

# Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals in Boarding Establishments: Table of Contents

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## **Preface**

The codes of recommendations and minimum standards for the welfare of animals have been prepared by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC), which was established in 1989 by the Minister of Agriculture to advise him on matters concerning animal welfare.

AWAC consists of members from the following backgrounds: the farming community, animal welfare groups, the veterinary profession, animal behaviour, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It also includes the chairman of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, an independent chairman and, up until February 1991, a philosopher.

Extensive consultation takes place with industry and other interested groups in the development of the codes.

This Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments was endorsed as a national code at the committee meeting held on 12 August 1993.

The codes of recommendations and minimum standards which have been endorsed by AWAC are:

- *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Circus Animals and Information for Circus Operators.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Sea Transport of Sheep from New Zealand.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Sheep.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Dairy Cattle.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Deer During the Removal of Antlers.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals Used in Rodeo Events.*

- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Horses.*
- *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Bobby Calves.*

The codes of welfare may be revised to take into account changes in practices of animal management and knowledge of animal welfare.

## 1. Introduction

Animal welfare considerations are becoming increasingly important for the keeping of animals, both in New Zealand and internationally. Practices which once may have been deemed acceptable are now being reassessed and modified according to new knowledge and changing attitudes. High standards of welfare are not only important legally, but also have direct economic benefits and we are necessary for continued international market access.

Without good animal care, welfare can never be adequately protected. This code is intended to encourage all those responsible for its implementation, and especially the inexperienced, to adopt the highest standards for animals in their care.

This code takes account of five basic animal needs:

- freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition;
- provision of appropriate comfort and shelter;
- prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of injury, disease or infestation with parasites;
- freedom from distress;
- ability to display normal patterns of behaviour.

## 2. Legal Responsibilities

The Animals Protection Act 1960 makes provision for the protection of animals and the prevention of cruelty to animals. Departure from a code of conduct is, in itself, not an offence under the Act. Such departure may, however, assist in determining whether, for example, the suffering of an animal was unreasonable or unnecessary, and in that way may assist in securing a conviction for an offence under the Act.

Specifically, amongst others, sections of the Act indicate that an offence is committed if anyone:

- cruelly ill-treat an animal;
- being the owner or person in charge of any animal, omits to supply the animal with proper and sufficient food, water or shelter;
- being the owner or person in charge of any animal, wilfully or wantonly neglects the animal so that it suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain suffering or distress;
- slaughters, brands, mutilates, confines, conveys, or carries any animal in such a manner or position as to cause the animal unnecessary pain, or suffering;
- keeps alive any animal which is in such a condition that it is cruel to keep it alive;

## 3. Responsibilities of the Manager

The manager of an animal boarding establishment is responsible for:

- providing accommodation and facilities to suit the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held;
- providing protection for the animals in his care from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, other animals and interference from human beings;
- providing sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest;
- providing sufficient and appropriate exercise for the requirements of the animal;
- providing sufficient quantities of appropriate feed and water to maintain good health;
- protecting animals as far as possible from disease, distress or injury;
- providing prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment in cases of disease or injury;

- maintaining the hygienic status of the premises and the health of the animals;
- directly or indirectly supervising daily feeding and watering, and inspecting the animals to ensure their welfare;
- providing adequate training and supervision of staff, whether working full-time or part-time and whether or not working for fee or reward;
- collating and maintaining relevant records.

## **4. Animal Housing**

### **4.1 Location**

4.1.1 The location and construction of animal boarding establishments must comply with local government requirements.

4.1.2 Animal boarding establishments should be located:

- where they are accessible to members of the public;
- away from sources of noise and pollution that are likely to cause injury or stress to the animals;
- only in areas that will drain, and are not prone to flooding.

### **4.2 Construction**

4.2.1 All animal accommodation must be soundly constructed to provide conditions to ensure suitable:

- temperature,
- humidity,
- ventilation.

4.2.2 Kennels must be separated by either solid partitions or by chain wire dividers. The partitions must not allow animals physical contact with each other, where injury may occur.

4.2.3 Any mesh or chain wire must be of sufficient strength to contain the animals. The recommended mesh size should not exceed 50 mm square.

4.2.4 The internal surfaces in which animals have contact must be constructed of impervious, solid, washable materials. Joints and corners should be properly sealed.

4.2.5 Floors of animal housing area of catteries and kennels should be made of an impervious material to facilitate cleaning and drainage. Sealed concrete is ideal.

### **4.3 Size**

#### **4.3.1 General principles**

Animal housing areas, whether for single or group housing, must provide at least enough space for each animal held to feed, sleep, sit, stand, lie with limbs extended, stretch and move about.

The following terms are used to describe the housing area:

- night box - a kennel with no run, designed principally for the animals to sleep in;
- kennel - a night box with a run attached;
- run - an area which allows the animal space in which it can urinate and defecate;
- exercise yard - an area, usually separated from the kennels and runs, in which an animal or animals can be released for exercise;

#### 4.3.2 Minimum sizes for the accommodation of dogs

|  | Night box       | Kennel                                    | Exercise area   | Minimum fence height |
|--|-----------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Small Dogs (less than 7 kg, e.g. toy breeds):                    | 900 mm x 700 mm | 500 mm x 500 mm plus Run: 600 mm x 1000mm | 3 m x 2 m for one dog (add 1 m each way for each additional dog allowed to exercise in that area).                | 1.2 m                |
| Medium Dogs (7-20 kg, e.g. Cocker spaniels, Shetland sheepdogs): | 1.2 m x 800 mm  | 600 mm x 700 mm plus Run: 800 mm x 1000mm | Exercise area: 3 m x 3 m for one dog (add 1 m each way for each additional dog allowed to exercise in that area). | 1.8 m                |
| Large Dogs (20-40 kg, e.g. Labradors, Dobermans):                | 1 m x 1.5 m     | 800 mm x 800 mm plus Run: 1 m x 800mm     | 4 m x 4 m for one dog (add 1 m each way for each additional dog allowed to exercise in that area).                | 1.8 m                |
| Extra Large Dogs (>40 kg, e.g. Great Danes, St Bernards)         | 1 m x 2 m       | 1.2 m x 1.2 m plus Run: 1.2 m x 2.4 m     | 5 m x 5 m for one dog (add 1 m each way for each additional dog allowed to exercise in that area).                | 1.8 m                |

#### 4.3.3 Minimum sizes for the accommodation of cats

##### *Communal cattery:*

The mixing of cats which are only to be boarded for a few weeks in a communal cattery should be discouraged as this can lead to the spread of disease.

The minimum size for any individual unit should be 600 mm x 600 mm x 600 mm including a sleeping shelf.

Cats should have access to an exercise area twice daily for a period no less than 1 hour.

##### *Individual and semi-individual cattery:*

Each cat unit shall consist of a night box, to allow the cat to withdraw, and exercise run.

Minimum sizes:

- Night box: 600 mm x 600 mm x 600 mm
- Exercise run: 1.8 m x 1.2 m x 600 mm

No more than two cats from the same household may be housed in this area.

#### 4.4 Drainage

Kennel and cattery floors should be sloped to enable wastes and water to run off.

#### 4.5 Temperature

4.5.1 Animals must be protected from extremes of temperature; recommended temperatures are between 15°C and 22°C.

4.5.2 Very old and very young animals which are more sensitive than others to changes in temperature may require provision of heating or cooling.

#### **4.6 Noise**

4.6.1 Design, construction and management of kennels should be such as to minimise noise levels.

4.6.2 Cats should be housed away from dogs as they may be disturbed by the barking.

#### **4.7 Lighting**

4.7.1 Lighting should be as close as possible, in duration and intensity, to natural conditions.

4.7.2 Sunlight is the preferred means of lighting, provided shaded areas are available.

4.7.3 Artificial lighting should be provided, where needed, to allow the animal housing area to be thoroughly cleaned and animals to be checked.

#### **4.8 Ventilation**

Ventilation should be adequate to keep animal housing areas free from dampness, noxious odours and draughts.

#### **4.9 Bedding**

All kennels should be provided with a raised sleeping area covered with a dry soft bedding material.

#### **4.10 Security**

4.10.1 Kennel and cattery buildings must be locked when no-one is in attendance.

4.10.2 Each individual kennel, cat cage, module or colony must be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the animals held.

4.10.3 Where dogs are boarded, a security barrier at least 3 m high should be constructed to prevent the escape of animals or unauthorised entry. The kennel compound wall may form part of the security barrier. In the case of cats, all buildings in which animals are housed should be fitted with double doors to prevent the loss of animals which may escape from cages or other facilities.

### **5. Hygiene**

#### **5.1 Cleaning and Disinfectant**

5.1.1 Animal housing and exercise areas must be cleaned so that the comfort of animals can be maintained and disease controlled.

5.1.2 Faeces must be removed at least once daily.

5.1.3 Kennels should be cleaned out at least once daily.

5.1.4 Animal housing should be cleaned daily and must be disinfected regularly, before new animals are introduced, and after an outbreak of infectious disease.

5.1.5 Cleaning and disinfecting agents should be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. Manufacturer's instructions for the use of these agents should be followed,

since too dilute a solution may be ineffective and too concentrated a solution may be toxic to animals.

5.1.6 After cleaning, animal housing areas should not be allowed to remain wet.

## **5.2 Pest Controls**

5.2.1 Efforts must be made to effectively control pests, including flies and wild rodents.

5.2.2 Some pesticides and rodenticide's are toxic to dogs and cats, and should be used with extreme care. If chemicals are used, they must only be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. All animals must be completely excluded from that part of the facility until the poison programme is complete.

## **5.3 Litter Trays**

5.3.1 Cats must be provided with litter trays.

5.3.2 Sufficient suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, untreated sawdust or shredded paper, is to be provided. Litter should be changed and litter trays cleaned and disinfected at least daily.

## **5.4 Waste Disposal**

5.4.1 Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of the local authority.

5.4.2 Solid waste must be collected from all parts of the facility and be disposed of in a suitable fashion, e.g. in an offal pit, septic tank, biogas digester, etc.

## **6. Management**

### **6.1 Facilities**

Each boarding establishment must provide:

- an area for reception;
- an area for records storage;
- washing and toilet facilities for staff;
- hygienically maintained facilities for bathing, drying and grooming animals;
- an area suitable for cleaning, disinfecting feeding bowls, water bowls, and any other equipment used in the preparation and dispensing of food;
- a hygienic food storage area where there is no risk of contamination of the food by vermin or spoilage by other organisms, and refrigerator space for foods which are likely to spoil at ambient temperatures.

### **6.2 Emergency Procedures**

6.2.1 An adequate plan must be provided to cover emergency measures. All staff should be aware of the plan.

6.2.2 A sign should be present referring anyone to an emergency contact if nobody is present at the facility.

6.2.3 Fire Extinguishers should be placed at easily accessible places, and fire exits should be clearly marked.

### **6.3 Record Keeping**

6.3.1 All animals must be able to be identified.

6.3.2 Records which must be kept for each animal admitted for boarding include:

- the animal's name
- the owner's name, address and telephone number
- the emergency/contact telephone number of the owner or the owner's nominee
- a description of the animal including:
  - the sex
  - breed or type
  - the colour
  - the age
  - distinguishing features
  - the date of admission
  - the expected date of collection
  - details of medical, dietary, bathing and grooming requirements
  - the animal's condition and preferably its weight on arrival
  - any collars, leads or belongings brought in with the animal
  - the vaccination status
  - the name and contact number of the veterinarian who normally attends the animal.

### **6.4 Hours of Attendance**

6.4.1 The owner/manager should be resident on the property to ensure the wellbeing of all animals.

6.4.2 The minimum hours of public attendance must be made known to the owners of all animals in the care of the facilities.

### **6.5 Staff**

6.5.1 Staff should respect the animals and have experience in their handling.

6.5.2 Staff should be aware of their responsibilities and competent to carry them out.

## **7. Health**

### **7.1 Animal Wellbeing**

Cats and dogs require frequent human contact. Time should be spent with each animal.

### **7.2 Disease Prevention**

7.2.1 For dogs, prior vaccination against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus is required. A current vaccination certificate (i.e. certifying that vaccination was done within the preceding 12 months) must be produced for each dog admission.

7.2.2 For cats, prior vaccination against feline infectious enteritis and feline respiratory disease is required. A current vaccination certificate (i.e. certifying that vaccination was done within the preceding 12 months) must be produced for each cat before admission.

7.2.3 Dogs and cats less than 4 months old should not be admitted for boarding except in exceptional circumstances, preferably held in isolation. All risks must be explained to the animal owner prior to admittance.

7.2.4 Dogs and cats should be treated for internal and external parasites before admission.

7.2.5 Animals known to be or suspected of suffering from an infectious disease should not be admitted for boarding, other than in exceptional circumstances. They must be held in isolation facilities.

7.2.6 Current local hydatids requirements should be met for all dogs entering the boarding establishment.

### **7.3 Health Checks**

7.3.1 Each animal shall be checked at least once daily to monitor its health and comfort.

7.3.2 Any change in health status should be reported promptly to the animal boarding establishment manager.

### **7.4 Veterinary Attention**

7.4.1 The animal boarding establishment manager should establish liaison with a veterinarian(s) to attend the premises whenever required.

7.4.2 Veterinary attention must be sought by the animal boarding establishment manager or his nominee for any animal showing signs of serious disease.

### **7.5 Isolation**

7.5.1 Facilities must be available for the isolation of animals that are suspected of, or have been diagnosed as, having an infectious condition. It is recommended that 10% of the boarding capacity be made available for this purpose.

7.5.2 Animals that have been in contact with an infectious case should be isolated from both the infectious case and the healthy animals. Veterinary advice should be sought in the management of the specific outbreaks of disease.

7.5.3 Facilities should be designed in such a way to prevent cross infection and to be easily cleaned and disinfected.

### **7.6 Death While in Care**

The cause of death must be attempted to be established by a veterinarian.

### **7.7 Euthanasia**

7.7.1 In accordance with the Animals Protection Act 1960, when an animal is found to be severely injured or sick and, in the opinion of a veterinarian, the animal would not respond to treatment and it would be cruel to keep it alive, the veterinarian shall forthwith destroy the animal or authorise its destruction where the owner is absent or cannot be found within a reasonable time.

7.7.2 If the owner refuses to destroy an animal or to consent to an animal being destroyed, and a veterinarian certifies in writing that it is not possible to cure or heal the animal so that it may live without suffering, only then can the animal be destroyed.

### **7.8 Medication**

7.8.1 The boarding establishment must follow all written medication protocols they receive unless they receive advice from a veterinarian to change it.

7.8.2 The type of drug (name, amount and description) should be noted on the animal's reception card along with details of the veterinarian who prescribed the medication.

7.8.3 The staff member administering the medication must record that each treatment has been administered (what and when) and a permanent record of this must be kept for reference purposes.

## **8. Diet**

### **8.1 Food**

8.1.1 Sufficient food of adequate nutritional value must be supplied daily to every animal.

8.1.2 The manufacturer's instructions should be adhered to for the feeding of commercial food.

### **8.2 Hygiene**

8.2.1 Food should be prepared hygienically in a separate kitchen area. It should be stored appropriately, i.e. dry food kept in a rodent-free place and fresh meat kept refrigerated.

8.2.2 Food containers should be preferably non-chewable and non-spillable. They must be readily accessible and cleaned at least daily.

### **8.3 Feeding of Dogs**

Where dogs leave food uneaten, the food should be removed and disposed of promptly so that it does not spoil or attract vermin.

### **8.4 Feeding of Cats**

## **9. Exercise**

### **9.1 Dogs**

9.1.1 Dogs must have the opportunity for exercise to:

- allow them to urinate and defecate;
- give them contact with humans and, if appropriate, with other dogs;
- allow muscular activity;
- monitor their gaits and behaviour.

9.1.2 Exercise can be provided by:

- allowing dogs access to an exercise area for at least 15 minutes twice daily; and/or
- walking dogs on a lead for at least 15 minutes twice daily.

9.1.3 Very active or old dogs may required more or less exercise than specified above.

### **9.2 Cats**

9.2.1 Cats must have sufficient room to enable them to stretch and to move about freely.

9.2.2 Cats should be monitored for gait and mobility.

Ideally, cats should be offered their daily food requirements (divided into small portions) several times a day.

## **10. Transport**

10.1 Animals should be transported in the shortest practicable time.

10.2 Any vehicle especially designed or regularly used for transporting animals should:

- protect animals from injury;
- have non-slip floors;
- provide easy access and be safe for the operator;
- protect against extremes of temperature;
- protect against unauthorised release of animals;
- be supplied with clean, secure cages or carry baskets for cats or very small dogs, and with separate compartments or partitions for larger dogs.

## **11. Disposal of Animals**

Animal boarding establishment managers must have a policy for dealing with unclaimed animals, which gives owners a reasonable opportunity to collect boarded animals.

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