



Companion Animal Protection Society



Why You Shouldn't Buy That Puppy In The Window

Pet shops buy their puppies from brokers. These brokers get their animals from puppy mills – commercial breeding establishments that mass-produce goods for resale. Most puppy mills and brokers are in the Midwestern United States.

- Puppy mills and pet shops do not properly socialize their puppies. They raise their puppies in cramped, often dirty cages – not home-enriched environments.
- Pet shop puppies lack fresh air, exercise, play, and lots of positive human contact – all of the ingredients necessary for a puppy to become a well-adjusted adult dog.

Unsound breeding practices predispose puppy mill dogs to hereditary afflictions like hip dysplasia, luxating patellas (dislocating kneecaps), eye maladies, and aggressive behavior. Life-threatening genetic conditions such as liver and heart diseases, autoimmune disorders, and seizures can also result from careless breeding. Many genetic defects may not show up for months or even years.

- Pet shops do not usually provide information on genetic disorders prevalent in certain breeds – such as hip dysplasia in German Shepherds and Labrador Retrievers.
- Pet shops do not provide copies of these important certificates: Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) on the hips of both parents; the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) on the eyes of both parents.

Pet shop puppies come into contact with numerous animals at puppy mills and brokers' holding facilities, during transportation by truck, van, or airplane, and ultimately at pet shops. Therefore, these puppies are commonly exposed to a variety of illnesses. Moreover, transportation stress makes them even more susceptible to disease.

- Pet shop puppies commonly have worms, upper respiratory infections, ear and eye infections, mange, coccidia or giardia. Some of these maladies can be transmitted to humans.
- Pet shop puppies are prone to parvovirus and distemper. These diseases are highly contagious and usually fatal. Parvovirus symptoms are not immediately detectable, so a puppy with parvo may share a cage with a healthy puppy.
- Pet shops normally place very sick or deformed puppies in an isolation area – in most cases, a depressing back room. Due to improper circulation, the germs of puppies in the back room are spread throughout the store.
- While some puppies seem healthy at the pet shop, disease symptoms sometimes do not appear for several weeks – a puppy can already be in a new home.
- Puppies frequently die or require euthanasia at puppy mills, brokers' facilities, and pet shops.

The American Kennel Club registration papers that ordinarily come with purebred pet shop puppies often impress buyers and provide a false sense of security. AKC registration, however, does not guarantee proper breeding conditions, health, quality or claims to lineage. In fact, California requires pet shops to notify consumers orally and in writing of these limitations.

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- The AKC derives a significant portion of its revenues from the registration of puppy mill litters. The organization registers thousands of puppy mill puppies each year without questioning why so many puppies are born to Midwest breeders.

Pet shops do not screen their buyers. Their business depends on impulse buyers – many pet shops are in malls, which know very little about dogs. Impulse buyers may not have the proper environment for raising a puppy. Pet shops rarely ask any of the following necessary questions:

- Will someone be at home during the day?
- Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- Will a dog be allowed indoors, especially at night:?
- Do you have a fenced yard?
- Do you have the time required to exercise a dog?
- Do you have children or other animals?
- Do you understand that a dog will be a member of your family for ten years or more?
- Have you had dogs before, and if so, what were your experiences with those dogs?
- Do you have a veterinarian, or do you need a referral?
- Are you prepared to pay for professional grooming if you adopt a dog that needs these services?

Pet shops charge exorbitant prices for puppies – financing is usually available – and earn huge profits because of substantial markups. For example, an eight-week-old Labrador Retriever from a pet shop may cost around \$600. If you see a pet shop selling a puppy for \$300 or less, chances are it is more than three months old and has been sitting in a cage for at least a month.

- Pet shops treat puppies as merchandise that can easily be returned for an exchange or credit toward another dog. Most customers, though, become attached to their puppies and will not return them.
- New owners can incur large veterinary bills. Most pet shop warranties, however, preclude reimbursement for veterinary expenses.

Pet shops are anxious to sell animals because they want to sell pertinent supplies. As a rule, they do not provide the following essential information:

- The significance of spaying or neutering animals
- The benefits of obedience training
- The correct ways to deal with puppy teething

Every year, animal shelters destroy millions of dogs – including purebreds and puppies – and cats. PLEASE adopt a companion animal from your local shelter, humane society, rescue organization or veterinarian. In addition, many pet supply stores, such as PetSmart or Petco, sponsor adoption days. You can also find animals to adopt at www.petfinder.com and www.pet-ark.com.

The Companion Animal Protection Society (CAPS) is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to protecting companion animals. CAPS' foremost concern is the abuse and suffering of pet shop and puppy mill dogs.