

MetroStar® Calls for Action & Financial Support of Abandoned Foreclosure Pets

Why Foreclosed Home Owners Abandon Pets

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Facing Foreclosure Alone?

Please, Don't Leave Your Pets Behind

A disconcerting consequence of many [foreclosures](#) is the increasing numbers of abandoned pets left behind. Some home owners dump their pets at animal shelters where, due to overpopulation at shelters, almost half of incoming animals are euthanized. But many home owners can't be bothered to be even *that* humane.

Pets who are the casualty of foreclosures are often left indoors, without food, water or the comforts of a temperature-controlled environment. Experts say a dog will become dehydrated within 24 hours without water and could die in extreme heat within a few days. Like humans, dogs and cats can go for a long time without food but will quickly [die without water](#).

How Can Home Owners Abandon Pets After Foreclosure?

You might ask yourself if these home owners feel no remorse when they leave a pet behind to die a slow and cruel death. You may be angry and unable to understand what these people were thinking. How can they be insensitive to such anguish and show no compassion?

I'd like to believe that humans who were kind enough to take in a stray pet, or adopt a pet for their children, would be responsible caregivers, but some

don't share the same sentiments toward pets as you and I. They don't look at a pet as living, breathing creature incapable of fending for itself. They see a pet as property, no different than a worn sofa tossed into the alley when the springs pop.

These types of home owners are often the kind who [strip assets during foreclosure](#) and sell everything they can rip out, including the kitchen sink.

Some pet owners don't think through their actions. They might naively rationalize their behavior by hoping that city officials or representatives of the bank will rescue the abandoned pets. Feeling desperate, they often can't think about the future beyond what it holds for themselves, forgetting their responsibilities toward their pets.

Why Foreclosed Home Owners Abandon Pets

First, examine why these home owners have [lost a home](#) through foreclosure. Foreclosures often are an undesirable result arising from one or more of the following events:

- Unemployment. They were laid-off, fired or quit job.
- An inability to continue working due to medical conditions.
- Incapacitation. Drug or alcohol addictions.
- Excessive debt and mounting bill obligations.
- Squabbles with co-owner or pending divorce.
- Job transfer to another state.

Sometimes people view themselves as victims of circumstances beyond their control. They feel helpless and are often depressed. Depression causes people to be indifferent to others, themselves and their obligations, namely their pets. Sadly, something has to give.

Moreover, people who have lost a home through foreclosure need to live somewhere else, which means they might have to rent an apartment, because they no longer qualify to [buy a home](#). Many apartment buildings do not allow pets. So, they think of their own security first and leave their pets behind.

How To Help Save Abandoned Pets

In most states, by law, pets are personal property, which means they have little or no rights. Personal property left behind by home owners are subject

to seizure by the lender that has taken the home back in foreclosure, but most [REO lenders](#) don't want to take care of pets. Some laws do not allow for forfeiture of personal property until a certain time period has passed, so lenders are prevented from removing the pets, and often discourage others from intervening.

- If you know that a home in your neighborhood is being foreclosed upon, why not ask the occupants if they have made plans for their pets?
- Some home owners might willingly turn over their pets to an animal welfare agency that specializes in rescuing stray and abandoned pets, if they knew where to take their pets.
- Leave animal rescue literature with the owners; it's better to offend and apologize than to do nothing.
- After the owners have moved, check on the home to see if any pets were left behind or tied up in the back yard.
- Call your [local humane society](#) to find out how you can help to rescue abandoned pets.
- Call a local real estate agent and ask the [neighborhood specialist](#) to inspect the home for abandoned pets. Most will gladly oblige at no obligation.
- In some states, animal cruelty is against the law. If you suspect animal cruelty, call the police.
- If you find a dehydrated pet, provide a small amount of water under supervision -- some pets can become so thirsty and weak that they can drown in a water bowl -- then call a vet before administering food.

Because if you don't speak up for these helpless animals, who will?

Thanks to Franny at [Cats.about.com](#) for her [blog about foreclosed pets](#), which inspired this article.