

Animal Welfare (Management of Animals in Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Establishments) Mandatory Code of Practice 2023*

Disallowable instrument DI2023-255

made under the

Animal Welfare Act 1992, Section 22 (Approved code of practice) and Section 23 (Mandatory code of practice)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Animal Welfare (Management of Animals in Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Establishments) Mandatory Code of Practice 2023*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

3 Application

This Mandatory Code of Practice applies to all persons responsible for the care and welfare of animals in a temporary housing facility including animal welfare centres, pounds, rescue groups and foster carers.

4 Approval

I approve the Code of Practice for the Management of Animals in Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Establishments, attached to this instrument, as a mandatory code of practice under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

5 Revocation

This instrument revokes notifiable instruments DI1995-97 *Animal Welfare (Handling of Companion Animals in Pounds and Shelters Code of Practice) Approval 1995*.

Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport and City Services
7 November 2023

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60

Code of Practice for the Management of Animals in Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Establishments

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Introduction

This Code of Practice for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has been prepared with guidance from the ACT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC).

This Code of Practice is made under section 23 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* and is a mandatory code of practice.

This Code of Practice includes mandatory standards and guidelines that are considered essential for meeting the requirements specified under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*. This Code of Practice also includes guidelines that are considered essential for meeting the requirements specified under the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*.

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide information to the owners and persons in charge of animals in a temporary housing facility on the standards they must achieve to meet their obligations under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* as well as the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*.

This Code of Practice encourages all those responsible for the welfare of animals in a temporary housing facility to adopt the highest standards of husbandry, care and handling, and to equal or exceed the minimum standards.

It aims to ensure that all animals receive proper treatment consistent with the need to maintain their comfort, security, physical and mental well-being at all times. This includes ensuring that all reasonable action is taken to reunite animals with their owners, or where relocation occurs, to place animals in safe and caring permanent homes.

Adequately maintaining the welfare of companion animals requires experience, training, and the observance of high standards. There are many stressors associated with animals being housed temporarily. Animals are confronted by new surroundings, change of diet and routine, and separation from familiar people and/or other companions. Most temporary housing facilities also keep animals at a much higher density than is common for more permanent pet homes, increasing the risk of contagious diseases.

Maintaining a high standard of animal welfare in a temporary housing facility requires particularly strict attention to behavioural needs and hygiene standards.

Who is this Code of Practice intended for?

This Code of Practice is intended for all persons responsible for the care and welfare of animals in a temporary housing facility including animal welfare centres, pounds, rescue groups and foster carers.

It also applies to any animals born while being kept in temporary housing facilities.

This Code of Practice applies to stray or unowned animals kept in temporary housing facilities for animals, such as stray cats and dogs.

It does not apply to the temporary housing of animals by their owners, for instance boarding or training facilities nor to veterinary clinics housing animals for the purpose of providing veterinary treatment or supervision (also see [Animal Welfare \(Overnight Animal Boarding Establishments\) Mandatory Code of Practice 2021](#) AND the [Veterinary Practice Act 2018](#)).

Holding facilities for the short-term housing of animals prior to transportation to an establishment must also comply with this Code of Practice. Additional specific conditions may apply to the long-term housing of animals seized and held for legislative purposes.

The Code of Practice is to be observed by the designated person in charge who may be the proprietor or operations manager, and also all other staff of an establishment. All establishments **must** comply with Territory legislation and permits.

It also does not apply to temporary housing of companion animals in temporary emergency shelters during civil defence and other emergency situations.

Although the basic principles of good animal welfare as outlined in this Code of Practice are universally relevant, this Code of Practice does not apply to wildlife being cared for by persons holding an authorisation under a licence to keep native animals, including for rehabilitation purposes, under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

Background

The *Animal Welfare Act 1992* provides for the welfare of animals in the ACT. It places obligations on people in charge of or who oversee animals to ensure good animal welfare.

The *Animal Welfare Act 1992* establishes the fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals and provides for the development and issue of codes of welfare. AWAC has the functions of advising the Minister and participating in the development of approved codes of practice and mandatory codes of practice.

Codes of Practice expand on the basic obligations of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* by setting minimum standards and recommending best practice for the care and management of animals.

Codes of Practice do not represent an operational manual or instructional guide for implementation. Each establishment must develop its own operational model to maximise its ability to better care for animals based on the information presented in Codes of Practice.

Welfare Framework

The main objects of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* are to recognise that—

- a) animals are sentient beings that are able to subjectively feel and perceive the world around them; and
- b) animals have intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with compassion and have a quality of life that reflects their intrinsic value; and
- c) people have a duty to care for the physical and mental welfare of animals.

This Code of Practice sets out guidelines for best practices as well as mandatory minimum standards of care for animals in line with the Objects of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

There are five fundamental freedoms (the Five Freedoms for Animal Welfare) to which every animal is entitled and the more modern welfare concept of the Five Domains, namely:

Five Freedoms	Five Domains
1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.	1. Nutrition — factors that involve the animal's access to sufficient, balanced, varied, and clean food and water.
2. Freedom from discomfort	2. Environment — factors that enable comfort through temperature, substrate, space, air, odour, noise, and predictability
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease.	3. Health — factors that enable good health through the absence of disease, injury, impairment with a good fitness level.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour.	4. Behaviour — factors that provide varied, novel, and engaging environmental challenges through sensory inputs, exploration, foraging, bonding, playing, retreating, and others.
5. Freedom from fear and distress.	5. Mental state — the mental state of the animal should benefit from predominantly positive states, such as pleasure, comfort, or vitality while reducing negative states such as fear, frustration, hunger, pain, or boredom.

The Five Freedoms and Domains for Animal Welfare are welfare principles which provide a model that is applicable across species and situations, including the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Native Wildlife – Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release.

Structure of Code

This Code of Practice includes mandatory standards and guidelines.

Mandatory standard

In this Code of Practice are minimum standards that **must** be met for the appropriate management of animals in pounds, shelters and rescue establishments. In this Code of Practice, mandatory standards appear under the heading *Mandatory standards*, include the word “must” and are outlined in a rectangular box.

Mandatory standards must be complied with and non-compliance can constitute an offence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

Guidelines

In this Code of Practice, guidelines provide additional information on the appropriate care and welfare of horses. Guidelines are not mandatory.

Compliance with Code

The Code of Practice is made under section 23 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*, which allows the Minister to approve a Code of Practice, part or all of which has mandatory force.

Failing to comply with the mandatory standards in this Code of Practice is an offence. It is also an offence to fail to follow a direction to comply with this Code of Practice. The following sections of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* outline these offences and their penalties:

- Section 24A (Reckless failure to comply with a code of practice);
- Section 24B (Failure to comply with mandatory code); and
- Section 24D (Failure to comply with direction to comply with mandatory code).

Relation to other Codes

A number of Codes of Practice for animal welfare have been made over time by the ACT Government. Taken together, the Codes create a matrix of animal welfare provisions that provide guidance on most of the acute animal welfare issues in the ACT. The Codes are subject to reviews and updates and additional codes of practice may be developed as industries, technologies, attitudes, science and best practice animal welfare evolves.

SECTION A: RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

Introduction

While this Code of Practice is based on good practice, scientific knowledge and available technology at the time of issue, it does not replace the need for experience and common sense in the handling and management of animals.

Owners or operators of a temporary housing facility for animals need to ensure that their staff have either the relevant knowledge and training or appropriate supervision to provide for the health and welfare needs of the animals in their care.

It is important that staff, including temporary or contract staff, either undergo formal training or be trained on the job by experienced and trained supervisors. Staff need to be appropriately instructed in the care and maintenance of animals and how their actions may affect the animals' welfare.

Knowledge of the normal appearance and behaviour of animals is essential for recognising early signs of distress or disease so that prompt action is taken or advice sought.

The competence of those responsible for animals during their stay in a temporary housing facility should be demonstrated through practical experience, preferably species' specific, or an appropriate certificate from an independent and formally recognised training or professional development body.

1. Proprietor responsibilities

Guidelines

- G1.1 The proprietor / director or manager of an establishment is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the establishment, which includes:
- ensuring compliance with the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* and Codes of Practice;
 - ensuring compliance with other relevant legislation including work health and safety obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT);
 - the health and wellbeing of all animals in the establishment and in foster care in accordance with the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare;
 - promoting and supporting relevant formal and informal training to staff;
 - ensuring there is a written and signed agreement stating who will be responsible for any building or plant work, where both parties' responsibilities are clearly defined if the proprietor is leasing the premises;

- having a written agreement with sufficient veterinary practitioners to provide prompt treatment other than first-aid and, if necessary, euthanasia;
- establishing and maintaining written foster care agreements;
- the protection of staff health at the establishment, including recognising and managing compassion fatigue;
- ensuring animals are in good health or under the supervision of a veterinarian prior to sale or rehoming;
- meeting requirements relating to the provision, design and maintenance of facilities and equipment, quality assurance procedures, the allocation of operational responsibilities and the competence and supervision of employee performance. This generally lies with the owner or manager of the business or facility; and
- keeping of records inclusive of name; microchip number; species; physical description (e.g., breed, colour, identifying marks); age; gender; source; medical history including sterilisation, vaccine history; behaviour notes; location within establishment; adoption applications and contracts; outcomes (e.g., fostered, adopted, returned), and a full body, side and close-up facial photograph.

G1.2 It is recommended that organisations involved in temporary housing for animals develop their own clear guidelines on operational responsibilities for meeting obligations outlined in the Code of Practice.

2. Operations manager responsibilities

Mandatory standards

- S2.1 The proprietor may act as the operations manager or appoint a person to that role. This appointed owner or persons are viewed as being 'in charge' of animals and as such are responsible for the management of general health and well-being of the animals as well as their fitness to deal with the additional stressors associated with being housed in an unfamiliar environment.
- S2.2 To operate an animal shelter or pound an operations manager **must** have relevant experience or qualifications in the husbandry of dogs and cats to meet their physical and behavioural requirements.
- If an operations manager is in training and has not yet attained qualifications or experience, then the operations manager **must** be under the supervision of a suitable trained and qualified person.

Guidelines

- G2.1 The Operations manager should have a written health management plan or protocol that has been formulated in consultation with a veterinary practitioner. The Health Management Plan could include protocols for:
- assessment for admission
 - vaccination programs
 - parasite prevention
 - response to an outbreak of disease
 - approved methods of euthanasia
 - management of isolation facilities
 - environmental enrichment
 - assessment programs for fostering animals
 - temperament and health assessment for rehoming animals
 - behavioural and welfare assessment of animals impounded longer than six weeks
 - processes for assessing and removal of animals deemed unfit for continued pound or shelter care.
- G2.2 The operations manager is responsible for the day to day operation of the establishment which could include:
- the health and wellbeing of all animals in the establishment.
 - reporting to the proprietor on matters of compliance and disease outbreaks
 - carrying out the directions of the veterinary practitioner
 - the supervision of staff and the provision of training
 - the maintenance and collation of records and statistics

- supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals
- supervision and examination of animals upon entry and release.
- the overall level of hygiene in the establishment, including the disposal of waste materials
- provision of prompt veterinary attention for animals when required
- developing and prominently displaying at the establishment a plan to respond to emergency situations for both humans and animals
- monitoring physical and psychological health of animals
- seeking relevant expert advice for adverse behavioural change in an animal
- removal of animals deemed not fit for a pound or shelter environment.

3. Animal attendant responsibilities

Mandatory standards

- S3.1 Animal attendants who work at the establishment must be trained and experienced to properly manage the type of animals kept at the establishment.
- S3.2 Animals in temporary housing facilities must be cared for by a sufficient number of staff, who collectively possess the appropriate time, ability, knowledge and competence necessary to maintain the animals' health and welfare in accordance with this Code.
- S3.3 Animal attendants are responsible for carrying out the following duties and must report to the operations manager on these duties:
- daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals
 - daily cleaning of animal housing areas, i.e. hose out, replace bedding, litter trays, feeding and watering utensils
 - administering medication and treatment as prescribed by a veterinary practitioner
 - routine disinfection of animal housing areas and equipment
 - exercising of animals as required
 - provision of environmental enrichment for the animals.
- S3.4 The animal attendant must promptly report to the operations manager animals showing clinical signs which may include any of the following:
- any serious physical or behavioural abnormality
 - any change in behaviour in an animal
 - apparent pain
 - bleeding or swelling of body parts
 - bloating of abdomen
 - coughing
 - diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained
 - difficulty or inability to urinate or defecate
 - fits or staggering
 - inability to stand or walk
 - lack of appetite
 - lameness
 - pregnancy
 - red or brown coloured urine
 - repeated sneezing

- runny nose
- runny or inflamed eyes
- vomiting
- weight loss
- whelping or queening
- Any other clinical sign of illness or injury

4. Veterinary practitioner

Mandatory standards

- S4.1 Where there is no Veterinarian staffed at the establishment, a written agreement between the proprietor and the veterinary practitioner must be in place and include a plan for 23 hour care arrangements for:
- the use of a veterinary practitioner's facilities for the treatment of animals
 - the provision of isolation housing if the establishment does not have a separate first aid and treatment area where animals could be housed until receiving veterinary treatment or oversight.

Guidelines

- G4.1 Animals housed for veterinary treatment or isolation at a veterinary clinic and under direct veterinary supervision should be housed in pens, cages or modules in line with ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board requirements.
- G4.2 A protocol should be in place for foster carers to be able to access afterhours Veterinary support for emergency situations.

5. Foster carer

Mandatory standards

- S5.1 A foster carer is a volunteer who has been formally signed on by the establishment, who has a written agreement and who has been sufficiently trained to care for animals for discreet periods of time in their home environments under the direction and auspices of that particular establishment.
- S5.2 A foster carer who undertakes foster care must have and comply with a written foster care agreement with an establishment that is registered and required to report on its operations to its Registering Body at least annually.
- S5.3 Foster carers conducting foster care for an establishment must:
- have the permits, where required by local government, to keep the number of animals at their premises
 - not have more foster animals in their care at any one time than they cannot singularly manage to provide care and enrichment for every day
 - notify the establishment and present the animal to a veterinary practitioner as soon as possible if symptoms of illness develop
 - provide environmental enrichment and socialisation in accordance with the written foster care agreement
 - follow any veterinary instructions on medication or treatment regimes as directed by the establishment veterinary practitioner for the animal in their care
 - follow any training or exercise regime as instructed in the written foster care agreement
 - not allow animals kept on their premises to leave the premises unless as specified in the written foster agreement
 - ensure that animals leaving the premises are in a crate or restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal
 - return the animals under foster care to the establishment within the specified time set in the written foster care agreement.

- S5.4 In addition, foster carers conducting juvenile, veterinary rehabilitation or behavioural rehabilitation foster care for an establishment must:
- be trained and experienced to care for and meet the needs of the animals placed in their care for rehabilitation
 - keep the animals and their records in accordance with the instructions of the written foster care agreement
 - present the animal and all related records to a veterinary practitioner or operations manager or nominated person as requested or required by the written foster care agreement.

SECTION B: GENERAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The nature of shelters, pounds and other temporary housing facilities, where animals with variable or unknown diseases or immune status and socialisation may be brought together, introduces the potential to create conditions for disease transmission, as well as for high levels of stress amongst the facility population.

6. Housing, shelter structures and yards

Mandatory standards

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| S6.1 | Every animal, on admittance to a temporary housing facility, must be temporarily kept separate prior to being assessed for overt symptoms of health or behavioural problems by an experienced or qualified person. |
| S6.2 | Any incoming animal identified as requiring urgent veterinary treatment must immediately receive prompt veterinary attention. |
| S6.3 | Any animal known or suspected of having an infectious disease must be carefully supervised and securely isolated to limit the infection spreading to other animals. |
| S6.4 | Any animal that is assessed as being aggressive, either towards people or other animals, must be handled or housed to minimise risk to other animals and staff. |

Guidelines

- G6.1 It is important that the health, welfare and socialisation status of each animal be established on its admittance. Such assessment needs to encompass any special requirements, including administration of medication, feeding of special diets, bathing, grooming, and isolation of any animal that has medical or behavioural conditions or issues that affect itself, other animals or the ability of staff to care for the animal appropriately, and that would benefit from being segregated.
- G6.2 Each incoming animal should be individually identified and a health record should be developed for any animal entering a temporary housing facility and kept in a manner that it can easily be traced to the animal.
- G6.3 When the owner of an animal places the animal for temporary (emergency) housing, but wishes to retain ownership of the animal, they should sign a consent form to allow veterinary treatment of the animal in the case that the animal becomes ill or injured and they cannot be contacted.

G6.4 Animals admitted can be classified by health status for appropriate action. A guideline is provided below:

Health Status	Action
healthy animal	for general admission process
Injured animal	to be provided with prompt first aid and veterinary treatment
identified pest species that is deemed feral, uncontrollable or diseased	may be euthanased in accordance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> or <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> or <i>Nature Conservations Act 2014</i>
unweaned and orphaned animal	May be euthanased if quality of life prognosis is poor or may be placed in appropriate foster care
animal suspected of having an infectious disease	must be housed and treated in isolation as approved by a veterinary practitioner

7. Vaccination, parasite control and quarantine

Mandatory standards

- S7.1 All animals **must** be appropriately vaccinated. In addition, animals need protection against parasites (e.g., fleas, heartworm) and zoonotic diseases (diseases that can spread between species, such as ringworm).
- S7.2 Vaccinations and parasite control schedules **must** be administered under the direction of a shelter veterinarian to determine what vaccinations and medications should be given to the animals on a routine basis.
- S7.3 All animals **must** be vaccinated prior to rehoming.

8. Isolation

Mandatory standards

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| S8.1 | All establishments must provide an isolation area for animals suspected of having an infectious disease. |
| S8.2 | Isolation housing within the establishment must be physically separated by an impervious barrier and a safe distance from other species housed at the establishment. |
| S8.3 | Animals must be maintained in an area approved in the animal health management plan — with particular reference to the area's airflow, workflow and cage or pen design. The isolation area should have its own drainage, ventilation and water supply systems and enclosures should not be able to drain waste into adjoining enclosures. |
| S8.4 | All animals confined in isolation housing must be under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner. |

Guidelines

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| G8.1 | Suitable over garments and footwear should be available and should be worn while inside the isolation area as required. Hand washing facilities and appropriate footbaths/pads should be available to be used at all entry/exit points as required. Where footbaths/pads are not present, disposable shoe coverings should be worn or footwear should be kept in the isolation area. |
| G8.2 | There should be provision for all equipment used within the isolation area (e.g. food bowls, waste buckets, carry cages, towels, brushes, leads, nets) to remain in the isolation area or be disinfected before leaving the area. |

9. Spay / Neuter and Microchipping

Mandatory standards

- S9.1 Every suitable animal **must** be sterilised prior to adoption, or arrangements made for sterilisation post adoption.
- S9.2 All adopted animals **must** be microchipped and adopters encouraged to register and update it with their current contact information.

10. Health maintenance and hygiene requirements

Mandatory standards

- S10.1 Animals **must** be visually assessed for signs of ill health or injury at least twice a day.
- S10.2 Owners, or persons in charge of animals, **must** seek immediate attention from a veterinarian if they observe the animals to be showing any of the following:
- signs of acute pain, suffering and distress;
 - signs of chronic pain, suffering and distress;
 - signs of rapidly deteriorating health;
 - serious injury.
- S10.3 Animal housing and exercise areas should be cleaned daily by hosing or other appropriate means and disinfected regularly, and before new animals are introduced. Disinfection of pens, cages, and modules **must** be done whenever the animal housing area is vacated or every eighth day with a hospital grade disinfectant.
- S10.4 Utensils and containers used for food preparation **must** be kept clean of contamination that may pose a threat to the health and welfare of the animal.

Guidelines

- G10.1 Humane handling requires an appraisal of each animal's behaviour, adequate numbers of properly trained staff, suitable equipment that is readily available and in good working condition, appropriate choice of location for procedures, personal protection such as gloves or push boards, and judicious use of tranquilisers under veterinary supervision.
- G10.2 After cleaning, animal housing areas should be rinsed and left as dry as possible prior to animals being returned to them.
- G10.3 Sufficient numbers of litter trays should be provided and cleaned as appropriate to the species and the number of animals being housed. Cats should be provided with clean litter daily. The trays, that hold the litter, should be cleaned and disinfected weekly or more often if required. Litter trays should be cleaned and disinfected between uses for different cats. Sufficient quantities of suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, sawdust or shredded paper, should be provided for each cat or kitten.
- G10.4 Faeces should be removed from housing and exercise areas at least twice a day to prevent possible contamination.

- G10.5 Food bowls should be washed with hot soapy water or antibacterial agent and then rinsed and dried in a manner that will not spread infectious diseases (e.g. air-drying or with a disposable paper towel) after each feed.
- G10.6 Care should be taken to clean around food containers daily to remove small pieces of discarded food that may harbour saliva and infectious agents.
- G10.7 Food should be prepared hygienically and stored appropriately.
- G10.8 Used bedding, used cat litter and uneaten food should be removed prior to cleaning. Used litter and uneaten food should be placed in a waste disposal device. Waste disposal should be in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate statutory authority.
- G10.9 Establishments should have an adequate water supply and should be sewerred, on a septic system, or have some other adequate method of disposing of faeces.
- G10.10 Animal handling should be as humane as possible with the minimum amount of physical restraint needed to accomplish the task without injury to people or animal.

11. Determining capacity

Guidelines

- G11.1 Establishments should determine their capacity based on resources available, and the ability to provide adequate care including enrichment time for each animal.
- G11.2 Capacity for care should take into account the average amount of time needed to perform each task during a typical animal's stay. These tasks should include services needed for each animal, e.g. medical care, daily care, intake, surgery, reception, adoption, behaviour, enrichment, daily monitoring.

12. Mental well-being

Mandatory standards

- S12.1 Animals **must** be offered appropriate enrichment. The purpose of enrichment is to reduce stress and improve well-being by providing physical and mental stimulation, encouraging species-typical behaviours (e.g., chewing for dogs and rodents, scratching for cats), and allowing animals more control over their environment. Environmental enrichment **must** be provided regularly for all animals. This could be in the form of exercise, foraging opportunities, toys, play materials, grooming and socialisation with humans and the animal's own species. Grooming is encouraged and longhaired animals should be groomed regularly to prevent coat entanglement. All enrichment and socialisation **must** be controlled to avoid risk of contamination of other animals. Items **must** be able to be disinfected between uses by animals or be disposable.

Guidelines

- G12.1 Enrichment should be given the same significance as other components of animal care, such as nutrition and veterinary care, and should not be considered optional.
- G12.2 Stress may not be relieved by enrichment alone, and other techniques such as changing their location, using products to simulate natural calming pheromones or to reduce anxiety or medications prescribed by a veterinarian can be used.
- G12.3 Socialisation activities should regularly occur for mental well-being and to prepare animals for successful adoption. Exercise areas should be securely fenced and designed to prevent the escape of the animal and a person should directly supervise animals when more than one animal is placed in the area, to ensure the animals are not in danger of attack or other injury.

The type of exercise and socialisation could vary depending on the animal, the type of containment required for the animal and the period of confinement.

13. Staff health

Mandatory standards

- S13.1 Potential health risks for humans exist when working with animals. Some animals may harbour disease-causing organisms, which can be transmitted to humans (zoonoses). Staff **must** be educated in prevention of zoonoses. All personnel:
- working with cats, especially women of childbearing age, **must** be made aware of the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis.
 - Assisting with caesareans or natural birth, **must** be made aware of the risk of contracting Q-fever and vaccinations is therefore promoted.
 - **Must** be appropriately vaccinated when working with Bats.
- S13.2 Staff health **must** be protected by being provided with or having access to:
- personal protective clothing
 - hot and cold hand washing facilities with disinfectant soap at the establishment
 - adequate information and training on health, hygiene and safety at their induction session
 - tetanus immunisation as necessary.

Guidelines

- G13.1 Establishments should provide access to staff for resources on how to identify, avoid and manage compassion fatigue.

14. Euthanasia

Mandatory standards

- S14.1 Where euthanasia is deemed necessary, e.g., either as being a last resort or only viable treatment option available to alleviate pain and/or suffering, this procedure **must** be carried out by a veterinarian.
- S14.2 Any euthanasia method **must** quickly induce loss of consciousness followed by death while still unconscious and must ensure the death is as free from pain, distress, anxiety, or apprehension as possible.
- S14.3 Death must be confirmed by the following 3 criteria for a period of not less than 5 minutes:
- (i) Lack of a heartbeat,
 - (ii) Lack of respiration, and
 - (iii) Lack of corneal reflex.
- S14.4 Dogs should not be euthanased in view (or within hearing) of other dogs.

SECTION C: ANIMAL CARE STANDARDS

SECTION C1 – GENERAL FACILITIES

15. Primary enclosure (general)

Mandatory standards

- S15.1 A primary enclosure is defined as an area of confinement such as a cage, run, kennel, stall, or pen, where an animal eats, sleeps, and in most sheltering situations spends the majority of its time.
- S15.2 It needs to be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that ensures the good health and well-being of the animals, while also preventing escape and injury to animals. The primary enclosure **must** be structurally sound and in a safe, working condition to properly confine animals, prevent injury, keep other animals out, and enable the animals to remain dry and clean.
- S15.3 Housing needs to provide protection from weather (wind, rain, sun and extremes of climate), vermin and harassment by other animals. Where kennel buildings/housing are constructed outdoors, they **must** also provide adequate shade and be partially enclosed to provide a sheltered sleeping area.
- S15.4 There **must** not be any sharp edges, gaps or other defects that could cause an injury or trap a limb or other body part. Secure latches or other closing devices **must** be present.
- S15.5 Housing systems and equipment, including shelters and mechanical equipment, **must** be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner that allows animals to move around comfortably, without risk of injury, disease or harm and enables them to meet their physical, health and behavioural needs as appropriate for the animals and species.
- S15.6 Primary enclosures **must** provide sufficient space to allow each animal, regardless of species, to make normal postural adjustments, e.g., to turn freely and to easily stand, sit, stretch, move their head, without touching the top or side of the enclosure, lie in a comfortable position with limbs extended, move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating. Some animals prefer not to eliminate near where they eat and sleep, so allowing sufficient space to distinguish an area for defecation is recommended.

Guidelines

- G15.1 The physical space that will serve as an animal's primary enclosure, the place where he will eat, sleep and spend the majority of his time, should

be safe, sanitary, and of sufficient size to provide a humane quality of life.

- G15.2 Primary enclosures should allow animals to see out but should also provide at least some opportunity to avoid visual contact with other animals, or spaces to avoid being seen. Tethering is an unacceptable method of confinement for any animal and has no place in humane sheltering.
- G15.3 Cages, crates, and carriers that are intended for travel, short-term, temporary, or veterinary care confinement are unacceptable as primary enclosures.
- G15.4 The design, size and maintenance of the openings and doors of housing systems should be such that animals can be placed in or removed from them without injury or distress.
- G15.5 The floors of animal housing areas and holding facilities should be constructed of an impervious material that is free of cracks and sealed to assist with drainage and disinfection. Animal housing areas and holding facilities should be constructed to not allow water, waste or urine to pass between individual pens, cages or modules. Sealed concrete is ideal, or sealed brick may be acceptable. Grassed or landscaped sections may form part of large outdoor runs but should be adequately maintained and not allowed to deteriorate into bare earth, which is unacceptable.
- G15.6 The internal surfaces of kennels and cat housing should be constructed of impervious, solid, washable materials. Wall/floor junctions should be sealed to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.
- G15.7 Kennel housing may be separated by either solid partitions, which help reduce noise and limit the spread of disease, or by galvanised mesh or chain wire dividers. Advice should be sought on suitable construction materials for reducing noise and injuries between kennels and to facilitate sanitisation.
- G15.8 Floors of kennel and cat housing should be sloped to enable wastes and water to run off (but methods of cleaning cat housing should be such that, at completion all surfaces are dry). A collection drain may be provided outside and fitted with fine mesh wire baskets to trap hair and waste. The baskets should be cleaned daily.

16. Primary Enclosure – Dog specific

Guidelines

- G16.1 Adult dogs should be housed only one dog to a pen, however, compatible dogs that are assessed suitable for rehoming, or dogs surrendered together may be housed two to a pen as long as all guidelines are adhered to as stipulated above.
- G16.2 Where dogs are housed together, they should have separate beds and food containers.
- G16.3 For standards size enclosures, at least one third of the area of each pen should be weatherproof and include a bed.

Table: Minimum pen sizes for dogs or up to four puppies

Height of dog or puppies at shoulders (centimetres)	Minimum Area (metres)	Minimum Width (centimetres)	Minimum Height (centimetres)	Increased floor area for each additional dog (metres)
above 70	3.5 x 3.5	119	170	1.7
40 to 70	2.4 x 2.4	100	170	1.2
below 40	1.5 x 1.5	90	170	1.0

17. Primary Enclosure – Cat specific

Guidelines

- G17.1 Cats should be housed individually in cages or modules constructed of impervious, washable materials during the nominated quarantine period.
- G17.2 Cats surrendered together may be housed together providing the owner states that they are compatible and were normally housed together and they are housed in colony pens.
- G17.3 Where housed together with female cats, male cats kept in colony pens should be desexed and all cats should have completed their vaccination period.
- G17.4 Colony pens should contain, for each cat housed in the colony pen, an individual litter tray and food container and a bed for each cat or kitten that provides a visual barrier from the shared area.
- G17.5 Cats should be housed away from dogs as they may be disturbed by barking.

Table: Minimum cage, module and colony sizes for cats up to three kittens

Cat housing (single cat or up to three kittens)	Minimum Area (metres)	Minimum Width (centimetres)	Minimum Height (centimetres)
Statutory eight day period	0.49 x 0.49	70	50
Transitional period	1.5 x 1.5	-	90
Modules**	0.8 x 0.8	90	170
Colony Pens** (area per cat) for up to eight cats	2.0 x 2.0	190	170

** A module or colony pen **must** contain at least two levels, excluding the floor, and these levels **must** be connected to the floor by means of a ramp or pole.

18. Providing for behavioural needs for different species

Mandatory standards

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| S18.1 | Understanding an animal's behavioural needs is essential for the maintenance of their welfare, particularly in higher-density temporary housing. |
| S18.2 | Animals in temporary housing facilities must have sufficient space to socialise, rest, sleep, hide, stand, stretch, swim, fly or move freely about (as appropriate to the species). |
| S18.3 | Housing must provide the means for animals to meet species-specific needs. |
| S18.4 | Animals such as dogs who require daily exercise must be provided this opportunity to sufficiently maintain their health and well-being. |

Guidelines

- G18.1 Behavioural needs will vary with each species, so it is important for staff to have a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of the animal under their care.
- G18.2 Where animals are housed or exercised communally, groups should be managed to avoid aggressive interaction.
- G18.3 Sufficient perches of varying diameter, roosting areas, and feed and water stations should be provided to meet the needs of all the birds in a cage or aviary.
- G18.4 Normal free movement and access to feed and water is not impeded by space restrictions or excessive competition.
- G18.5 Housing provides appropriate means for animals to meet species-specific needs, including, as appropriate, access to a source of UV light for reptiles, access to water of sufficient depth and quality for aquatic and semi-aquatic animals, access to a dry area for semi-aquatic species, and access to dust baths.
- G18.6 Species-appropriate enrichment toys are provided.
- G18.7 All non-aquatic animals are provided with a bedding or nesting area for shelter and/or sleeping. Bedding or nesting material is provided where this is a species-specific need, including for rodents and rabbits.
- G18.8 Animal enclosures are protected from excessive light at night, even if it is generated from outside the premises so that animals can withdraw to a sleeping area that is appropriate for their species, to sleep for the time required for that species.

- G18.9 Mammals should have supervised and/or safe, predator-proof access to exercise out of their enclosure on a daily basis, to prevent behavioural problems.
- G18.10 Cats should be provided with high areas and areas in which they are able to hide.
- G18.11 While each species of animal has the same set of innate behaviours, they have different thresholds at which they are stimulated to exhibit such behaviours. If a behavioural problem does occur, it is important to address this under guidance from a suitably qualified person.
- G18.12 Establishments receiving farm animals should provide treatment consistent with that described in the various Codes of Practice for domesticated livestock.

19. Temperature

Mandatory standards

- S19.1 Temperatures **must** be maintained at a level that provides for the health and welfare of the animals, as appropriate to the species.
- S21.2 Immediate remedial action **must** be taken when animals show signs of discomfort as a result of exposure to excessive cold or heat

20. Lighting

Mandatory standards

- S20.1 Animals **must** be provided with natural or artificial light of appropriate intensity for a duration appropriate for their species.
- S20.2 Natural light (not filtered by glass or plastic) or artificial UV lighting **must** be provided to reptiles.
- S20.3 Lighting **must** be available and sufficient to enable thorough inspection of all animals and housing areas.

21. Ventilation and air quality

Mandatory standards

Non-aquatic species

- S21.1 Ventilation of the housing facility **must** be sufficient to prevent the build-up of heat, humidity, dust or noxious gases to levels that are harmful to animal health or that cause pain or distress to animals.
- S21.2 Immediate remedial action **must** be taken if noxious odours (e.g. ammonia) are detected at animal level, or if animals exhibit signs of heat stress, respiratory distress or distress from humidity, dust or noxious gases.

Aquatic species

- S21.3 All aquariums **must** have a filtration system that is adequate for the species and population densities, and effective at all times.
- S21.4 Water of an appropriate quality **must** be provided.
- S21.5 Unless specifically contraindicated for certain species, aquariums **must** have a water volume of 4 litres or greater.
- S21.6 Water chemistry **must** be checked regularly, and appropriate measures taken to correct any imbalances.

22. Contingency planning

Mandatory standards

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| S22.1 | Contingency plans must be in place for emergencies such as fire, flooding or a power cut to ensure the welfare of the animals. It is important that staff are made aware of how they need to act in the event of an emergency and are suitably trained to carry out the contingency plan if required. |
| S22.2 | Staff must be suitably trained to respond to an emergency that could have a detrimental effect on the animals in the temporary housing facility. |
| S22.3 | There must be a written evacuation plan and all staff are well acquainted with the procedures set out in the plan. |

Guidelines

- G22.1 A reserve supply of feed and water is maintained on site, sufficient for the maximum capacity of the establishment for at least five days in case of an emergency.

23. Transport

Mandatory standards

- S23.1 Animals must be transported in the shortest practicable time.
- S23.2 They must not be kept in parked vehicles.

Guidelines

- G23.1 Any vehicle especially designed or regularly used for transporting animals should:
- allow for the facilities for the separation of the animals
 - protect animals from injury
 - have non-slip floors
 - be easy to clean and disinfect
 - provide easy access and operator safety
 - protect against extremes of temperature
 - protect against unauthorised release of animals
 - a design that is both escape proof and prevents the protrusion of heads and/or limbs of the smallest animal carried
 - be supplied with clean, secure cages or carry baskets for cats or very small dogs, and with separate compartments or partitions for larger dogs.
 - Transport cages should permit an animal to turn around, but otherwise be small enough to avoid trauma during transport.
- G23.2 Vehicles should be disinfected as appropriate, at least on a daily basis after use to prevent transmission of disease. Mats in vehicles, if used, should be cleaned at the end of each day.

SECTION D2 – FOOD AND WATER

24. Food and nutrition

Mandatory standards

- S24.1 Animals must receive adequate food and nutrients relative to their species, age and health status to enable each animal to:
- maintain good health; and
 - meet its physiological demands, including those resulting from pregnancy, lactation, growth, exercise and exposure to heat and cold; and
 - avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.
- S24.2 Food must be provided in sufficient quantity and nutritional quality to meet the daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

Guidelines

- G24.1 Dogs and cats should generally be fed at least once a day, animals between four and six months of age should be fed a minimum of twice daily and animals up to four months of age should receive a minimum of three feeds a day OR as per instructions from a veterinarian or as per product specifications based on weight and other factors.
- If there is any doubt concerning an appropriate feeding regime for animals, advice needs to be sought from those recognised as experts in the field of animal nutrition specific to the species concerned (e.g. veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and manufacturers).
- G24.2 Food should be stored in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Food should be stored in sealed containers which should be vermin proof. The preparation of food should be conducted in hygienic areas which should be cleaned and disinfected after food is prepared. The establishment should hold a minimum of five days' food, the equivalent of that required under full capacity for the establishment.
- G24.3 Food leftovers should not be re-offered, and all food scraps should be removed and disposed of.
- G24.4 Food and water containers should be non-spillable and designed to be easily cleaned and disinfected. Containers should not cause injury to the animals.

25. Drinking water

Mandatory standards

- S25.1 Animals **must** have access to clean and fresh water that is palatable, not harmful to health and available in sufficient quantities to meet their needs. Water **must** be checked at least once a day, or more frequently in hot weather.

Guidelines

- G25.1 The amount of water needed daily is approximately 50 millilitres of water per one kilogram of body weight, but the amount may vary depending on a number of factors including health status, environmental temperature, amount of exercise, lactating animal, water content of diet, age.

SECTION D3 – REHOMING

26. Rehoming

Mandatory standards

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| S26.1 | Animals that are suspected or known to be sick, injured or diseased must not be sold or rehomed without full disclosure to and acceptance by the new owner. |
| S26.2 | Young animals must be fully independent prior to sale or rehoming except under circumstances where the mother is unable to provide the necessary care and specific provisions have been made for a competent person to provide full care for nutritionally dependent young. |
| S26.3 | Establishments must have a policy for dealing with stray animals, which gives owners a reasonable opportunity to reclaim their animals. |
| S26.4 | Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure animals are rehomed to suitable owners/ households and in appropriate/safe environments. |

Guidelines

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| G26.1 | Establishments should disclose to persons adopting animals any known inherited disorders that the animal may be predisposed to which may cause health and/or welfare problems during the animal's lifetime. |
| G26.2 | New owners should be given appropriate literature on the care of the animal for example on feeding, desexing, parasite control, health (including procedures for emergency treatment), housing, and responsible companion animal ownership including current legislation covering the registration of companion animals. |
| G26.3 | Animals, except for fish, should not be sold or rehomed while pregnant. |
| G26.4 | Establishments should exercise their right to refuse to rehome an animal to persons/households if they have concerns around the animal's welfare with that person/household. |
