernourished and infested with parasites. In another North Carolina animal control facility, two hungry animals were left in the same drop box. The animals began to fight, one killed the other, and the hungry surviving animal ate its victim. At this same facility, a bloody trap was found in the drop off area.

Live animal drop off facilities create atmospheres ripe for cruelty and neglect of the animals inside. Even in the safest of these facilities, pet drop off locations perpetuate the idea that animals are disposable property, reinforce irresponsible pet ownership, and allow owners to surrender their animals with no accountability for their actions.

