

Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses (2014)

July 2015 version

Working dogs

This factsheet covers aspects relating to working dogs, under the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014

Which working dog breeders need to abide by the Code?

Working dog breeders and rearers who meet the following definitions must abide by the Code:

- an enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs or cats to sell, where

In the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is a member of an applicable organisation

- the enterprise has 10 or more fertile female dogs or 10 or more fertile female cats or
- the enterprise has between 3 and 9 fertile female dogs or between 3 and 9 fertile female cats in circumstances where no more than 2 of the fertile female dogs or fertile female cats (as the case may be) are not registered with the applicable organisation; or

In the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation, the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female dogs or 3 or more fertile female cats; or

- an enterprise that is run for profit which carries out the rearing of dogs or cats.

How do I prove my dogs are working /guarding dogs?

It is up to the breeder to work with their local council to determine whether their business qualifies as a working/guardian dog business. Council will be looking at the amount of time per day/per week each dog is used for working/guarding livestock; and how many dogs there are at the business, relative to the number of livestock, for the purpose of working/guarding.

Do working and guardian dogs have exercise and housing requirements like other dogs?

It is recognised that working and guardian dogs, unlike pet dogs, spend large proportions of their time working or guarding livestock. Their lives are different to pet dogs or show dogs or breeding dogs; as they spend considerable time working/guarding livestock rather than sitting in a pen or backyard.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, 1 Spring Street Melbourne, July 2015

© The State of Victoria Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources 2015

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

ISBN 978-1-74326-655-7 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-74326-656-4 (pdf)

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone DEDJTR Customer Service Centre 136 186, email customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au, via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available in on the internet at www.vic.gov.au/pets

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

The special requirements set out in the Code for these two types of dogs are based on the fact that these dogs are predominantly used for working/guarding livestock.

Is there a staff:animal ratio required?

The minimum of one full-time staff member is required if the business has more than 25 fertile animals. This is necessary to maintain good breeding practices and minimum standards of animal welfare.

What is the health management plan?

The health management plan is essentially a complete description of the operation of a breeding or rearing business. It provides protocols and standard operating procedures for the management of, and health care within a facility. The health management plan is required to be reviewed by a veterinarian annually.

Are there mandatory requirements for vaccination and parasite prevention?

Yes. Depending on the age and the species there are a list of requirements for vaccination regimes and parasite control. As these vary between species and the age of the animal it is best to check that specific section for dogs.

Why does euthanasia have to be done by a veterinarian?

The Code requires that euthanasia, except in an emergency situation, must be performed by a veterinarian and be achieved by barbiturate overdose, intravenous for adults and intraperitoneal for neonates (puppies 8 weeks old and under).

Barbiturates are scheduled drugs under the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 and the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006. The legislation requires that barbiturates suitable for euthanasia of dogs must only be administered by a veterinarian.

What happens in an emergency situation with regards to euthanasia?

Euthanasia in an emergency situation must be carried out under the direction of a veterinarian.

This means that in a situation where an animal is terminally sick or injured and a veterinarian cannot be present within sufficient time to minimise suffering, then the breeder and the veterinarian may decide, over the phone, to euthanase the animal.

In this case, the veterinarian will discuss with the breeder, options for humane euthanasia; and determine with the breeder the best method available to the breeder to end the animal's suffering. The breeder will then be able to carry out the euthanasia procedure and the veterinarian will provide the breeder with a letter or certificate indicating that permission by the veterinarian had been given and the method that had been agreed upon. The letter/certificate must be filed as part of the animal records by the breeder.

Blunt force trauma is banned in the Code.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone DEDJTR Customer Service Centre 136 186, email customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au, via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available in on the internet at www.vic.gov.au/pets

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

What are the reasons for requiring veterinary checks?

Expert veterinary advice, community expectation and recommendations from breeders were used to determine the need for veterinary checks for animals in breeding and rearing businesses. The Code mandates that all animals, regardless of breeding status, receive at least an annual general health check by a vet, as recommended by the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) for all pet cats and dogs.

In addition, the Code (1 July 2015 version) specifies that female breeding dogs must have a general health check by a veterinary practitioner prior to first mating to assess whether she is physically mature enough to be bred with. Veterinary practitioners must provide a certificate to state that, at the time of examination, the female is suitable to breed. After this, a veterinary practitioner must provide a general health check:

- within 4 weeks prior to all subsequent seasons in which the owner intends to mate the female; and within 8 weeks post-partum; or
- at least once per year, whichever is more frequent.

However if a vet requests to check an animal more frequently, then the animal must receive these extra veterinary checks in addition to the minimum requirements.

Why do males need rest days and what is the basis for the frequency?

Allowing a rest period should help promote healthier sperm and improve the quality and robustness of the offspring. The selected rest frequencies are based on sperm regeneration cycles, which is every 60 days for dogs, and every 47 days for cats.

What are the requirements for breeding animals?

There are several requirements listed specifically within the code, briefly:

- All breeding animals must have at least an annual veterinary general health check (with female dogs requiring additional pre and post-partum checks), along with any additional veterinary health checks as directed by a veterinary practitioner
- Breeding mates must not be closely related (for example, father and daughter; brother and sister etc)
- Male dogs must not be used for breeding until they are 12 months of age and require a health check first
- Male dogs must be retired at 6 years (except with veterinary certification to extend the breeding age)
- Female dogs must not be used for breeding until they are 12 months of age and require a health check first
- Female dogs cannot have more than 5 litters in their lifetime (except with veterinary certification for subsequent litters).

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone DEDJTR Customer Service Centre 136 186, email customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au, via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available in on the internet at www.vic.gov.au/pets

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Why are the record keeping requirements so stringent?

Record keeping is an essential part of traceability and breeding management that promotes animal welfare. Comprehensive record keeping also ensures businesses adhere to the requirements of the Code by providing authorised officers with a starting point for auditing businesses.

I have read the Code and I do not know how I am going to be able to comply, what should I do?

There is a guide on the DEDJTR website www.vic.gov.au/pets providing you with a check list to becoming compliant, as well as guides to developing your health and emergency plans. The DEDJTR website also provides lots of different record keeping templates to help you get started with your record keeping. You should also consider discussing any issues you have with the Code with your local Council to ensure you understand the requirements of the Code and the expectations of Council in relation to your business. You can also call the DEDJTR customer service centre on 136 186 for further information.

Is any training available?

The online breeder training course is available at www.vic.gov.au/pets. Along with the tool kit available online, the Department has commissioned and developed this FREE training course for breeders and their staff. This training course meets the minimum educational requirements in the Code.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, 1 Spring Street Melbourne, July 2015

© The State of Victoria Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources 2015

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

ISBN 978-1-74326-655-7 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-74326-656-4 (pdf)

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone DEDJTR Customer Service Centre 136 186, email customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au, via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relay.service.com.au. This document is also available in on the internet at www.vic.gov.au/pets

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.