



## Limited Hours, No Help with Strays from Hillsborough County Pet Resources

By Steve Andrews | January 27, 2016

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, Fla. (WFLA) – Fourth of July fireworks make for spectacular displays. They also terrify many animals, causing them to flea in fear. It's one of the busiest intake days of the year at animal shelters.

So on July 5th when a dog with no tags wandered into Adrienne Swisher's cul-de-sac in Brandon, she called Hillsborough County Pet Resources. "Asked them if I could go ahead and bring him on down. They said, 'No,' this is not their normal intake hours, that I could bring it in on the Monday from 8 to noon," Adrienne said.

First of all, Adrienne works so those hours would not be manageable for her. She manages the Timberlane Pet Hospital and Resort in Plant City.

In addition, Adrienne has three dogs at home and told the county she could not keep a stray. "There was no compassion, no empathy, no solution," she recalled.

If Adrienne couldn't bring the dog to the shelter, she told them she'd be forced to release it onto the street. "It was **just do what you need to do**," Adrienne said.

Dr. Ellen Alence got a similar response from the county when she called about someone abandoning a cat at her animal hospital. "And I said, 'Well, I can't keep this cat. What am I supposed to do,' and **they told me to just let it out**," Alence explained.

**It's getting harder to surrender animals at the county shelter, and some people believe Hillsborough is making it more difficult to improve its numbers.**

**Adrienne contends the county is more concerned about raising its live-release rate than caring for animals.** The shelter has limited the times when the public can surrender animals,

As a result, it is Adrienne's contention that animal hospitals, as well as rescues, are taking in more strays.

"And we try, but eventually just like everything else, you run out of room, you run out of space, you run out of resources," she said.

It is also her belief more animals are being left on the streets. "How many more animals are out there suffering, starving to death, hit by cars, injured that wouldn't have been if they were able to get into the shelter and have a safe place to go?" she asked.

According to the county, the number of hours and days available to owners who wish to surrender their pets has increased and remained the same for persons who bring in strays. Under the current leadership, the schedule for people to turn in owned or stray animals is more consistent.

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