

*New Hanover County Animal Control Services  
Animal Adoption Contract*

Animals adopted from New Hanover County Animal Control Services may have been exposed to various diseases from contact with other animals. Wildlife rabies is currently prevalent in this area of North Carolina. A dog, cat, or other animal which is bitten (exposed) by a rabid animal may not develop symptoms of rabies for up to six months. During this time (the incubation period), the exposed animal may appear to be totally healthy. Since the vaccination history of shelter animals is usually unknown, many of these animals are not protected against rabies. Although all animals offered for adoption have been carefully screened for signs of exposure to rabid animals prior to adoption, the possibility exists that your adopted pet could be infected.

It is, therefore, very important that you know that these symptoms could be rabies in your pet: change in behavior, vicious or nervous activity, difficulty swallowing, excessive drooling, difficulty walking, or paralysis. If your pet develops any of these symptoms, immediately separate the animal from people and other animals until it can be examined by a veterinarian. Newly adopted pets must be examined by a veterinarian and vaccinated for rabies. However, a rabies vaccination may not protect the animal from previous bite or other exposure to rabies. In addition, the physical condition of some animals may be less than ideal due to conditions the animal may have suffered before arriving at the shelter.

New Hanover County Animal Control Services strives to screen animals and to inform prospective adopters of any perceivable problems, but some problems may not be evident to them at the time of adoption. Animals may be returned to the ACS shelter during regular working hours on weekdays if the adopter decides it is in his or her best interest or in the best interest of the animal. All paperwork must be returned with the animal.

Adopter verifies that he or she is 18 years of age or older and fully understands the contractual obligations set out above, and agrees to accept all risks. Failure to comply with these obligations will be a breach of contract, which gives ACS the legal right to reclaim the animal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adopter Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ACS Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date