

Code of Practice for the
**Management of
Dogs and Cats in
Shelters and Pounds**

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Introduction

This Code of Practice is made under section 59 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

The purpose of the Code of Practice is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care that are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of dogs and cats housed in establishments operating as an animal shelter or Council pound.

The Code of Practice is designed to cover all animal shelters and Council pounds, and includes any holding facilities used by these establishments. Holding facilities for the short term housing of animals prior to transportation

to an establishment must comply with this Code of Practice. Specific conditions apply to the long term housing of dogs seized and held for legislative purposes.

The Code of Practice is to be observed by the proprietor, operations manager and all other staff of an establishment. All establishments must comply with State and local government legislation and permits.

This Code of Practice does not apply to wildlife shelters operated by persons holding an authorisation under the *Wildlife Act 1975* to establish a shelter for the rehabilitation of native wildlife.

Definitions

These definitions are provided solely for the purpose of interpreting this Code of Practice.

Act: the **Domestic Animals Act 1994**.

Animal: dog, puppy, cat or kitten.

Authorised officer: a person appointed as an authorised officer under section 71, 71A, 72 or 72A of the Act.

Animal housing area: all pens, cages or modules used to house animals at the establishment.

Bed: an impervious structure, raised off the level of the floor that is large enough to cater for the animal to lie comfortably when housed in the pen, cage or module.

Behavioural rehabilitation foster care: care for an animal outside of the establishment to rectify a behavioural problem to prepare the animal for return to the establishment for rehoming.

Cage: a structure designed to house a cat or kitten.

Cat: any animal identified as *Felis catus*.

Colony pen: a walk in structure designed to house up to eight cats or kittens.

Council: a municipal Council that may be constituted as a City Council, Rural City Council or Shire Council.

Disinfectant: a chemical used on an inanimate surface to destroy micro-organisms likely to cause infection in cats and dogs.

Dog: any animal identified as *Canis lupus familiaris*.

Establishment: an animal welfare shelter or Council pound.

Exercise area: an area separate to the animal housing area, which an establishment may use for additional exercise of animals.

Euthanasia: to cause the deliberate and painless death of an animal.

Foster care agreement: a written agreement between the establishment and foster carer, in relation to the animal's needs and foster carer's responsibilities. If the animal is placed in juvenile or veterinary rehabilitation foster care the agreement must include the veterinary care requirements and be signed and endorsed by the veterinary practitioner.

Foster carer: a person who undertakes behavioural foster care, juvenile foster care, short-term relief foster care or veterinary rehabilitation foster care for an animal outside of the establishment until the animal is fit for sale and returned to the establishment for rehoming.

Holding facilities: pens, cages or modules for housing animals for a period of less than 24 hours.

Impervious: materials or sealed materials that prevent water, urine or any other liquids penetrating the material or being absorbed and held by the material.

Isolation housing: pens, cages or modules that are kept in a separate area to general housing and used for animals suspected of having, or diagnosed with, an infectious disease.

Juvenile: a puppy or kitten.

Juvenile foster care: care for a juvenile animal outside of the establishment until the animal is strong enough to return to the establishment for rehoming.

Kitten: a cat aged less than 16 weeks.

Operations manager: a person responsible for the day to day operation of an establishment.

Module: a structure designed to house a cat or kitten after the quarantine period.

Pen: a structure designed to house a dog or puppy.

Pound: any premises maintained for the purpose of impounding dogs or cats.

Proprietor:

- if local government owns the land and runs the pound = Council;
- if local government owns the land and a contractor runs the pound = Contractor / Executive Officer;
- if Contractor owns the land and Council run the pound = Council;
- if Contractor owns the land and runs the pound = Contractor / Executive Officer.

In the case of a Shelter, with a board of management, the Executive Officer is considered to be the proprietor.

Quarantine: separation from other

animals until eight days after vaccination.

Puppy: a dog aged less than 16 weeks.

Rehoming: preparing and offering the animal for sale.

Short term relief foster care: care for an animal, outside of the establishment to allow a healthy animal respite from the pound or shelter environment to be cared for in preparation for rehoming by the establishment.

Staff: includes the proprietor, operations manager, animal attendants, volunteers and foster carers.

Transitional period: the period after a cat has been impounded for eight days.

Veterinary Practitioner: a veterinary practitioner registered under the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*.

Veterinary rehabilitation foster care: care for an animal, outside of the establishment, whilst it recovers from a medical condition including an illness, injury or disease, until the animal is well enough to return to the establishment for rehoming.

Washable: an impervious surface that allows for cleaning.

Weatherproof: protection from the wind, rain and extreme temperatures to safeguard the welfare of the animals housed in the establishment.

1 Staff

1.1 Proprietor

The proprietor of an establishment must have a written health management plan that has been formulated in consultation with a veterinary practitioner. The proprietor may act as the operations manager or appoint a person to that role.

The health management plan must include protocols for:

- assessment for admission to the pound or shelter;
 - vaccination programs;
 - parasite prevention;
 - response to an outbreak of disease;
 - approved methods of euthanasia;
 - management of isolation facilities;
 - environmental enrichment;
 - assessment programs for fostering animals;
 - temperament and health assessment for rehoming animals;
 - behavioural and welfare assessment of animals impounded longer than six weeks;
 - processes for assessing and removal of animals deemed unfit for continued pound/shelter care.
- the health and wellbeing of all animals in the establishment and in foster care;
 - promoting and supporting relevant formal and informal training to staff;
 - ensuring there is a written and signed agreement stating who will be responsible for any building or plant work, where both parties' responsibilities are clearly defined if the proprietor is leasing the premises;
 - having a written agreement with sufficient veterinary practitioners to provide prompt treatment other than first-aid and, if necessary, euthanasia;
 - establishing and maintaining written foster care agreements;
 - the protection of staff health at the establishment.

The proprietor of an establishment is responsible for:

- the overall management and conduct of the establishment;
- ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and Codes of Practice;

1.2 Operations manager

To operate an animal shelter or pound an operations manager must have relevant experience or qualifications in the husbandry of dogs and cats to meet their physical and behavioural requirements.

If an operations manager is in training and has not yet attained qualifications or experience then the operations manager must be under the supervision of the proprietor or a veterinary practitioner.

The operations manager is responsible for the day to day operation of the establishment which includes:

- the health and wellbeing of all animals in the establishment;
- reporting to the proprietor on matters of compliance and disease outbreaks;
- carrying out the directions of the veterinary practitioner;
- the supervision of staff and the provision of training;
- the maintenance and collation of records and statistics;
- supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals;
- supervision and examination of animals upon entry;
- the overall level of hygiene in the establishment, including the disposal of waste materials;
- provision of prompt veterinary attention for animals when required;
- developing and prominently displaying at the establishment a plan to respond to emergency situations for both humans and animals;
- monitoring physical and psychological health of animals;
- seeking relevant expert advice for adverse behavioural change in an animal;
- removal of animals deemed not fit for a pound or shelter environment.

1.3 Animal attendants

Animal attendants who work at the establishment must be trained and experienced to properly manage the type of animals kept at the establishment. The minimum equivalent of one full-time animal attendant must be employed for every 50 animals housed at the establishment.

Animal attendants are responsible for carrying out the following duties and must report to the operations manager on these duties:

- daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals;
- daily cleaning of animal housing areas; i.e., hose out, replace bedding, litter trays, feeding and watering utensils;
- administering medication and treatment as prescribed by veterinary practitioner;
- routine disinfection of animal housing areas and equipment;
- exercising of animals as required;
- provision of environmental enrichment for the animals.

The animal attendant must promptly report to the operations manager animals showing any of the following symptoms:

- any serious physical or behavioural abnormality;
- any change in behaviour in an animal;
- apparent pain;
- bleeding or swelling of body parts;

- bloating of abdomen;
- coughing;
- diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained;
- difficulty or inability to urinate or defecate;
- fits or staggering;
- inability to stand or walk;
- lack of appetite;
- lameness;
- pregnancy;
- red or brown coloured urine;
- repeated sneezing;
- runny nose;
- runny or inflamed eyes;
- vomiting;
- weight loss;
- whelping or queening.

1.4 Veterinary practitioner

The written agreement between the proprietor and the veterinary practitioner must include arrangements for:

- the use of the veterinary practitioner's facilities for the treatment of animals;
- the provision of isolation housing if the establishment does not have a separate first aid and treatment area, or isolation housing and the supervision of animals in isolation at the establishment.

Animals housed for veterinary treatment or isolation at a veterinary clinic and under direct veterinary supervision can be housed in pens, cages or modules contrary to this Code of Practice.

Where directed by a veterinary practitioner, unweaned, injured and diseased animals must be euthanased.

1.5 Vehicle driver

Any driver of an establishment, Council contractor, or Council animal transport vehicle must be experienced or adequately trained to carry out the following tasks:

- assessment, handling and care of animals being transported in accordance with admissions section 2.2 of this code;
- ensuring the hygiene and cleanliness of the vehicle and the cages and equipment used in the vehicle, including routine cleaning and disinfection;
- clean and disinfect the cargo area of the vehicle before another animal is placed in the cargo area if an animal shows signs of infectious disease or defecates, vomits or urinates in the cargo area.

Animals must be transported for the minimum time practicable, taking into consideration the most direct route from the area where the animal was collected back to the holding facility or establishment.

Where the pick-up of stray or injured animals is conducted on a shuttle basis to the establishment or veterinary care, the timetable must ensure the minimum time in transit for distressed or injured animals.

Severely injured or diseased animals must be examined and euthanased, where appropriate, by an authorised officer or veterinary practitioner as soon as possible.

1.6 Foster carer

This section applies to foster care programs conducted as part of a Council pound or animal shelter operation. A foster carer who undertakes foster care must have and comply with a written foster care agreement.

Foster carers conducting foster care for an establishment must:

- have the permits, where required by local government, to keep the number of animals at their premises;
- not have more animals requiring foster care in their care at any one time than they can singularly manage;
- notify the establishment and present the animal to a veterinary practitioner if symptoms of illness develop;
- provide environmental enrichment and socialisation in accordance with the written foster care agreement;

- follow any veterinary instructions on medication or treatment regimes as directed by the establishment veterinary practitioner for the animal in their care;
- follow any training or exercise regime as instructed in the written foster care agreement;
- not allow animals kept on their premises to leave the premises unless as specified in the written foster agreement;
- ensure that animals leaving the premises are in a crate or restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal. No more than two dogs can be walked outside at one time;
- return the animals under foster care to the establishment within the specified time set in the written foster care agreement.

In addition, foster carers conducting juvenile, veterinary rehabilitation or behavioural rehabilitation foster care for an establishment must:

- be trained or experienced to care for and meet the needs of the animals placed in their care for rehabilitation;
- keep the animals and their records in accordance with the instructions of the written foster care agreement;

- present the animal and all related records to a veterinary practitioner or operations manager or nominated person as requested or required by the written foster care agreement.

1.7 Staff health

Potential health risks for humans exist when working with animals. Some animals may harbour disease-causing organisms, which can be transmitted to humans (zoonoses). To protect staff health, a list of common zoonoses associated with animals must be prominently displayed throughout the establishment and staff must be educated in prevention of zoonoses. All personnel working with cats, especially women of childbearing age, must be made aware of the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis.

Staff health must be protected by being provided with or have access to:

- personal protective clothing;
- hot and cold hand washing facilities with disinfectant soap at the establishment;
- adequate information and training on health, hygiene and safety at the induction session;
- tetanus immunisation.

Members of the public must be provided with access to hot and cold water hand washing facilities with disinfectant soap.

2 Handling, treatment and care of animals

2.1 Handling

Staff handling animals must be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviour to undertake the appropriate handling techniques for the animals impounded at the establishment. Handling methods must be as humane as possible with minimum risk to the animals, staff and members of the public. The behaviour of the species and individual animal concerned must be taken into account when deciding on the methods used to handle the animal.

2.2 Admission

Every animal admitted to the establishment must be examined by a veterinary practitioner or by an experienced person, who is responsible for classifying the animals into the health status (Table 1) for appropriate action.

2.3 Vaccination

All dogs sold from an establishment must be vaccinated to cover the following diseases:

- Canine Distemper;
- Infectious Canine Hepatitis;
- Canine Parvovirus;
- Canine Cough (Parainfluenza (Type II) and Bordetella bronchiseptica).

All cats sold from an establishment must be vaccinated to cover the following diseases:

- Infectious Feline Enteritis;
- Feline Respiratory Disease (feline calicivirus and feline herpes virus).

Table 1. Health status and appropriate action to be taken upon admission

Health status	Action
healthy animal	for general admission process
moderately or slightly injured animal	to be given prompt first aid and treatment to relieve pain if required, or referred to a veterinary practitioner for treatment
severely injured animal	to be assessed immediately by a veterinary practitioner
unidentified cat that is wild, uncontrollable or diseased	may be euthanased in accordance with the Act
unweaned and orphaned animal	may be euthanased or veterinary practitioner approval granted to place in appropriate foster care
animal suspected of having an infectious disease	must be housed in isolation as approved by a veterinary practitioner

2.4 Quarantine

All animals must be vaccinated and serve an eight day quarantine period prior to animals being made available for rehoming. The only exception is if the animal was previously vaccinated and presented with a current vaccination certificate and is free from infectious disease.

At the end of the quarantine period, all animals must again be examined by the operations manager or a veterinary practitioner to assess their suitability for sale.

2.5 Isolation

All establishments must provide an area for isolation for animals suspected of having an infectious disease or must have a written agreement with a veterinary practitioner to provide isolation facilities off site.

Isolation housing within the establishment must be physically separated by an impervious barrier or a distance of at least ten metres from other types of animal housing at the establishment. Animals must be maintained in an area approved in the animal health management plan – with particular reference to the area's airflow, workflow and cage or pen design.

All animals confined in isolation housing must be under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner and the fate of an animal must be decided by a veterinary practitioner.

2.6 Euthanasia or removal of an animal from the establishment

At the conclusion of the statutory period specified in the Act for seized or surrendered animals, animals must be:

- made available for rehoming to a new owner; or
- euthanased because of disease, injury, behaviour, age, unsuitability for sale; or
- placed in appropriate foster care and returned at an appropriate date for rehoming; or
- released under a written agreement to a person or body which operates in accordance with the Act to care for and dispose of the animal, at the discretion of the operations manager or veterinary practitioner.

The preferred method of euthanasia is barbiturate overdose, which must be carried out by a veterinary practitioner. Any method of euthanasia must be carried out humanely.

Euthanasia must be performed in an area that is separated from animal accommodation at the establishment and must not be carried out in view of any other animals or members of the public.

2.7 Care

2.7.1 Nutrition

Food must be provided in sufficient quantity and nutritional quality to meet the daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

Dogs and cats must be fed a minimum of once a day.

Animals between four and six months of age must be fed a minimum of twice daily.

Animals up to four months of age must receive a minimum of three feeds a day.

Food must be stored in sealed containers which must be vermin-proof. The preparation of food must be conducted in hygienic areas which must be cleaned and disinfected after food is prepared. The establishment must hold a minimum of five days food, the equivalent of that required under full capacity for the establishment.

All animals must have access, in their housing area, at all times, to a sufficient supply of fresh, clean water. The amount of water needed daily is approximately 50 millilitres of water per one kilogram of body weight but the amount may vary depending on a number of factors including health status, environmental temperature, amount of exercise, lactating animal, water content of diet, age etc.

Food and water containers must be non-spillable and designed to be easily cleaned and disinfected. Containers must not cause injury to the animals.

For dogs and weaned puppies, one food and water container must be provided for each animal. For cats, there must be one feeding bowl per adult and one feeding bowl per three kittens.

2.7.2 Disinfection and hygiene

Maintenance of hygiene in an establishment will prevent build-up of disease causing organisms including viruses and parasitic worm eggs. An establishment must be clean and hygienic at all times.

All pens, cages and modules used to house animals must be cleaned out at least once per day (or more often as required) by hosing or other appropriate means. Animal housing areas must not be allowed to remain wet if the animal is returned to the area. All faeces, used bedding, used cat litter and uneaten food must be removed prior to cleaning. Used litter and uneaten food must be placed in a waste disposal device. Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate statutory authority. Use of a trade waste service for collection and disposal of wastes is preferable. Wastes must not be incinerated unless the incinerator is registered with the appropriate authority.

Establishments must have an adequate water supply and must be sewered, on a septic system, or have some other adequate method of disposing of faeces.

All watering and feeding utensils must be cleaned daily using chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Utensils must be rinsed after disinfection to avoid poisoning.

Cats must be provided with clean litter daily. The trays, that hold the litter, must be cleaned and disinfected weekly or more often if required. Litter trays must be cleaned and disinfected between uses for different cats. Sufficient quantities of suitable litter material, such as commercial cat litter, sawdust or shredded paper, must be provided for each cat or kitten.

Disinfection of pens, cages, and modules must be done whenever the animal housing area is vacated or every eighth day with a hospital grade disinfectant. Products containing Phenol must not be used. Manufacturer's instructions for the use of these agents must be followed.

Pests including fleas, ticks, flies, mosquitoes and rodents must be effectively controlled at the establishment. Registered chemicals used for pest control must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and must be either prescribed by a registered veterinary practitioner or used in accordance with the appropriate authority. Material Safety Data Sheets for all chemicals used at the establishment must be current and kept on site in an accessible format.

2.7.3 Inspection

All animals, housed at the establishment must be inspected by staff, at least once each day and each animal's general appearance and behaviour noted. Puppies and kittens must be inspected at least twice each day.

It is the responsibility of animal attendants at establishments to report any animal that appears sick, injured or whose behaviour has changed, to the operations manager or proprietor or veterinary practitioner as soon as possible. Animals suspected of having an infectious disease must be housed in isolation.

2.7.4 Enrichment

Environmental enrichment must be provided regularly for all animals. This could be in the form of exercise, foraging opportunities, toys, play materials, grooming and socialisation with humans and the animal's own species. Grooming is encouraged and long-haired animals should be groomed regularly to prevent coat entanglement. All enrichment and socialisation must be controlled to avoid risk of contamination of other animals. Items must be able to be disinfected between uses by animals or be disposable.

The proprietor or operations manager is responsible for ensuring that where an animal enters the establishment and is likely to be housed for an extended period for legal reasons, the animal must be assessed on entry for their physical,

psychological and social wellbeing by a veterinary practitioner and then at least once a month by a veterinary practitioner during the stay of the animal.

Animals housed long term must have environmental enrichment daily. Enrichment activities must be assessed for safety to the handler and the animal and should be varied regularly.

The type of enrichment may vary depending on the animal, the type of containment required for the animal and the period of confinement, as suggested in Tables 2 and 3 (see pages 14 and 15).

2.7.5 Exercise/socialisation areas for dogs

Exercise areas must be securely fenced and designed to prevent the escape of the animal. Staff must directly supervise animals when more than one animal is placed in the area, to ensure the animals are not in danger of attack or other injury.

The type of exercise and socialisation could vary depending on the animal, the type of containment required for the animal and the period of confinement, as suggested in Table 2.

2.7.6 Exercise/socialisation areas for cats

Exercise areas must be completely enclosed and designed to prevent the escape of the animal and a person must directly supervise animals when more than one animal is placed in the area to ensure the animals are not in danger of attack or other injury.

The type of exercise and socialisation may vary depending on the animal, the type of containment required for the animal and the period of confinement, as suggested in Table 3.

After assessment, for compatibility in exercise and socialisation, up to eight socially compatible cats can be exercised together provided they are the same sex or desexed.

Exercise areas must:

- contain litter trays for each cat;
- be the minimum equivalent size of a colony pen;
- be well maintained;
- offer a form of enrichment (such as scratch posts, toys, access to high and low areas for hiding or rest);
- have a secure roof and be escape proof;
- have some shade within/over the area;
- take into consideration the health and hygiene of both animals and humans;
- allow access to water.

Table 2. Enrichment, exercise and socialisation of dogs and puppies

Quarantine period (eight days)	Post quarantine period for all dogs except dogs seized for legislative purposes	Long term housed dogs seized for legislative purposes
• Dogs must be singularly exercised, with the exception of puppies from the same litter or dogs surrendered together. • If there is an exercise area suitable for quarantine animals, the area and route to the area must be disinfected after use. • Exercise can occur in the dog's own pen or cage by encouraging activity (such as tug of war, hiding food treats). • Environmental enrichment should be provided – using equipment that can be disposed of, sterilised or decontaminated. • Grooming is encouraged – using equipment allocated to only that dog and equipment that is disposable or can be sterilised or decontaminated. • Human interaction should be encouraged but human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed.	• Grooming is encouraged. Grooming areas may be provided by a grooming service if the grooming is completed inside an establishment's premises and the establishment has a written agreement with the grooming service. • Dogs can be exercised within the establishment. • Dogs that have not been seized can be exercised outside the establishment. The dog must be restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by a trained or experienced animal attendant. No more than two dogs per animal attendant can be walked outside the establishment. A proprietor must conduct a risk assessment to determine if offsite exercise is necessary and develop a policy for walking dogs outside of the establishment for public safety. • For exercise and socialisation periods, up to six compatible dogs can be exercised in an area. An animal attendant must be in visual or audible range of animals in each enclosure at all times. • Exercise can occur in the dog's own pen or cage by encouraging activity (such as 'fetch', hiding treats, etc). • Human interaction should be encouraged but human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed.	• Can be provided with time in a secure exercise area but human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed. • Exercise can occur in the dog's area by encouraging activity (such as foraging). • Environmental enrichment must be provided – (such as toys, shredded paper, boxes, and chew toys). • Grooming is encouraged. • Human interaction should be encouraged but human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed.

Table 3. Enrichment, exercise and socialisation of cats and kittens

Quarantine period
(eight days)

- Cats must be singularly housed, with the exception for kittens from the same litter or cats surrendered together.
- If there is an exercise area suitable for quarantine animals, the area and route to the area must be decontaminated after use.
- Exercise can occur in the cat's own pen or cage by encouraging activity.
- Environmental enrichment should be provided – using equipment that can be disposed of, sterilised or decontaminated.
- Grooming is encouraged – using equipment allocated to only that cat and equipment that is disposable or can be sterilised or decontaminated.
- Human interaction should be encouraged but human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed.

Post quarantine period

- Grooming is encouraged.
- Grooming areas may be provided by a grooming service if the grooming is completed inside establishment's premises and the establishment has a written agreement with the grooming service.
- Exercise/play time in a secure exercise area.
- Exercise can occur in the cat's area by encouraging activity (such as hunting).
- Environmental enrichment must be provided (such as toys, shredded paper, boxes, and chew toys).
- Climbing, scratching, hide and retreat areas.
- Vertical space.
- Sunbaking or heat bank area.
- Pheromones or aromatherapy areas.
- Music.
- Cat toys.
- Human interaction should be encouraged but, human safety, hygiene and risk of contamination must be considered and addressed.

2.8 Foster care

Foster care must only be undertaken with a written foster care agreement between the establishment and foster carer, in relation to the animal's needs and foster carer's responsibility. If the animal is placed in juvenile or veterinary rehabilitation foster care the agreement must include the veterinary care requirements and be signed and endorsed by the veterinary practitioner.

This section provides minimum standards for the operation of foster care arranged by establishments. An animal can be placed in foster care for reasons including juvenile foster care, behavioural rehabilitation foster care, veterinary rehabilitation foster care, or to provide for short term relief for an animal.

Animals placed in foster care must be permanently identified by microchip unless the animal is the subject of written veterinary practitioner advice that the health of the animal is liable to be significantly prejudiced if it is implanted with a microchip. Foster animals remain the property of the establishment.

If for any reason an animal has a litter whilst in foster care the animal and all of the young must be returned to the establishment for its rehoming process.

The establishment's written foster care agreement must identify the requirements for:

- each animal being placed in foster care;

- the appropriate care, nutrition, hygiene, exercise and husbandry of the animal;
- other animals in the carer's home;
- expected progress or outcomes for the animal whilst in care;
- any specific veterinary treatments or requirements;
- any required treatment or training to be provided to the animal;
- action should the animal become ill, escape or die;
- any record keeping requirements;
- return date for the animal to the establishment.

2.8.1 Juvenile foster care

The purpose of juvenile foster care is to allow a healthy kitten or puppy to be cared for off site in preparation for sale to ensure the kitten or puppy is the health, age and weight required for vaccination and desexing prior to being rehomed by the establishment.

Dogs can be exercised outside of the foster carer's premises provided they are restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal. No more than two dogs, in foster care, can be exercised off the premises at any one time.

Animals must be returned to the establishment when it is deemed appropriate by the veterinary practitioner to desex the animal post vaccination.

2.8.2 Veterinary rehabilitation foster care

The purpose of veterinary rehabilitation foster care is to provide an opportunity for animals with a recoverable injury or illness to be treated off site and then, to be rehomed by the establishment.

Animals that are placed in veterinary rehabilitation foster care must be microchipped, vaccinated and wormed prior to leaving the establishment and they must have completed the eight day quarantine vaccination period. A veterinary practitioner must provide in the health plan an expected date of return to the establishment for rehoming and must assess the progress of the animal for medical improvement.

If approved by the veterinary practitioner, dogs in veterinary rehabilitation foster care may be exercised outside of the foster carer's premises provided they are restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal. No more than two dogs in foster care can be exercised off the premises at any one time.

Animals placed in veterinary rehabilitation foster care must be returned to the establishment for the purposes of desexing and rehoming.

2.8.3 Behavioural rehabilitation foster care

The purpose of behavioural rehabilitation foster care is to provide an opportunity for animals to be retrained to rectify a behavioural trait restricting the animal being rehomed by the establishment.

Animals that fail temperament tests must only be placed in behavioural rehabilitation foster care under the instruction of the operations manager. It is recommended that the operations manager seeks advice from an animal behavioural specialist. The written foster care agreement must provide a training plan and expected date for return to the establishment for rehoming and must assess the progress of the animal for behavioural improvement.

Animals that are placed in behavioural rehabilitation foster care must be microchipped, vaccinated and wormed prior to leaving the establishment and they must have completed the eight day quarantine vaccination period.

If approved suitable under the written foster care agreement, dogs in rehabilitation foster care may be exercised outside of the foster carer's premises provided they are restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal. No more than two dogs in foster care can be exercised off the premises at any one time.

During the period of behavioural rehabilitation foster care, the animal must be assessed to ensure that the animal is making acceptable improvement as per the written foster care agreement.

Animals placed in behavioural rehabilitation foster care must be returned to the establishment for the purposes of desexing and rehoming.

2.8.4 Short term relief foster care

The purpose of short term relief foster care is to allow a healthy animal to be cared for outside of the establishment in preparation for being rehomed by the establishment.

Animals that are placed in short term relief foster care must be microchipped, vaccinated and wormed prior to leaving the establishment and they must have completed the eight day quarantine vaccination period. A written foster care agreement must be prepared for each animal that includes an expected date of return to the establishment for rehoming.

Dogs can be exercised outside of the foster carer's premises provided they are restrained by a chain, cord or leash that is held by the approved foster carer or a person designated in the written agreement as being able to control that animal. No more than two dogs in foster care can be exercised off the premises at any one time.

Animals must be returned to the establishment as per the written foster care agreement.

2.9 Responsible pet ownership

Establishments which rehome animals must assist in promoting responsible pet ownership in the community by the following methods:

- providing prospective buyers with advice on the most suitable type of pet for their environment (consider yard size, exercise requirements, children etc.). Encouraging prospective buyers to seek advice on numbers of pets allowed or legal requirements from their local Council and to gain approval from landlords in the case of rental premises, prior to acquiring an animal; and
- providing new pet owners with advice on pet care and information leaflets about the veterinary attention required for animals after purchase (such as follow-up vaccination), and current legislation covering the registration of animals.

2.10 Rehoming

All animals rehomed from an establishment must be microchipped, wormed, desexed and vaccinated.

Aggressive, anti-social animals or an animal with known vices such as excessive barking, or habitual escapees must not be made available for sale.

Animals with a defect that does not significantly affect the quality of life of the animal can be made available for sale. This decision must be made by a veterinary practitioner and brought to the attention of the prospective owner prior to sale or giving away.

New owners must be supplied with a microchip, desexing and vaccination certificate. New owners must be given literature about Council registration, feeding, housing, training and responsible pet ownership and instructed to seek advice about problems with the animal from veterinary practitioners or people with experience in animal care and management.

Establishments must develop and practice standard procedures for the assessment of health, temperament and sociability in animals selected for rehoming.

2.11 Guarantee

If an animal is not acceptable to a purchaser because of health, physical or other reasons (excluding accidents), which is supported by a statement from a veterinary practitioner, within seven days of purchase, proprietors must accept the animal back and refund the purchase price of the animal.

If an animal is returned within three days for any other reason, the proprietor must refund 75% of the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

If the animal dies or is euthanased as a result of a disease that is traceable to the point of sale, the proprietor must refund the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

2.12 Returning long term seized dogs (that have been held due to legislative process) to owners

Owners must be advised that the animal has been managed according to legislative requirements and informed of any behavioural issues or problems that have been noted. They must be strongly encouraged to seek advice from an animal behavioural specialist or training expert on rehabilitating the animal back into the home environment.

2.13 Public access to establishments

Reasonable periods for public access to the establishment must be provided during working hours. Public access after hours or on weekends at an establishment may be made by appointment with the authorised officer or an animal attendant at the establishment.

3 Transport vehicles and animal housing

3.1 Council, contracted to Council and establishment animal transport vehicles

Council, Council contracted, and establishment vehicles used for the transport of animals must have the following features for the confinement of animals:

- provision for animals to be physically separated and restrained or individually enclosed by compartment or cage;
- if dogs and cats are transported in the same vehicle there must be visual separation between the dogs and cats;
- any cages in the cargo area are to be secured to the vehicle to prevent movement of the cage;
- no protrusions or sharp edges in the framework, doors, partitions, etc.;
- any additional stored equipment must be secured or separated to prevent movement or injury to an animal being carried;
- a design that is both escape-proof and prevents the protrusion of head and/or limbs of any animal carried;
- floors must be strong enough to bear the weight of the animals being transported, and must have a non-slip surface to minimise the likelihood of injury;

- be weatherproof with adequate ventilation of vehicles both when stationary and in motion;
- facilities for ease of loading and unloading animals with minimal risk of injury to the animals and humans;
- materials and a design that allows for effective cleaning and disinfection.

Animals must not be transported in the cabin of animal transport vehicles unless secured in a crate.

3.2 Animal housing

Temperature, humidity and ventilation must be considered at the establishment.

The animal housing areas must have:

- natural lighting or lighting that duplicates the characteristics of natural light including a simulated day/night period;
- adequate fire extinguishers or other fire protection in each of the animal housing facilities;
- sufficient ventilation to keep animal housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts;
- supply of fresh air.

Where animals are housed in a totally enclosed area, where forced ventilation is the only form of air movement, the following is required:

- an air change rate of a minimum of eight changes per hour and sustained to prevent the build up of foul odours;
- ventilation must not cause draughts and must distribute fresh air evenly to all of the animal housing areas;
- temperature must be maintained in the range of 15-27 °C;
- air recirculation units incorporating effective air cleaning and filtration to ensure the removal of infectious organisms and chemicals;
- a back-up and alarm system in case of power failures or breakdown of ventilation and temperature control mechanisms.

3.2.1 Design of animal housing areas, isolation housing and holding facilities

Animal housing areas, isolation housing and holding facilities separating dogs and cats must be physically separated by an opaque and impervious barrier. Areas must be constructed of impervious, washable materials designed to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.

The floors of animal housing areas and holding facilities must be constructed of an impervious material that is free of cracks and sealed to assist with drainage and disinfection. Animal housing areas

and holding facilities must be constructed so as to not allow water, wastes or urine to pass between individual pens, cages or modules.

Animal housing areas and holding facilities must be completely enclosed with a solid or wire roof to prevent the escape of animals. Animal housing areas and holding facilities must not have gaps in the design that would allow an animal to protrude its head outside the housing area.

Outdoor animal housing areas and holding facilities must be encircled by a 1.8 metre high fence with lockable gates to prevent the escape of animals. Outdoor animal housing areas and holding facilities must have weatherproof sleeping quarters and a bed to provide protection from extremes of weather.

Preferably, animal housing areas should not be built to face each other as this will increase the noise and spread of diseases between animals.

Cat cages and modules must have an impervious barrier between them. Where cat cages and modules face each other, in isolation areas and quarantine, the distance between the cat cages and modules must not be less than 1.2 metres.

Where dog housing areas face each other and the drainage line is centrally located between the pens, an impervious partition one metre high must be centrally installed in the area to reduce the possibility of the spread of disease into the opposite housing area during cleaning.

Individual drainage outlets must be incorporated in each pen and connected to a completely enclosed drain or pipe. Drains at the front of dog pens must be enclosed to prevent the animal or person walking through waste water. Floors of dog pens must be graded to this drainage outlet. An impervious barrier one metre high and sealed to the floor must separate all dog pens and dog exercise areas.

3.2.2 Examination and treatment areas

If the establishment does not have a written agreement with a veterinary practitioner for the use of their facilities then a separate first aid treatment area must be provided and equipped with a table which can be readily cleaned and disinfected, lighting and shelving, and first-aid materials including dressings, disinfectants and medicines to treat open wounds. Restricted drugs kept on the premises must be stored and used in accordance with the appropriate legislation. Hot and cold running water must be available in the examination area of the establishment.

3.2.3 Size of animal housing areas, isolation areas and holding facilities

a. Dogs

During the statutory and quarantine period, adult dogs must be housed only one dog to a pen. Up to four weaned puppies can be housed in a pen together if they are from the same litter or, if from different litters, at the conclusion of the quarantine period following vaccination.

Post quarantine, compatible dogs that are assessed suitable for rehoming, may be housed two to a pen.

Dogs surrendered together may be housed together providing the owner states that they are compatible and were normally housed together.

Where dogs are housed together they must have separate beds and food containers.

One third of the area of each pen must be weatherproof and include a bed.

Table 4. Minimum pen sizes for dogs or up to four puppies

Height of dog/puppies at shoulders (centimetres)	Minimum Area (square metres)	Minimum Width (centimetres)	Minimum Height (centimetres)	Increased floor area for each additional dog (square metres)
above 70	3.5	120	180	1.7
40 to 70	2.4	100	180	1.2
below 40	1.5	90	180	1.0

b. Cats

Cats must be housed individually in cages or modules constructed of impervious, washable materials during the statutory and quarantine period. Cats surrendered together may be housed together providing the owner states that they are compatible and were normally housed together and they are housed in colony pens.

Statutory eight day period cages or transitional period cages can accommodate up to three kittens providing that the kittens are from the same litter or, if from different litters, at the conclusion of the quarantine period following vaccination. Up to six kittens can be held together in module cages providing that their temperament has been assessed as suitable for colony housing.

Cats must not be kept in statutory eight day period cages for more than eight days. Cats kept for longer than eight days must be housed in transitional period cages, modules or colony pens.

Male cats kept in colony pens must be desexed and all cats must have completed their vaccination period. Desexed males (that have completed a six week post-surgery period) and females can be housed together. It is recommended that females be desexed if they are to be housed long term.

Colony pens must contain, for each cat housed in the colony pen, an individual litter tray and food container and a bed for each cat/ kitten that provides a visual barrier from the shared area.

Table 5. Minimum cage, module and colony pen sizes for cats or up to three kittens

Cat housing (single cat or up to three kittens)	Minimum Floor Area (square metres)	Minimum Width (centimetres)	Minimum Height (centimetres)
Statutory eight day period	0.49	70	50
Transitional period	1.5	-	90
Modules**	0.8	90	180
Colony Pens** (area per cat) for up to eight cats	2.0	200	180

** A module or colony pen must contain at least two levels, excluding the floor, and these levels must be connected to the floor by means of a ramp or pole.

4 Records

4.1 Collection and retention of information by proprietor

The proprietor must record the following information and retain these records for a period of not less than five years:

(a) For animals physically presented at the establishment for admission but not admitted:

- date of presentation
- reason for the animal's non-admittance:
 - (a) no capacity;
 - (b) significant or unmanageable health concerns;
 - (c) significant or unmanageable behaviour concerns;
 - (d) animal from another jurisdiction; or
 - (e) other

(b) For animals handed in by their owners or owner's agent:

- species of animal
- name of the animal
- name of the owner of the animal
- contact telephone number and address of the owner or owner's agent
- reason the animal was handed in.

A description of the animal including:

- sex and whether the animal is desexed
- breed type
- colour
- age
- details of medical, dietary, bathing and grooming requirements
- vaccination status
- heartworm treatment (dogs)
- any behaviour problems
- any permanent identification.

(c) For animals seized under the Act:

- species of animal
- location where animal was seized
- time and date animal was seized
- name and address of person who seized the animal (business address of authorised officers or Council contractors)
- reason why animal was seized.

A description of the animal including:

- sex and whether the animal is desexed
- breed type
- colour
- age
- any injuries noted when seized
- any behaviour problems noted when seized, e.g. aggression
- any permanent identification.

(d) For animals in foster care:

- species of animal
- address where animal is in foster care
- date animal was assessed as requiring foster care
- date animal was taken to foster care
- date animal was returned to establishment
- name, address and telephone number of foster carer
- reason why animal is in foster care.

A description of the animal including:

- sex and whether the animal is desexed
- breed type
- colour
- age
- details of medical, dietary, bathing and grooming requirements
- vaccination status
- heartworm treatment (dogs)
- any behaviour problems
- permanent identification.

(e) Fate of animal - including recovery by owner, rehoming or euthanasia

In the event that the animal is recovered by an owner:

- name and address of person who recovered the animal
- registration status of the animal at time of recovery
- Council registration and microchip number of the animal
- municipal area in which the animal is to be kept.
- In the event that the animal is rehomed:
- microchip number and date of implantation
- date Animal Registry Service was notified
- date Council notified that new owner lives in that Council area
- date animal was wormed
- date animal was desexed
- date animal was vaccinated and by whom it was vaccinated.

In the event that the animal is permanently transferred to another establishment or organisation for rehoming:

- date of transfer
- name of establishment or organisation animal transferred to
- In the event that the animal is returned to the establishment after being rehomed:
- date of animal return to establishment
- reason for animal return:
 - (a) change of mind;
 - (b) owner circumstances changed;
 - (c) post-adoption health or behavioural issues; or
 - (d) other

In the event that the animal is euthanased:

- date of the animal's euthanasia
- reason for animal's euthanasia:
 - (a) disease;
 - (b) injury;
 - (c) behaviour;
 - (d) age;
 - (e) unsuitability for sale;
 - (f) unidentified cat that is wild, uncontrollable, or diseased; or
 - (g) unweaned and orphaned animal
- method of the animal's euthanasia.

In the event an animal dies, but is not euthanased, in the establishment or while in foster care:

- date of death.

4.2 Reporting by proprietor

The proprietor must collect and provide to the Victorian Government department responsible for administering the Act the information specified in this section, so that all animals managed by the establishment can be traced. The information must be provided in the template provided by the Victorian government department responsible for administering the Act, in accordance with the following tables:

Pilot reporting periods	Pilot reporting dates
1 January – 30 June 2023 1 July – 31 December 2023	On or before 31 August 2023 On or before 28 February 2024
Ongoing reporting period	Ongoing reporting date
1 January – 31 December of the same calendar year	On or before 28 February, following the end of the reporting period

The information required to be reported is the number of dogs and cats:

- in care at the establishment, or in foster care, on the first day of the reporting period
- not accepted for admission, including the reason an animal was not accepted for admission
- accepted for admission
- admitted to foster care
- that waited more than 14 days to access foster care
- permanently transferred to other facilities or groups for rehoming
- reclaimed by their owner
- rehomed
- rehomed but returned, including the reason the animal was returned
- euthanased, including the reason why euthanasia was the appropriate or necessary outcome
- that died while in the establishment or while in foster care, but were not euthanased.

