

Australian Capital Territory

# Animal Welfare (Animal Day Care Establishments) Mandatory Code of Practice 2021

Disallowable instrument DI2021-194

made under the

**Animal Welfare Act 1992, Section 23 (Mandatory code of practice)**

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## **1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Animal Welfare (Animal Day Care Establishments) Mandatory Code of Practice 2021*.

## **2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 1 August 2021.

## **3 Approval**

I approve the Code of Practice for Animal Day Care Establishments, attached to this instrument, as a mandatory code of practice under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

Chris Steel MLA  
Minister for Transport and City Services

13 July 2021

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## Introduction

### Name of Code

This Code is the *Code of Practice for Animal Day Care Establishments 2021*.

### Purpose of Code

This Code sets out both mandatory standards and additional information to guide the care and management of animals temporarily boarded for a period of hours (not overnight) in animal day care establishments in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Mandatory standards set out in this Code serve as conditions for pet business licences held by animal boarding establishments that offer a day care service. These licenses are established under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* (the Act).

The minding, keeping and caring of animals by animal day care establishments must comply with all relevant ACT legislation.

### Scope of Code

This Code applies to the care and management of all animals that are cared for temporarily in animal day care establishments in the ACT, including dog kennels and catteries. These establishments may offer pet day care services as the primary or sole service or may offer pet day care services as an ancillary service to the business. The scope of standards in this Code includes the governance, staffing, policy and operational aspects of the business, where these functions relate to animal welfare.

This Code does not apply to businesses that may board stock animals, horse agistment or pet care businesses that do not operate out of a permanent location e.g. pet sitting apps,<sup>1</sup> nor does it apply to the boarding of animals for the purpose of veterinary care, animal welfare or benevolent purposes. Overnight animal boarding establishments are covered by the 'Code of Practice for Overnight Animal Boarding Establishments 2021'.

Under section 24I the Act, all ACT animal day care establishments must adhere to the mandatory standards in this Code as conditions of a pet business licence issued under section 24G of the Act.

It is an offence for an animal day care business to not comply with the mandatory standards in this Code. A business which is found not to comply with a mandatory standard that applies to the business may be given a direction to correct the non-compliance within a stated timeframe. If the business still fails to comply, the licence may be suspended or revoked and the business may face financial penalties.

The additional information accompanying the mandatory standards in this Code is not included as conditions of a pet business licence. The additional information provides guidance on the minimum animal welfare standards that should be met by animal day care establishments in the ACT, although are not mandatory under the Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Pet sitting businesses using apps are becoming increasingly popular in Australia and these for-profit services are not currently covered by a licensing system or a specific code of practice under the Act. Instead, the operations of pet sitters associated with these apps are covered more generally by the broader animal welfare provisions and offences set out by the Act.

If an authorised animal welfare inspector or the Animal Welfare Authority requires a particular pet business licence to include additional information from this Code as a licence condition, this can be outlined on the licence itself.

### **Structure of Code**

All mandatory standards are compiled from page 6 of this Code. These mandatory standards are also listed under their relevant sections, along with additional information to be used as further guidance on the responsibilities of animal day care establishments. Mandatory standards are minimum standards set out for the appropriate care and management of animals cared for by animal day care businesses. Standards listed as additional information are not mandatory.

Mandatory elements of this Code are identified by their inclusion as bolded numbered provisions, each of which is preceded by the heading ‘Mandatory standards under section 23 of the Act’.

Non-compliance with any relevant mandatory standards can constitute an offence under the Act and a breach of a pet business licence.

### **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 may be developed as industries, technologies, attitudes and best practice animal welfare evolves.

### **Compliance with Code**

This Code is made under section 23 of the Act, which allows the Minister to approve a code of practice, part or all of which has mandatory force. Failing to comply with the mandatory elements of this Code is an offence. It is also an offence to fail to follow a direction to comply with this Code. Sections 24A, 24B, 24C and 24D of the Act outline these offences and their penalties.

A licensed animal day care business must comply with the mandatory standards set out in this Code as conditions of a pet business licence under section 24I of the Act. An animal day care business that does not comply with the mandatory standards of this Code as conditions of the licence is committing an offence under section 24S of the Act.

### **Definitions for this Code**

*Animal*: has the same meaning as provided in the Act; however, it is noted the majority of animal day care establishments only offer day care services tailored to dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other small pets.

*Animal day care establishment*: A fixed location business that formally offers and receives payment for the temporary custody and care of an animal for a period of hours in a day as one of the services provided.

*Boarding*: for the purpose of this Code, boarding means the temporary taking of custody or possession of an animal from its keeper for a period of hours in a day for the purpose of minding and caring for the animal. Other services may also be provided during boarding, such as training, grooming, walking or socialising.

*Boarded at a facility:* for the purpose of this Code, an animal boarded at a facility means an animal that is within the care of an animal day care establishment between check-in and check-out. This includes any activities the animal day care staff may undertake while the animal is in the temporary custody of the business, such as being exercised off the premises, being transported by staff, grooming, playing, training, etc.

*Cattery:* means a business or section of a business used to house cats in contained cages or compartments including for sleeping and oftentimes play and exercise spaces. Play and exercise spaces should generally not involve cats from different households making direct contact with each other unless the owners or keepers of the cats have permitted this to take place.

*Dog kennel:* means dog sleeping area and/or enclosed dog run.

*Dog pen:* means an enclosed indoor or outdoor yard or space used for dogs to move about freely, alone or with other dogs.

*Manager:* means a person who holds responsibility over the general management of and decision making for an animal day care establishment, either a nominated manager, supervisor or business owner, depending on the staffing structure of the business.

*Pet business licence:* is a licence issued under section 24G of the Act. A licensed pet business must meet the licence conditions set out by the Animal Welfare Authority and by the mandatory standards set out in the relevant code of practice. Animal day care establishments must be licensed and the mandatory standards set out in this Code are conditions of the licence.

*Staff:* includes the proprietor, manager, supervisors, employees, volunteers and work experience employees of an animal day care establishment.

*Up to date vaccinations:* for dogs this means C5 vaccination at a minimum (C5 covers vaccination against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and kennel cough (parainfluenza virus and Bordetella bronchiseptica). For cats this means F3 vaccination at a minimum (F3 covers vaccination against feline distemper (panleukopenia), feline calicivirus and feline rhinotracheitis virus). C5 and F3 vaccinations must have been administered within the past 12 months.

*Up to date worming:* means an intestinal all-wormer administered within the past three months.

For further information please contact:

**Animal Welfare Authority**  
**GPO Box 158**  
**CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Enquiries relating to this Code can also be made through Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or via the online feedback form located at [accesscanberra.act.gov.au](http://accesscanberra.act.gov.au)

## **Mandatory standards in this Code**

This section lists all mandatory standards contained in this Code. Provisions are numbered according to the section of this Code in which they occur.

**1.1.1 The manager of an animal day care facility is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the business which may directly or indirectly impact on the welfare of animals boarded there. The manager must either be able to demonstrate experience and training in animal care or employ a person who has such experience and training and who can oversee the care of all animals boarded each day, including when transporting the animals and where the animals are exercised off the premises.**

**1.1.2 The manager must ensure the staff working or volunteering at the facility have the skills, knowledge, training and resources to be able to effectively maintain the physical health and mental wellbeing of all animals boarded at the facility, both directly (such as providing water and keeping animals out of extreme weather conditions) and indirectly (such as administrative staff overseeing animal intakes and record keeping). This applies to training for day to day operations and for emergencies.**

**1.1.3 The manager must ensure staffing and rostering can consistently accommodate the needs of animals boarded at the facility to maintain their health and wellbeing.**

**1.1.4 The manager must have arrangements in place that enable prompt veterinary treatment and euthanasia if necessary e.g. arrangement with a veterinarian or veterinary practice for priority call-outs and over the phone advice.**

**1.1.5 In particular, the manager is responsible for:**

- **1.1.5.1 ensuring that each animal is able to be individually identified;**
- **1.1.5.2 provision of sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest;**
- **1.1.5.3 provision of protection for animals, as necessary, from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, including extreme weather conditions, other animals that are aggressive and interference from unauthorised persons;**
- **1.1.5.4 establishing policies, standard operating procedures and/or training manuals and ensuring staff are aware of these and can access them at all times when working. The information must include details on day to day operations (including provision of clean water, record keeping, escape prevention measures, maintaining suitable conditions, transportation if used and general handling of animals), vaccinations policy, contact details and instructions for if an animal displays high stress, illness or injury (including the manager's details and an established veterinary contact);**
- **1.1.5.5 providing emergency management procedures and equipment, including procedures for evacuation and basic firefighting equipment, and ensuring staff are aware of these and can access them at all times when working; and**
- **1.1.5.6 supervision of all staff, whether they are working full or part time and whether or not working for fee or reward.**

**1.2.1 Staff dealing with animals are responsible for:**

- **1.2.1.1 watering and inspection of all animals;**
- **1.2.1.2 exercising animals as required for the species;**
- **1.2.1.3 daily cleaning of facilities, including hosing out any kennels, replacing/cleaning any bedding, changing litter trays, cleaning watering utensils and disinfecting kennels and cages.**

- **1.2.1.4 reporting any of the following symptoms in any animal to a supervisor, manager or a veterinarian to seek advice and/or treatment:**
  - runny nose, runny or inflamed eyes;
  - repeated sneezing;
  - coughing;
  - vomiting;
  - diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained;
  - lameness;
  - lethargy;
  - inability to stand or walk;
  - dogs on heat (non-desexed dogs should not be accepted unless appropriate measures have been put in place to prevent breeding, such as isolation or ensuring a non-desexed female and non-desexed male are never allowed in the same enclosure, transported or exercised together);
  - 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;
  - wounds, inflammations or irritations;
  - changes in behaviour indicative of high stress; and
  - any other serious physical or behavioural abnormality.

**1.3.1 All staff must have an understanding of the responsibility they hold in the care and management of animals boarded at the facility and must have the knowledge, competence and skills to carry out day to day operations in a way that maintains the health and wellbeing of animals boarded there.**

**1.3.2 In particular, all staff whether dealing with animals directly or indirectly are responsible for:**

- **1.3.2.1 the mental and physical wellbeing of all animals in the establishment, including ensuring conditions likely to cause stress, injury or pain are managed effectively and tools for enrichment are utilised e.g. bedding, toys, scratching posts, protection from stressors, etc.;**
- **1.3.2.2 provision of enclosures, activities and equipment which suits the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held;**
- **1.3.2.3 protection of animals as far as possible from disease, distress and injury, including regular inspections of animals, upholding vaccination policy, only grouping animals together when it is safe to do so and under supervision e.g. following behavioural assessments;**
- **1.3.2.4 provision of prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment in cases of disease or injury and the skills to identify when this may be needed;**
- **1.3.2.5 maintenance of hygiene of the premises and general health of the animals held;**
- **1.3.2.6 provision of sufficient quantities of clean, fresh water, particularly during hot weather;**
- **1.3.2.7 provision of temperature control indoors and measures to ensure there is protection from severe weather conditions for outdoor areas;**



- **1.3.2.8 the maintenance and collation of relevant records; and**
- **1.3.2.9 prevention of animals escaping, either into other areas of the facility not constructed for the animal to be present or outside the facility. All containers, cages, kennels, enclosures, pens and yards must be constructed maintained and used in ways that significantly reduce the likelihood of an animal brought into the facility escaping. All animals brought into the facility must be handled, cared for and managed in ways that prevent escape, including during transportation or when being exercised.**

**2.1.1 Animal day care sites must have an adequate water supply and appropriate waste disposal systems. When animals are taken off the premises this must still have an adequate water supply e.g. public taps or bubblers, or water must be carried. Faeces must be disposed of in bags in public and placed in a bin.**

**2.1.2 Potential clients must be allowed to briefly inspect the area of the facility where their animal would be boarded (including any facilities their animal may be exposed to e.g. grooming area or training area) at a mutually agreed time and under the supervision of a member of staff.**

**2.2.1 Day care facilities 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 (e.g. prevent cats climbing/jumping out of cages or dogs jumping over or digging under fences) or injury to any animal or human.**

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

**2.2.3 Materials should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. Floors of areas for catteries, kennels, cages and pens (other than grassed enclosures) must be made of an impervious material to assist cleaning and drainage.**

**2.3.1 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 freely.**

**2.4.1 Dogs must be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.**

**2.4.2 Enclosures for dogs, such as exercise yards, must allow enough space for each dog to move around freely and comfortably. Enclosures must not have overcrowding at any time.**

**2.5.1 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 housed or exercised together unless the owners have requested that the cats be housed together.**

**2.5.2 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.**

**2.5.3 Cats must be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.**

**2.5.4 All cat pens must allow each cat adequate space to move around freely and comfortably.**

**2.6.1 Pens, including catteries, kennels and smaller animal cages, must have floors that:**

- **enable waste and water to run off; and**

- are designed to facilitate cleaning and disinfecting.

**2.7.1 Animals must be protected from extremes of temperature, appropriate to their needs. Dogs are particularly susceptible to high temperatures and must never be allowed to overheat.**

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

**2.10.1 Ventilation must be adequate to keep areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts.**

**2.11.1 Unauthorised persons must not enter the facility beyond reception without staff permission and supervision.**

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

**2.11.3 Security barriers or secure fencing must be constructed to prevent escape of animals or unauthorised entry.**

**2.11.4 Enclosure gates must either be designed as a double-gated system or at least be self-closing to prevent escapes.**

**3.1 Customers/visitors must be supervised by staff at all times when in any area of the facility that contains animals. A written policy should be established outlining that customers and visitors are not to enter areas of the facility beyond the reception area unless supervised by staff. This is to ensure animals cannot be interfered with by unauthorised persons.**

**3.2 A behavioural assessment of each dog must be made on admission by an experienced and/or specially trained staff member (if such an assessment has not been done by the facility for that dog before) to ensure the dog is safe around staff and other dogs.**

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

**4.1.2 Faeces must be removed at least once daily from litter trays, cages, kennels and exercise areas.**

**4.1.3 Facilities that use kennels, catteries, pens or cages must disinfect these spaces at least three times each week and before the introduction of any new animal and after an outbreak of an infectious disease.**

**4.1.4 Cleaning agents containing phenols must not be used where cats are kept because they are particularly toxic to cats.**

**4.2.1 Pests (including fleas, ticks, lice and wild rodents) must be controlled.**

**4.3.1 Cats must be provided with litter trays and sufficient suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, must be provided.**

**4.3.2 Faeces and soiled litter must be removed daily.**

**4.3.3 Litter should be changed every three days if used only by one cat, or every day if used by several cats.**

**4.3.4 Litter trays must be disinfected before being used by any other cat.**

**5.1.1 All animals must be identified.**

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

**5.1.3 Operations manuals, standard operating procedures and/or training manuals must be readily accessible to staff at all times.**

**5.2.1 A staff member must be within visual and audible range of animals at all times.**

**5.3.1 The day care establishment must require the following information in relation to each animal's admission.**

- **5.3.1.1 The animal's:**
  - name;
  - sex, entire or desexed;
  - breed;
  - colour;
  - age;
  - condition on arrival;
  - permanent identification details (such as microchip implant number, where applicable); and
  - any health or behavioural issues.
- **5.3.1.2 The owner's (and the owner's emergency contact):**
  - name; and
  - contact number/s.

**5.3.2 The day care establishment must seek information relating to the following:**

- **5.3.2.1 details of the animal's special requirements in writing (if any) e.g. medical needs, past injuries, behavioural quirks worth noting;**
- **5.3.2.2 vaccination status of the animal and proof of up to date vaccinations;**
- **5.3.2.3 whether the animal has been wormed with an all-wormer in the past three months; and**
- **5.3.2.4 contact details of preferred veterinarian and agreement from the owner/s to cover any veterinary costs.**

**6.1.1 Dogs and cats to be boarded must be up to date with vaccinations within the past 12 months (C5 for dogs and F3 for cats) and the owners must supply a current vaccination certificate that indicates adequate vaccination history for each dog before admission. If a certificate is not provided the attending staff member must call the relevant veterinary clinic to confirm up to date vaccinations.**

**6.1.2 Puppies between 10-16 weeks of age must only be boarded at a day care facility if they have received their first vaccination at least eight days prior and are continuing their vaccinations. Owners must have given written acknowledgement of the risks of the puppy contracting disease. Puppies must be supervised closely while around other puppies or dogs.**

**6.1.3 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 three months must be wormed on admission at the owner's expense and the owner advised accordingly.**

**6.1.4 Owners of boarded animals must be asked to sign an agreement authorising provision of necessary veterinary treatment at the owner's cost.**

**6.1.5 Should an animal disease or parasitic infestation be suspected or confirmed, staff should seek veterinary advice and adopt immediate quarantine and disease control procedures.**

**6.2.1 The health and wellbeing of animals boarded at a day care facility must be monitored by staff at all times to observe whether the animal:**

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

**6.2.2 Any changes in health status must be reported promptly to the animal day care establishment manager, with the issue and actions taken documented in the relevant system or file relating to the animal.**

**6.3.1 An arrangement with a registered veterinarian or veterinary practice must be in place to ensure the day care establishment can obtain prompt veterinary advice when required and priority call-outs without a standard appointment.**

**6.4.1 Facilities must be available either at the day care facility or at veterinary premises for the isolation of animals that are suspected of or have been diagnosed as having an infectious condition or parasitic infestation. Housing for animals in isolation must still meet the requirements of this Code where staff safety and the safety of other animals is able to be maintained.**

**6.4.2 Staff must be trained in caring for animals in quarantine.**

**6.5.1 Euthanasia must only be carried out by a veterinarian.**

**7.1 All animals must have a permanent supply of fresh, clean water.**

**7.2 Water containers must be cleaned daily.**

**7.3 Animals boarded during the day should not require feeding unless they are under veterinary advice, pregnant or lactating, or young. If the animal is to be fed during its stay this must be confirmed with the owner.**

**8.1 Dogs must have the opportunity for exercise to:**

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

**8.2 Exercise can be provided by:**

- allowing dogs access to an exercise area for a minimum of 30 minutes daily depending on kennel size; or
- walking dogs on a lead for a minimum of 30 minutes daily.

**\*It may not be suitable to exercise specific animals due to age, existing health concerns or aggression that poses a risk to staff safety.**

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

- 9.1.1 protect animals from injury and stress, as is required under section 15 of the Act;
- 9.1.2 have non-slip floors;
- 9.1.3 provide easy access and operator safety;
- 9.1.4 be climate-controlled to protect against extremes of temperature;
- 9.1.5 protect against escape or unauthorised release of animals;
- 9.1.6 be easy to clean and disinfect; and
- 9.1.7 be properly ventilated.

**10.1 If an animal escapes, is lost, stolen or is given to the wrong owner whilst in the care of an animal boarding establishment, the business must make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner and must ensure changes are out in place to prevent this occurring again.**

**10.2 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 or services provided, the business must make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner and must ensure changes are out in place to prevent this occurring again.**

## **1. Responsibilities of managers and staff**

This section relates to the general responsibilities and duties of managers and staff associated with the care and management of animals in an animal day care facility, including the business owner, managers, supervisors, employees, volunteers and people undertaking work experience.

### **1.1 Specific to manager**

**1.1.1 The manager of an animal day care facility is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the business which may directly or indirectly impact on the welfare of animals boarded there. The manager must either be able to demonstrate experience and training in animal care or employ a person who has such experience and training and who can oversee the care of all animals boarded each day, including when transporting the animals and where the animals are exercised off the premises.**

**1.1.2 The manager must ensure the staff working or volunteering at the facility have the skills, knowledge, training and resources to be able to effectively maintain the physical health and mental wellbeing of all animals boarded at the facility, both directly (such as providing water and keeping animals out of extreme weather conditions) and indirectly (such as administrative staff overseeing animal intakes and record keeping). This applies to training for day to day operations and for emergencies.**

**1.1.3 The manager must ensure staffing and rostering can consistently accommodate the needs of animals boarded at the facility to maintain their health and wellbeing.**

**1.1.4 The manager must have arrangements in place that enable prompt veterinary treatment and euthanasia if necessary e.g. arrangement with a veterinarian or veterinary practice for priority call-outs and over the phone advice.**

**1.1.5 In particular, the manager is responsible for:**

- **1.1.5.1 ensuring that each animal is able to be individually identified;**
- **1.1.5.2 provision of sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest;**
- **1.1.5.3 provision of protection for animals, as necessary, from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, including extreme weather conditions, other animals that are aggressive and interference from unauthorised persons;**
- **1.1.5.4 establishing policies, standard operating procedures and/or training manuals and ensuring staff are aware of these and can access them at all times when working. The information must include details on day to day operations (including provision of clean water, record keeping, escape prevention measures, maintaining suitable conditions, transportation if used and general handling of animals), vaccinations policy, contact details and instructions for if an animal displays high stress, illness or injury (including the manager's details and an established veterinary contact);**

- **1.1.5.5 providing emergency management procedures and equipment, including procedures for evacuation and basic firefighting equipment, and ensuring staff are aware of these and can access them at all times when working; and**
- **1.1.5.6 supervision of all staff, whether they are working full or part time and whether or not working for fee or reward.**

1.2 Specific to staff dealing directly with animals (not including staff that only perform an administrative role)

**1.2.1 Staff dealing with animals are responsible for:**

- **1.2.1.1 watering and inspection of all animals;**
- **1.2.1.2 exercising animals as required for the species<sup>2</sup>;**
- **1.2.1.3 daily cleaning of facilities, including hosing out any kennels, replacing/cleaning any bedding, changing litter trays, cleaning watering utensils and disinfecting kennels and cages.**
- **1.2.1.4 reporting any of the following symptoms in any animal to a supervisor, manager or a veterinarian to seek advice and/or treatment:**
  - **runny nose, runny or inflamed eyes;**
  - **repeated sneezing;**
  - **coughing;**
  - **vomiting;**
  - **diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained;**
  - **lameness;**
  - **lethargy;**
  - **inability to stand or walk;**
  - **dogs on heat (non-desexed dogs should not be accepted unless appropriate measures have been put in place to prevent breeding, such as isolation or ensuring a non-desexed female and non-desexed male are never allowed in the same enclosure, transported or exercised together);**
  - **refusal of water or an excessive consumption of water;**
  - **apparent pain;**
  - **fits or staggering;**

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<sup>2</sup> Staff safety comes before meeting exercise requirements. Where an individual animal shows aggression, exercise requirements and any other duties that may require direct handling should be managed by a competent person who has the training, skills and/or knowledge to manage the animal. An animal should not be handled if it is not safe to do so and the manager should ensure provision of necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to all staff. Generally, animals known to be aggressive should not be admitted to a day care service unless there is a separate enclosed area for the animal to be kept away from others.

- **bloating of abdomen;**
- **difficulty or inability to urinate or defecate;**
- **red or brown coloured urine;**
- **wounds, inflammations or irritations;**
- **changes in behaviour indicative of high stress; and**
- **any other serious physical or behavioural abnormality.**

### 1.3 All staff

All staff are responsible for record keeping and should ensure records are kept for a minimum of 5 years. The manager is responsible for ensuring a record keeping system is in place to accommodate this.

Further detail on record keeping requirements is at section 5.3 of this Code.

**1.3.1 All staff must have an understanding of the responsibility they hold in the care and management of animals boarded at the facility and must have the knowledge, competence and skills to carry out day to day operations in a way that maintains the health and wellbeing of animals boarded there.**

**1.3.2 In particular, all staff whether dealing with animals directly or indirectly are responsible for:**

- **1.3.2.1 the mental and physical wellbeing of all animals in the establishment, including ensuring conditions likely to cause stress, injury or pain are managed effectively and tools for enrichment are utilised e.g. bedding, toys, scratching posts, protection from stressors, etc.;**
- **1.3.2.2 provision of enclosures, activities and equipment which suits the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held;**
- **1.3.2.3 protection of animals as far as possible from disease, distress and injury, including regular inspections of animals, upholding vaccination policy, only grouping animals together when it is safe to do so and under supervision e.g. following behavioural assessments;**
- **1.3.2.4 provision of prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment in cases of disease or injury and the skills to identify when this may be needed;**
- **1.3.2.5 maintenance of hygiene of the premises and general health of the animals held;**
- **1.3.2.6 provision of sufficient quantities of clean, fresh water, particularly during hot weather;**
- **1.3.2.7 provision of temperature control indoors and measures to ensure there is protection from severe weather conditions for outdoor areas;**
- **1.3.2.8 the maintenance and collation of relevant records; and**



- **1.3.2.9 prevention of animals escaping, either into other areas of the facility not constructed for the animal to be present or outside the facility. All containers, cages, kennels, enclosures, pens and yards must be constructed maintained and used in ways that significantly reduce the likelihood of an animal brought into the facility escaping. All animals brought into the facility must be handled, cared for and managed in ways that prevent escape, including during transportation or when being exercised.**

## **2. Animal housing**

This section relates to the housing arrangements in place for animals boarded at the facility, including site, enclosure construction, environment, any bedding and maintenance of enclosures.

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

### 2.1 Facility

**2.1.1 Animal day care sites must have an adequate water supply and appropriate waste disposal systems. When animals are taken off the premises this must still have an adequate water supply e.g. public taps or bubblers, or water must be carried. Faeces must be disposed of in bags in public and placed in a bin.**

**2.1.2 Potential clients must be allowed to briefly inspect the area of the facility where their animal would be boarded (including any facilities their animal may be exposed to e.g. grooming area or training area) at a mutually agreed time and under the supervision of a member of staff.**

### 2.2 Construction - general

**2.2.1 Day care facilities 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 (e.g. prevent cats climbing/jumping out of cages or dogs jumping over or digging under fences) or injury to any animal or human.**

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

**2.2.3 Materials should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. Floors of areas for catteries, kennels, cages and pens (other than grassed enclosures) must be made of an impervious material to assist cleaning and drainage.**

### 2.3 Pen size – general all animals

**2.3.1 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 freely.**

### 2.4 Enclosure size - dogs

**2.4.1 Dogs must be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.**

**2.4.2 Enclosures for dogs, such as exercise yards, must allow enough space for each dog to move around freely and comfortably. Enclosures must not be overcrowded at any time.**

A rest area or 'quiet down' area is recommended where dogs can be rotated through the day.

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

2.5 Pen size - cats

**2.5.1 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 housed or exercised together unless the owners have requested that the cats be housed together.**

**2.5.2 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.**

**2.5.3 Cats must be monitored to ensure there is no aggressive behaviour.**

**2.5.4 All cat pens must allow each cat adequate space to move around freely and comfortably.**

2.6 Drainage

**2.6.1 Pens, including catteries, kennels and smaller animal cages, must have floors that:**

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

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

2.7 Temperature

**2.7.1 Animals must be protected from extremes of temperature, appropriate to their needs. Dogs are particularly susceptible to high temperatures and must never be allowed to overheat.**

Animals housed in an enclosed pen, including cattery, kennel or smaller animal cage should have a temperature maintained between 15-27°C.

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.

2.8 Noise

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

Noise from dogs must not be addressed using deterrent collars (other than citronella collars), as these are not permitted under the Act.

### 2.9 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.

### 2.10 Ventilation

#### **2.10.1 Ventilation must be adequate to keep areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts.**

Indoor cages, pens or enclosures should have an ample supply of fresh air. In totally enclosed buildings where air conditioned 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 15-27°C;
- 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.

All sleeping areas in use should be cleaned and disinfected daily.

To ensure the most hygienic environment for the internal spaces, a curved wall/floor junction is recommended. A floor of sealed concrete is ideal for dogs, although paved and grassed areas are acceptable for the special behavioural needs of some dogs.

### 2.11 Security

#### **2.11.1 Unauthorised persons must not enter the facility beyond reception without staff permission and supervision.**

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

#### **2.11.3 Security barriers or secure fencing must be constructed to prevent escape of animals or unauthorised entry.**

#### **2.11.4 Enclosure gates must either be designed as a double-gated system or at least be self-closing to prevent escapes.**

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.

Kennel compound walls may form part of the security barriers. The security barriers 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.

### **3. Safety and security**

This section relates to the general safety and security of animals, staff, visitors and the overall facility.

**3.1 Customers/visitors must be supervised by staff at all times when in any area of the facility that contains animals. A written policy should be established outlining that customers and visitors are not to enter areas of the facility beyond the reception area unless supervised by staff. This is to ensure animals cannot be interfered with by unauthorised persons.**

**3.2 A behavioural assessment of each dog must be made on admission by an experienced and/or specially trained staff member (if such an assessment has not been done by the facility for that dog before) to ensure the dog is safe around staff and other dogs.**

Appropriate security structures and systems should be put in place to prevent break-ins.

Staff health should be protected by the provision of appropriate work clothing, adequate hand washing facilities and tetanus immunisation. Staff should 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 of facilities that house cats, especially women of childbearing age, should be made aware of the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis through inadequate hygiene procedures.

### **4. Hygiene**

This section relates to the general cleanliness and hygiene of the facility to ensure animals are kept in hygienic conditions and not exposed to disease or illness.

#### 4.1 Cleaning and disinfection

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

**4.1.2 Faeces must be removed at least once daily from litter trays, cages, kennels and exercise areas.**

**4.1.3 Facilities that use kennels, catteries, pens or cages must disinfect these spaces at least three times each week and before the introduction of any new animal and after an outbreak of an infectious disease.**

**4.1.4 Cleaning agents containing phenols must not be used where cats are kept because they are particularly toxic to cats.**

Cleaning and disinfecting agents must be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. 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.

#### 4.2 Pest control

##### **4.2.1 Pests (including fleas, ticks, lice and wild rodents) must be controlled.**

Chemicals used for pest control should only be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

#### 4.3 Litter trays

##### **4.3.1 Cats must be provided with litter trays and sufficient suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, must be provided.**

##### **4.3.2 Faeces and soiled litter must be removed daily.**

##### **4.3.3 Litter should be changed every three days if used only by one cat, or every day if used by several cats.**

##### **4.3.4 Litter trays must be disinfected before being used by any other cat.**

### **5. Administration and operations**

This section relates to the administrative and procedural/operational management of the business, particularly concerning identification of animals and record keeping of health concerns and any special needs of an animal.

#### 5.1 Operational matters

##### **5.1.1 All animals must be identified.**

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

##### **5.1.3 Operations manuals, standard operating procedures and/or training manuals must be readily accessible to staff at all times.**

#### 5.2 Supervision

##### **5.2.1 A staff member must be within visual and audible range of animals at all times.**

There should be a staff to dog ratio of 1:15 during business hours; however, there should be two staff members working during main check-in and check-out times. If there are over 40 dogs one extra staff member should be added for every 10 thereafter.

At least one staff member not working should be on call at all times to come in if needed.

#### 5.3 Record keeping and admission requirements

##### **5.3.1 The day care establishment must require the following information in relation to each animal's admission.**

- **5.3.1.1 The animal's:**
  - **name;**
  - **sex, entire or desexed;**
  - **breed;**
  - **colour;**

- **age;**
  - **condition on arrival;**
  - **permanent identification details (such as microchip implant number, where applicable); and**
  - **any health or behavioural issues.**
- **5.3.1.2 The owner's (and the owner's emergency contact):**
    - **name; and**
    - **contact number/s.**

**5.3.2 The day care establishment must seek information relating to the following:**

- **5.3.2.1 details of the animal's special requirements in writing (if any) e.g. medical needs, past injuries, behavioural quirks worth noting;**
- **5.3.2.2 vaccination status of the animal and proof of up to date vaccinations;**
- **5.3.2.3 whether the animal has been wormed with an all-wormer in the past three months; and**
- **5.3.2.4 contact details of preferred veterinarian and agreement from the owner/s to cover any veterinary costs.**

## **6. Health care**

This section relates to the management and prevention of disease and illness for animals being cared for at the facility.

### 6.1 Disease prevention

**6.1.1 Dogs and cats to be boarded must be up to date with vaccinations within the past 12 months (C5 for dogs and F3 for cats) and the owners must supply a current vaccination certificate that indicates adequate vaccination history for each dog before admission. If a certificate is not provided the attending staff member must call the relevant veterinary clinic to confirm up to date vaccinations.<sup>3</sup>**

**6.1.2 Puppies between 10-16 weeks of age must only be boarded at a day care facility if they have received their first vaccination at least eight days prior and are continuing their vaccinations. Owners must have given written acknowledgement of the risks of the puppy contracting disease. Puppies must be supervised closely while around other puppies or dogs.**

**6.1.3 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 three months must be wormed on admission at the owner's expense and the owner advised accordingly.**

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<sup>3</sup> If veterinary confirmation of up to date vaccinations cannot be confirmed the animal should not be boarded unless veterinary approval can be provided, in which case veterinary instructions on safe boarding and quarantine from other animals is required.

**6.1.4 Owners of boarded animals must be asked to sign an agreement authorising provision of necessary veterinary treatment at the owner's cost.**

**6.1.5 Should an animal disease or parasitic infestation be suspected or confirmed, staff should seek veterinary advice and adopt immediate quarantine and disease control procedures.**

It is recommended that all owners have their dogs on medication to prevent heartworm.

The boarding establishment should enquire if the animal is known or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or parasitic infestation. Animals known to have these conditions must be quarantined and treated appropriately or refused admission.

Sedatives must only be used in accordance with veterinary advice.

### 6.2 Health monitoring

**6.2.1 The health and wellbeing of animals boarded at a day care facility must be monitored by staff at all times to observe whether the animal:**

- **is drinking normally;**
- **is defecating normally;**
- **is urinating normally;**
- **is behaving normally;**
- **is of normal appearance; and**
- **is able to move about freely.**

**6.2.2 Any changes in health status must be reported promptly to the animal day care establishment manager, with the issue and actions taken documented in the relevant system or file relating to the animal.**

### 6.3 Veterinary attention

**6.3.1 An arrangement with a registered veterinarian or veterinary practice must be in place to ensure the day care establishment can obtain prompt veterinary advice when required and priority call-outs without a standard appointment.**

The animal day care manager should nominate sufficient veterinarians who are able to attend to animals, if the animal's normal veterinarian is unavailable.

Veterinary advice should be sought by the manager or a nominee for any animal showing one or more of the signs listed at 1.2.1.4.

### 6.4 Isolation

**6.4.1 Facilities must be available either at the day care facility or at veterinary premises for the isolation of animals that are suspected of or have been diagnosed as having an infectious condition or parasitic infestation. Housing for animals in isolation must still meet the requirements of this Code where staff safety and the safety of other animals is able to be maintained.**

**6.4.2 Staff must be trained in caring for animals in quarantine.**

All appropriate personal hygiene rules must be followed by staff caring for animals that have been isolated.

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.

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;
- wastewater, 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.

### 6.5 Euthanasia

#### **6.5.1 Euthanasia must only be carried out by a veterinarian.**

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.

## **7. Food and water**

This section relates to the basic minimum standards for the provision of food and water for animals at the facility.

### **7.1 All animals must have a permanent supply of fresh, clean water.**

### **7.2 Water containers must be cleaned daily.**

### **7.3 Animals boarded during the day should not require feeding unless they are under veterinary advice, pregnant or lactating, or young. If the animal is to be fed during its stay this must be confirmed with the owner.**

Food should generally be provided by the animal's owner and should be fed to the animal upon request by the owner.

Treats may be provided to the animals during boarding, such as for training or positive reinforcement more generally.

## **8. Exercise**

This section relates to the provision of exercise for animals boarded at the facility, including allowing the animal to exercise itself by moving about freely in its kennel or enclosure.



### **8.1 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
- allow stretching.

### **8.2 Exercise can be provided by:**

- allowing dogs access to an exercise area for a total of 30 minutes daily depending on kennel size; 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, existing health concerns or aggression that poses a risk to staff safety.**

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

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

## **9. Transport**

This section relates to the safe and appropriate transportation of animals by the business.

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

- **9.1.1 protect animals from injury and stress, as is required under section 15 of the Act;**
- **9.1.2 have non-slip floors;**
- **9.1.3 provide easy access and operator safety;**
- **9.1.4 be climate-controlled to protect against extremes of temperature;**
- **9.1.5 protect against escape or unauthorised release of animals;**
- **9.1.6 be easy to clean and disinfect; and**
- **9.1.7 be properly ventilated.**

Animals should be transported in the shortest practicable time.

## **10. Unclaimed, lost, injured or deceased animals**

This section relates to ensuring the business responds appropriately to unforeseen circumstances where an animal may be lost or injured. Though less likely for a day care establishment, risk of unclaimed animals should also be managed by the business to ensure staff are able to manage the situation appropriately.

**10.1 If an animal escapes, is lost, stolen or is given to the wrong owner whilst in the care of an animal boarding establishment, the business must make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner and must ensure changes are out in place to prevent this occurring again.**

**10.2 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 or services provided, the business must make every attempt to remedy the situation for all parties concerned in a timely manner and must ensure changes are out in place to prevent this occurring again.**

The animal boarding establishment should maintain public liability cover as a minimum and should evaluate the need for further insurance cover.

The managers of animal boarding establishments should 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 should include a period of time during which an animal will be kept after the arranged collection date. The policy should state what action will be taken should an animal not be collected within the given timeframes, which must involve using a government agency, rehoming organisation or rehoming directly e.g. via social media. The policy must not resort to euthanasia in these circumstances unless a veterinarian has advised this for welfare reasons.

## **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, previous versions of the ACT's 'Code Of Practice For Animal Boarding Establishments' produced by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, the Pet Industry Association of Australia's 'Standards and Guidelines for Best Practice Boarding Facilities/Establishments and Doggy Day Care Centres 2016' and in consultation with ACT industry representatives.