

Australian Capital Territory

Animal Welfare (Animal Boarding Establishments) Code of Practice 2008*

Disallowable instrument DI2008—234

made under the

Animal Welfare Act 1992, s 22 (Codes of practice)

1. Name of instrument

This instrument is the Animal Welfare (Animal Boarding Establishments) Code of Practice 2008.

2. Details of instrument

Pursuant to *section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992* the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee:

- a) has revised the Code of Practice for Animal Boarding Establishments (the Code); and
- b) recommends adoption of the Code.

3. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

4. Instrument revoked

This instrument revokes the Animal Welfare (Animal Boarding Establishments) Code of Practice Approval 1993.

Jon Stanhope MLA

Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change

8 September 2008

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) specifies the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of dogs and cats housed in animal boarding establishments. An animal boarding establishment is one which undertakes animal boarding for profit.

The Code and its provisions are to be observed by owners and operators of boarding establishments and by people who work in them. At establishments where day boarding of animals is offered, all aspects of this Code apply unless otherwise stated.

Animal welfare considerations are becoming increasingly important in the keeping of animals. This Code is based on established experience and current scientific knowledge. Practices once considered acceptable are now being reassessed and modified according to new knowledge and changing attitudes. This document will be reviewed in the light of new knowledge.

2. Definitions

Animal: for the purpose of this Code means a dog, cat, puppy or kitten.

Boarding: means the taking of custody or possession of a dog or cat for the keeping, accommodation, care, training or feeding for fee or reward at a property other than the animal's normal place of residence.

Overnight boarding: means the animal stays at the facility for at least one night.

Vaccination: For a dog—means vaccination against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and kennel cough (*parainfluenza* (Type II) virus and *Bordetella bronchiseptica*).

For a cat—means vaccination against feline infectious enteritis, feline rhinotracheitis, feline calicivirus and feline respiratory disease as a minimum.

Exercise: For a dog – means walking a dog 'on lead' for at least 15 minutes and/or allow dog(s) to 'free run' in a fenced secure yard reserved for exercise for 15 minutes.

3. Staff

3.1 Manager

The manager of a boarding facility is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the establishment and for the welfare of animals boarded there. The manager must be experienced and trained in animal care, or must employ a person who has such experience and skills. Information regarding Registered Training Organisations is available from the National Training Information Service

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/>.

In particular, the manager is responsible for:

- ensuring that each animal is able to be individually identified;
- the well-being of all animals in the establishment;
- provision of accommodation and equipment which suits the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held;

- provision of sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest;
- provision of protection for animals, as necessary, from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, other animals and interference from humans;
- providing an emergency plan including procedures for evacuation and to ensure staff are aware of these procedures;
- protection of animals as far as possible from disease, distress and injury;
- provision of prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment in cases of disease or injury;
- maintenance of hygiene of the premises and health of the animals held;
- provision of sufficient quantities of adequate and sufficient food and clean, fresh water to maintain good health;
- supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of animals adequate to ensure their welfare;
- supervision of all staff, whether they are working full or part time and whether or not working for fee or reward;
- the maintenance and collation of relevant records and statistics; and
- ensuring that information about the establishment's operating hours and conditions is displayed or made known to pet owners.

3.2 Animal Attendants

The manager must ensure that animal attendants employed by the boarding establishment are trained and experienced to properly manage the type of animal boarded. The manager is responsible for ensuring animal attendants are completing daily tasks, as outlined, but not limited to:

- daily feeding for overnight boarding, and where required, for day-boarding animals;
- watering and inspection of all animals;
- exercising animals as required by the manager;
- daily cleaning of facilities—hosing out kennels, replacing bedding, changing litter trays, cleaning feeding and watering utensils;
- reporting any of the following symptoms in any animal to management:
 - runny nose, runny or inflamed eyes;
 - repeated sneezing;
 - coughing;
 - vomiting;
 - diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained;
 - lameness;
 - lethargy;
 - inability to stand or walk;
 - bleeding or swelling of body parts;
 - bitches on heat;
 - significant weight loss with lack of appetite;
 - lack of appetite;
 - refusal of water or an excessive consumption of water;
 - apparent pain;
 - fits or staggering;
 - bloating of abdomen;

- difficulty or inability to urinate or defecate;
- red or brown coloured urine;
- significant wounds, inflammations or irritations or hair loss; and
- changes in behaviour indicative of stress levels.

Staff health must be protected by the provision of appropriate work clothing, adequate hand washing facilities and tetanus immunisation. Staff must be aware of disease-causing organisms that can be transmitted to humans and personal hygiene procedures must ensure that transmission of diseases does not occur.

All personnel, especially women of childbearing age, must be made aware of the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis through inadequate hygiene procedures.

3.3 Veterinary Treatment

The manager of an animal boarding establishment must have arrangements in place that enable prompt veterinary treatment and euthanasia if necessary. Owners of boarded animals must be asked to sign an agreement authorising provision of necessary veterinary treatment at the owner's cost.

4. Animal Housing

4.1 General

The location and construction of animal boarding establishments is subject to approval by relevant ACT Government authorities.

Animal boarding establishments should be located:

- away from sources of noise or pollution that could cause injury or stress to animals; and
- out of areas that are prone to flooding and/or bushfires.

Animal boarding establishment sites must have an adequate water supply and appropriate waste disposal systems.

Potential clients must be allowed to inspect the facilities where their animal will be boarded at a mutually agreed time.

4.2 Construction

Catteries and kennels must be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that ensures the good health and well-being of the animals whilst preventing escape of the animal or injury to any animal or human.

Housing must provide protection from the weather (wind, rain, sun and extremes of climate), vermin and harassment from other animals.

Materials should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. Floors of animal housing areas of catteries and kennels must be made of an impervious material to assist cleaning and drainage. A floor of sealed concrete is ideal for dogs, although paved and grassed areas are acceptable for the special behavioural needs of some dogs.

The internal surfaces of catteries and kennels must be constructed of impervious, solid, washable materials. To ensure the most hygienic environment for the internal spaces, a curved wall/floor junction is recommended.

Kennel and cattery pens must be divided by a solid opaque partition between all adjoining pens. The dividing wall must have a partial solid partition between each pen. The solid partition does not need to extend the full length of the pen but needs to be long enough to provide any animal with adequate protection from any aggressive neighbouring animals and to afford all animals some privacy out of view.

A solid partition will help with noise reduction. The remainder of the dividing partition can be constructed from galvanised wire chain or welded mesh wire dividers.

Where dog kennels (sleeping area and run) are constructed outdoors they must provide adequate shade in addition to all other requirements. Outdoor kennels must be partially enclosed to provide sheltered sleeping areas. The sleeping area in all kennels must be weatherproof and contain a raised bed.

Where catteries or kennels are constructed indoors, temperature, humidity and ventilation must be considered. Ventilation must be adequate to keep animal housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts. Cage or pen areas must have an ample supply of fresh air.

In totally enclosed buildings where forced ventilation is the only form of air supply, the following are required:

- an air change rate of 8-12 changes per hour to prevent the build up of foul odours or carbon monoxide;
- ventilation devices must avoid causing draughts and distribute fresh air evenly to all of the boarding areas;
- temperature must be maintained in the range of 15-27⁰C;
- air recirculation units must incorporate effective air cleaning and filtration to ensure the removal of infectious organisms and chemicals; and
- a back-up and alarm system in case of power failures or breakdown of ventilation and temperature control mechanisms.

4.3 Pen Size

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.

4.3.1 Dogs

Kennelling for dogs, including sleeping quarters and pens, must meet the following minimum standards:

- Where the dogs are exercised once daily:
 dogs up to 15 kg - run area 4 m² with a minimum dimension (width/length) of 1 m, plus 1/2 m² per additional dog (maximum 3 dogs);
 dogs 15 kg to 30 kg - run area 6 m², with a minimum dimension (width/length) 1.5 m plus 1/2 m² per additional dog (maximum 3 dogs);
 and
 dogs over 30 kg - run area 8 m² with a minimum dimension (width/length) of 2.0 m plus 1 m² per additional dog (maximum 4 dogs).
- Where dogs are exercised twice daily:
 half the above floor areas, minimum width 0.9 m, one dog per kennel.

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

Dog pens should be high enough to permit staff to walk right to the back of the pen.

Where dogs are housed together it must be in accordance with Section 4.3.1 of this Code.

All dogs must be housed one to a pen unless the owner(s) have requested that the dogs be housed together. Dogs should be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.

4.3.2 Cats

Cats may be housed either in banks of cages, which prevent direct contact, or in walk-in modules that include a sleeping compartment and an exercise area. Cats from different households should not be exercised together unless the owner(s) have requested that the cats be housed together. Cats should be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.

Cats may only be housed in groups where all owners have given specific written permission and have received advice/information on the risk of disease.. Where cats are housed in groups, additional floor space to accommodate the exercise needs is required. Increased attention is required to prevent injury and disease.

Cats boarded for up to two weeks must be provided with a floor area of at least 1 m² and a minimum height of 900 mm.

Cats boarded for longer than two weeks but less than two months, must be provided with accommodation that meets the following criteria:

- cages that have a minimum floor area of 1.5 m² and a minimum height of 900 mm; or
- walk-in modules that have a minimum floor area of 0.8 m², a minimum width of 900 mm and a minimum height of 1.8 m. The module must contain at least two levels including raised sleeping quarters. The higher level(s) must be connected to the floor by means of a ramp, pole

or steps. This size is for one cat only. An additional one metre squared of floor space is required for each additional cat. Each cat must have an individual sleeping area, shelf, food bowl and litter tray.

Cats boarded for longer than two months must be provided with accommodation that meets the following criteria:

- enclosures must provide the minimum space of 3 m² x 1.8 m high with an additional 2 m² for each additional cat.

Where a boarding establishment provides a common cat exercise area, the minimum floor area available for sleeping must be 0.4 m².

4.4 Drainage

Cattery and kennel floors must:

- enable waste and water to run off; and
- be designed to facilitate cleaning and disinfecting.

Where a collection drain is provided to take away water after cleaning, it must be fitted with a fine mesh wire basket to trap hair and waste and be cleaned daily.

4.5 Temperature

Animals must be protected from extremes of temperature, appropriate to their needs.

Very old and very young animals, together with animals that are injured, ailing, or under veterinary supervision, are more sensitive than other animals to changes in temperature and may require provision of heating or cooling.

Animals housed in an enclosed cattery or kennel should have a temperature maintained between 15-27⁰C.

4.6 Noise

Noise, particularly from barking dogs, should be controlled by limiting visual stimulation. Use of deterrent collars, other than citronella collars, is not permitted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

Cats should be housed away from dogs as they may be distressed by barking and smells.

4.7 Lighting

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

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

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

4.8 Ventilation

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

4.9 Bedding

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

Cats must be provided with bedding. For health and hygiene reasons, the practice of owners providing bedding is to be discouraged.

New or freshly cleaned bedding must be provided to each animal on arrival if boarded overnight.

Any bedding provided for animals must be changed frequently and kept clean and dry.

4.10 Security

Kennel and cattery buildings must be secured and locked.

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

Any security method used must allow for ready access to animals and ready exit of staff and animals from the premises in the event of an emergency.

Where animals are boarded, a security barrier must be constructed to prevent escape of animals or unauthorised entry. The kennel compound wall may form part of the security barrier. The security barrier must be fitted with at least one self-closing, lockable gate. There should be a minimum of two lockable gates or doors between the animals' immediate housing and the exterior of the premises.

4.11 Grooming

If an animal boarding establishment offers a grooming service, suitable facilities for bathing, drying and grooming must be available and must be hygienically maintained.

5. Hygiene

5.1 Cleaning and Disinfection

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

Faeces must be removed at least once daily from kennels and exercise areas. Kennels should also be hosed at least once daily.

Kennels and pens should be disinfected at least three times each week. In addition, kennels and pens must be disinfected before the introduction of any new dog and after an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Cat housing must be cleaned daily and disinfected before new cats are introduced, and must be disinfected after an outbreak of infectious disease.

Cleaning and disinfecting agents must be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. Phenols must not be used where cats are kept because they are particularly toxic to cats. Manufacturer's instructions for the use of these agents must be followed and clearly displayed for all staff to follow. If a solution is too dilute it may be ineffective. If a solution is concentrated it may be toxic to animals. Animals must be regularly checked for sensitivity to any chemical agents used.

5.2 Pest Control

Pests (including fleas, ticks, flies, lice, mosquitos and wild rodents) must be controlled.

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

5.3 Litter Trays

Cats must be provided with litter trays.

Sufficient suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, is to be provided. Faeces and soiled litter must be removed daily. Litter should be changed every three days if used only by one cat, or every day if used by several cats. Litter trays should be washed, and scalded with hot water every time the litter is changed for a resident cat. When the cat has left, the litter tray must be disinfected before being used by any other cat.

5.4 Waste Disposal

Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of ACT Government authorities.

6. Management

6.1 Operational Matters

All animals must be identified.

All reasonable special requirements requested by the animal's owner or attending veterinary surgeon, such as administration of medication, feeding of special diets, bathing and grooming, must be implemented.

Leads and collars which are likely to become entangled and endanger dogs must be removed on admission.

Dogs must be housed singly except when they are compatible dogs from the same household. Dogs may only be housed in groups where all owners have given specific written permission. Where dogs are housed in groups, additional floor space to accommodate the exercise needs is required. Increased attention is required to prevent injury and disease.

6.2 Record Keeping

The boarding establishment must require the following information in relation to each animal's admission:

- The animal's:
 - name;
 - sex, entire or desexed;
 - breed;
 - colour;
 - age;
 - condition on arrival;
 - distinguishing features;
 - permanent identification details (such as microchip implant number, where applicable);
 - date of admission; and
 - expected date of collection.

- The owner's (and the owner's nominee):
 - name;
 - address; and
 - telephone number.

The boarding establishment must seek information relating to the following:

- details of the animal's medical, dietary, bathing and grooming requirements in writing;
- vaccination status of the animal; and
- contact details of preferred veterinarian.

Upon collection of the animal the manager of the boarding establishment is to provide details of any veterinary treatment the owner's animal(s) received whilst at the boarding establishment.

7. Health Care

7.1 Disease Prevention

Dogs to be boarded must be up to date with all vaccinations and the owners must supply a current vaccination certificate that indicates adequate vaccination history for each dog before admission.

Cats to be boarded must be up to date with all vaccinations and the owners must supply a current vaccination certificate for each cat before admission.

Dogs and cats less than three months old should not be admitted for boarding, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Dogs and cats should have been treated for gastrointestinal worms before admission. Animals that have not been wormed with an all wormer (including hydatids) in the previous six weeks must be so wormed on admission at the owner's expense and the owner advised accordingly. Long-term boarders should be wormed as appropriate. **It is recommended that all owners have their dogs on medication to prevent heartworm.**

The boarding establishment should enquire if the animal(s) are, known or suspected to be, suffering from an infectious disease or parasite infestation. Animals known to have these conditions must be quarantined and treated appropriately or refused admission.

Should an animal disease or parasite infestation be suspected, the manager should seek veterinary advice and adopt immediate quarantine and disease control procedures.

7.2 Health Checks

Each animal shall be checked at least once daily to monitor its health and comfort. The person checking animals should observe whether each animal:

- is eating normally;
- is drinking normally;
- is defecating normally;
- is urinating normally;
- is behaving normally;
- is of normal appearance;
- is able to move about freely; and
- has a normal coat.

Any changes in health status must be reported promptly to the animal boarding establishment manager.

7.3 Veterinary Attention

The animal boarding establishment manager must nominate sufficient veterinarians who are able to attend to animals in his or her care, if the animal's normal veterinarian is unavailable.

Veterinary advice must be sought by the manager or his or her nominee for any animal showing one or more of the signs listed at 3.2, with the exception of bleeding or swelling associated with bitches in heat.

Sedatives must only be used in accordance with veterinary advice.

7.4 Isolation

Facilities must be available either at the animal boarding establishment or at veterinary premises for the isolation of animals that are suspected of, or have been diagnosed as, having an infectious condition or parasite infestation.

Sick animals that are not infectious or infested, but which may be stressed by contact with other animals, should be housed in a quiet environment away from other animals, but not necessarily isolated.

Staff must be trained in caring for animals in quarantine. All appropriate personal hygiene rules must be followed.

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. Additional contact with humans may be necessary to ensure the animal does not suffer emotionally as a result of the isolation;
- waste water, food and containers should be handled and disposed of separately. Reusable containers should be cleaned separately from those used by healthy animals; and
- where appropriate, clothing and footwear should be disinfected or washed immediately upon completion of handling isolated animals due to the possibility of the carriage of diseases by humans from one animal to another.

7.5 Euthanasia

Euthanasia should be considered and recommended to the owner where it is advised by a veterinarian who has examined the animal.

If euthanasia is required, all avenues to advise the owner should be undertaken prior to euthanasia, as long as the welfare of the animal is not compromised by any delay.

Euthanasia must only be carried out by a veterinarian.

8. Diet

All animals must have a permanent supply of fresh, clean water. Food and water containers must be non spillable, not chewable and of a design that can be easily cleaned and does not cause any injury to the animals. Food and water containers must be cleaned daily.

Animals boarded during the day should not require feeding unless they are under veterinary advice, or pregnant, or lactating or young.

The following should be used as a guide for feeding dogs subject to manufacturers' advice:

Recommended Daily Intake for Normal Adult Dogs

Body Weight of Dog (kg)	Dry Dog Food cups/dog	<u>OR</u>	Canned Dog Food	
			450g/can cans/dog	700g/can cans/dog
3	0.75		0.50	
5	1.00		0.75	
10	2.00		1.25	
15	2.50		1.75	1.00
20	3.25		2.00	1.25
25	3.75		2.50	1.25
30	4.00		2.75	1.75
40	5.00		3.50	2.00
50	6.00		4.00	2.50

The following should be used as a guide for feeding cats:

Recommended Daily Intake for Normal Cats

Body Weight of cat(kg)	Age (wks)	Canned cat food 425g/can cans/cat
0.5 - 1	10	0.25 - 0.5
1.0 - 2.0	20	0.3 - 0.6
1.5 - 3.0	30	0.3 - 0.65
2.0 - 4.0	40	0.4 - 0.7
3.0 - 5.0	Adult	0.4 - 0.8

- A variety of canned foods should be supplied. Fish or fresh meat may tempt fussy eaters.
- Dry food may be supplied on an ad-lib basis in addition to canned or fresh meat unless contra-indicated.
- Whole milk should not generally be offered as it may cause diarrhoea.

Pregnant and lactating animals require approximately twice the amount of food specified in the above tables.

Adult dogs and cats must be fed daily. Pregnant and lactating animals, pups up to six months of age and kittens up to eight months of age must be fed twice daily.

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

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

Cats should be specially monitored after admission to check that they are eating.

9. Exercise

Dogs must have the opportunity for exercise to:

- allow them to urinate and defaecate;
- give them contact with humans and, if appropriate, with other dogs;
- allow them to be checked over; and
- permit stretching.

Exercise can be provided by:

- allowing dogs access to an exercise area for a total of 30 minutes daily depending on kennel size (see Sec 4.3); or
- walking dogs on a lead for a total of 30 minutes daily.

It may not be suitable to exercise specific animals due to age or existing health concerns.

For safety reasons, dogs must be exercised within the premises.

Very active or old dogs may require more or less exercise than specified.

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

Cats should be checked daily for mobility.

Boarding establishments may accept toys and other forms of enrichment for the exclusive use of that dog or cat while boarding.

10. 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 and stress;
- 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, level cages or carry baskets for cats or very small dogs, and with separate compartments or partitions for larger dogs; and
- be properly ventilated.

11. Disposal of Animals

The managers of animal boarding establishments must have a policy for dealing with unclaimed animals. Any policy for unclaimed animals must allow the owner of the animal a reasonable opportunity to collect his or her boarded animal. The policy must include a period of time during which an animal will be kept after the arranged collection date. The policy must state what action will be taken should an animal not be collected within the given timeframes.

Owners must be made aware of this policy when animals are admitted by reading and signing a form which sets out the terms under which animals are accepted for boarding. Unclaimed animals must be placed with relevant government agencies or a recognised animal agency, eg, the RSPCA.

12. Lost, Injured or Deceased Animals

If an animal escapes, is lost, or given to the wrong owner whilst in the care of an animal boarding establishment, the manager of the animal boarding establishment should make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner.

If an animal suffers an injury or dies whilst in the care of an animal boarding establishment and that injury or death can be attributed to the housing or exercising facilities provided, the manager of the animal boarding establishment should make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner. The animal boarding establishment must maintain public liability cover as a minimum and should evaluate the need for further insurance cover.

13. Acknowledgements

This Code has been based upon the *Guidelines for the Care and Management of Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding Establishments* produced by the NSW Department of Local Government, the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments* produced by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and the ACT's previous *Code Of Practice For Animal Boarding Establishments* as produced by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.