

Comprehensive Complaint Regarding SPCA Chandigarh Management and Operations

Date: April 6, 2025

To: The Administrator, Chandigarh

CC: Municipal Commissioner, Chandigarh

CC: Director, Department of Animal Husbandry, Chandigarh

CC: Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Animal Welfare Advocate

Subject: Urgent Intervention Required for Persistent Operational and Administrative Issues at SPCA Chandigarh

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am writing to bring to your attention the ongoing issues at the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Chandigarh that require immediate intervention. Despite multiple communications with various authorities over the past two years, several critical issues remain unresolved, compromising animal welfare and the facility's operations.

A. Background and Previous Correspondences

Since December 2023, multiple communications have been exchanged with authorities including:

1. Letter to Municipal Commissioner (December 18, 2023) highlighting urgent infrastructure and staffing issues
2. Communications with Smt. Maneka Gandhi who personally intervened (December 2023 - January 2024)
3. Meeting with Municipal Commissioner (January 4, 2024) where several action points were agreed upon
4. Follow-up communications regarding veterinary officer involvement (September 2024)
5. Comprehensive report on numerous unresolved issues (November 5, 2024)

While some improvements were made following these communications, many critical issues persist or have resurfaced, indicating systemic problems that require a more comprehensive approach.

B. Critical Persistent Issues

1. Administrative and Management Challenges

- **Leadership and Accountability Gaps:**

- Frequent changes in administrative leadership have led to inconsistent policy implementation
- Promised monthly meetings for progress monitoring have not been consistently held
- Lack of formal complaint redressal system for visitors and volunteers
- Absence of clear protocols for staff accountability during high-risk periods (e.g., Diwali)
- **Staff Conduct and Supervision:**
 - Reported incidents of misconduct toward visitors and volunteers, particularly female volunteers and senior citizens
 - Serious dereliction of duty observed on Diwali night (October 31, 2024) when essential staff were absent without notice
 - Inadequate supervision during evening shifts, affecting animal care and safety
 - Claims of staff demanding excessive payments for medicines (e.g., Rs. 500 for a Rs. 25 injection)
- **Operational Inefficiencies:**
 - Delays in procurement of essential supplies (e.g., rice, dalia, bori/tirpal)
 - Administrative bottlenecks delaying implementation of approved repair work
 - Communication challenges due to non-functional landline (disconnected due to non-payment)
 - No modern communication options implemented (e.g., WhatsApp helpline) despite requests

2. Infrastructure and Resource Challenges

- **Physical Infrastructure:**
 - Pending structural repairs approved in AGM 2024 remain unimplemented
 - Leaking walls and broken sheds exposing animals to harsh weather conditions
 - Inadequate kennel infrastructure (though some repairs have recently been completed)
 - Cages lacking proper locks, posing security risks
- **Essential Equipment and Supplies:**
 - Non-functional ambulance limiting emergency response capabilities
 - Delayed procurement of winter materials (bori/tirpal) for protecting animals during cold weather
 - Shortages of essential food supplies reported since September 2024
 - Lack of working computers for efficient administration and record-keeping

3. Medical Care and Veterinary Services

- **Veterinary Staff Issues:**
 - Insufficient veterinary officer presence at the shelter (Dr. Munish Sharma rarely visiting despite being stationed 100m away)

- No in-house doctor available at all times as required by job description
- Staff salary delays affecting morale and performance (reported 2+ months without payment)
- Inadequate medical oversight during evening hours and emergencies
- **Animal Care Protocols:**
 - Inadequate protocol implementation for tagging and record-keeping of animals
 - Inconsistent feeding schedules and inappropriate food provided to animals
 - Insufficient pest control measures leading to tick infestations
 - Inadequate isolation facilities for animals with contagious conditions

4. Financial Management and Transparency

- **Budget Allocation and Expenditure:**
 - Unclear status of budget allocation for SPCA operations
 - Delayed bill payments resulting in service disruptions (e.g., disconnected landline)
 - Lack of transparency regarding fund utilization for approved projects
 - Delayed staff salary disbursements affecting operations
- **Procurement Processes:**
 - Administrative bottlenecks delaying essential procurement
 - Inefficient procurement processes leading to shortages of critical supplies
 - Unclear responsibility allocation for procurement decisions

C. Impact on Animal Welfare and Public Service

The cumulative effect of these issues has resulted in:

1. Increased animal suffering due to delayed medical care and inadequate facilities
2. Higher mortality rates, especially during extreme weather conditions
3. Reduced trust in the institution from the public and animal welfare advocates
4. Inefficient utilization of limited resources
5. Compromised emergency response capabilities
6. Staff demoralization affecting service quality
7. Volunteer frustration and burnout, reducing much-needed supplementary support

D. Documented Improvements and Acknowledgements

Despite these challenges, it is important to acknowledge:

1. Improvements in cleanliness and organization under Supervisor Saurav Sharma's management
2. Increase in release rates and reduction in death rates since March 2024

3. Some infrastructure improvements including kennel repairs and shed work recently undertaken
4. Dedication shown by several staff members working under challenging conditions
5. Ongoing efforts to improve SPCA's social media presence
6. Support from volunteers who continue to provide essential resources and assistance

E. Requested Actions

Based on the persistent issues identified, I respectfully request the following actions:

Immediate Actions (0-30 days):

1. Emergency Staff Review:

- Immediate review of staff attendance and conduct, particularly addressing the Diwali incident
- Implementation of strict accountability protocols for staff absences
- Clear delineation of responsibilities for emergency response

2. Essential Resource Allocation:

- Immediate disbursement of pending staff salaries
- Emergency procurement of essential supplies (food, medicine, winter protection materials)
- Repair of ambulance or provision of alternative emergency transport
- Restoration of landline service and establishment of WhatsApp helpline

3. Veterinary Oversight Enhancement:

- Enforce mandatory twice-weekly visits by Dr. Munish Sharma to SPCA
- Documentation of all veterinary visits in a formal register
- Implementation of proper medical record-keeping for all animals

Medium-term Actions (30-90 days):

1. Administrative Reforms:

- Establishment of formal complaint redressal system with visible contact information
- Implementation of bi-weekly staff meetings led by veterinary officer
- Installation of CCTV cameras with access for senior officials to ensure safety and accountability
- Development of standard operating procedures for all aspects of shelter operations

2. Infrastructure Improvement:

- Commencement of approved structural repairs prioritizing animal protection areas
- Completion of all kennel repairs and secure enclosure work
- Installation of proper pest control measures
- Procurement of computers for administration

3. Transparency Measures:

- Monthly audit of animal intake, mortality rates, and successful rehabilitations/adoptions
- Public disclosure of budget allocation and expenditure
- Regular progress reports on implementation of agreed improvements

Long-term Actions (90+ days):

1. Sustainable Operational Model:

- Consideration of NGO partnership model following Noida SPCA example (as previously suggested)
- Development of long-term funding strategy for shelter operations
- Staff training program on animal welfare best practices

2. Public Engagement:

- Establishment of official SPCA website and social media handles for public engagement
- Development of volunteer program with clear roles and protections
- Community awareness campaigns about animal welfare and SPCA services

F. Conclusion

While I acknowledge the complexity of running an animal welfare facility with limited resources, the persistent nature of these issues despite multiple interventions suggests the need for systemic reform. I remain committed to supporting SPCA Chandigarh's mission and offering assistance where possible.

I request a formal meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss these matters in detail and to establish a collaborative path forward to address these concerns. I firmly believe that with proper administrative support, SPCA Chandigarh can fulfill its mandate effectively and humanely.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Contact Information]

Volunteer and Animal Welfare Advocate