



Government of South Australia

The Dog and Cat Management Board

CODE OF PRACTICE

The Management of Companion Animals in Shelters and Pounds

*Developed in conjunction with DCMB
Animal Welfare League, RSPCA of SA and
Members of the Dog Consultative Committee*

Adopted as Policy by the
Dog & Cat Management Board of SA
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DEFINITIONS

<i>pet retail industry</i>	refers to commercial ventures that sell animals from businesses such as pet shops, markets etc.
<i>companion animals</i>	in this document refers primarily to dogs and cats, but may include other domestic animals depending on the nature of the shelter.
<i>cats & small dogs</i>	refers to dogs of the small terrier/Chihuahua size and variety and in the case of cats, all varieties.
<i>large dogs</i>	refers to dogs in the variety of the Labrador, Rottweiler, German Shepherd and larger varieties.
<i>large animals</i>	in all other respects, refers to domesticated stock such as horses, cattle, etc
<i>surrendered</i>	refers to a person, either owner or not owner, bringing an animal to a shelter for purposes of relinquishment or handover where responsibility of that animal is then transferred to the “shelter”.
<i>shelter</i>	refers to premises responsible for the care and welfare of lost, abandoned and surrendered domestic companion animals and their subsequent adoption or other disposal.
<i>OH&S legislation</i>	refers to the Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Act 1986 (SA) (OH&S Act 1986).
<i>pound</i>	authorised facility as defined in the Dog & Cat Management Act which states: “In this document, where appropriate when the term ‘shelter’ is used, this also applies to pounds.”
<i>Veterinary Surgeon</i>	refers to a person who is registered, or is deemed to be registered, on the register of veterinary surgeons under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1985 (SA).
<i>agent</i>	In this document, agent refers to a person who has permission to legally represent another person on that person’s behalf. The agent so representing has authority to speak and sign documents on behalf of the persons so represented. Such actions are held to be binding on the person so represented.

PART 1 CARE AND MANAGEMENT

1. Introduction

This code describes the **minimum** standards of management, accommodation and care for the physical and behavioural needs of animals housed in shelters and pounds.

In addition, this code encourages responsible pet ownership and a high standard of customer service.

This code does not apply to wildlife shelters.

2. Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S)

Animal shelters can be a high risk environment because of the unpredictable nature of some animals under stress and the possible exposure of staff to disease-causing organisms.

Shelter operators must be familiar with and observe OH&S legislative requirements.

Shelter workers must receive induction training in the following areas:

- a) Correct handling of animals
- b) Injuries and diseases caused by animals
- c) Manual handling
- d) Prevention of slips, trips, falls and sprains
- e) Health and hygiene
- f) Correct use of chemicals, restricted drugs and firearms as required.
- g) Use of equipment and plant

All staff-development training must be recorded in personnel files.

3. Basic Requirements

Animals housed in pounds and shelters **must** be provided with the following basic requirements:

- a) Accommodation and equipment designed to meet their physical and behavioural needs.
- b) Protection from heat, cold, wind and rain.
- c) Comfortable temperature, ventilation and lighting.
- d) Protection from harassment by other animals.
- e) Space to move, stretch and rest.
- f) Exercise for animals held in excess of three (3) working days, subject to the requirement for disease management procedures. This includes the use of free-running exercise areas.
- g) Daily food and water to provide required nutrients to sustain optimum body weight.
- h) Protection from disease through correct animal husbandry processes; ie: hygiene.
- i) Veterinary assessment and treatment as required.
- j) Regular surveillance to ensure early detection of problems.
- k) Daily human interaction.

4. Collection of Stray Animals

4.1 Capture of Stray Animals

The safe capture of animals requires specialist skills. The methods used must be humane with minimum risk and stress to the operator, animal and observers.

The behavioural characteristics of the animal concerned must be taken into account when deciding on the methods used.

The operator must be trained in the capture of animals.

Maximum use is to be made of minimum stress measures for the capture of animals. These are defined as:

- a) food
- b) leads
- c) nets
- d) poles
- e) ingested tranquillisers
- f) non-invasive traps

4.2 Capture Guns/Blow Pipes

The medications used in capture (tranquilliser guns/blow pipes) must be used by or under the direct supervision of a Veterinary Surgeon.

4.3 Handling

Prior to capture, the officer in charge of the capture must make a preliminary assessment of the threat to staff, public and the animal to determine the most appropriate method of capture. The method chosen must minimise the risk and stress levels to all involved. When captured, the animal must be secured appropriately to minimise risk of injury to itself and handlers.

5. Transport

Operators of pound and shelter vehicles must ensure that drivers are trained in the handling of animals. Drivers are responsible for:

- a) The care and welfare of animals during collection and transport.
- b) Hygiene and safety of the vehicle.
- c) Ensuring the vehicle conforms to the minimum standards for animal transport vehicles as prescribed in this code.

Animals should be transported for the minimum time necessary

5.1 Containers

Small animals must be placed in secure cages. Larger animals must be placed in individual compartments or securely tethered and separated. Dogs must not be tethered by slip collars (choker chains).

Animals must be secured in such a manner so as not to pose a risk to themselves or other adjacent animals.

5.2 Vehicles

Vehicles used for the collection and transport of animals must have the following features:

- a) Facilities for the separation of animals
- b) No protrusions or sharp edges in the framework, doors or partitions
- c) A design that is both escape-proof and prevents the protrusion of heads and/or limbs of the smallest animal carried.
- d) Floors which are strong enough to bear the weight of the animals being transported and have a non-slip surface to minimise the likelihood of injury.
- e) Adequate controlled ventilation of vehicles both when stationary and in motion. Fully enclosed vehicles must be air conditioned.
- f) Materials and a design that allows for effective cleaning and disinfection.
- g) Vehicles must protect animals from the elements.

Vehicles and equipment must be disinfected frequently to prevent transmission of disease.

6. **Induction to the Shelter**

Animals must be unloaded at the pound or shelter immediately on arrival.

6.1 Identification, Reporting and Documentation

Each animal must be immediately identified by providing it with a serial number, and by identifying the enclosure where the animal is placed. Each animal's entry to the shelter must be noted and the following information recorded promptly:

- a) Name of impounding officer or person presenting the animal
- b) Date, time and place of collection
- c) Description of the animal including:
 - ▶ species (cat or dog)
 - ▶ breed or type
 - ▶ colour, markings and any other distinguishing identifiers such as scars
 - ▶ sex
 - ▶ condition on arrival (eg healthy, injured, pregnant)
- d) Details of identification of the animal:
 - ▶ registration
 - ▶ discs and name tags
 - ▶ tattoos - both ears
 - ▶ micro-chip number – (all animals must be scanned for micro-chipping and if chipped, owners' details must be traced immediately from the appropriate register).
 - ▶ markings on inside of collar

- e) If the animal has been surrendered, the following details of the animal must be provided by the owner or their agent:
- ▶ age
 - ▶ temperament
 - ▶ health status
 - ▶ vaccination status
 - ▶ desexing details
 - ▶ proof of ownership
 - ▶ written permission from the owner or their agent
 - ▶ reason for surrender
 - ▶ microchip status

7. Daily Management

7.1 Disinfection and Hygiene

Pounds and shelters must be kept clean and hygienic at all times. Bedding must be checked daily and replaced if soiled. Cats and kittens must be provided with litter trays - these must be cleaned and litter replaced daily. All pens must be cleaned out each day.

Disinfection of pens and cages with hospital grade disinfectant must be done daily on pens holding sick animals. Pens must be disinfected periodically (at least once per week) with an alternate product such as bleach to reduce the likelihood of bacterial resistance and to retain disinfectant efficacy.

7.2 Health

Animals must be inspected at the beginning and end of work everyday. Any changes in eating, drinking, defecating, urinating, general appearance and behaviour must be reported to the person responsible.

Animals suspected of having an infectious disease must not be housed with or near other animals. A Veterinary Surgeon must be consulted in the event of significant illness or injury of animals.

8. Feeding Procedures

All animals must be fed at least once per day and have fresh water available to them at all times.

Food and water containers must be kept functional, placed so that they cannot readily be knocked over and must be disinfected between use.

For dogs, one feeding bowl should be provided for each animal. Cats may share bowls where appropriate.

Puppies and kittens should be fed under supervision.

Steps must be taken to ensure that each animal consumes the appropriate amount of feed to achieve appropriate body weight.

8.1 Daily Food Intake – Dogs

Preference should be given to the use of dry food. Good quality food must be used to avoid illness and waste. Quantities used need to be adjusted subject to the condition and age of the animal and the amount of exercise available.

Body Weight kg	Dry dog food 150g cup/s per dog	<u>OR</u>	Canned dog food 700g can/s per dog
1 - 10	1.5		0.75
10 - 20	2.0		1.0
20 - 30	3.0		1.5
30 - 40	4.0		2.0
40 +	5.0 (+)		3.0 (+)

This table applies to normal, adult, non-breeding, non-working house dogs. If body weight is less than 3 kg or age less than 3 months, feeding should be twice daily consisting of 0.5 cup soaked dry food or 1/3 (250g) of canned food each feed.

Growth requirements:

- ▶ weaning to 40% adult weight + 2 x maintenance
- ▶ 40-80% adult weight = 1.5 x maintenance
- ▶ 80-100% adult weight = 1.2 x maintenance

Working dogs may require up to 2 x maintenance in an active situation.

Pregnancy increases food requirements during the last trimester to 2 x maintenance. Lactation requirements are 3 x maintenance at 2-3 weeks post partum, decreasing to maintenance at weaning.

8.2 Daily Food Intake - Cats

Body Weight kg	Age - weeks	Dry (grams)	<u>OR</u>	Canned (425g) Cat food
0.5-1	8	40-50		0.25 - 0.5
1-2	12	60-70		0.25-0.75
1.5-2	16	75-95		0.25-0.75
3	Adult	40-50		0.75-1.25
4	Adult	55		0.75-1.5
6	Adult	80		1-2

This table applies to normal, non-breeding house cats. Growth, pregnancy and lactation requirements are as for dogs.

If using canned as well as dry, keep in separate feed containers in small amounts ensuring that adequate water is always available. An average adult cat requires about 22g of dry food per kg body weight per day. Manufacturer's directions should be followed.

PART 2 HOUSING FACILITIES

Shelters and pounds must have two types of housing areas - general holding pens and isolation pens.

9. Construction

These pens must be constructed of impervious, washable materials optimally curved at the wall/floor junction to facilitate cleaning and disinfection. It is imperative for disease prevention that:

- a) pens have smooth steel trowelled finished concrete floors. The concrete used must be non-porous with 20mPa being the minimum grade used.
- b) the internal face brick overhangs the concrete floor covering by 10mm; and
- c) timber framework, cladding or lining is not to be used in the construction of pens unless the timber is a minimum of 2 metres above the floor level.
- d) Gates must not have gaps in which animals' heads may become caught.

10. Security

All pens must be secured against escape of animals. Pens holding dogs at risk of theft must be locked. Where pens and runs are constructed outdoors, a fence with a lockable gate must enclose each section.

11. Design

Outside pens and runs must be designed to take account of local environmental factors. Consideration must be given to protecting the animals from these factors eg wind breaks, shade trees, cold water sprayed onto the pens in hot weather etc.

12. Temperature

Any enclosed room or building in which pens or cages are housed must have adequate facilities for heating, cooling and ventilation.

13. Drainage

The line of drainage from the pens must be away from the animals' sleeping quarters, must not run from pen to pen and must be in accordance with local government authority health requirements.

14. Sleeping Area

All pens and cages must have raised sleeping quarters or raised beds. With outside pens, the sleeping quarters must be covered by a waterproof roof or shelter and protected from wind and draughts.

14.1 Young and Geriatric Animals

Neonatal (young animals up to 4 weeks of age) and geriatric animals must be provided with sleeping quarters with heating facilities and soft bedding, subject to the condition/health of the animal(s). Bedding must be changed daily if soiled or damaged. In hot weather, cooling must be available and external quarters must be shaded, well ventilated and protected from wind and draughts.

15. Stocking Density

No more than two adult dogs or four adult cats must be kept in any one pen based on the minimum sizes as defined below, subject to compatibility between and size of the individual animals.

16. Cage Sizes

Pens and cages should be of an appropriate size to the animal housed. These pens and cage sizes are as follows:

16.1 Dogs

Dogs must be housed in a pen at least 1m wide, 2.5m long (not less than 2 square metres of floor space) and 2.15m high. At least one square metre of this pen must include the sleeping quarters and be roofed with at least three closed sides. The pens must provide shelter from wind and draughts. Clean bedding must be provided for each sleeping area.

No more than two compatible adult dogs can be held in one pen. In circumstances where it is known that families of dogs are compatible, more than two may be housed together, subject to specified floor space requirements being observed.

Dogs known to have an aggressive nature are to be housed in an area separate from main kennel areas and this area must allow for safe access for feeding and cleaning purposes.

Age	Maximum number per pen
Adult (greater than 6 months)	2
Pups (6 weeks to 6 months)	4 (up to 6 for small breeds)
Unweaned pups (less than 6 weeks)	Bitch plus litter

16.2 Cats

Cats may be housed either in a large enclosed holding pen or individually in cages.

Holding pens may be constructed to hold a maximum of 4 adult cats, providing that each cat has at least ½ square metre of floor space and a separate raised sleeping area. Bedding must be provided for each sleeping area. Bedding should be checked daily and changed if soiled/damaged. Litter trays must be provided. They must be cleaned and the litter changed at least once daily. (Minimum one tray per two cats).

Cages used to hold individual adult cats must be at least 700mm wide, 700mm deep and 500mm high (0.245 sq m)

Up to three kittens (less than 12 weeks of age) may be held in cages of the above size.

PART 3 EXAMINATION, TREATMENT AND EUTHANASIA

17. Facility

A separate first aid treatment area must be provided for animal care. This area should be established in consultation with a Veterinary Surgeon.

Facilities for euthanasia must ensure no live animal is exposed to cadavers or sees the euthanasia of another animal.

18. Euthanasia

Animals will generally be euthanased because of disease, injury, temperament, age or other grounds which might make them unsuitable for rehoming. All euthanasia is to be performed by trained staff.

The preferred method of euthanasia is intravenous barbiturate over-dose. It may be necessary to pre-sedate aggressive or timid animals. Euthanasia via the intra-cardiac route may sometimes be necessary. Euthanasia via the intra-peritoneal route may only be used as a last resort and on a sedated animal.

If for good reason the methods described above cannot be used, the following alternate humane methods may be adopted:

21. carbon dioxide narcosis
22. shooting with a bullet to the brain
23. captive bolt (to be followed by injection with barbiturate or bleeding out).

It is stressed that training in each of these processes is mandatory.

The objective is that euthanasia will be as humane as possible in prevailing circumstances to ensure the rapid, pain and stress-free death of the animal.

All euthanasia must be recorded.

Animal bodies must be stored and disposed of in a manner consistent with environmental and local government regulations.

PART 4 FOOD STORAGE

Facilities for the storage and preparation of food must be separate from any animal accommodation. Food storage facilities must be available to hold a minimum of five days requirements under peak conditions.

Food must be protected from rodents and insects.

PART 5 WASTE DISPOSAL

Facilities must be provided for the sanitary disposal of animal cadavers in accordance with local government authority requirements. Statutory requirements must be complied with for the disposal of animal waste, food scraps and soiled bedding.

PART 6 STAFF

19. The Manager

The Manager of a pound or shelter is ultimately responsible for the:

- a) Appointment, training, supervision and safety of all staff and volunteers.
- b) Maintenance and collation of daily records and statistics.
- c) Supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals.
- d) Obtaining prompt veterinary attention when required.
- e) A high standard of hygiene at the shelter including the disposal of cadavers and waste materials.
- f) Ensuring the security of the premises and contents.

20. Animal Attendants

Animal shelters must employ and train Animal Attendants for positions that require the capture, handling and management of animals.

It is recommended that one Animal Attendant be utilised per 40 pens with housed animals.

Animal Attendants must receive base level training, preferably through a recognised educational institution and be encouraged to gain additional recognised qualifications in animal management and care.

PART 7 REHOUSING AND ADOPTION

21. Selection for Adoption

Old or sick animals or animals with known vices such as excessive barking, aggression, fence jumping (in dogs) etc will not be made available for adoption except in special circumstances.

22. Adoption Process

New owners must be informed and given written guidance about feeding, housing, local council requirements and responsible pet ownership. They should also be encouraged to report any problems with a new pet to the shelter and to seek advice about the problem. Pounds and shelters must have a policy in place that provides clear support for such problems.

23. Desexing

All cats and dogs sold from a pound or shelter must be desexed except where in the opinion of a Veterinary Surgeon desexing could put the animal at risk, or other exceptional circumstances. Animals in this category must not be sold without a prepaid desexing voucher if not desexed at 8 weeks of age. Animals younger than 8 weeks must not be rehomed.

24. Vaccination

Every animal must be examined and vaccinated by a Veterinary Surgeon prior to sale. The new owner must be given a vaccination certificate.

A vaccination program must be implemented for all dogs and cats being placed in new homes by the shelter which cover the following diseases:

- | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---------------|
| a) Dogs: | Canine (Parainfluenza / Bordetella) cough
Canine distemper
Infectious canine hepatitis
Canine parvovirus | } | Generic
C5 |
| b) Cats: | Infectious feline enteritis (FE)
Feline Rhinotracheitis Virus & Feline Calici Virus (FRFC)
Feline Chlamydia (FChl) (Recommended only) | } | Generic F3/4 |

25. Public Access

All animal shelters must be open to the public for at least 42 hours per week, at least 8 hours of which must be at the weekend.

26. Dog Registration

Shelters must have facilities and documentation available that can provide for dog registration through the relevant local Council. This registration process must apply to all dogs rehomed prior to leaving the respective shelter.

27. Cat Identification

All cats rehomed by shelters should be identified with a collar and disc showing the shelter identification number. Change of this identification will be the responsibility of the new owner. The identification belonging to the shelter will be linked to a registration system maintained at the shelter.

PART 8 RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

28. It is incumbent upon animal shelters that rehome animals to promote responsible pet ownership in the community. This can be achieved through the following methods:

- a) The adoption of pets which have health and vaccination certificates and which are either desexed (this is the preferred option) or have desexing vouchers. (See clause 23)
- b) New pet owners being provided with verbal and written information on caring for their pet's health and well-being. Information about training, diet, follow up veterinary treatment, vaccination requirements and the legislation covering ownership of companion animals must be provided to produce the best chance for a healthy and happy owner/pet relationship to develop.◇