



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

August 22, 2019

Greg Allen
Chief of Police
El Paso Police Department

Via e-mail: pdpios@elpasotexas.gov

Dear Chief Allen,

I hope you're well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the world's largest animal rights organization, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide. We're writing today regarding complaints that our office received alleging dangerous and possibly illegal conditions for animals at the El Paso Animal Services Center. **We ask that you join us in considering this an urgent matter and respectfully request an investigation into possible criminal code violations at the shelter.**

Disturbing photos (please see attached) that we're told were taken recently at the facility show several animals who allegedly died unassisted in their cages, dogs with bloody wounds and other serious injuries apparently sustained during fights with other dogs with whom they were confined, and critically ill animals who were reportedly denied timely medical care or euthanasia to prevent further suffering.

Additional documentation we've reviewed indicates the following:

- Animals who are routinely confined for months or longer to kennels and cages designed only for short-term, temporary use are experiencing extreme deterioration of physical and mental health. Some dogs have reportedly lost weight to the point of emaciation and have been observed exhibiting behavior that indicates they've gone mad (or "cage crazy") from confinement.
- Incompatible dogs are routinely forced to share living quarters, resulting in fights over space, food, and water, and are sustaining life-threatening injuries that require euthanasia. Some have been found unresponsive or dead in their kennels after having been mauled by kennel mates—sometimes within hours of arriving at the facility.
- Dogs too aggressive to interact safely with staff or to be released to the public (which would place humans and other animals at risk) have apparently been housed for months with no expectation that they'll be adopted in order to avoid euthanasia.

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- PETA Netherlands
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- Routine severe crowding (we understand that the facility's July population count was *more than 2,000 dogs and cats*) has led to the confinement of animals in makeshift "overflow" areas inside cramped wire cages lacking a solid surface on which they can lie, preventing them from having a normal range of movement and avoiding their own waste.

As you likely know, Texas penal code *Sec. 42.092. Cruelty to Nonlivestock Animals* prohibits "any act that causes unjustifiable pain or suffering" and states that "(b) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally, **knowingly, or recklessly**: . . . (3) **fails unreasonably to provide necessary** food, water, **care**, or shelter for an animal in the person's custody" [*emphasis added*].¹ Animal shelters are not exempt from the law. We believe that the reported conditions at the El Paso facility present sufficient cause for your department to visit the property and undertake a thorough criminal investigation.

Please find attached a copy of a letter from PETA sent in March to Mayor Dee Margo and city councilors (copied herein) regarding a [news report](#) about allegations that at least four dogs died during extreme temperatures after they had been moved to outdoor kennels and a barn, which were built by the city's Animal Services shelter. We did not receive a response and are deeply concerned that conditions at this facility have possibly risen to the level of criminal conduct under the guise of "saving more lives."

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter as well as for your work for El Paso residents. I await your acknowledgement and can be contacted at 630-229-6470 or JenniferB@peta.org.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brown
Animal Sheltering Adviser
Cruelty Investigations Department

cc: The Honorable Dee Margo, Mayor of El Paso (mayor@elpasotexas.gov)
Members of the El Paso City Council (district1@elpasotexas.gov;
district2@elpasotexas.gov; district3@elpasotexas.gov;
district4@elpasotexas.gov; district5@elpasotexas.gov;
district6@elpasotexas.gov; district7@elpasotexas.gov;
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El Paso County Judge Ricardo A. Samaniego (CountyJudge@epcounty.com)
El Paso County Sheriff Richard D. Wiles (epsheriff@epcounty.com)

¹Penal Code, Title 9. Offenses Against Public Order and Decency, Chapter 42. Disorderly Conduct and Related Offenses, Sec. 42.092. Cruelty to Nonlivestock Animals
<<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/PE/htm/PE.42.htm#42.092>>.