

DRAFT_03/07/14

CONSULTATION DRAFT - Dogs and Cats in Council Pounds and Animal Shelters Guidelines 2014

The Guidelines should be read together with Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dogs and Cats in Council Pounds and Animal Shelters) Standards 2014 No 1

Explanatory note

The object of these Guidelines is to complement the Standards.

The Standards prescribe legally enforceable requirements which apply to any temporary or permanent facility operated by or for a local council, other organisation or person which is used for the accommodation or shelter of dogs or cats for the purpose of housing or finding new homes for stray, seized, abandoned or unwanted dogs or cats.

The Guidelines outline recommended practices to achieve desirable animal welfare outcomes. for dogs and cats kept in these facilities. They are not mandatory but should be used as guidance.. Noncompliance with one or more guidelines will not in itself constitute an offence under law.

This format of this document follows the Parts, Heading and Structure of the Standards document.

CONTENTS

Part 1 Preliminary

- 1 Name of the Guideline
- 2 Commencement
- 3 Application of these Guidelines
- 4 Interpretation

Part 2 Responsibilities and competency of staff

Part 3 Quality management systems

Part 4 Dog and cat housing standards

Part 5 Management of care of dogs and cats

Part 6 Health standards for dogs and cats

Part 7 Re-homing dogs and cats

Part 8 Foster care of dogs and cats

Part 9 Humane destruction

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of the Guideline

These Guidelines are the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dogs and Cats in Council Pounds and Animal Shelters) Guidelines 2014 and complement the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dogs and Cats in Council Pounds and Animal Shelters) Standards 2014 No 1. which are referred to in Column 2 of Schedule 1 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012.

2 Commencement

These Guidelines commence on the same day as the [Insert name of Regulation amending Schedule 1 to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012].

3 Application of these Guidelines

These Guidelines apply to the conduct of council pounds and animal shelters for dogs and cats.

4 Interpretation

(1) Definitions

In these Guidelines:

animal means a dog or a cat.

animal shelter means any temporary or permanent establishment, other than a council pound, which is used for the accommodation or shelter of animals for the purpose of housing or finding new homes for, stray, seized, abandoned or unwanted animals.

care includes meeting the welfare needs, both physical and psychological, of the dog or cat.

cat means a member of the species *Felis catus* in a facility and includes a kitten.

council pound has the same meaning as in the Companion Animals Act 1998.

dog means a member of the species *Canis familiaris* in a facility and includes a puppy and a dingo.

facility means a council pound or animal shelter.

foster care, in relation to a dog or a cat, means care temporarily provided for the animal by a person in their private residence, under a foster care agreement, until the animal is fit to be re-homed.

foster care agreement means a written agreement between a facility and a foster carer, under which a dog or a cat is temporarily provided with care (as set out in that agreement) at a private residence by a foster carer, until the animal is fit to be re-homed.

foster carer means a person who has the possession, custody, care or control of a dog or a cat under a foster care agreement.

isolation facility means a secure area in which an individual dog or cat or dogs or cats can be kept separate from other animals and which can be made biosecure.

kitten means a cat which is less than 12 weeks of age in a facility.

microchip means an inert miniaturised electronic passive transponder inserted under the skin of a dog or a cat for permanent identification purposes.

person in charge, in relation to a facility, includes:

- (a) the owner of the facility;
- (b) the manager of the facility; and
- (c) any person performing the role of the manager of the facility.

puppy means a dog which is less than 12 weeks of age in a facility.

re-home means the process of providing a dog or a cat with a new owner and a new place to live.

staff or staff member means a person who works in a facility including the person in charge of a facility, employees and volunteers, whether working full-time or part-time and whether or not working for fee or reward.

veterinary practitioner has the same meaning as in the Veterinary Practice Act 2003.

Part 2 Responsibilities and competency of staff

- Persons working in a pound or shelter should have relevant experience or qualifications in the husbandry of dogs and cats to meet their physical and behavioral requirements . It is recommended that at least one staff member on duty during the hours of operation of a pound or shelter should hold formal qualifications in animal care. . A person holding formal qualifications:.

- (a) is a veterinary practitioner, or

- (b) holds a current Certificate III in Animal Technology or an equivalent veterinary nursing qualification; or

- (c) holds a current Certificate II in Animal Studies; or

- (d) has been assessed by a training organisation registered under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth) to have successfully completed equivalent units of competence.

- Pounds and shelters should employ a volunteer co-ordinator to manage all aspects of the volunteer program (if used), including development of policies and procedures that address the rights and responsibilities of both the volunteers and the pound or shelter. The volunteer co-ordinator should be responsible for facilitating the resolution of disputes between staff and volunteers.

Part 3 Quality management systems

- The Animal Register (a Register of information about dogs and cats) should include notes or observations regarding individual animals, including behavioural assessments and any significant alteration in the animal's condition or behaviour.

- Early collection or adoption of dogs and cats can be facilitated if the pounds and shelters are accessible to the public, with public display of opening hours and/or provision for appointments.

- Any written procedure implemented by a pound or shelter should be reviewed at least every two years.

- Pounds and shelters are encouraged to analyse data collected and monitor population statistics within their facility so that they can evaluate staffing levels and their capacity for care (particularly when animals remain in care for extended periods).

Part 4 Dog and cat housing standards

- When constructing new cages, it is recommended that the facility should endeavour to have the cages face north.. Cages with this aspect are usually warmer and have more natural light.
- Cages should have a solid roof, which overhangs the walls by a minimum of 700 millimetres at a 45 degree angle.
- Airborne particles and contaminants should be minimised. Ammonia levels in cages should be kept less than 2 parts per million.
- If possible the provision of lockable, accessible cages for animals delivered outside normal working hours. should be considered.
- Measures should be taken to reduce noise by:
 - Using sound proofing;
 - Placing animals so that exposure to stressful stimuli is minimised;
 - Using blinds or altering cage design to prevent dogs from seeing into nearby cages;
 - Holding dogs in compatible pairs; or
 - Taking care to exercise dogs away from the sight of kennelled animals.
- Excessive noise should be avoided where dogs and cats are unable to escape or withdraw from the sound.

Part 5 Management of care of dogs and cats

- Dogs and cats should be screened with a microchip reader more than one time upon arrival to increase the likelihood of detecting a microchip.
- When allocating animals to cages, consideration should be given to the compatibility of the animals; particularly their individual behaviour, their reproductive stage and status, their age and their health.

- Animals distressed by other animals or other species of animals should be housed in a manner that prevents visual and olfactory contact.
- Dogs and cats should be monitored after admission to enable staff to become familiar with their individual behaviours, eating patterns and elimination patterns.
- Environmental and social enrichment should be provided, especially for dogs and cats held for any significant length of time.
- All equipment should be designed, used and maintained to minimise the risk of illness or injury to animals.
- Any techniques used to capture dogs and cats should minimise the risk of harm and distress to the animal. Tranquilliser guns should only be used within the pound or shelter as a last resort for dangerous or aggressive animals that are posing a risk to staff and/or other animals.
- Cleaning, care, exercise and socialisation routines should follow a daily pattern to minimise the stress on individual animals.
- The separation between food, urination and defecation, and resting areas should be maximised.
- Food and water containers should be stable (less likely to be tipped over), non-toxic and easily cleaned/disinfected.
- Food and water containers should be positioned within cages so that they are accessible, and to avoid spillage or contamination.
- A variety of foods should be supplied and should be stored appropriately in a dry, cool, rodent and pest free place.
- Cages should be cleaned and disinfected in order of susceptibility to significant infectious disease – that is; attendants should start cleaning routines in cages where animals with highest susceptibility to disease (eg healthy puppies and kittens and healthy adult animals). Cages containing dogs or cats which are infectious should be cleaned last.
- Cleaning equipment (eg cloths, gloves) should be disinfected or changed prior to moving to a new cage. There should be separate cleaning equipment used for the isolation facility.
- All waste products such as faeces, bedding, and food wastes should be disposed of promptly and hygienically.

- Specialist and veterinary advice should be sought before pest control operations are conducted, in order to protect the health and safety of the animals kept.
- Dogs and cats should not be transported on the back of an open vehicle.
- Transport cages should permit an animal to turn around, while also being an appropriate size to avoid trauma during transport.
- Small dogs and cats may be placed in secure, well-ventilated carrying baskets or cages or crates.
- Large dogs may be restrained on a leash or similar or be held in separate compartments.
- Any vehicle especially designed or regularly used for transporting dogs and cats should:
 - be free from protrusions or sharp edges in the carrying area;
 - be insulated and provide protection from the weather and be air conditioned to protect against extremes of temperature even when stationary;
 - be fitted with an operational air conditioning system to the section of the vehicle where the animals are held.
 - have non-slip floors;
 - provide easy and safe access for handlers;
 - protect against unauthorized release or escape of the animals
 - have the name, address and telephone number of the facility clearly visible on the vehicle; and
 - be easy to clean and disinfect.
- When transporting dogs to or from a facility where travel time is more than 2 hours , adequate stops must be scheduled to allow dogs the opportunity to urinate, defecate and exercise, and be given access to water.
- When transporting cats to or from a facility where travel time is more than 2 hours, adequate stops must be scheduled to allow cats the opportunity to urinate, defecate and be given access to water.

Part 6 Health standards for dogs and cats

- Staff should follow appropriate biosecurity procedures to protect themselves and other animals when handling or examining dogs and cats with signs of illness. This may include the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves protective gowns or overalls and footwear or footwear covers. After handling of the affected animals, PPE is removed for disposal or disinfection and hands are washed with soap and water for at least 15 seconds.

- Dogs and cats should be given attention where any of the following symptoms or signs of illness and distress are observed:
 - Clear or coloured discharge from the nose;
 - Discharge or inflamed (reddened) eyes;
 - repeated sneezing or coughing;
 - vomiting;
 - severe diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained;
 - passage of parasites in faeces;
 - lameness;
 - bleeding or swelling of body parts;
 - inability to stand or walk;
 - loss of appetite;
 - weight loss;
 - apparent pain;
 - staggering or convulsions;
 - bloating of the abdomen (this is an emergency situation if this occurs in a dog after eating and is associated with pain and distress);
 - difficulty (straining) or inability to urinate or defecate
 - red or brown coloured urine;
 - patchy hair loss;
 - depression;
 - fever;
 - presence of external parasites;
 - hiding, social withdrawal, or repetitive behaviours
 - any other serious physical or behavioural abnormality.

- Where animals are held in pounds and shelters for long periods, they should be monitored closely and receive regular behavioural assessments to ensure that they remain physically and psychologically healthy.

Animals held for extended periods of time in pounds or shelters can suffer both mentally and physically from prolonged captivity, become stressed and will be at high risk of contracting significant infectious diseases and developing behavioural problems. Options such as placing the animal into foster care or with a rescue group should be considered to maximise opportunities for the animal to be re-homed.

Part 7 Re-homing dogs and cats

- Pounds and shelters are encouraged to develop relationships to facilitate the re-homing of suitable cats and dogs. This may be through arrangements with other pounds, shelters, rescue groups, breed placement organisations, pet retail shops or media outlets.

- Pounds and shelters are encouraged to facilitate the adoption of animals by maintaining current websites or social media sites, and advertisements for animals.
- Policies, procedures and staff training should be implemented so that all staff and visitors to the pound or shelter understand their roles in, and the urgency of, re-uniting animals with their owners; and where necessary in re-homing unwanted animals to new homes.
- Policies, procedures and staff training should be implemented which ensure that prospective owners are matched to suitable animals. Such matching should consider the characteristics and lifestyle of the owner, the type and behavioural attributes of the animal including exercise requirements, and the environment of the new home, including yard size and presence of children.
- In certain circumstances, dogs and cats with some problems may be re-homed (for example a dog missing an eye or leg) providing that a veterinary health check is undertaken on the animal to determine whether it is fit and healthy, and that veterinary treatment is implemented where required, and that the prospective owner is made aware of the animals condition and the requirements for the animals care (including cost).
- Information provided to the new owners of an animal should include information about:
 - General care requirements of the dog or cat, including appropriate diet and feeding regimes;
 - Correct and current information on the basics of behaviour and training that gives the new owners reasonable expectations of the animal, as well as appropriate understating of why certain behaviours arise;
 - Usual life span of the breed/species;
 - Minimum requirements for humane shelter and accommodation;
 - Minimum requirements for security of the dog or cat;
 - Minimum requirements for social contact with humans and other animals of the same species;
 - Minimum requirements for disease and parasite control/prevention;
 - How to identify and appropriately manage common diseases;
 - Procedures for seeking emergency treatment for the animal, and the value of establishing a relationship with a veterinary practitioner, and/or animal behaviourist or other experienced persons;
 - The estimated costs associated with providing food and shelter;
 - Routine veterinary treatment which may be required for the animal(s), for example vaccination or parasite control;
 - Maximum time an animal can be left unattended;
 - The expected behaviours of the species or breed, for example digging or scratching;
 - Information about the legal requirements for pet ownership, and the penalties for non-compliance;

- The animal's vaccination status, and the need for ongoing vaccinations;
 - The desirability and advantages of desexing other animals in their care;
 - Minimum requirements for exercise or behavioural enrichment;
 - Costs associated with registering the animal; and
 - Other information that the purchaser should reasonably be made aware of.
 - Information that is specific to the individual dog or cat, such as health care history, should be provided when animals are returned to their owner.
- Pounds and shelters should provide new pet owners with information about what financial support or in kind veterinary services they will provide if an animal becomes sick after sale.

Pounds and shelters can be an invaluable source of information or referral to new pet owners. New owners should be encouraged to contact the pound or shelter from which they adopted their new pet in the case of any arising problems.

Re-homing of animals may be assisted through the provision of a dedicated adoption area, which will allow prospective new owners the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their preferred new animal.

Part 8 Foster care of dogs and cats

- Shelters and foster carers should enter into an agreement that outlines responsibility for care, cost-sharing of husbandry, veterinary items or treatments, information about the animals and the requirements for the termination of the agreement.
 - A foster care co-ordinator should be appointed to manage all aspects of the pound or shelter's foster care program, including the length of time individual animals are fostered.
 - Foster carers should be provided with a document that outlines the care and husbandry requirements for cats and dogs, symptoms of common diseases or illnesses, and the pounds' or shelters' aims and policies related to foster care and adoption.
- Foster care is intended as a short-term management arrangement to care for animals to maximise the opportunity for an animal to be re-homed.

Part 9 Humane destruction

- Animals that are dangerous, distressed or difficult to handle should be pre-medicated with a tranquilliser prior to scanning and euthanasia.

- The use of firearms to destroy animals should be limited to emergency situations only.

Where firearms are used, operators should be appropriately licensed, trained and experienced, and animals should only be humanely destroyed in areas away from the sight and hearing of other animals and the public.

- Where possible, more than one person should be involved in the decision making process which results in the humane euthanasia of an animal.