



Department of
**Primary Industries and
Regional Development**

Draft
FOR CONSULTATION

Health and Welfare of Dogs in Western Australia



Standards & Guidelines

Animal welfare

Ensuring all animals receive appropriate care

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Preface

The Western Australian Government recognises the value of animal welfare to our community and strives to ensure that all animals receive appropriate standards of care. As companions and working animals, dogs have an important place in the lives of many Western Australians.

The development of minimum requirements for dog care and management is a valuable input to compliance with the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*. By following these recommendations, people who are responsible for the care and management of dogs can ensure animal welfare and comply with the law.

The Dog Standards and Guidelines were prepared by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department) in consultation with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, WA and experts in dog care and welfare. All information in this document is based, as far as possible, on current scientific knowledge, and reflects, as appropriate, recommended industry practice and community expectations. The efforts of all who contributed to this process are gratefully acknowledged.

The Department notes that the content of the Dog Standards and Guidelines does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the organisations or individuals who participated in the process to date.

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Part 1 - Preliminary

Section 1– Introduction

Purpose

This document describes the minimum standards that owners and people must follow to ensure the health and welfare of dogs kept in Western Australia (WA). It also details guidelines and additional information to support people in charge of dogs to maximise the health and welfare of dogs under their care.

Background

As defined by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), “animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress”. For the purpose of this document, health includes both the physical and mental health of the dog. Good animal welfare can only be achieved when an animal’s mental, social, behavioural and physical needs are met.

Responsible dog ownership involves providing for the welfare, health and safety of a dog while considering other people in the community and complying with relevant laws.

In Western Australia, the main laws on the keeping and welfare of dogs are the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (Animal Welfare Act) and the *Dog Act 1976* (Dog Act).

Animal Welfare Act

The Animal Welfare Act has the purpose of promoting and protecting the welfare, safety and health of animals. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department) assists the Minister for Agriculture and Food in administering the Animal Welfare Act. Further information on animal welfare in WA is available at <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare>.

The Dog Act

The Dog Act establishes obligations and rights in relation to the control, registration, ownership and keeping of dogs. Administration of the Dog Act is the responsibility of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, while enforcement is primarily undertaken by local government authorities. Further information on the Dog Act is available at <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/localgovernment/forcommunity/Pages/Dogs-and-Cats.aspx>.

Scope and application

This document covers key aspects of the care, welfare and health of dogs in WA.

The Dog Standards and Guidelines apply to all dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris* and *Canis lupus dingo* or hybrid) kept in WA. They do not cover wild, free-ranging dogs that do not have ‘an owner’ or carer.

Standards are minimum requirements to meet the basic welfare needs of dogs. They are presented in a text box labelled ‘Minimum standards’ and use the word ‘must’.

Guidelines are recommended practices to achieve desirable animal welfare outcomes and use the word ‘should’.

The Standards and Guidelines were written to promote compliance with WA law and are based on currently available scientific evidence and consideration of existing policy in other jurisdictions. Where evidence has not yet been established or is not yet quantified, standards and guidelines are based on current understanding of the welfare needs of dogs. The general information in this document is not a substitute for expert advice on concerns or issues with a particular individual animal.

Part 2 of the Dog Standards and Guidelines apply to all people with responsibility for the care and management of dogs, in private and commercial settings.

Part 3 sets out additional requirements that ONLY apply to a domestic dog operation, defined in this context as follows.

A domestic dog operation is:

- a person who owns five or more fertile bitches that are kept for the purpose of breeding and selling dogs;
- an animal shelter or pound;
- a pet shop; or
- a premise at which dogs are boarded, trained, or kept overnight or during the day, whether the operator receives a payment or not.

The standards, in all cases, apply to a 'person in charge' of a dog. The term 'person in charge' is defined in the Animal Welfare Act as follows:

person in charge, in relation to an animal, means —

- a) the owner of the animal;
- b) a person who has actual physical custody or control of the animal;
- c) if the person referred to in paragraph (b) is a member of staff of another person, that other person; or
- d) the owner or occupier of the place or vehicle where the animal is or was at the relevant time.

A dog can have more than one 'person in charge' at any one time. For example, the owner and a person who has actual physical custody or control of a dog can both be considered as the 'person in charge' of the dog.

Interpretation

In these Standards and Guidelines –

bitch means a female dog;

body condition score means a scoring system used to classify the condition of an animal, based on assessment of the amount of fat and/or muscle covering of the animal;

choke chain means a length of metal chain, strapping or rope which forms a collar when passed through an end 'O' ring or eye, also called a choke collar, slip collar or check chain;

dam means a female parent of a puppy or litter of puppies;

dog means an animal of any age of the species *Canis lupus familiaris* or *Canis lupus dingo*, or hybrid, kept in Western Australia;

debarking means a surgical procedure to remove the vocal cords;

electronic collar means a collar that is used to modify behaviour through the delivery of a stimulus, including but not limited to an electric shock, citronella spray, vibration, water vapour, air pressure or tone, and includes electric training collars and electrical devices known as the "invisible fence";

environmental enrichment means a process for improving the environment and behavioural care of animals;

established ear tattoo identification scheme means a scheme established to meet Racing and Wagering WA's greyhound 'ear branding' regulation, or an established dog identification register, and where the procedure is performed by a person trained to perform ear tattooing.

establishment means a place where dogs are kept or housed by a domestic dog operation;

experienced dog trainer means a person with an accredited qualification or demonstrable experience in canine behaviour and training who is able to correct behavioural problems in dogs;

fit for breeding means a dog is suitable for breeding, following consideration of factors such as the dog's health, temperament, and genetic make-up;

fit for further breeding means a bitch over seven years of age is suitable for breeding, based on physical examination and further tests as required by a veterinarian. A bitch cannot be certified by a veterinarian as 'fit for further breeding' once she has produced five litters. A certificate allowing further breeding will be valid for six months after the examination.

harm has the meaning as defined in the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*; 'includes – (a) injury; (b) pain; and (c) distress evidenced by severe, abnormal physiological or behavioural reactions';

health means both the physical and mental health of a dog;

housing means any shelter or structure, including an enclosure, cage or module, a house or apartment used for human habitation, or a garage or shed, where a dog is kept. This does not include cages and crates used for confinement during transport or when a dog is under veterinary care;

incompatible dogs means dogs which, when in each other's presence, interact in a manner that can cause injury, fear or distress to one or both of the dogs;

individual characteristics mean traits or characteristics of a dog such as breed, age, reproductive status, genetic makeup, personality, prior socialisation and experiences; these characteristics influence the physical, psychological and social needs of the individual dog;

physiological needs means the requirements for the normal functioning of a dog's body;

problem behaviour means a behaviour that is considered to be outside the normal or acceptable behaviour pattern for that species and type of animal; these can include both pathological/abnormal behaviours, or natural behaviours which may be perceived as a nuisance or risk to people, other animals, property or the environment;

prong collar means a chain made of metal or hardened plastic links with prongs for positioning against the neck on each link, also called pinch collars;

proper diet means a diet with a nutritional composition generally regarded as suitable for dogs;

puppy means a dog under the age of six months;

restraint device means a device fitted on a dog as an aid to dog control and management, including collars, leads or leashes, harnesses, muzzles and halters;

sire means the male parent of a puppy or litter of puppies;

social needs means an individual dog's requirement for appropriate socialisation and positive interaction with people, dogs and other animals.

staff has the meaning as defined in the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*; 'in relation to a person, includes – (a) all the people working for, or engaged by, that person whether as officers, employees, agents, contractors, volunteers or in any other capacity; (b) if the person is a scientific establishment, all the people who use the establishment's facilities for scientific purposes; (c) if the person is a body corporate, its directors, secretary and executive officers; and (d) if the person is a partnership, the partners';

surgical alteration procedure* means ear cropping, debarking and dew claw removal procedures. *Note that tail docking of dogs is regulated under the *Animal Welfare (General) Regulations 2003*.

transfer has the meaning as defined in the *Dog Act 1976*; 'to sell, trade, give away, take consideration for, transfer ownership of and offer for sale, and to reclaim from a dog management facility';

veterinarian means a veterinary surgeon registered with the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960*;

veterinary advice means advice offered from a veterinarian or person acting on the instructions of a veterinarian, including telephone advice;

veterinary care means care or treatment of an animal provided by a veterinarian or person acting on the instructions of a veterinarian in accordance with generally accepted veterinary practices.

Part 2 – General Care of Dogs

Section 1 – General

1. Identification of dogs

Objective

To ensure that dogs are identified in a way that protects and promotes dog welfare, safety and health.

Introduction

The Dog Act sets out the requirements for the identification of dogs kept in WA.

Standards and guidelines on the use of collars are set out in Part 2, Section 3, 14: Restraint. Other methods of identification, such as microchipping and ear tattooing can present health and welfare risks to a dog if not performed appropriately. (See the Dog Act for requirements on microchipping dogs in WA.)

Minimum standards: Identification

- S1.1.** Branding (hot iron or freeze), ear marking, ear notching and ear tags must not be used for the purpose of identifying a dog.
- S1.2.** Microchipping must only be performed by a person trained in implanting microchips.
- S1.3.** Ear tattooing must only be undertaken by a veterinarian or by a person acting on the instructions of a veterinarian, while the animal is under general anaesthetic, unless undertaken for the purpose of an established ear tattoo identification scheme.

Recommended guidelines

- G1.1** A tag, engraved or marked with current owner contact details, should be securely attached to a dog's collar.

2. Transfer of ownership

Objective

To ensure that the welfare, safety and health of a dog are protected at the time of transfer, taking into account the future needs of the dog.

Introduction

Change of dog ownership involves a duty of care, both by the person transferring ownership and the prospective owner. This duty of care includes consideration of the physical, mental and social needs of the dog and the capability of the prospective owner to meet those needs.

The acquisition of a dog should be the result of careful planning and recognition of the responsibilities involved with owning a dog during its whole life. Purchasing a dog on impulse can often result in poor welfare outcomes, particularly when there is a mismatch between owner expectations and lifestyle, and the animal's needs.

The 'transfer' of dogs has the same meaning as it does under the Dog Act. The Dog Act has a number of requirements that apply to the transfer of dogs.

Minimum standards: Transfer of ownership

- S2.1** A puppy must not be permanently separated from the dam and littermates for the purpose of transfer unless the puppy:
- (a) is at least 8 weeks of age; and
 - (b) is fully weaned;
- except when it is in the best interests of the welfare or health of the puppy or the dam as advised by a veterinarian.
- S2.2** A dog must not be transferred by a person if the person is aware, or reasonably suspects, that a dog is sick, injured, physically impaired, diseased, pregnant, aggressive or displaying problem behaviours, unless:
- a) the dog's condition is fully disclosed to the prospective owner, and
 - b) following disclosure, the prospective owner consents to the transfer proceeding.

Recommended guidelines

- G2.1** Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that prospective new owners are able to provide for the health and welfare of a dog before transferring the dog.
- G2.2** A dog should not be transferred unless the dog has been;
- (a) treated for internal and external parasites; and
 - (b) vaccinated in accordance with general veterinary advice, unless this is contrary to the welfare, health or safety of the dog.
- G2.3** A dog breeder should make reasonable efforts to maintain contact with the owners of dogs that he/she has bred, to:
- (a) offer advice and reasonable assistance to support the care and welfare of the dogs they have bred; and
 - (b) allow evaluation of any inherited disorders or problem behaviours that may develop in the dogs they have bred.
- G2.4** Wherever practicable, intended owners of a puppy should be allowed to appropriately socialise and interact with the puppy, its littermates and its dam and sire prior to transfer of the puppy.
- G2.5** Intended owners should be offered written information relating to the care of the dog, at no cost and at the time of transfer. This should include:
- (a) information about the general care and management of dogs; and
 - (b) information specific to the dog, including:
 - (i) the dog's current diet and feeding schedule, any care, training, exercise practices the dog is accustomed to; and
 - (ii) any available health records relating to the dog, including desexing and vaccination certificates.
- G2.6** To allow a puppy to acclimatise to its new home during its socialisation stage, a puppy going to a new home should ideally be transferred between eight and twelve weeks of age.
- G2.7** All reasonable efforts should be made to rehome a healthy dog that is without an owner or can no longer be kept by the dog's current owner.

Section 2 – Housing and transport

3. Minimum housing conditions

Objective

To ensure that the housing, environment and security of dogs are of a standard that promotes and protects dog welfare, safety and health.

Introduction

Suitable housing provides a dog with:

- protection from the natural elements and adverse weather
- a comfortable place to rest and sleep
- choice of environment and space to move about freely
- opportunity to express natural behaviours
- security i.e. by preventing escape or straying
- security i.e. by protection from other animals or people.

Dogs are housed under a range of conditions. Most companion dogs will share the same housing as their owner or carer but some dogs may be housed for short or long periods in enclosures, e.g. in the case of temporary kennelling, or dogs kept for work or sport. In this document, pens, runs and kennels used for housing and confinement are considered as 'enclosures'.

For further information on enclosure size and design, see Appendix 1.

These standards set out minimum requirements for the housing of dogs. They do not apply to temporary confinement during transport or veterinary care. For standards relating to transport, see Part 2, Section 2, 8: Transport of dogs. For further information on managing dogs in hot weather, see Appendix 2.

Minimum standards: Minimum housing conditions

- S3.1** Housing must be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that:
- (a) provides for the welfare, safety and health of a dog;
 - (b) minimises the risk of injury to a dog;
 - (c) minimises the risks of transmission of infectious disease agents; and
 - (d) prevents the escape of a housed dog.
- S3.2** An area in which a dog is kept must:
- (a) include a weatherproof area which adequately provides the dog with shelter, shade or other protection from the elements;
 - (b) allow access to a dry surface, including during cleaning;
 - (c) have sufficient air flow and quality to ensure levels of noxious gases, odours, dust, or heat do not pose a risk of harm to dog health or welfare; and
 - (d) be maintained to avoid faeces, urine and spoiled food accumulating to such an extent that this poses a risk to the health or welfare of the dog.
- S3.3** Housing in which a dog is kept must:
- (a) be large enough for a dog to stand, turn around freely, stretch, roll, lie with limbs extended, and urinate and defecate away from sleeping and eating areas;

	(b) meet the minimum size requirements listed in Appendix 1; and (c) not be constructed with toxic materials or with wire flooring.
S3.4	Reasonable steps must be taken to prevent a dog from suffering heat or cold stress.
S3.5	A dog must have access to dry bedding which is: (a) free from faeces, urine and soiled food; (b) appropriate to the health status and individual characteristics of the dog; and (c) sufficient to provide thermal and physical comfort.

Recommended guidelines

- G3.1** Enclosures and outdoor housing should be located in an area that provides a dog access to both shade and sun.
- G3.2** A dog's housing and environment should be checked on a daily basis. Faeces, urine and soiled food should be removed and contaminated bedding replaced.
- G3.3** Efforts should be made to effectively control pests in a dog's housing and environment, including flies, fleas, mosquitoes and rodents.
- G3.4** Lighting used in dog housing areas should be as close as possible, in duration and intensity, to natural conditions.
- G3.5** Exposure of a dog to sudden, loud noises should be minimised or managed.
- G3.6** Enclosures should be designed to allow the regular inspection of housed dogs.
- G3.7** Enclosures used for long-term housing of dogs should be designed to allow environmental enrichment and choice, such as raised platforms or sleeping quarters, and a separate exercise/activity area.
- G3.8** Where possible, dogs kept in enclosures should be housed in socially harmonious pairs or groups.
- G3.9** Incompatible dogs should not be housed in an enclosure together, and should be managed and housed in a way that prevents fighting and injury.
- G3.10** A sick or injured dog should be housed in a quiet, warm and dry area away from interference of other animals.

4. Crating of dogs

Objective

To ensure that crating, if used to confine a dog, is done in a manner that minimises the risk to the welfare, safety and health of the dog.

Introduction

Dogs may be crated for various reasons, including transport, when cage rest is recommended by a veterinarian, or to provide a secure place to sleep or rest. A suitably sized crate will enable a dog to stand up, turn around and lie comfortably.

While dogs may tolerate crating, it is essential to introduce a dog to a crate in a careful and gradual manner. Inappropriate confinement in a crate may be harmful and may cause problem behaviours.

Crating may be harmful when the dog has not been properly trained to accept crating, when crated dogs are not provided adequate environmental enrichment, or are confined for excessive periods of time. All crated dogs should be given the opportunity to urinate and defaecate outside the crate. Puppies need to urinate and defecate more frequently, so duration of time spent in a crate will need to be shorter compared to an older toilet-trained dog.

Minimum standards: Crating of dogs

- S4.1** A dog must not be confined in a crate with the crate door closed for a period of time that is detrimental to the health of the dog.

Recommended guidelines

- G4.1** A dog should not be confined in a crate with the crate door closed unless;
- (a) the dog has been trained to accept confinement;
 - (b) efforts are made to provide appropriate enrichment; and
 - (c) the period of time does not exceed 2 hours a day during daytime hours.

5. Tethering of dogs

Objective

To ensure that tethering, if used, is done in a manner that minimises the risk to the welfare, safety and health of the dog.

Introduction

Tethering is the securing of an animal to an anchor point to confine it to an area. Swivel tethers on a fixed running tether are the preferred type of tether as they may reduce the likelihood of entanglement and injury. A coated cable or good quality metal chain is less likely to break or become tangled, and is therefore preferred over rope.

Long-term tethering can have a significant negative impact on the health of a dog and should be avoided. In addition to access to food, water and shelter, a tethered dog needs environmental enrichment, and periods of free movement and exercise to prevent distress, boredom or social isolation. A secure yard or enclosure which complies with the housing requirements in this document (see Part 2, Section 2, 3. Minimum housing conditions) is preferred over tethering as a means of confinement.

Minimum standards: Tethering of dogs

- S5.1** A dog must not be tethered in a way that may cause an unreasonable risk of harm to the dog, including attaching a dog:
- (a) to an object that could be moved under any exertion by the dog;
 - (b) adjacent to a drop or fence in a manner that puts the dog at risk of injury or death by hanging;
 - (c) using choke chains or other devices which tighten around the neck; or
 - (d) outdoors in extreme weather conditions.
- S5.2** A dog must not be tethered for a period exceeding 30 minutes unless:
- (a) the dog has been trained to accept tethering;
 - (b) all devices used are appropriate for the individual dog;

- (c) the dog is regularly supervised;
- (d) the dog has access to weatherproof shelter and water
- (e) the tether is fitted with a swivel and is checked daily; and
- (f) the dog is provided with daily exercise off the tether.

S5.3 Pregnant bitches of more than 7 weeks gestation, whelping bitches and lactating dams with puppies must not be tethered.

S5.4 The use of a tether as a means of confinement must be discontinued if the dog displays signs of distress associated with tethering.

Recommended guidelines

- G5.1** Dogs should not be tethered for a period exceeding two hours in any twenty-four hour period.
- G5.2** When dogs are to be tethered for an extended period, the tether should be at least three metres in length.
- G5.3** Tethers should only be used when other means of confinement are unavailable, insufficient, or not appropriate for the confinement of the dog.
- G5.4** Dogs should not be tethered to address problem behaviour unless part of a behaviour modification program overseen by a veterinarian or experienced dog trainer.
- G5.5** A tethering site should be relatively flat, dry and maintained daily; this includes the removal of dog faeces.
- G5.6** The size and weight of chain or cable used to tether a dog should be appropriate to the size of the dog, and not hinder the dog's movement within the tether site.

6. Transport of dogs

Objective

To ensure that dogs are fit and adequately prepared for their journey, and transported in a manner that protects and promotes their welfare, safety and health.

Introduction

These recommendations apply to every person transporting a dog in WA, whether by road, air or water. Requirements for the provision of food, water and exercise set out in other chapters also apply to dogs during transport.

People with responsibility for transporting a dog should take steps to minimise the stress that may be caused by the transport experience. Preparation is important and should take into consideration the type and length of the journey, whether the dog is transported with familiar companions, and the quality of transport.

Studies show that even on relatively mild days, vehicles can rapidly reach temperatures approaching 50°C. Most of the increase in temperature will occur within the first 15 to 30 minutes. Providing a small amount of ventilation, window tinting, putting a sun shade up in a vehicle will not prevent temperatures rising to levels that can seriously threaten the health of confined dogs. See Appendix 2 for further information on managing dogs in hot weather.

Minimum standards: Transport of dogs

- S6.1** A dog must not be left unattended in a vehicle in conditions where the dog is at risk of heat stress.
- S6.2** A dog must not be transported on the open back of a moving vehicle unless the dog is:
- (a) provided adequate shelter during extremes of weather; and
 - (b) suitably secured by:
 - (i) enclosing the dog in a transport crate fixed to the vehicle; or
 - (ii) restraining the dog by a tether, where the length of the securing lead or chain allows the dog some movement, including to stand and lie down, but does not allow the dog to jump or fall off the tray.
- S6.3** A dog must not be transported in the closed boot of a sedan or in the rear of a utility vehicle under a tonneau cover.
- S6.4** Transport crates used to transport dogs must:
- (a) be escape-proof;
 - (b) prevent the protrusion of head and/or limbs of transported dogs;
 - (c) when fixed to a vehicle, be fixed securely in a position which provides adequate air flow and quality and minimises exposure to exhaust fumes and dust.
- S6.5** A dog to be transported must be fit for the intended journey, except where the transport is to seek veterinary care for the dog.

Recommended guidelines

- G6.1** Non-slip surfaces and insulated matting should be provided for dogs transported in direct contact with metal surfaces, such as on the open back of a vehicle, or in the back of vans or trucks.
- G6.2** Dogs should be regularly checked for their welfare, safety and health during transport.
- G6.3** Transport crates used to transport dogs should:
- (a) be designed for transporting animals;
 - (b) provide adequate light;
 - (c) provide adequate space for the dog to sit, stand, and turn around, but prevent excessive movement which may risk injury;
 - (d) provide adequate shelter from rain and wind, direct sunlight or other adverse weather conditions; and
 - (e) be strong enough to withstand general handling.
- G6.4** Adequate stops should be made in suitable locations during a journey to allow a transported dog the opportunity to eat, drink, exercise, urinate and defecate, and for the transport crate or area to be cleaned as necessary, especially where road trips exceed two hours in duration.
- G6.5** Dogs held for loading in, or on, to a vehicle or aircraft should be kept in a secure, quiet and sheltered area.
- G6.6** Transport crates and vehicles used for the transport of dogs should be kept in a clean and hygienic state during the transport process.

- G6.7** Dogs should be transported and handled in a manner that minimises stress. For example, drivers should drive with care and try to minimise bumps, jolts and swerving during the journey.
- G6.8** Dogs should be effectively restrained during transport to prevent driver distraction and risk of injury in the event of an accident.
- G6.9** Where dogs are transported by air, carriers should ensure that they comply with the Live Animal Regulations, published by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

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Section 3 – Health and husbandry

7. Health and veterinary care

Objective

To ensure the provision of appropriate health and veterinary care to protect and promote the health and welfare of dogs.

Introduction

Owners and carers of dogs have a responsibility to maintain the health of a dog in their care, and to seek treatment for injury and disease when it occurs.

Daily checking is important to allow detection of changes to normal behaviour or signs of ill-health in a dog. The health needs of a dog vary according to its life stage, breed and type. Young, senior and breeding dogs may require closer monitoring to ensure that any changes to their state of health are identified early; seeking veterinary advice early in the course of an illness or injury can minimise the impact and support the management of a disease.

Preventative health care aims to prevent or reduce the risk of disease, rather than treating a disease after it occurs. For dogs, preventative health care includes vaccination and management of internal and external parasites. The main ('core') vaccines administered to dogs in WA are those used to protect against the life-threatening diseases; canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis and parvovirus. Vaccines against the main disease agents which cause kennel cough are also commonly given.

Grooming and dental care are also important for a dog's health and wellbeing.

Minimum standards: Health and veterinary care

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| S7.1 | A dog must be checked at least once a day to monitor the health and welfare of the dog. |
| S7.2 | Veterinary advice must be sought promptly for a dog observed to be showing signs of:
(a) acute or chronic pain, suffering, or distress;
(b) rapidly deteriorating health;
(c) serious injury; or
(d) poisoning, or where the dog is known or suspected to have consumed a poison or toxic substance. |
| S7.3 | Reasonable measures must be taken to:
(a) prevent dogs from contracting distemper, infectious canine hepatitis and parvovirus;
(b) protect dogs from other common infectious diseases; and
(c) control internal and external parasites, including heartworm, as applicable to the local area where the dog is kept. |
| S7.4 | A surgical alteration procedure must only be performed on a dog by a veterinarian, and;
(a) in the case of an ear cropping procedure, is performed for medical reasons; and
(b) in the case of a debarking procedure, is performed for a medical reason or as an alternative to euthanasia of the dog when reasonable and documented effort has been made to reduce barking behaviour through other training techniques, and these have not been effective. |
| S7.5 | A dog's coat, nails and teeth must be maintained as necessary to avoid impairment of the dog's health, mobility or general welfare. |

Recommended guidelines

Ill-health and injury

- G7.1** Owners or carers should be familiar with the signs of both good and poor health in a dog. A daily health check should include monitoring the dog's physical condition, checking for signs of ill health and injury, and checking that the dog is eating, drinking, toileting and behaving normally.
- G7.2** Veterinary care should be sought promptly for a dog showing signs of ill health or injury.
- G7.3** A dog should receive a veterinary health-check as frequently as necessary, with at least one check a year, to enable provision of suitable health care.
- G7.4** A person in charge of a dog who is aware that the dog will be out of range of accessible veterinary care (for example when travelling, exercising or working in remote areas) should carry a first aid kit appropriate for dogs.
- G7.5** Veterinary advice should be sought in the event of unexplained death of a dog.
- G7.6** All practical steps should be taken to ensure that dogs are not exposed to poisons and harmful substances.
- G7.7** Human medication should not be administered to a dog, unless under the advice of a veterinarian.

Preventative health care

- G7.8** Dogs should be vaccinated in accordance with veterinary recommendations, based on consideration of the individual dog's circumstances, including age and health state, location and likely contact with other dogs and animals.
- G7.9** Puppies are more susceptible to infectious diseases and, to reduce the risk of exposure to canine infectious diseases, should be kept away from public places until after their final vaccinations.
- G7.10** Internal and external parasites can affect both dog and human health. Dogs should be given regular and effective treatments to prevent and control internal and external parasites as recommended by veterinarians or relevant product manufacturers.
- G7.11** Unless otherwise advised by a veterinarian, a dog that is known or suspected to have a contagious disease that is likely to pose a serious health risk to other animals should be securely isolated to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

Grooming and dental

- G7.12** Dogs should be groomed sufficiently to prevent the coat from becoming tangled or matted.
- G7.13** Dogs' coats, ears and feet should be checked regularly and appropriate action taken when grass seeds, burrs and external parasites such as fleas, ticks and mites are observed.
- G7.14** Dogs' teeth and gums should be checked regularly and appropriate action taken when signs of poor teeth and gum health are observed.

8. Food and water

Objective

To ensure dogs are provided with water and food of sufficient quality and quantity to provide good health and welfare.

Introduction

Food and water are important to the health and welfare of any individual dog. A proper diet is important in preventing some diseases and maintaining overall good health in dogs. For the purpose of this document, a *proper diet* means: a diet with a nutritional composition generally regarded as suitable for dogs. The nutritional composition includes the water, energy, protein, fat, carbohydrate, mineral and vitamin content of the food. The quality of food is further affected by how digestible and palatable the food is, and if it is free from harmful contaminants. Further information on feeding is provided in Appendix 3.

As a guide, dogs require 50-70mL of water per kilogram of bodyweight each day for normal health. Dogs need more water when the weather is hot, when they are active and when feeding puppies. Providing free access to water can be the most convenient way to meet a dog's requirement for water.

Body condition scoring provides a means to assess if a dog's nutritional needs are being met. Further information on body condition is provided in Part 2, Section 3, 9. Body Condition.

Minimum standards: Food and water

- S8.1** A dog must have access to clean water in a sufficient quantity to meet the dog's physiological needs.
- S8.2** A dog must have access to a proper diet in sufficient quantity to:
 - (a) maintain good health; and
 - (b) meet the physiological needs of the dog, including, but not limited, to times of growth, pregnancy and lactation.
- S8.3** A dog must be fed:
 - (a) in the case of a weaned puppy under four months of age, at least three times a day;
 - (b) in the case of a puppy between four and six months of age, at least two times a day; and
 - (c) in any other case, at least once each day.

Recommended guidelines

- G8.1** Puppies should be:
 - (a) offered appropriately prepared solid food from three weeks of age;
 - (b) fed under supervision until four months of age.
- G8.2** Sick or debilitated dogs, and/or dogs on prescription diets, should be fed in accordance with veterinary advice.
- G8.3** Food for dogs should be prepared hygienically.
- G8.4** Food for dogs should be stored to prevent its deterioration or contamination. Manufacturer's instructions should be followed where available.
- G8.5** Food and water containers provided for dogs should:
 - (a) be constructed of non-toxic materials;
 - (b) be designed for easy and effective cleaning and disinfection;

- (c) be readily accessible to the dog and positioned to avoid unintended spillage or contamination by urine or faeces; and
- (d) not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to the dog.

- G8.6** Spoiled or contaminated dog food or water should be removed and disposed of promptly, and containers cleaned before reuse.
- G8.7** The social compatibility of dogs should be considered when feeding dogs together, to ensure that each dog is able to eat a sufficient quantity of food without distress or fear.
- G8.8** When feeding dogs together, one food container should be provided for each dog.
- G8.9** Unweaned puppies should be monitored to ensure that each puppy's nutritional and suckling needs are met through lactation or hand rearing.
- G8.10** Automatic feeders or watering devices should be checked daily to ensure proper function and cleanliness.

9. Body condition

Objective

To ensure the maintenance of a dog's health and welfare.

Introduction

A dog's body condition reflects their health and nutritional state and can be assessed through body condition scoring (BCS). In dogs, BCS involves observing and feeling over the ribs, backbone, pelvis and abdomen. BCS can be used to guide the feeding of a dog; for example reducing the quantity or energy content of food may be advised for a dog in over-heavy condition. A nine-point scale to assess body condition in dogs is recommended by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)¹. See Appendix 4 for the WSAVA BCS and further information on assessing body condition in dogs.

Minimum standards: Body condition

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| S9.1 | Reasonable efforts must be made to maintain a dog in an ideal body condition (Body condition score (BCS) 4-5 of 9 on the WSAVA scale). |
| S9.2 | Veterinary advice must be sought for a dog with a severely underweight (BCS 2 or below on the WSAVA scale) or obese (BCS 7 or above on the WSAVA scale) body condition. |

Recommended guidelines

- G9.1** A person in charge of a dog should be familiar with body condition scoring to allow regular monitoring of body condition as a way of assessing dog health and welfare.
- G9.2** Veterinary advice should be sought:
 - (a) if the dog's body condition lies outside the ideal range (4-5 of 9 on the WSAVA scale) and the dog shows signs of ill health, such as not eating, drinking, toileting or behaving normally;
 - (b) if a dog's body condition changes (as reflected by change in BCS) without known changes to nutritional intake or level of exercise;
 - (c) for a dog with a thin body condition (BCS below 4 of 9), which does not respond to increased nutritional intake; or

- (d) for a dog with a heavy body condition (BCS above 5 of 9) which does not respond to a reduced nutritional intake and suitable increases to the dog's level of exercise.

¹Provided courtesy of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA). Available at the WSAVA Global Nutrition Committee Nutritional Toolkit website: <http://www.wsava.org/nutrition-toolkit>. Accessed June 29, 2016. Copyright Tufts University, 2014.

10. Behaviour and training

Objective

To ensure that the behavioural and social needs of dogs at all stages of their development are met through appropriate socialisation, training and provision of an enriched environment.

Introduction

Good animal welfare, safety and health can only be achieved when an animal's mental, social, behavioural and physical needs are met.

All dogs have the need to express natural behaviours. Lacking this, a dog may become frustrated, bored and stressed, leading to negative impacts on health and welfare and, potentially, to problem behaviours. The opportunity to express natural behaviours is therefore essential to an animal's welfare.

The social needs of domestic dogs include regular, quality interaction with people. While the presence of another animal is not a substitute for the companionship of an owner or carer, the social needs of some dogs may be partly met through companionship and interaction with other animals. Isolation can be very stressful for dogs and it is important to appropriately manage any extended period when a dog is on their own.

Enrichment refers to a process for improving the environment and behavioural care of animals. The purpose of enrichment is to reduce stress and improve welfare by providing physical and mental stimulation, encouraging natural behaviours, and allowing animals more control over their environment. All dogs need some form of enrichment, however this need will depend on the animal and the circumstances in which it is kept. Providing enrichment is a particularly important if a dog is on their own for extended periods.

Training can be a valuable enrichment activity, and age appropriate training should begin in the home as early as possible. Advice on training should be sought from a veterinarian or experienced dog trainer.

Minimum Standards: Behaviour and Training

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| S10.1 | The social and behavioural needs of a dog must be met on a daily basis. This includes providing appropriate environmental enrichment, that takes into account the individual characteristics, and health of the dog. |
| S10.2 | The training techniques or aids used to train a dog and the duration of such training must not cause harm to the dog. |

Recommended guidelines

- G10.1** Dogs should be appropriately socialised with people, dogs, other animals and stimuli to acclimatise them to their environment, and the circumstances in which they will be kept as an adult.
- G10.2** Training of dogs should focus on reward-based training techniques.

- G10.3** Dogs, and puppies from eight weeks of age should be trained in basic commands, including recall, stay and sit.
- G10.4** Training should be discontinued, or modified as advised by a veterinarian, when a dog is clinically unwell.
- G10.5** Training should be discontinued or modified when the training causes the dog to be anxious or distressed.
- G10.6** Training or exercising of a dog for intensive working or sporting purposes should be under the advice of a veterinarian or experienced dog trainer, and follow a structured training process which considers the dog's individual characteristics.
- G10.7** Veterinary advice should be sought at the early stages of a problem behaviour to rule out a health related cause.
- G10.8** Effort should be made to identify and address problem behaviours and their underlying causes through training and other environmental and behavioural management techniques.
- G10.9** Effort should be made to minimise and manage exposure of sensitive dogs to unpleasant environmental stimuli, such as fireworks, thunderstorms or vibrations from nearby heavy machinery.

11. Exercise

Objective

To ensure that a dog receives appropriate and sufficient exercise to promote and protect its health and welfare.

Introduction

Exercise is a form of environmental enrichment and is extremely important for a dog's health. Exercise can:

- maintain or improve fitness
- maintain healthy body condition
- allow dogs an opportunity to urinate and defecate
- provide an opportunity to express other natural behaviours
- improve confidence and help prevent problem behaviours
- provide a positive experience of being outdoors and exploring
- allow interaction with other people and animals, and the environment
- allow a dog to expend physical energy.

Exercise requirements vary and need to be appropriate for a dog's individual characteristics and health status. Veterinary advice should be sought for dogs with particular physiological or health considerations.

Minimum standards: Exercise

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| S11.1 | A dog must receive exercise that is appropriate to the dog's individual characteristics, health, and level of fitness, and sufficient to maintain the health and welfare of the dog. |
|--------------|--|

Recommended guidelines

- G11.1** Dogs should be given the opportunity to exercise for a minimum of 20 minutes each day, unless under veterinary advice.
- G11.2** Dogs kept primarily indoors, or in an enclosure, should be given the opportunity to exercise outdoors on a daily basis.
- G11.3** Care should be taken to limit intensity and duration of exercise in very hot conditions and during the hottest part of the day.
- G11.4** Exercise should be introduced gradually to dogs unaccustomed to regular exercise.
- G11.5** A dog using exercise equipment, such as treadmills and therapy pools, should be supervised at all times.

12. Restraint

Objective

To ensure that restraint devices, if used, are used in a manner that protects the welfare, safety and health of a dog.

Introduction

A restraint device is a device fitted to a dog as an aid to control and management. Restraint devices include collars, leads, leashes, harnesses, muzzles and halters. Restraint devices are used for a range of purposes, such as to aid training, prevent straying or escaping, to allow identification and to support exercise, working or sporting activities.

While many of these devices are routinely used, if fitted or used incorrectly, restraint devices can harm and/or significantly reduce the welfare of a dog. The quality of restraint device design and materials can affect their efficacy and comfort, and professional advice should inform the selection, fitting and use of any restraint device.

The use of any restraint device for training and behaviour modification should be undertaken with care; training techniques which involve intimidation or punishment causing fear or physical harm are not acceptable. Incorrect use of a restraint device to train a dog can lead to unintended behavioural outcomes such as aggression and anxiety, or the dog becoming unwilling to train.

Minimum standards: Restraint

- S12.1** Restraint devices used on dogs must be correctly sized and appropriate for the individual dog.
- S12.2** Prong collars must not be used on a dog.
- S12.3** Choke chains must not be left on an unsupervised dog.
- S12.4** A muzzle must only be used on a dog:
 - (a) while the dog is under direct supervision;
 - (b) for a period that does not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to the dog; and
 - (c) if the muzzle does not restrict the dog's breathing or panting.

Recommended guidelines

- G12.1** A properly fitted flat collar will allow two fingers to be placed between the collar and the dog's neck.

- G12.2** Collars and harnesses should be checked frequently and adjusted to correctly fit a dog, particularly when fitted on a young growing dog.
- G12.3** A dog should be supervised when wearing a harness.
- G12.4** A harness should not be left on a dog continuously in any 24 period, unless under veterinary advice.
- G12.5** A muzzle should not be used for the purpose of punishment.
- G12.6** If a muzzle is to be used, it should be introduced slowly to a dog, in a manner which encourages positive association and minimises risk of harm with its use.
- G12.7** Choke chains should only be used for training dogs under the guidance of a veterinarian or experienced dog trainer, and when other training techniques and other types of collars or harnesses have not been effective at achieving the desired behavioural change.
- G12.8** The use of a choke chain should be discontinued if its use worsens a dog's behaviour.

13. Electronic collars

A short discussion paper provides further information on this matter. This is available at: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/standards-and-guidelines-health-and-welfare-dogs-wa>

Objective

To ensure that electronic collars, if used, are used in a manner that minimises risks to dog welfare, safety and health.

Introduction

For the purpose of this document, an electronic collar means a collar that is used to modify behaviour through the delivery of a stimulus, including but not limited to an electric shock, citronella spray, vibration, water vapour, air pressure or tone, and includes electric training collars and electrical devices known as the “invisible fence”.

Electronic collars are not recommended for the modification of behaviour of dogs. A number of jurisdictions in Australia and internationally have banned the use of electronic collars for dogs. In WA, a device (other than an electric fence) designed or modified to deliver an electric shock to an animal is a prescribed inhumane device under the Act. However, the use of a prescribed inhumane device in accordance with the manner set out in the Act can provide a defence to a charge of cruelty. For dogs, the manner of use “*must be in accordance with the generally accepted method of usage for the type of collar, or for containment, for the type of “invisible fence”,* as outlined below.

Minimum standards: Electronic collars

- S13.1** An electronic collar must only be used on a dog in accordance with the generally accepted method of use. For the purposes of these Standards, the generally accepted method of use includes:
- (a) if a reasonable and documented effort has been made to use other training techniques to modify behaviour and these have not been effective;
 - (b) a veterinarian has examined the health and temperament of the dog and reasonably believes that the dog is suitable to wear an electronic

- collar;
- (c) the dog is over 6 months of age;
- (d) a collar is not left on the dog for more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period;
- (e) the use is in accordance with any instructions for use of the collar provided by the manufacturer;
- (f) the collar is introduced and used on a dog in accordance with a training program under the advice of a veterinarian or experienced dog trainer; and
- (g) the collar is checked regularly to ensure it is fitted and working correctly.

- S13.2** A person in charge of a dog must discontinue the use of an electronic collar if:
- (a) there is any trauma to the skin of the dog;
 - (b) the dog displays signs of distress associated with the use of the collar;
 - or
 - (c) there is any electronic malfunctioning of the device.

Recommended guidelines

- G13.1** An electronic collar should not be left on an unsupervised dog.
- G13.2** Electronic collars to prevent a dog from barking should not be used where the barking of other nearby dogs may activate the collar.
- G13.3** Electronic collars should not be used in wet weather.
- G13.4** Electronic collars should comply with technical requirements for Electronic Pet Training and Containment Collars established by the Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association™.

14. Euthanasia

Objective

To ensure that dogs are afforded a humane death, without pain, suffering or distress.

Introduction

In this document, euthanasia is defined as the humane killing of an animal in the animal's best interests; e.g., when injury, pain, distress or suffering is likely to exceed manageable levels, or when the health or welfare of an animal is irredeemably compromised. Humane killing requires the sudden loss of consciousness of the animal, with death occurring while the animal is unconscious. A humane killing technique avoids causing unnecessary pain or distress.

When the health and welfare of a dog is irredeemably compromised, such as terminally unwell or severely injured animals, euthanasia may provide the best welfare outcome. Euthanasia may also be advised for animals with problem behaviours, where welfare is compromised and other methods to modify behaviour have not been successful.

Minimum standards: Euthanasia

- S14.1** Euthanasia must be conducted by intravenous injection of a euthanasia agent administered by a veterinarian, or another person authorised to administer such an injection under the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960*, unless:
- (a) there are reasonable grounds for using an alternative method;
 - (b) the alternative method will humanely kill a dog;
 - (c) the alternative method is performed by a person competent in the method; and
 - (d) avoids unnecessary injury, pain and distress of the dog.
- S14.2** A firearm must only be used as an alternative method to kill a dog in circumstances where:
- (a) a veterinarian is not reasonably accessible, or the time taken to reach veterinary care will prolong the suffering of a dog; or the injection of a euthanasia agent poses an unreasonable risk to people or other animals;
 - (b) the person is competent and licensed to use a firearm; and
 - (c) the firearm is suitable for the purpose of humane killing of a dog.
- S14.3** A person must not kill a dog as a means of managing an unwanted puppy or an unwanted or retired breeding dog.
- S14.4** Where a person undertakes to kill a dog, reasonable action must be taken to confirm the dog has died.

Recommended guidelines

- G14.1** The euthanasia or humane killing of a dog should not be carried out in view of any other animals.
- G14.2** Following euthanasia and confirmation of death, the body of a dog should be disposed of in accordance with local government requirements.

Section 4 – Breeding

15. Breeding of dogs

Objective

To ensure that dog breeding practices protect the health and welfare of dogs, and prevent inherited disorders and the over-production of dogs.

Introduction

Breeding dogs and puppies have specific health and welfare needs and people in charge of them must ensure that these needs are met, through responsible breeding practices. This includes the appropriate selection of dogs for breeding, management of mating, care of the pregnant bitch, and care and management of the dam and puppies.

Indiscriminate or irresponsible breeding practices can increase the risk of dogs being abandoned by owners or surrendered to animal shelters, and contribute to the population of animals without homes or owners.

Indiscriminate breeding practices include:

- unplanned breeding of puppies without consideration of their future life;
- breeding dogs that are not physically, mentally or genetically sound; and
- intensive breeding of puppies without regard to these standards ('puppy farming').

The purpose of setting minimum and maximum ages for breeding dogs and maximum number of litters that can be produced is to protect against poor health outcomes, improve genetic diversity and reduce the over-production of puppies. Pre-mating health checks by a veterinarian aim to provide assurance that a dog is fit for breeding. In addition, if a breeder wishes to breed a bitch that is seven years of age or older, the dog must be certified by a veterinarian as fit for further breeding. Additional information on the care and management of breeding dogs and puppies is contained in Appendix 5.

Minimum standards: Breeding of dogs

- S15.1** A dog must not be mated unless;
- (a) the dog is health-checked not more than twelve months before the mating and is deemed fit for breeding by a veterinarian;
 - (b) the dog is in good health at the time of mating;
 - (c) in the case of a male dog, the dog is at least twelve months of age;
 - (d) in the case of a bitch, the dog is at least twelve months of age and physically mature, and has had at least one season (oestrus cycle) prior to the mating; and
 - (e) if the bitch is seven years of age or more, that the bitch is certified by a veterinarian as fit for further breeding.
- S15.2** A dog that displays excessively nervous or aggressive behaviour towards people or other animals must not be bred.
- S15.3** A bitch must not produce more than;
- (a) two litters in any eighteen month period; and
 - (b) five litters before the dog is retired from breeding.
- S15.4** Reasonable efforts must be made to ensure that the genetic make-up of both sire and dam will not increase the frequency or severity of known inherited disorders in the litter produced from the mating. This includes not mating a dog with a first degree relative.
- S15.5** A person in charge must ensure that during mating of a breeding pair of dogs;
- (a) appropriate steps are taken when risks to the welfare, safety or

- health of the dogs are identified;
- (b) a dog breeding stand is not used to confine the bitch for mating.
- S15.6** A pregnant bitch must be:
- (a) checked at least twice a day to monitor the dog's health and welfare; and
- (b) provided appropriate assistance if signs of ill health or distress are observed. This may include seeking advice from a veterinarian or an experienced, reputable dog breeder.

Recommended guidelines

- G15.1** Dogs should only be allowed to breed when there is a reasonable expectation of finding suitable homes for any puppy produced.
- G15.2** Unless selected for breeding, bitches should be isolated from all entire male dogs while in season (pro-oestrus and oestrus).
- G15.3** A bitch should not be bred:
- (a) to produce a litter from consecutive seasons; and
- (b) more than four times in her lifetime;
- unless veterinary advice indicates that this breeding practice will not pose the dog an unreasonable risk of harm.
- G15.4** A bitch that:
- (a) is over five years of age and has not been previously bred; or
- (b) has experienced reproductive complications or disease;
- should not be bred unless veterinary advice indicates that future breeding will not pose the dog an unreasonable risk of harm.
- G15.5** Dogs that display poor temperament, including nervous and aggressive behaviour, should be desexed as early as practicable.
- G15.6** Dogs which have, or carry inherited disorders:
- (a) with a high chance of inheritance, or
- (b) with a low chance of inheritance, but which may severely compromise an animal's health or welfare.
- should not be used for breeding, and should be desexed as early as practicable.
- G15.7** Breeding dogs should not be selected for exaggerated breed characteristics which may impact on the health or welfare of the resultant puppies.
- G15.8** Where a breeding dog is a type or breed affected by a known inherited disorder which has a recommended screening procedure or test, the dog should be tested for the inherited disorder; and:
- (a) documentation of the test result should be provided to the owners of any dog selected to breed with the dog; and
- (b) documentation of the test result of both the sire and the dam should be provided to the new owners of any resultant puppy.
- G15.9** A dog should not be mated with a second degree relative.
- G15.10** A person in charge must ensure that the behavioural and social needs of a breeding dog that is isolated from other dogs and animals are met on a daily basis. This may require the provision of additional attention and companionship by the owner or carer.
- G15.11** Mating dogs should be allowed to separate naturally.

- G15.12** Assisted reproductive technologies used for breeding dogs should be performed or overseen by a veterinarian.
- G15.13** Bitches should have a healthy body condition prior to mating and this should be maintained throughout pregnancy and lactation.
- G15.14** Bitches should be up-to-date for core vaccinations and deworming treatments prior to mating.

16. Whelping and care of puppies

Objective

To ensure that whelping and rearing practices are managed to protect and promote the health and welfare of breeding dogs and puppies.

Introduction

Owners and carers should be familiar with the normal whelping process and must monitor a bitch due to deliver or during the whelping process frequently enough to enable the early detection of whelping difficulties. Providing early assistance to a bitch in difficulty will reduce the potential suffering of the bitch and improve puppy survival rates. While an experienced dog breeder may provide some assistance in the management of a whelping bitch, veterinary advice will be required for many causes of whelping difficulties. For further information, see Appendix 5.

Minimum standards: Whelping and care of puppies

- S16.1** A pregnant bitch due to deliver or during the whelping process must be:
 - a) able to withdraw from other animals;
 - b) provided with a suitable birthing area;
 - c) checked often enough to allow early detection of whelping difficulties; and
 - d) provided appropriate assistance if signs of whelping difficulties are observed. This may include seeking advice from a veterinarian or an experienced, reputable dog breeder.
- S16.2** A lactating dam must be checked at least twice a day to assess her state of health and lactation. Veterinary advice must be sought for a lactating dam that is showing signs of ill-health or abnormal behaviour.
- S16.3** Health-checks and vaccination advice must be provided by a veterinarian for a dam and litter within six to eight weeks of birth of the litter.
- S16.4** Unless a veterinarian advises to delay vaccination for an individual animal on health reasons;
 - a) puppies must be vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus (core diseases);
 - b) an intestinal worm program must be started from two weeks of age and
 - c) reasonable measures must be taken to control external parasites.
- S16.5** Pre-weaned/suckling puppies must be checked at least twice a day to assess their state of health and growth. Veterinary advice must be sought if:
 - a) a puppy has a significant physical abnormality, injury or abnormal behaviour; or
 - b) a puppy is not gaining weight or otherwise appears unwell.

Recommended guidelines

- G16.1** Bedding material for the whelping and puppy rearing area should be:
- (a) replaced after whelping; and
 - (b) replaced as frequently as needed to keep the area clean, while taking care to not disturb the dam and litter.
- G16.2** A dam and recently born puppies should be monitored at least every six hours, to assess the dam and litters' state of health, and to ensure the puppies are feeding and maternal acceptance has been established.
- G16.3** A lactating dam should have access to food at all times.
- G16.4** The eyes and ears of a puppy should not be interfered with before they open or unfold. Veterinary advice should be sought if a puppy's eyes have not opened naturally by 14 days of age, or if ears have not unfolded naturally by 20 days of age.
- G16.5** Daily gentle handling of puppies should begin within seven days of birth.
- G16.6** An appropriate puppy socialisation program should be started when the puppy is four weeks of age. This involves the safe, gradual and positive introduction of puppies to different stimuli likely to be encountered in the future.
- G16.7** Puppies should be fully weaned by seven to eight weeks of age, and fed appropriately prepared solid food at least three times a day.

Part 3 – Additional requirements for domestic dog operations

Section 1 – Introduction

Objective

To safeguard the welfare, safety and health of dogs kept by a domestic dog operation.

Scope and application of Part 3

Unless otherwise specified, this Part is in addition to any relevant requirement specified elsewhere in these Standards.

In this document, a domestic dog operation is:

- a person who owns five or more fertile bitches that are kept for the purpose of breeding and selling dogs;
- an animal shelter or pound;
- a pet shop; or
- a premises at which dogs are boarded, trained, or kept overnight or during the day, whether the operator receives a payment or not.

'Establishment' refers to the place where dogs are kept, and includes private homes or commercial premises.

The additional requirements outlined in this part are intended to safeguard dogs from welfare, safety and health risks particularly associated with domestic dog operations, including:

- being in a new environment (with unfamiliar animals, noises, odours, management and people);
- various people being responsible for many dogs;
- kennels or other housing conditions that differ from their normal home; or
- commercial production.

These requirements address business practices, infrastructure, equipment, staff and operating procedures to protect the safety, health and welfare of dogs kept at an establishment. It is the responsibility of the 'person in charge' of the domestic dog operation to ensure that these practices are maintained. For small domestic dog operations, such as a registered dog breeder with a small number of fertile females, the person in charge of the domestic dog operation may also be the animals' owner. For larger operations, the owner or an operational manager may have this responsibility.

In terms of the legal responsibility for animals, 'person in charge of a dog' in a domestic dog operation may apply to various people, including the dog's owner, employees, business owners, managers and transporters. The welfare, safety and health of a dog in the context of a domestic dog is a shared responsibility. All people with responsibility for dogs must be aware of the legal requirements regarding the welfare and management of dogs.

Section 2 – Administrative requirements

17. Business practices

Introduction

The quality of care and handling of a dog in a domestic dog operation will have a significant impact on the dog's experience, particularly where a dog is away from its usual environment or the dog is not familiar with the person in charge.

People responsible for dogs must have relevant knowledge, experience and skills to follow care and management protocols. A register of staff training to record relevant staff qualifications and is useful to demonstrate staff competency in dog care and management. Record-keeping is an important element of good animal husbandry.

Refer to Appendix 6 for further information on record-keeping.

Each domestic dog operation should make arrangements to ensure reasonable access to a veterinarian who can advise on disease prevention, treatment of animals showing signs of ill-health, and the Dog Health Management Plan of the operation. This plan should include procedures to optimise the health and welfare of dogs at the establishment. Refer to Appendix 7 for further information on the Dog Health Management Plan.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Business practices

- S17.1** A person in charge of a domestic dog operation must;
- (a) ensure the number of carers or staff is sufficient to maintain the welfare, safety and health of the dogs kept at the establishment;
 - (b) ensure there are reasonable means to ensure the care and monitoring of dogs housed in the establishment out of business hours;
 - (c) ensure accurate and up to date records are kept relating to the identity, health and care of dogs kept at the establishment; and
 - (d) take reasonable actions in the design, construction, maintenance and operation of equipment and facilities of an establishment to ensure the welfare, health and safety of dogs kept by the domestic dog operation.

Recommended guidelines

- G17.1** A written Dog Health Management Plan should be developed in consultation with a veterinarian, and implemented at the establishment.
- G17.2** A documented Emergency Management Plan should be in place to protect the safety of dogs kept at the establishment in the event of an emergency.
- G17.3** Arrangements for the care of a dog should be agreed upon between the owner of the dog and domestic dog operation at the time of admission. This should include arrangements for the dog in the event of an emergency or when veterinary care is required.
- G17.4** A domestic dog operation that breeds dogs should record information detailing each litter bred. This should include, where applicable: the name and microchip number of both the dam and the sire; the date of mating(s); the date of whelping, identification details of each animal within the litter, including any abnormalities or deaths.
- G17.5** The minimum staffing level should be at least the equivalent of one full-time competent animal attendant for every 25 dogs kept at the establishment.

Section 3 – Housing requirements

18. Minimum housing conditions

Introduction

The location and design of a domestic dog operation can have a significant effect on welfare, particularly for dogs housed in enclosures for extended periods.

The layout, materials and arrangement of an establishment should provide a range of natural behaviours and allow a dog to exercise choice, such as inclusion of a platform in the enclosure to allow visual contact with other animals. Dogs should also be able to withdraw to a quiet and dark area to allow rest and sleep. Other key considerations for the layout of an establishment includes ease of cleaning and monitoring of animals. Security measures such as the incorporation of double barriers to reduce the risk of the escape of dogs should also be considered.

If possible, a domestic dog operation should be situated away from sources of excessive noise or vibration, such as road traffic and machinery which can be a source of stress or injury to dogs. Noise from barking dogs should be managed to comply with noise regulations and occupational health and safety requirements.

Extremes of environmental temperature can be a significant stressor, particularly for confined dogs. Protocols for the management of extremes of environmental temperature should be included in the Dog Health Management Plan; thermometers should be placed at different sites in the establishment and checked regularly during the hottest part of the day.

The duration and intensity of artificial lighting, where used, should be as close as possible to natural conditions and light cycles. At night, establishment lights should be subdued or turned off, or dog enclosures protected by other means from exposure to excessive light.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Minimum housing requirements

- S15.3.1** An establishment must:
- be able to be reasonably secured to prevent access by unauthorised people;
 - have functioning fire-fighting equipment readily available;
 - have sufficient lighting to enable thorough inspection of animals when required;
 - have an adequate water supply and have adequate means of disposing of waste approved by the appropriate government authority.
- S15.3.2** All fully enclosed housing must have:
- ventilation devices that avoid draughts and distribute fresh air evenly through the housing;
 - an air change rate of at least 8-12 changes per hour to prevent the build-up of noxious odours and gases, including maintaining the concentration of ammonia below 25ppm; and
 - a back-up plan in the event that the ventilation device becomes inoperable.
- S15.3.3** Dogs must not be kept exclusively in darkness or continuous lighting over any 24 hour period.
- S15.3.4** Incompatible dogs must not be kept together in an enclosure, and must be housed and managed in a way to prevent fighting and injury.
- S15.3.5** The establishment must be maintained in a clean and hygienic state.
- S15.3.6** An enclosure must be cleaned between a changeover of dogs, and at least once daily unless this is contrary to the welfare, safety and health of the dog

	housed in the enclosure.
S15.3.7	An indoor enclosure must be disinfected between a changeover of dogs and at least once weekly, unless this is contrary to the welfare, safety and health of the dog housed in the enclosure.
S15.3.8	Reasonable steps must be taken to effectively control pests including fleas, flies, lice, mosquitoes and wild rodents.

Recommended guidelines

- G18.1** An establishment should be designed and constructed to ensure that drainage does not run from isolation areas to, or through, other animal housing areas.
- G18.2** Faulty or flickering lights should be promptly replaced.
- G18.3** The temperature of housing in an establishment should be maintained between 15 and 30 degrees.
- G18.4** Reasonable steps should be taken to mitigate hot environmental conditions if the temperature rises above 30 degrees in an establishment of a domestic dog operation.
- G18.5** A person in charge of a domestic dog operation must ensure that any artificial heating device used for an enclosure is positioned so that an area of the enclosure remains unheated and provides a temperature gradient for housed dogs.

19. Biosecurity and isolation areas

Introduction

Good hygiene practices are an essential biosecurity measure, particularly in establishments housing larger, or changing, populations of dogs. The layout, maintenance and tidiness of the establishment can impact on cleanliness and hygiene. Staff should be aware of the risks of transfer of infectious diseases when handling animals or cleaning enclosures and should use practices to reduce these risks. Housing should be designed and constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that minimises the risk of transmission of infectious diseases. Refer to Part 2, Section 2, 3. Minimum housing conditions for further information.

When dogs are kept in premises outside normal business hours, the standards of hygiene and biosecurity must still be maintained, regardless of whether the operation is closed to the public. The Dog Health Management Plan should address biosecurity risks relevant to the domestic dog operation.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Biosecurity and isolation areas

S19.1	Reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease within an establishment.
S19.2	Enclosures must be disinfected immediately after an outbreak of infectious disease is suspected or identified.
S19.3	A domestic dog operation must have a means to effectively separate a sick dog from other animals; either in an isolation area at the establishment, or by arrangement with a veterinary clinic.
S19.4	A dog known or suspected to have a contagious disease that could pose a serious health risk to other animals must be effectively isolated as necessary

S19.5	to reduce the risk of transmission, as advised by a veterinarian. Items from an isolation area at an establishment, such as bedding, food and water utensils, and enrichment items, must be used solely in the isolation area.
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Recommended guidelines

- G19.1** Waste collection drains in a domestic dog operation should be cleaned daily.
- G19.2** To avoid adverse effects on housed dogs, advice should be sought from a licensed pest animal technician before pest control operations are conducted at an establishment of a domestic dog operation.
- G19.3** Hand-washing facilities and personal protective equipment, such as disposable gloves, should be available for staff, and where applicable, members of the public who come into contact with animals at the establishment of a domestic dog operation.

20. Transport

Introduction

Transportation can be stressful for dogs, particularly when they are exposed to unfamiliar people, places and animals. Domestic dog operations that transport dogs must minimise the health and welfare risks posed by transport.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Transport

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| S20.1 | Vehicles used to transport consignments of dogs must be cleaned between each consignment, and appropriate measures must be taken to minimise the transmission of infectious diseases. |
| S20.2 | Incompatible dogs, or dogs who are unfamiliar with each other, must be physically separated during transport. |

Section 4 – Health and husbandry requirements

21. Dog husbandry

Introduction

As many dogs find the environment of domestic dog operations stressful, staff should be aware of, and proactively monitor for signs of stress. These signs include excessive panting and salivation, compulsive or repetitive behaviours such as pacing or circling, over-grooming, loss of appetite, lethargy or vocalisation, aggression to humans or other dogs, withdrawal, cowering, attempts to hide, dig, climb or escape. Staff should take reasonable steps to reduce the effect and address the possible underlying cause of stressors. Care should be taken not to unnecessarily isolate stressed dogs; it is still necessary to meet the social needs of all dogs kept in an establishment.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Dog husbandry

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| S21.1 | A person in charge of a dog in a domestic dog operation must have, or be under the direct supervision of a person that has, the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to maintain the welfare, safety and health of the dog. |
| S21.2 | Husbandry practices at an establishment must minimise exposure of dogs to excessive noise. |

22. Food and water

Introduction

The hygienic preparation and storage of food is especially important in domestic dog operations, particularly where there are a large number of dogs and variety of staff handling food. A clean area dedicated for the purpose of food preparation can reduce the risk of food contamination.

Protocols for feeding dogs should be included in the Dog Health Management Plan, and cover the type of food, frequency of feeding, and record-keeping. Food and water consumption can be a key indicator of the status of a dog's health and wellbeing.

Staff should monitor and record food and water consumption, taking steps to encourage eating where the dog is not eating well, and to seek veterinary advice when necessary.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Food and water

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|--------------|--|
| S22.1 | Food for a dog must be prepared hygienically and stored in a way that prevents its deterioration or contamination. |
| S22.2 | Spoiled or contaminated food or water must be removed and disposed of promptly, and containers must be cleaned before reuse. |

23. Exercise

Introduction

Dogs must be given the opportunity to exercise and express natural behaviours, however the appropriate type of exercise will depend on the individual animal. Where dogs are exercised off-lead in exercise areas, these areas should be securely fenced and designed to prevent escape.

The number of staff supervising dogs during exercise should be directly proportional to the number of dogs. A ratio of one staff member to four compatible dogs is generally acceptable where direct supervision is provided. The compatibility of dogs must be carefully assessed prior to group-exercising, in particular when dogs are not familiar with each other.

Exercise areas must be maintained to reduce the risk of injury and spread of infectious disease or parasites, and measures should be in place to minimise the deterioration of grassed outdoor exercise areas to bare earth.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Exercise

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|--------------|---|
| S23.1 | A dog continuously housed in an enclosure must be given an opportunity to exercise outdoors on a daily basis, weather permitting. |
| S23.2 | Dogs exercised together must be screened for compatibility and supervised during exercise. |

24. Whelping and care of puppies

Introduction

Pregnant bitches, lactating dams and puppies are particularly vulnerable to environmental stressors, and exposure to stressful conditions can impact on future puppy health and behaviour. For further information on care of the pregnant bitch, and dam and puppies, see Part 2, Section 4 and Appendix 5.

Minimum standards: Domestic dog operation: Whelping and care of puppies

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|--------------|--|
| S24.1 | A separate area or enclosure must be provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) each pregnant bitch due to whelp. This should be introduced at least one week prior to whelping; and(ii) each nursing dam with a litter. |
| S24.2 | A puppy must be socialised in accordance with a puppy socialisation program appropriate for the age of the puppy. |

Appendix 1: Enclosure size and design

Table 1: Minimum enclosure size for dogs, other than those for livestock working dogs housed in raised kennels

Height of dog at shoulder	Min floor area (m2)*	Min height (cm)**	Min width (cm)	Increased floor area for each additional dog (m2)
<40cm	1.5	180	90	1.0
40-70cm	2.4	180	100	1.2
>70cm	3.5	180	120	1.7

- *Minimum floor area includes the area allocated to bedding
- **Minimum height applies if the enclosure is roofed.

Where livestock working dogs are housed in raised kennels, the kennel must have a minimum floor area of 2m², a minimum width of 90cm, and an internal height of at least 95cm over at least two thirds of the length.

Please note; these requirements are for enclosures built after the date this document came into effect. Pre-existing enclosures will be exempt from these requirements.

Enclosure design

Enclosures used for long-term confinement of dogs should be of a design that allows for environmental enrichment, choice and comfort. Where metal and concrete floors are used, care should be taken to ensure the comfort of the dog, and minimise the risk of pressure sores and foot injuries. Metal flooring and roofing can become extremely hot in warm weather, while metal and concrete flooring can be cold in cooler weather. Including enclosure furniture, such as raised platforms or sleeping quarters and providing appropriate bedding may reduce adverse health effects from enclosure housing materials.

Outdoor environments

A separate exercise/activity area is also important to optimise the wellbeing of dogs primarily housed in enclosures. Outdoor yards or runs may provide a varied and sensory-rich environment for dogs, allowing dogs to express many of their natural behaviours.

While providing important enrichment for dogs, outdoor spaces need to be adequately maintained to minimise hazards, such as:

- injury from materials such as wire and metal sheeting;
- injury from grass seeds, especially to feet, ears and mouths;
- toxic or irritating plant foliage and berries;
- snake-bites, especially where long foliage or excessive vegetation provide a good habitat for snakes;
- respiratory and eye problems caused by dusty conditions; and
- drowning.

Where dogs are housed in an area with access to a pool, dam or other or body of water, they should be supervised and trained to get out of the water if they jump or fall in.

Appendix 2: Managing dogs in hot weather

Hot weather conditions experienced in WA pose a particular risk to dog health and welfare. In addition to hot temperatures, factors such as high humidity, excessive exercise, close confinement and a lack of adequate ventilation, shade, and drinking water, will add to the risk. Certain animals are more vulnerable to heat stress, and particular care should be taken with brachycephalic, densely-coated, overweight or unwell dogs.

Health risks

Heat stress and heat stroke: Heat stress will occur when environmental temperatures rise, requiring physiological and behavioural changes by the dog, such as panting, drinking water and seeking shade to maintain a safe body temperature. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition arising when the dog's efforts to reduce its body temperature fail, and the rise in internal body temperature causes tissue and organ damage. Signs of heat stroke commonly include; restlessness, relentless panting, salivating, red or pale gums, increased heart rate, vomiting, diarrhoea, staggering, lethargy, muscle tremors, seizures, collapse and death. If a dog is suspected to have heat stroke, veterinary care should be sought immediately and emergency first aid instigated to cool the dog.

Injury to foot pads and skin: In hot conditions, surfaces such as metal, concrete, asphalt and sand can burn or injure dogs' foot pads and skin. Walking or exercising dogs directly on unshaded, hot surfaces should be avoided. Care should be taken to protect dogs with white or sparse coats, especially over the nose and ears, from sunburn.

Housing and environment

Steps to reduce the risk for dogs in hot weather include providing access to a cooler, shaded area, moving a dog indoors or gently wetting the dog. Supervised swimming in a body of water, a paddling pool filled with water, or sprinklers can provide both enrichment and reduce the risk of heat stress on hot days.

Dogs should have free access to drinking water during hot weather to prevent dehydration; providing at least two water bowls can be advisable, to allow for spillage. Adding ice cubes to the water bowl or providing treats frozen in ice cubes can also help to keep dogs cool.

Exercise

Exercising a dog in hot and humid conditions increases the dog's susceptibility to heat stress and should be avoided or carefully managed. Where possible, dogs should be walked early in the morning or late in the evening when temperatures are cooler. Where it is necessary to walk a dog in a muzzle, a loose basket muzzle which allows the dog to pant should be used. Swimming can be a suitable way to exercise a dog on warmer days.

Transport

Dogs must never be left unattended in a vehicle in conditions where the dog is at risk of heat stress. The temperature in a closed vehicle in full sun can reach 50 degrees centigrade in less than 15 minutes. Pets can overheat in a very short amount of time, even when the windows are down or the car is parked in the shade. It is also necessary to ensure sufficient ventilation when the car is moving.

Grooming

Clipping a dog's coat may help long haired dogs tolerate warmer weather, however, as some coats, such as double coats, can assist in the maintenance of thermal comfort, it may be beneficial to ask a veterinarian or professional groomer for advice before shaving a dog.

Appendix 3: Feeding dogs – general considerations

Dog food types

The most appropriate food for a dog will depend on the individual dog and their particular circumstances.

Commercially prepared dog food is available in a dry (biscuit/kibble) preparation, or moist or semi-moist preparations. When a dog food company claims their product represents a 'complete and balanced' food for dogs, they are stating that their product has been manufactured to meet the nutritional requirements for dogs (such as the nutritional recommendations of the Association of American Feed Control Officials, or AAFCO), and can be fed as the dog's sole diet. Commercial dog foods have also been developed for specific life stages and dog health conditions.

Home-made dog food can be provided as a cooked preparation or as a raw diet. While home-made dog food is preferred by some owners and carers, they must ensure it is prepared with safe ingredients and meets recommended nutritional requirements.

To reduce the risk of nutritional imbalance, recipes should be reviewed for nutritional composition by a veterinarian, particularly if owners or carers intend to use home-prepared dog food for pregnant and lactating females, or growing puppies. Imbalances in the calcium/phosphorous ratio or energy content, for example, can pose a serious health risk to these animals.

Feeding raw offal to dogs may pose a health risk to humans, dogs and other animals. If dogs are fed raw offal, a complete worming program should be implemented.

Feeding methods and frequency

Meal feeding: where an allocated quantity of food is provided. This is the preferred method of feeding for most dogs. Daily or twice daily feeding is suitable for a mature dog. However, smaller and more frequent meals may be appropriate for an individual dog to ensure that nutritional needs are met, or to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal problems.

Free choice feeding: where food is always available; also known as ad libitum or self-feeding. This is generally not recommended for dogs other than lactating dams, as it may lead to obesity. In growing dogs, especially large breeds, rapid growth linked to free choice feeding can lead to skeletal development problems.

Enrichment: Providing food in a variety of ways is increasingly used as environmental enrichment for dogs. For example, food dispensing toys and devices such as snuffle mats and treat balls may be used to prevent or manage boredom or separation-related problem behaviours.

Changes in diet: A new diet should be introduced gradually, ideally over three to seven days to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal upset,

Treats and supplements

Treats can be useful during training and socialisation, however, too many treats can lead to obesity or excessive levels of nutrients such as salt. Where treats are not nutritionally 'complete and balanced', they should make up less than 10% of the daily energy intake; low calorie treats should be considered.

A wide range of supplements exist for a range of nutritional and medical purposes. Dietary supplements should be used in accordance with veterinary advice; unnecessary supplementation may cause dietary imbalance, and adversely affect a dog's health.

Dogs with special feeding requirements

Pregnant bitches and lactating dams: A highly digestible, high energy, correctly balanced diet is required to optimise the health of a pregnant bitch and her puppies. As the pregnancy progresses through to whelping and lactation, food may need to be provided in three or four portions throughout the day, or free choice feeding may be required for a bitch to maintain her body condition. Depending on the litter size, a lactating dam may require up to three times her usual food requirements to ensure milk supply for the rapidly growing puppies and to prevent metabolic diseases, such as eclampsia, which in dogs is caused by low blood calcium levels.

Growing dogs: Feeding practices during a dog's growth stage should avoid encouraging an overly rapid growth rate or a heavy body condition, as this can make dogs susceptible to obesity and musculoskeletal disease in later life. Dietary supplements should not be necessary if a young dog is fed a good quality 'growth' diet. Expert advice may be useful if uncertainty exists regarding the feeding of growing dogs. Regular Body Condition Scoring (BCS) can also be useful tool to monitor the suitability of a feeding program for a growing dog.

Old dogs: As dogs age, their need for high quality and readily digestible food increases. They may also be prone to obesity, and to developing illnesses and conditions such as arthritis, which can be managed with specific treatments, diet and supplements.

Specific conditions and illnesses: A range of medical conditions may be managed or improved by feeding a special diet, or avoiding a specific diet. For example, high-fat meals or treats should be avoided for a dog that is susceptible to pancreatitis. Veterinary advice should be sought to assist the feeding of dogs with specific health requirements.

Overweight dogs: A BCS over 5 out of 9 exceeds the 'ideal' body condition for a dog. A number of underlying factors can cause a dog to gain weight. These include overfeeding, sedentary lifestyle, and metabolic changes that can occur as a dog ages. Some medical conditions can lead to weight gain in a dog, and certain medications can also increase hunger. Reducing the weight of severely overweight or obese dogs should be carefully undertaken as part of a weight management plan under expert advice. This may include a gradual increase to the level of exercise as well as the management of food intake.

Common items that may pose a risk to dogs

Poisoning

Many household items and foods can be toxic to dogs. All practical steps should be taken to ensure dogs cannot access poisons, or harmful household items or substances. If a dog is showing signs of poisoning, or is suspected to have eaten a poisonous or potentially toxic substance, veterinary advice must be promptly sought.

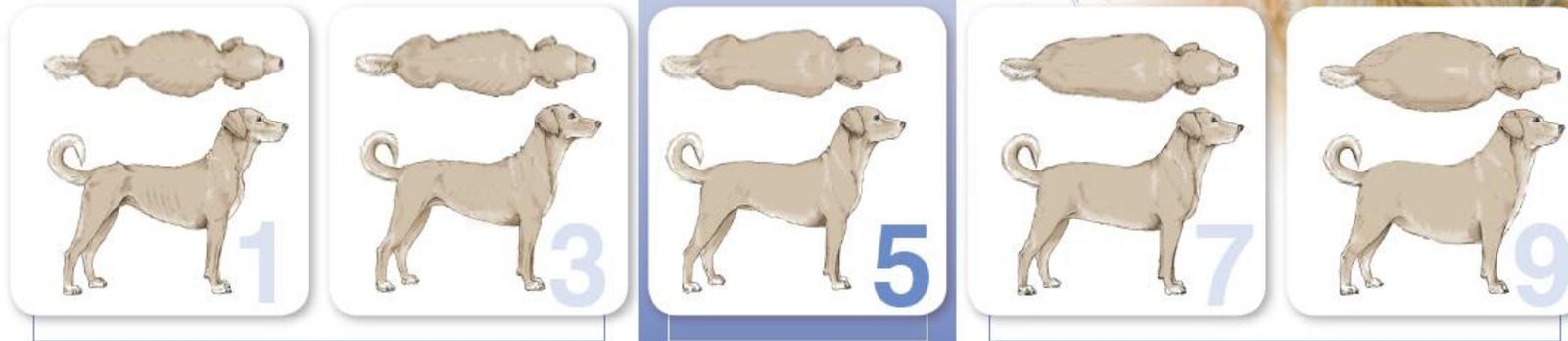
Indigestible objects

When swallowed by a dog, indigestible objects such as toys, large fruit seeds, clothing and plastics can obstruct or perforate the gut (stomach and intestine) wall. This can cause significant pain and lead to a life-threatening medical emergency. Prompt veterinary advice must be sought for a dog that has consumed an indigestible object, and is showing signs pain, suffering and distress or rapidly deteriorating health.

Appendix 4: Body condition scoring scale



Body Condition Score



UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

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 Kcally RD, et al. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *JAVMA* 2002;220:1315-1320.
 Latham DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Canine Pract* 1997;22:10-15.



Appendix 5: Breeding dogs

Owners and carers intending to breed dogs should have a good understanding of the general mental, social, behavioural and physical needs of breeding animals, and any additional issues posed by a breeding dog's individual characteristics. Owners or carers should ensure they are knowledgeable about the:

- normal reproductive cycle of the dog;
- selection of dogs to ensure that breeding dogs are as physically, behaviourally and genetically sound as possible;
- safe management of breeding dogs during mating, including, when mating should be stopped, if the bitch is being unduly harassed without accepting the male dog;
- care and management of pregnant bitches, including, nutritional and health care needs, the normal whelping process, and when prompt veterinary care is required;
- care and management of the lactating dam and puppies, including, nutritional and health care needs and providing an appropriate nursing environment;
- special requirements of puppies, including, nutritional and health care needs, the normal developmental milestones for puppies and appropriate puppy socialisation.

Inexperienced owners or carers planning to breed from their dog should seek expert advice, such as from an experienced, reputable dog breeder or veterinarian, at all stages of the breeding process. Good care and management of breeding animals is essential for the welfare of breeding dogs and the production of healthy puppies.

Selection of breeding animals

In addition to ensuring that a bitch and dog are physically mature and in good mental and physical health at the time of mating, the selection of breeding dogs should consider the risk of genetic disorders and any exaggerated physical characteristics that may pose health and welfare risks. Selection of breeding dogs should also consider any risk posed by previous reproductive complications and disease, such as where a bitch has failed to carry a litter to term or has required a caesarean section.

A dog's nature, or 'temperament' is affected not only by the training and socialisation but it also has a genetic component. It is therefore important to select breeding dogs for behavioural soundness and mental health. Waiting for puppies from a litter to mature to adulthood can allow evaluation of behavioural traits before planning to use the sire and dam to breed another litter.

Inherited disorders and exaggerated physical characteristics

An inherited disorder is one that is passed from parent to offspring through a defective gene or combination of genes. Some inherited disorders have high heritability, where it is very likely that if the parent dog is affected then the offspring will also be affected. Genetic testing can be helpful to identify whether a dog is affected by, or is carrying, a particular inherited disorder.

In addition to inherited disorders, exaggerated physical characteristics, seen as desirable in certain breed types, can be associated with health and welfare risks. These include characteristics such as chondrodysplasia (short limbs) and excessive skin wrinkling. Another common example is seen with brachycephaly which can be associated with Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome, where upper airway abnormalities increase upper airway resistance and make breathing harder for a dog.

Advice from a veterinarian or animal geneticist may assist with the selection, or exclusion, of a particular dog from a breeding program.

Care of dog and puppies

Whelping

Owners and carers should be familiar with the normal whelping process, and must monitor a bitch due to deliver or during the whelping process frequently enough to enable the early detection of whelping difficulties. Providing early assistance to a bitch in difficulty will reduce the potential suffering of the bitch and improve puppy survival rates. While an experienced dog breeder may provide some assistance in the management of a whelping bitch, veterinary advice will be required for many causes of whelping difficulties.

Signs to look out for with difficulty whelping include but are not limited to:

- whelping has commenced (the bitch has contractions/straining) but has not progressed within two hours;
- more than two hours in between the delivery of puppies;
- the bitch has intense contractions/straining for more than 20 minutes without a puppy being delivered;
- the bitch becomes weak, lethargic, or has an elevated body temperature;
- where a pup is visibly stuck in the birth canal;
- the bitch has heavy or prolonged bleeding;
- the bitch has a dark green vaginal discharge before or during whelping or
- the birth of a dead puppy.

Whelping area: A suitable whelping area or box should be in a safe, warm, well ventilated and quiet environment, and allow the owner or carer to observe the bitch and expected puppies without disturbance. The bitch should be introduced to the area or box at least one week before the expected whelping date; wherever possible, this should be in an environment familiar to the bitch. Some bitches will refuse to use the provided area or whelping box. Where practicable and safe, the bitch's choice should be catered for; caution must be taken not to place the litter at risk through unnecessary interference.

Nursing area: A suitable area is essential to support the nursing dam and her puppies in their few weeks of life. Puppies cannot effectively regulate their body temperature for the first four weeks of life, so care should be taken to ensure the nursing area is warm, safe and draught-free.

Signs of ill health in a lactating dam to look out for include, but are not limited to:

- (a) abnormal vulval discharge;
- (b) mammary glands that appear inflamed, ulcerated, or have abnormal discharge;
- (c) excessive significant or rapid weight loss; and
- (d) signs of eclampsia, such as panting, twitching or seizing.

Puppies

Colostrum is the nutrient-rich first milk produced by a lactating dam and contains special proteins which can provide important immune protection for the first three to four months of a puppy's life. It is very important that puppies suckle from the mother and receive this colostrum within 24 hours of birth; healthy puppies will be active from birth and start to suckle within 30 minutes of birth. Orphaned or rejected newborn puppies may require an alternative source of natural or formulated dog colostrum.

If needed to supplement the dam's milk to reduce demand on the dam, such as with a large litter or where the dam is losing body condition, lactose-free puppy milk supplements are available. Due to the high lactose content, puppies do not tolerate cow's milk, and feeding it to puppies should be avoided.

Puppies should start to be interested in solid food from between three to four weeks of age, when their first puppy teeth start to erupt. Softened solid food can be offered several times a day from three weeks of age. Puppies should be supervised during feeding, with water freely accessible. By five to six weeks of age, puppies should be readily eating solid food, with weaning generally completed between six to eight weeks of age.

Social and exercise needs

Periods of separation or isolation for breeding dogs, such as when a bitch is in season, the last few days of advanced pregnancy or nursing puppies, must be managed to prevent dogs suffering stress from social isolation. This may require providing more human companionship, although unwanted attention that could disturb nursing dams must be avoided. In general, gentle exercise is appropriate for pregnant bitches until the last two weeks prior to whelping. Nursing dams will not require regular exercise while their puppies are very young.

Orphaned puppies

Raising orphaned or rejected puppies can be a time-consuming and challenging undertaking but can be successfully managed with good understanding of the husbandry needs of very young puppies. Advice from a veterinarian or experienced, reputable dog breeder or puppy carer is recommended for owners or carers attempting to rear orphaned puppies.

Separation from the dam and litter

Weaning and maternal separation must be managed carefully to minimise stress at a time when puppies are particularly vulnerable to psychological harm. Advice can be sought from a veterinarian, puppy carer or experienced, reputable breeder on weaning practices.

Puppies intended for transfer (including sale or being given away) to another home should spend short periods of time away from the dam and littermates, to encourage independence while still in a familiar environment. A person transferring a puppy needs to be satisfied that the puppy is ready for independent life before they are moved to a new home.

Puppy socialisation

There are a number of recognised stages of development for dogs, including the socialisation stage between three and twelve weeks of age. Appropriate puppy socialisation is important for a number of reasons, including to:

- assist puppies to learn how to interact in a confident and appropriate way with people, dogs and other animals
- enable puppies to better adapt to new situations and environments
- optimise mental development and behaviour
- promote manageability and responsiveness to training
- reduce timidity and aggression towards people, dogs and other animals, and
- prevent other problem behaviours later in life.

An appropriate puppy socialisation program involves careful introduction of a puppy to a wide range of people, dogs and other animals, as well as to different places, noises, household objects, appliances and experiences. Receptiveness to socialisation will begin to pass after twelve weeks of age, so early puppy socialisation is important. This needs to be provided in a safe and positive environment, and if possible, under advice or guidance from a dog behaviour professional. Puppies can benefit from attending socialisation classes (often called 'puppy pre-school') at an early age once their vaccination program has begun. Veterinary advice should be sought to optimise puppy socialisation without risking exposure to canine infectious diseases or other harmful circumstances.

Appendix 6: Record-keeping in a domestic dog operation

Records relating to the identity, health and care of dogs must be kept by a domestic dog operation. As per good record-keeping practice, operations should hold back-up copies of all electronic records. The following information should be recorded, where applicable:

Animal identification

A description of each animal should include:

- Name
- Microchip number (if microchipped)
- Sex (including whether desexed)
- Breed
- Coat colour and any distinguishing features, such as scars or markings
- Age and/or date of birth
- The pedigree registration number (where applicable)

Animal health and care

A thorough health care and veterinary history should be recorded, including:

- Vaccination records
- Internal and external parasite control
- Medical history; medical and dietary requirements; genetic or health test results
- Any identified behaviour problems
- If relevant, breeding information including:
 - name and microchip number of the dam and sire (if available)
 - breeding history for the dam including dates of mating
 - date of whelping
 - number and identification of puppies born
 - number of puppies still-born or born with gross abnormalities
 - description of any whelping complications and assistance or treatment provided
 - number of puppies alive at 8 weeks of age
 - any veterinary care provided post whelping and/or during lactation.
- In the event of the death of a dog; the date of death, details of any post-mortem performed, and the cause of death if known.
- In the event of euthanasia of a dog; the date, reason and method of euthanasia.

Business records

Any business records relating to the animal, which may include:

- Boarding agreement or contract - this should specify details such as duration of boarding, the establishment's responsibilities and any specific dog care instructions. The boarding agreement should include arrangements in the event of an emergency, should the dog require veterinary care or not be collected by the owners.
- Admission records - these could include the date, time and reason for admission, and any observations of the health condition of the dog (such as hair loss, sore eyes, injuries or lameness).
- Identification cards - to identify dogs admitted to an establishment (for example, to place on the front of an enclosure housing the dog).
- Transfer records - in addition to obligations under the Dog Act, records that should be documented by a domestic dog operation include; date and details of the transfer, details of the dog's new owners, and any details provided to the new owners. Refer to Part 2, Section 1, 2 for further information on transfer of ownership. This information should also be recorded if an animal is leased.

Appendix 7: Dog Health Management Plan

Dog Health Management Plan

A Dog Health Management Plan is an operation-wide plan relating to the care and management of dogs kept by a domestic dog operation. This should include protocols (where applicable) for:

- dog admission requirements and assessments
- quarantine and movement of dogs, including the introduction of new animals
- nutrition and feeding
- cleaning, hygiene and disinfection of dog housing areas and the wider environment
- vaccination requirements and programs
- disease prevention measures, including screening for external parasites and ringworm
- control of internal and external parasites
- monitoring and identifying signs of stress and ill-health in dogs
- the care of sick and injured dogs, including when prompt veterinary care is required
- response to an infectious disease outbreak
- management of isolation facilities
- approved methods of euthanasia for emergency situations
- exercise, environmental enrichment and socialisation programs
- dog behaviour and welfare assessment
- selection of breeding dogs
- care and management of breeding dogs, including pregnant bitches, whelping bitches lactating dams, and puppies
- monitoring and assessment of puppies
- assessment, care and management of breeding dogs at the end of breeding
- grooming
- risk assessments of housing and exercise areas
- out of hours arrangements for the care of housed dogs, and establishment cleaning arrangements
- pest management

Emergency Management Plan

Ideally a supervisor will be onsite at all times. However, when an establishment is closed or otherwise unattended (such as out of business hours or at night), a supervisor should be available who is contactable by telephone, resides within a reasonable distance from the establishment, and who is able to attend the establishment at short notice in the event of an emergency.

An Emergency Management Plan for both people and animals should be developed and prominently displayed. Staff should be familiar with its content. This should include evacuation procedures at the establishment in the event of an emergency. Additional consideration should be made to deal with the housing and care of animals after an evacuation has taken place.

Important disclaimer

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