

The Hidden Dangers of Buying Puppies and Kittens in

Idaho Animal Rescue Network | May 5, 2025



“Puppies for Sale” or “Free Kittens.” Maybe it seems innocent, even helpful, to take home one of these adorable animals. But what many people don’t realize is that buying or giving away pets in parking lots isn’t just risky . It’s often illegal and deeply...

It’s a familiar scene in many towns: a truck or SUV parked outside a busy store with a sign that reads “Puppies for Sale” or “Free Kittens.” Maybe it seems innocent, even helpful, to take home one of these adorable animals. But what many people don’t realize is that buying or giving away pets in parking lots isn’t just risky and can be deeply harmful.

Here’s what you need to know before you stop at that tailgate full of puppies or kittens.

Backyard Breeding: Unregulated and Dangerous

Most animals sold in parking lots or roadside vehicles come from unlicensed backyard breeders. These individuals often breed animals for quick cash, not because they care about the animals’ health, genetics, or well-being. They’ll go as far as to tell you that it was an “accidental litter” and they’re using the money you give them to spay and neuter the parents. Backyard breeders never admit to being backyard breeders.

No health testing. These breeders rarely screen for common hereditary issues like hip dysplasia, heart defects, or other breed-specific conditions.

Poor living conditions. Many animals are raised in overcrowded, unsanitary environments without proper socialization.

No accountability. Once the animal is sold, the breeder disappears. There’s no contract, no return policy, and no support.

Vaccination Lies and the Spread of Disease

Buyers are often told that puppies or kittens are “vaccinated,” but unless verified by a licensed veterinarian, animal rescue, or shelter, this is frequently false or misleading. Some go as far as to create fake vaccine records to appear “legitimate”.

Parvo, distemper, and feline panleukopenia are deadly viruses that thrive in unvaccinated populations and can wipe out entire litters.

Sick animals may not show symptoms for several days, and by the time you notice, it may be too late, emotionally and financially. In 2024, our rescue became involved with 2 litters of parking lot puppies that developed parvo within 48 hours of being rehomed. We were also involved with a litter of kittens given away at Walmart in Clarkston with feline panleukopenia.

These animals pose a risk to your other pets and local shelters if surrendered or rehomed due to illness.

Illegal Interstate Sales

Under laws enforced by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, it is illegal to transport animals across state lines for sale without proper health certificates and documentation.

Many breeders bring animals in from out of state, often with no vet records, health checks, or required paperwork. You may not cross from Idaho into Washington or vice versa to sell animals without a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI).

This creates a legal liability for buyers and puts additional strain on shelters and rescue groups when animals are abandoned or surrendered later.

Report violators to your local law enforcement agency in addition to your Department of Agriculture. Include photos, videos, and clear identification of the vehicle(s) involved, such as their license plate and other identifying information.

Contributing to Overpopulation

By buying from parking lot breeders, you may unknowingly:

Support people who refuse to spay/neuter their animals.

Encourage more unethical breeding practices for profit.

Undermine the work of legitimate shelters and rescues that are overflowing with homeless pets needing homes.

? Do the Right Thing: Adopt Responsibly

If you're ready to welcome a new furry family member:

Visit your local animal shelter or rescue. Many have puppies and kittens available, all vetted, vaccinated, and spayed/neutered.

Ask questions. Responsible rescues and breeders will be transparent about medical history, temperament, and adoption policies.

Don't rush the process. A pet is a lifelong commitment, not an impulse buy.

? Be Part of the Solution

If you see someone selling animals from a parking lot:

Report the activity to local animal control or law enforcement. It is up to them to enforce the regulations set forth by your Department of Agriculture.

In Washington and Idaho, you can also report to the Department of Agriculture for possible transport and sales violations.

Share this post to help educate others about the risks and realities.

Local businesses can play a critical role in protecting animals and the community by prohibiting the sale or giveaway of puppies and kittens in their parking lots or on their property. These informal setups often enable irresponsible backyard breeding, unvaccinated animals, and illegal interstate transport, all of which pose public health and legal risks. By clearly posting signage, notifying staff, and working with local authorities to report unauthorized sellers, businesses send a strong message that they do not support unsafe and unethical animal sales. Taking this simple stand helps reduce pet overpopulation, prevents disease transmission, and promotes responsible pet adoption from reputable sources.

Let's work together to protect animals, educate the public, and stop the cycle of irresponsible breeding.

Want to make a difference? Consider fostering, volunteering, or donating to your local animal rescue. Every little bit helps save lives.

#AdoptResponsibly #SayNoToParkingLotPets #EndBackyardBreeding #ProtectOurPets
#AnimalWelfareEducation #IdahoRescue #StopIllegalPetSales

Source & Contact

Current story:

<https://idahorescue.com/2025/05/05/the-hidden-dangers-of-buying-puppies-and-kittens-in-parking-lots/>

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