



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 1992

CODE OF PRACTICE - APPROVAL

NO. 95 OF 1995

Pursuant to section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992 I approve the document entitled "Code of Practice for the Welfare of Greyhounds in the ACT" as a Code of Practice.

Dated this 30th day of June 1995

Gary Humphries
Minister for the Environment,
Land and Planning

**CODE OF PRACTICE
FOR THE WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS IN THE A.C.T.**

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has been prepared from a consideration of the welfare of greyhounds. Its purpose is to provide general guidelines on the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care that are appropriate to the greyhound.

The Code emphasises the importance of good management and husbandry practices, pointing out that persons in charge of greyhounds have a legal liability under ACT legislation to care for the dogs under their control.

The *Animal Welfare Act 1992* and *Regulations 1993* enact as law that a person shall not, without reasonable excuse, commit an act of cruelty, or deliberately cause unnecessary pain to an animal, or fail to provide it with appropriate and adequate food, water, shelter and exercise. The keeping of Greyhounds in the ACT for any purpose must also comply with the *Dog Control Act 1975* and any amendments. Greyhound owners are expected to be familiar with these Acts and Regulations.

The basic needs of greyhounds are :

- * readily accessible food and water in sufficient quantities to maintain health and vigour;
- * freedom of movement to stand, stretch and lie down;
- * regular exercise;
- * shelter and accommodation that provides protection from the elements;
- * protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth, and internal and external parasite control; and
- * rapid identification and treatment of injury and disease.

The overriding theme of this Code is that the well being of the greyhound must at all times be considered above the demands of owners, breeders, trainers, sponsors, officials or spectators.

2. General Housing and Care of Greyhounds

2.1 Location of Greyhound Kennels

The location of kennels should be away from sources of noise or pollution that could cause injury or stress to the animals and out of areas that are prone to flooding and/or bushfires.

2.2 Construction

Kennels (sleeping areas and run) must provide adequate protection from rain and wind, and provide adequate shade. Outdoor kennels must be partially enclosed to provide sheltered sleeping areas.

Kennels should be high enough to permit an adult person to walk right to the back of them.

Where kennels are indoors temperature, humidity and ventilation must be appropriate. Lighting should be as close as possible in duration and intensity to natural conditions.

All kennels should be provided with raised wooden sleeping boards, dog houses or trampoline-style beds.

Kennels should be readily cleanable and be well drained.

2.3 Kennel Size

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

Kennels for adult dogs, including sleeping quarters and runs should meet the following requirements:

- * Where the dogs are exercised once daily: run area 8 m² with a minimum dimension (width and length) of 2.0 m plus extra 1 m² per additional dog (max. 4 dogs).
- * Where the dogs are exercised twice daily: half the above floor areas, minimum width 1.2 m.

In certain cases, some dogs may need to be housed in smaller areas due to injury, illness and age.

Where dogs are housed together they should be compatible.

2.4 Hygiene

Faeces and urine should be removed at least once a day from kennels and exercise areas.

Any cleaning and disinfecting agents should be chosen on the basis of suitability, safety and effectiveness. Manufacturers' instructions for the use of these agents should be followed since too concentrated a solution may be toxic to animals.

2.5 Vermin Control

Effort must be made to effectively control pests, including flies, mosquitoes and wild rodents.

Chemicals used for vermin control should be registered under relevant Commonwealth and ACT agriculture and veterinary chemicals legislation, and used only in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

3 Nutrition

Dogs should be provided with adequate amounts of good quality food and fresh clean drinking water daily to maintain optimal health at all times.

Adult dogs should be fed daily. Pregnant and lactating animals and pups up to 6 months of age should be fed twice daily.

Food should be presented in appropriate containers, i.e. non-chewable and non-spillable. They should also be cleaned at least once a day.

Uneaten food should be removed and disposed of daily so that it does not spoil or attract vermin.

4 Exercise

Dogs must have the opportunity once or twice a day for exercise to :

- * allow them to be checked over,
- * allow them to stretch their limbs, and
- * give them contact with humans.

Exercise can be provided by walking dogs on a lead for a minimum of 30 minutes once daily or 15 minutes twice daily. Very active, very old or injured dogs may require more or less exercise than the above. If the dog is not being raced it should be given an opportunity to run either on a suitable training area or in a designated exercise area as prescribed in the *Dog Control Act 1975*.

5 Health

Each animal should be checked at least once daily to monitor its health and comfort. Any changes in health status should be monitored closely, and if necessary, veterinary attention should be sought. It is recommended that routine vaccination and procedures for the control of internal and external parasites are carried out.

5.1 Owner's Responsibility

Owners must declare to the duty veterinarian any known or suspected parasite infections or transmissible diseases that their animals may be carrying when they arrive for a race meeting.

5.2 Disease and Ill Health

Disease, ill health or stress may be observed in greyhounds in a variety of ways. Sick greyhounds in the last stage of disease incubation period or following parasite infestation may show any combination of the following signs:

- * runny nose,
- * runny or inflamed eyes,
- * repeated sneezing,
- * coughing,
- * vomiting,
- * diarrhoea,
- * lameness,
- * bleeding or swelling of body parts (other than the vulva of bitches in heat),
- * significant weight loss or inappetence (not eating),
- * apparent pain,
- * fits of staggering,
- * bloating of abdomen, and
- * inability to urinate or defecate.

5.3 Suspension for Health Reasons

A greyhound suspected of suffering from a transmissible skin condition or any other contagious disease or external parasite infestation must not be allowed to be kennelled or compete in any race or qualifying trial at the meeting.

A greyhound that has whelped a litter shall not be allowed to compete in any race or qualifying trial held within 16 weeks after the date of the whelping.

A greyhound that the owner or trainer knows, or has reason to believe, is in season shall not be allowed to compete in any race or qualifying trial held within 30 days after the date on which the owner or trainer first knew or suspected that the animal was in season.

5.4 Injured Greyhounds

A greyhound injured during a race must be inspected by the duty veterinarian immediately after the race.

Severe injuries that have occurred during a race must be treated or stabilised promptly by the duty veterinarian on the race track. Less serious injuries can be handled by the owner or trainer's personal veterinarian.

5.5 Euthanasia of Critically Injured Greyhounds

Where a greyhound has become critically injured during racing, euthanasia should be considered and may be recommended to the owner by the duty veterinarian.

Euthanasia on the race track should be performed behind appropriate protective screens to shield the dog from public view. Disposal of the carcass should meet with ACT Government regulations.

6 Transport of Racing Greyhounds

Owners must ensure that their greyhounds are transported at all times in a way not to cause injury or stress. This includes to and from race meetings, training sites, exercise sites, veterinary visits, stud purposes, when sold or otherwise disposed of, and any other reasons for travel.

6.1 Methods of Transport

Owners must ensure that their greyhounds travel in suitable modes of transport. These include:

- * enclosed trailer - insulated and ventilated,
- * in car with owner or handler, and
- * in rear compartment of station wagon with owner or handler.

Modes of transport that are not suitable are:

- * wire cages in trailer, utilities, etc. which are open to the elements, and
- * non-ventilated or non-insulated trailers.

Owners must ensure that the mode of transport used must have no protuberances that could injure the animal during transport.

Owners must also ensure that the greyhound has enough room to stretch adequately in a standing position as well as being able to lie down comfortably during transport.

6.2 Provision of Water for Duration of Transport

Owners must ensure that adequate good quality water is provided to each greyhound at least every six hours.

6.3 Breaks During the Trip

A greyhound should not be kept in a mode of transport for more than 6 hours without breaks provided. A break should consist of being let out of the mode of transport for at least ten minutes.

6.4 Sanitary Conditions of Mode of Transport

Before the commencement of each trip the owner must ensure that the mode of transport is in a sanitary condition. It must also be kept in a reasonably clean condition for the entire duration of each trip.

7. Greyhound Welfare at the Track

7.1 National Greyhound Racing Rules

All greyhound racing meetings in the ACT must be run within the *Rules of the Greyhound Racing Control Board 1983* (as amended from February 1984) and also within the *Club Rules for Greyhound Racing*.

7.2 Transferring Greyhounds

When transferring greyhounds from mode of transport to track kennels, they should be on a lead.

7.3 Drug Control

Regular testing should be conducted for prohibited substances. At race meetings, such testing is conducted at the discretion of the stewards.

7.4 Racing Weight

No dog should be permitted to race if there is a variation of more than one kilo from its registered weight.

7.5 Track Kennelling

All kennels at the track should be air-conditioned. Kennel construction should be such that there are no projections or defects that may result in injury to greyhounds. All kennels should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each race meeting.

7.6 Live Lures and Baiting

Live lures are prohibited from all racing and training greyhound tracks in the ACT. Baiting, also known as blooding, is prohibited under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

7.7 Presence of a Veterinarian

At all greyhound meetings in the ACT, a veterinarian should be present and all dogs should be examined by that person prior to racing.

8. Disposal of Unwanted Greyhounds

8.1 Greyhounds as Pets

A greyhound that has completed its racing life or is not good enough for competition can still make a good pet.

To facilitate possible life as a pet after their racing life, it is recommended that greyhounds get as much contact as possible with humans and other dogs.

Owners may make arrangements to pass their dog on to a new owner as a companion animal through organisations such as the RSPCA.

Greyhounds that are kept as companion animals are still required to comply with the requirements of the *Dog Control Act 1975* with regards to muzzling and being walked on leads except in designated exercise areas as prescribed under the *Dog Control Act 1975*.

8.2 Humane Death

When necessary, the recommended method of humane and painless death for any greyhound is a rapid intravenous injection of concentrated barbiturate solution.

Such methods of euthanasia must be performed by a veterinarian, either in private practice or by the veterinarian on duty in the RSPCA shelter or ACT Government Dog Pound.