

One ACO's Story

My name is Linda Cordry and I'm an animal control officer in Liberty County, GA. I've used both methods of putting animals to sleep and I prefer using lethal injection 150% over the gas chamber. I know from firsthand experience that the gas chamber is a barbaric piece of equipment. Lethal injection ***properly administered to sedated animals*** delivers death rapidly compared to a gas chamber. The latter takes a minimum of 20 minutes and it is not uncommon for it to take as long as 45 minutes, depending on the size, age and health of the animal. Sometimes it is necessary to gas an animal two or three times before they succumb.

I can say without qualification that being killed in a gas chamber is terrifying for the animals and heartbreaking for the humans involved. It is *extremely* inhumane to both human and animals. It is the ultimate nightmare, and no horror film could even come close to depicting the experience.

Those opposing the use of the gas chamber will ask the question: "If gas chambers are so humane, why don't veterinarians use them in their practices to euthanize animals?" Those supporting the use of the gas chamber will answer: "Vets don't use the gas chamber to euthanize animals because the equipment is expensive and they would not use it enough to warrant the cost of the purchase." Well, I can tell you for certain that the reason veterinarians do not use gas chambers in their private practice is *not* because of the cost. It is because the cries coming from the dying animals are horrendous and would be offensive to the vet's customers. Having a customer hear his or her pet/family member crying out in terror and pain, when they are paying good money to have them *humanely* "put to sleep", just wouldn't do!

By contrast, having properly trained personnel euthanize dogs and cats *once they have been adequately sedated* is much less stressful. Those opposed to the gas chamber ban will argue that sedating the animals properly is too expensive, but it's not. It takes very little of the drug used in this humane step prior to administering the lethal injection, and it is a small price to pay for lessening the suffering of both the animal and the human.

The countless number of perfectly healthy cats and dogs that have been killed in gas chambers is heart wrenching, to say the very least. It's a big part of the reason I have been involved in animal rescue work for the past 10 years. The day I witnessed a dog survive the gas chamber is forever indelibly written on every fiber of my being (<http://www.wtoctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=5297862> and <http://www.wtoctv.com/Global/story.asp?s=5183653>.) I am ashamed that the county I work for was grandfathered in when the Humane Euthanasia Act was passed in 1990 and then allowed to install a new chamber in 2002 – clearly against the law (<http://www.blufftontoday.com/node/13147>). Gassing animals is a horrific experience and something I will *NEVER, EVER* be a party to again!

There is so much misinformation, and some bald-faced lies, circulating about the gas chamber, perhaps because people just don't want to believe the ugly truth. Contrary to one of the myths being told, animals DO NOT just fall asleep once they are placed in the chamber. Dogs cry out in fear and whine and growl and fight desperately to get out! Their bodies are trying to shut down and they don't understand why. The cats climb the cart walls, meowing continuously, crying pitifully. Cats should not be put in a gas chamber with dogs, but since there are no standards and/or regulations enforced with respect to the use of the chamber, one can only guess what really goes on. When it is not even known how many chambers are actually in use in Georgia, who can claim to speak the truth other than those who have actually walked the walk?

No matter the species, gender, size, health or temperament of the animals, they suffer terribly! They claw, climb, and try to stay awake. They writhe and vomit and urinate and defecate on one another. Believe it, I speak the truth! **Does this sound like peaceful and painless death to you?**