

EUTHANASIA FAQ

IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT GASSING IS CRUEL.

It is only "common knowledge" that gas is inhumane if you accept the patently false propaganda that carbon monoxide (CO) gas euthanasia is inhumane, which it most definitely is NOT. They do not suffocate, they do not cry out "in pain". What they do is quickly lapse into unconsciousness as they do with sodium pentobarbital. Carbon monoxide is odorless, tasteless and actually the 'drug' of choice for many suicides; 99% pure carbon monoxide, in a properly designed chamber results in death in less than 10-12 seconds. Carbon monoxide binds with the hemoglobin on the red blood cells preventing transportation of oxygen to the brain and carbon dioxide away from the brain cells. The first sign of carbon monoxide poisoning is unconsciousness.

Animals in a carbon monoxide chamber collapse, they FALL DOWN, they don't lie down. Conscious animals do not collapse, they don't fall down. There is no sensation of "gasping" for their last breath.

EUTHANASIA BY INJECTION IS PAINLESS AND FAR MORE HUMANE.

Another false assumption is that injection is painless. I have never had a needle shoved through my skin when it didn't hurt, and my skin is considerably thinner than a cat or a dog. The matter of restraint is also assumed to be given. Most activists think of cats and dogs as Fluffy or Fifi, their beloved pets. These are NOT what makes up the majority of animals euthanized. Most have little or no training or socialization, or are aggressive by nature, or are feral with no desire to be even close to, let alone handled by, any human. Restraining a feral cat for euthanasia is neither pretty nor humane and requires more than one staff member. There is real danger to both of the animal control staff members required to restrain and inject, not the least of which is the possible exposure to a rabid animal, and we haven't even touched on the issue of euthanasia of wildlife.

SHOULD THE CHOICE OF WHICH TYPE OF EUTHANASIA TO USE BE THE DECISION OF THE ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER AND NOT LEGISLATED BY STATE LAW?

Euthanasia is in itself an unfortunate necessity. Those in animal control do not choose to have to euthanize beyond having chosen to work in that field. Irresponsible people choose to put them in the position that they have to euthanize. The methods of euthanasia, carbon monoxide, sodium pentobarbital, and gunshot in the field are all accepted by the scientific community as humane, and are humane when properly applied. There is no one of these methods which is more humane, especially in all situations.

The emotional stress of having to be held, muzzled, etc, when the animal has never had a human hand on it is more stressful than simply walking into a unit that is clean, lighted, and having a door close; take 2-5 breaths and reach unconsciousness and then death.

This is NOT a 'one size fits all' issue. For example: animals with respiratory distress should be euthanized by injection; but by the same token, animals with depressed circulatory issues actually do better with carbon monoxide if the animal control officer cannot find a vein without repeated needle sticks.

Now that the NC Department of Agriculture mandates specific training as well as background checks for all employees who will be doing any form of euthanasia we have made major strides in correcting the issue of local Government failing to provide adequate training. They are mandated by State Law to financially provide this training – and renewal of the Certification on a regular basis. For this we are very grateful.

However, this does not specifically address the issue of EBI vs CO; it still comes down to the necessity for more than one method to be available, and to be used for the right reasons in the right way with the right equipment by the right persons. There will always be a place for CO and EBI in Animal Control Shelters.

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