



Code of practice for the operation of pet shops

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Bureau of Animal Welfare, Attwood

Introduction

This Code of Practice is made under the provisions of Section 59 of Division 4 of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994. (The Act)

The purpose of the Code is to define the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are appropriate to the welfare, physical and behavioural needs of pet animals held for sale in pet shops registered under the Act. People who operate or who work in pet shops are required by the Act to comply with these minimum standards and are encouraged to establish higher standards.

A pet shop is defined as a shop situated in a permanent location, where a pet animal, namely a dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, mouse, reptile, caged bird or any other similar animal of a class or kind prescribed by the regulations is offered for sale, sold or brought and sold. The shop may be a self contained section of a larger business such as a department store or permanent market. The shop must be able to be secured and to house animals outside of normal trading hours in accordance with State legislation including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, Local Government Regulations and the requirements of this Code.

Pet shops are required to display the guarantee defined in Section 2.4 in a prominent position on a wall of the shop.

Animals in pet shops have certain basic requirements :

- accommodation and equipment designed to suit their physical characteristics and behaviour;
- shelter and comfortable conditions of temperature, ventilation and lighting;
- protection from other animals;
- space enough to move, stretch and rest;
- feed and water to provide essential nutrients;
- protection from disease;
- regular observation to enable early detection of problems.

General

1. Staff

1.1 Proprietor

The proprietor of a pet shop, responsible for the overall management and conduct of the establishment and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of this Code of Practice and in particular for :

- the well-being of the animals in the establishment;
- training and supervision of staff;
- supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals;
- supervision of examination of animals within 24 hours of admittance;
- obtaining prompt veterinary attention for animals when required;
- the overall level of hygiene at the pet shop including the disposal of waste materials;
- the treatment of internal and external parasites as required.
- the maintenance of records.

1.2 The veterinarian

Every pet shop proprietor must have a written agreement with sufficient veterinarians to be on call for the treatment of animals (other than first-aid) and for humane euthanasia where an overdose of barbiturate is used.

1.3 Animal attendants

Pet shops proprietors must train or employ trained or experienced personnel for the handling and management of animals.

Animal attendants are responsible for the following tasks:

- daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals;
- reporting of sick or injured animals to the Manager.

1.4 Staff health

Some hazards exist with certain species of animals which are known to harbour disease-causing organisms which can be transmitted to man (zoonoses). Personal hygiene procedures must be such that transmission could not occur.

In order to provide for the health protection of the animal handlers in pet shops, the following safeguards are required -

- adequate hand washing facilities be available;
- staff be immunised against tetanus;
- all personnel working with cats, especially women of child-bearing age must be made aware of the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis.
- all personnel working with birds, particularly parrots, must be made aware of the risk of contracting psittacosis.

2. Handling and treatment of animals

2.1 Vaccination

Dogs and cats must be vaccinated at least fourteen days prior to sale to cover the following diseases :

- Dogs: canine distemper
 infectious canine hepatitis
 canine parvovirus
- Cats: infectious feline enteritis
 feline respiratory disease (Cat Flu).

2.2 Quarantine

Any sick or injured animal must be isolated in an area away from public contact and from other animals until fully recovered.

2.3 Maintenance procedures

a. Feeding

Fresh cool water must be available to animals at all times.

All adult animals, other than reptiles, must be fed at least once per day.

Food supplies for reptiles must be commercially available at all times of the year.

Puppies and kittens less than four months of age must be fed a minimum of three times daily, provided animals are not left without food for a maximum of twelve hours and between four and six months must be fed twice daily with a nutritionally balanced diet. The food provided must contain acceptable nutritive values in sufficient quantity to meet appropriate daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

b. Disinfection and Hygiene

Pet shops must be kept clean and hygienic at all times. All cages and pens holding animals must be cleaned out daily and cats must be provided with clean sanitary trays daily.

Disinfection of pens and cages must be done with hospital grade disinfectants whenever the occupants are changed or every fifth day.

It is important that all surfaces and utensils must be thoroughly rinsed after disinfecting to avoid poisoning.

Phenol is injurious to cats and must not be used.

c. Inspection

Animal attendants must inspect every animal daily, noting its general appearance and behaviour.

It is the responsibility of animal attendants at pet shops to report any animal that appears sick or injured, or is behaving oddly, to the Proprietor or Manager as soon as possible. Animals suspected of having an infectious disease should be placed in isolation or euthanased.

2.4 Sale of animals

All dogs and cats sold must have a vaccination certificate signed by a veterinarian stating that the animal has been vaccinated in accordance with the label instructions of the manufacturer of the vaccine. The certificate must indicate the next date for further vaccination and any obvious defects. No animal with a potentially life threatening defect apparent at the time should be sold.

All animals offered for sale must be weaned and fully self sufficient. Minimum age of animals for sale must be:

Dogs	-	8 weeks
Cats	-	8 weeks
Rabbits	-	5 weeks
Guinea Pigs	-	4 weeks
Mice	-	3 weeks

Juvenile birds must be self sufficient and should be fully feathered (moult permitting). Unweaned animals must not be on the premises.

No animal suspected of being sick, injured or diseased may be sold. All animals must be free of external parasites and dogs and cats must have been treated for internal worms. Reptiles with active lesions should not be sold.

Purchasers of pet animals must be given literature about feeding, desexing, parasite control, health - including procedures for emergency treatment during the guarantee period, housing, responsible pet ownership and current legislation covering the registration of pet animals. The information should be prepared in consultation with the relevant professions. New owners should be encouraged to seek advice about problems with the pets from veterinarians and other people with experience in animal care and management. Information prepared by a specialist herpetologist relating to the specific reptile being sold must be given to the purchaser at the time of sale.

If an animal is not acceptable to a purchaser because of health or other reasons that are supported by a statement from a veterinarian, excluding accidents within seven days of purchase, pet shops proprietors must take the animal back and refund all monies or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee. If an animal is returned within three days for any other reason, the pet shop proprietor must refund 75% of the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee. If the animal dies or is euthanased as a result of a disease that is traceable to the point of sale, the pet shop proprietor must

refund the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

3. Buildings and facilities

3.1 Food storage and hygiene

Feed storage facilities must be vermin proof and available to hold a minimum of five days requirements under peak conditions.

Feeding and drinking utensils must be stable and either disposable or able to be readily cleaned and disinfected.

Facilities must be provided for the vermin proof storage and sanitary disposal of animal wastes, cadavers, food scraps and refuse. A regular pick-up of such wastes at least once per week is required.

3.2 Housing facilities

Sale cages

These cages must be constructed of impervious, washable materials to facilitate cleaning and disinfection. All pens must be able to be secured to prevent accidental escape of animals and must be completely enclosed having either a solid or wire roof or have walls high enough to prevent excessive handling by customers and escape of the animals.

Reptile cages should be lockable and tamper proof. Reptiles should be screened from excessive noise and vibration and buffered from the public by barriers or signage, for example - "Quiet Please": "Do not Tap on Glass."

Where possible, puppies and kittens from different sources should be housed separately to reduce the spread of contagious diseases.

Clean soft bedding must be provided for dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and mice and discarded daily.

Animals require a secluded darkened sleeping area. Animals in view of the public must be removed from pens in shop windows at night or alternatively, the pens must be covered with opaque screens to exclude both light and the vision of the public.

Animal cages must be placed out of draughts and have adequate shade when exposed to direct sunlight, especially through glass windows.

Adequate temperatures for reptiles in the range of 20 - 33 °C should be maintained at all times. Heating devices must be positioned so that parts of the enclosure are not heated, thereby providing a range of temperatures.

Ventilation must be adequate to keep premises free of dampness and obnoxious odours. Separate bird rooms should be provided where possible and an extraction fan system must be provided where birds are housed to remove as much feather, dander and dust as possible from the premises thus reducing the fomites responsible for carrying Psittacosis.

Artificial lighting must not generate excess heat.

Cages for rabbits, guinea pigs and mice must not be totally open-sided and must have a darkened private area. Reptiles cages must be totally enclosed except for one viewing panel and must include cage furniture that allows total or partial concealment of the reptile.

Tortoises require a pool of water deep enough for the animal to completely submerge and a totally dry haul out area large enough to enable the entire animal to be out of the water. The edges of the haul out area must be a shallow gradient that allows easy access and will not abrade the bellies of the tortoises.

Frogs and snakes require a shallow pool of water.

Reptiles housed in pet shops require a photoperiod of eight hours and light bulbs used for heating must be coloured red or blue so that the animal has a dark period during the day.

Different species must be housed separately at all times except for:

- compatible species of birds.
- rabbits and guinea pigs provided that the cage size for the total number of occupants conforms to the minimum requirements for rabbits.

Where different species are housed in adjoining cages, a solid opaque partition must separate the cages.

All housing facilities must have appropriate fire extinguishers or other fire protection.

Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994

The previous version of this note was published in May 2002.

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See attachments: Appendix 1.

Appendix 1.

Recommended cage and pen sizes
DOGS, CATS, RABBITS, GUINEA PIGS, MICE & SNAKES

Species	Minimum floor area (Sq. cm)	Minimum width (cm)	Minimum height (cm)	Maximum number of animals	Increased floor area for each additional animal (sq. cm)
Dogs					
Puppies (8-16 weeks)	6,000	60	50	4	1,500
Less than 3 kg					
Over 3 kg	6,000	60	50	2	3,000
Adults less than 40 cm in height	15,000	90	180	1	-
Adults 40-70 cm in height	24,000	90	180	1	-
Adults over 70 cm in height	35,000	90	180	1	-
Cats					
Kittens (8-12 Weeks)	6,000	60	50	3	1,500
Adults	6,000	60	50	1	-
Rabbits					
Young(5-12 weeks)	6,000	60	50	6	300
Adult	6,000	60	50	2	600
Guinea pigs					
	2,500	50	40	4	600
Mice					
	600	20	20	2	300
Snakes					
Up to 100 cm	2000	45	35	2	1000
100 cm to 250 cm	4500	50	50	2	-
250 cm to 400 cm	6000	50	50	2	-
Over 400 cm	10000	90	75	1	

NOTE.

Juvenile pythons (less than 40 cm) may be held singularly in holding units with a minimum floor area of 480 square cm. These units may be stored in one temperature controlled enclosure

Juvenile mice(less than 8 weeks) may be housed four to a pen.

Animals may only be kept in these cages for a maximum of four weeks.

LIZARDS, TORTOISES, FROGS

Species	Minimum floor area (Sq. cm)	Minimum width (cm)	Minimum height (cm)	Maximum number of animals	Increased floor area for each additional animal (sq. cm)
Lizards					
Geckoes, skinks legless lizards to 25cm snout to vent length	1800	30	20	3 Adults 10 juveniles	300
Monitors, dragons, skinks* to 30 cm total length	2100	40	40	3 Adults 10 juveniles	350
Monitors, dragons, skinks** to 50 cm total length	2500	40	40	2 Adults 5 Juveniles	600
Monitors, dragons, skinks*** to 90 cm total length	7000	90	60	1	3500
Monitors to 120 cm total length	10000	90	90	1	5000
Monitors to 200 cm total length	30000	150	120	1	15000
Tortoises					
			Minimum water depth		
Carapace- 0 - 10 cm	1800	30	20	3	300
Carapace- 10 - 20 cm	3,600	40	30	3	600
Carapace- over 20 cm	6000	40	30	3	1500
Frogs					
Large Tree and Ground Frogs	2500	50	40	3	400
Small Tree and Ground Frogs	1800	30	30	6	150

NOTE

* This group includes -Black Rock, Tree, White's, Water, Stripped Skinks

** Includes heavy bodied, slower moving species such as Blue-tongue, Shingleback, Gidgee Skinks

*** Includes Land Mullet, Yakka, Major, King's Skink