

CODE OF PRACTICE PET GROOMING ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE ACT

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice sets minimum standards for the care and management of animals held in premises in the ACT for the purpose of grooming and bathing for fee or reward.

In this code premises encompass shops, private dwellings and motor vehicles or trailers set up for the purpose of animal grooming and bathing.

2. Responsibilities of Manager

The nominated Manager of a pet grooming establishment is responsible for:

- provision of secure accommodation for each animal held on the premises at any given time;
- provision of protection for animals from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, other animals and unauthorised interference from humans;
- provision of sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest;
- provision of drinkable water for animals;
- protection of animals from distress and injury as well as pests, diseases and parasites;
- provision of prompt veterinary treatment if an animal is injured and provision of advice to the animal's owner of any injury, disease or parasitic infection;
- maintenance of hygiene of the premises;
- supervision and training of staff, whether working full- or part-time and whether or not working for fee or reward;
- collation and maintenance of relevant records; and
- ensuring that there is a responsible person present whilst animals are held.

Note: Mobile animal groomers and washer operators are considered to be the Manager for the purposes of this code of practice.

2.1 Emergency Plan and Procedures

The Manager is responsible for the development of an emergency plan, including evacuation procedures. Managers should ensure that staff are trained, are familiar with, and have the ability to carry out, emergency procedures. Fire fighting equipment must be available and staff trained in its use.

3. Animal Housing

3.1 Location

The location and construction of pet grooming establishments is subject to approval by relevant ACT Government authorities. The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) should be consulted. Advice is available at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

Pet grooming establishments should be located:

- away from sources of excessive noise or pollution that could cause injury or stress to animals; and
- in areas that are not prone to flooding and/or bushfires.

3.2 Construction of Cages and Animal Holding Areas

Animal cages must be designed and maintained to avoid injury, disease and parasite transmission, theft, escape or interference by unauthorised persons.

Animal cages must be designed to permit regular cleaning, ready checking of animals within and ready supply and checking of drinkable water.

All surfaces of animal cages must be cleanable.

Floors of animal holding areas must be made of washable material to assist cleaning and drainage.

The internal surfaces of the external walls of animal holding areas should be constructed of solid and washable materials. Wall/floor junctions should be sealed to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.

3.3 Size of Caging

Animal cages must provide at least enough space for each animal held to sleep, sit, stand, lie with limbs extended, stretch and move about.

A toilet area separate from cages should be provided for dogs.

3.4 Temperature

Animals must be protected from extremes of temperature. Very old and very young animals, who are more sensitive than others to changes in temperature, may require provision of heating or cooling.

3.5 Noise

Noise from barking dogs should be reduced by one or more of the following methods:

- placing dogs so that they do not face each other;
- limiting external stimulation;
- holding dogs singly or in compatible groups from the same household; or

- introducing a toy, dog chew or other food relevant to the animal.

Cats should be held away from dogs as they may be disturbed by barking, or contribute to dogs barking.

3.6 Lighting

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

If sunlight is the means of lighting, shaded areas should be available.

Artificial light should be provided, where needed, to allow animal holding areas to be thoroughly cleaned and animals checked.

3.7 Ventilation

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

3.8 Security

Buildings should be fitted with self-closing doors and must be securely lockable. Grooming areas should be designed to prevent animals escaping.

Each animal cage must be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the animals held.

Any security methods used must allow for ready access by staff to animals and ready exit of staff in an emergency.

4. Grooming and Bathing Facilities

Bathing areas should be weatherproof, draught-proof and properly drained.

A bath should have hot and cold water available.

A separate area for proper drying of animals after bathing must be provided.

Grooming tables must be easy to clean, stable and have a non-slip surface.

Grooming equipment must be kept clean and well maintained.

5. Hygiene of Facilities

5.1 Cleaning and Disinfection

All equipment in contact with animals should be cleaned and disinfected between use on individual animals.

Animal holding and bathing areas in contact with animals should be cleaned and disinfected between use on individual animals.

Grooming areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least daily so that the comfort of animals can be maintained and disease controlled.

Faeces and urine should be removed promptly.

Cleaning and disinfecting agents should be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. The manufacturer's instructions for the use of these agents should be followed. Phenols should not be used where cats are held as they are particularly toxic to cats.

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

5.2 Pest Control

Efforts must be made to effectively control pests including fleas, ticks, flies, lice, mosquitoes and wild rodents.

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

As some pest control agents are toxic to domestic animals, they should only be used under professional supervision.

5.3 Litter Trays

Cats must be provided with litter trays.

Sufficient suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, sawdust or shredded paper, is to be provided. Litter must be changed as often as necessary and litter trays cleaned and disinfected between use or potential use by different animals.

5.4 Waste Disposal

Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of relevant ACT Government regulations. Up-to-date information is available at www.tams.act.gov.au/live/Recycling_and_Waste/workplace.

Hair, faeces and used litter should be placed in sealed containers for disposal.

Use of a trade waste service for collection and disposal of wastes is preferable. Wastes should not be incinerated.

6. Management

6.1 Facilities

Each pet grooming establishment is to provide an area for reception, records storage and display of information for clients. Premises should include washing and toilet facilities for staff.

6.2. Care of Animals

All animals held must be readily identified by owner's name.

Collars or leads which are likely to become entangled or lost should be removed on admission.

Animals should always be held singly, except for compatible animals of the same species from the same household.

Cats must not be held in the same cage as dogs, even if they come from the same household.

Sedatives may only be administered under veterinary supervision or direction, and with the written consent of the owner.

Dogs may be muzzled whilst being handled, provided that the dog is able to breathe freely with the muzzle on and the muzzle does not cut into the dog's skin.

Drinkable water should be available to animals at all times except while grooming/washing is being carried out.

Where an animal is held overnight, for any reason, it should be fed and offered the opportunity to exercise.

All animals should have current vaccination against major diseases. Unvaccinated animals should be handled separately.

- For dogs, the major diseases are distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and kennel cough.
- For cats, the major diseases are feline enteritis, rhinotracheitis and calicivirus.

If unvaccinated, severely parasite-infested or diseased animals are to be admitted, a designated isolation area should be available to house these animals.

Application of chemical preparations, including pesticides, to dogs and cats should be done with the owner's consent and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

A procedure for handling isolated animals is:

- Animals in isolation should have no contact with other healthy animals at the establishment. Air from isolation areas should be separately exhausted.
- Waste water, food and containers should be handled and disposed of separately. Reusable containers should be cleaned separately from those used by healthy animals.
- Hands, clothing and footwear should be disinfected or washed immediately upon completion of handling isolated animals.

6.3 Record Keeping

- At least the following information must be recorded relating to each animal admitted:
- the animal's name and the name, address and contact telephone number(s) of its owner;
- a description of the animal including sex, age and breed;
- treatment requested;
- date of each treatment;
- vaccination status; and
- name and contact telephone number of a veterinarian who normally attends the animal.

6.4 Staff

Washing and grooming animals can be stressful to the animals and can result in unpredictable movement and behaviour outside the animals' normal reactions. Full supervision by senior experienced staff is recommended as part of any training provided.

Staff should have respect for animals and be trained in handling dogs, cats and in the use of chemical cleaning and disinfection agents that they may be required to use. Formal training, such as technical college qualification in animal care, is an advantage.

Staff should be confident in their ability to handle the animal being washed or groomed and be capable of dealing with difficult circumstances and emergencies.

Staff should be familiar with emergency procedures, including veterinary contact numbers.

7. Transport

Animals should be transported in the shortest practicable time.

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

- protect animals from injury;
- have non-slip floors;
- provide easy access and operator safety;
- protect against extremes of temperature;
- protect against unauthorised release of animals;

- be easy to clean and disinfect;
- be supplied with clean, secure cages or carry baskets for cats or very small dogs, and with separate compartments or partitions for larger dogs; and
- be properly ventilated.

8. Acknowledgement

This code draws heavily on the "Guidelines for the Care and Management of Animals in Pet Grooming Establishments" produced by the NSW Department of Local Government and endorsed by the NSW Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This code was developed and endorsed by the ACT's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.