

Code of Practice for the
**Operation of
Dog Training
Establishments**



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1 Introduction

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

The purpose of the Code is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of dogs being trained in dog training establishments.

The Code and its provisions are to be observed by all proprietors of dog training establishments, including those establishments that conduct training at the residence of a client, and by people who work in them. All dog training establishments must comply with State and Local Government legislation and permits.

Protection training is defined as training a dog to attack people or animals and includes the training of a dog to attack a human wearing padded protective clothing for any purpose including

sport. All dogs entering dog training establishments must be identified and dogs that are undergoing protection training must be permanently identified by means of a microchip issued by the municipality in which the dog normally resides. The Act requires an owner to notify the appropriate municipality immediately attack training has commenced.

If, in the trainer's opinion, a dog is suffering from any ailment, the trainer may refuse to train that dog.

Reasonable care must be exercised by the trainer or training establishment, to ensure the safety and well being of the client and dog at all times, e.g. in circumstances where a dog is aggressive, and displays a clear danger to other dogs or people it must be muzzled.

Slip Collars (choker chains), must not be used on puppies under 12 weeks of age.

Undue force must not be used when training any dog. All proprietors of dog training establishments must carry a minimum of \$5,000,000 Public Liability insurance cover.

2 Staff

2.1 Manager

The proprietor of a dog training establishment is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the facility and for the welfare of the animals held therein. In particular, the proprietor is responsible for:

- the well-being of all animals in the establishment;
- the supervision of staff;
- the maintenance and collation of records and statistics;
- supervision of daily feeding, watering, inspection and training 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;
- ensuring adequate shade is available at each training venue;
- provision of cleaning utensils for the disposal of dog's faeces and ensuring that they are available at all times whilst training is being conducted;
- notifying owners (or their contacts) as soon as possible when an animal is observed to be ailing or injured or promptly after a veterinarian has examined the animal;
- developing a plan for an emergency situation;
- provision of suitable padded training attire for use in protection training.

2.2 Veterinarian

The proprietor of an establishment must have a written agreement with sufficient veterinarians to be on call for the treatment of animals other than first aid.

2.3 Animal attendants

Animal attendants employed by the proprietor of the training establishment must be trained and experienced to properly manage the dogs being trained. They are responsible to the proprietor for:

- daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals;
- daily cleaning of facilities, ie. hose out, replace bedding, feeding and watering utensils;
- reporting of sick or injured animals;
- exercising dogs as required by the manager.

The proprietor of the training establishment must ensure that staff health is protected by the provision of appropriate work clothing, adequate hand washing facilities and tetanus immunization. Information must be supplied on disease-causing organisms which can be transmitted to humans (zoonoses) and personal hygiene procedures must be such that transmission could not occur. A First Aid Kit must be available at all times at all training venues and at least one staff member, whether a trainer or not, must be qualified in First Aid, and available at all times at each training venue whilst training is being conducted.

The proprietor of a training establishment must ensure that at each training venue, telephone access is provided for, in case of emergencies.

3 Husbandry

3.1 Nutrition

All dogs housed in the training establishment must be fed at least once a day. The food provided must contain acceptable nutritive values in sufficient quantity to meet appropriate daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

All animals must have a permanent supply of fresh, clean water.

Food and water containers must be non spillable and of a design that can be easily cleaned and does not cause injury to the animals.

3.2 Vaccination and health care

For dogs, pre-vaccination against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus is required. A current vaccination certificate (ie, certifying that vaccination was done within the preceding 12 months and that the "due date" for the next vaccination has not passed) must be produced for each dog before admission. Vaccination against canine cough and checking for heartworm infection should be recommended prior to admission.

Animals known or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease must not be admitted for training.

3.3 Hygiene

The training establishment is to be clean and hygienic at all times. All pens must be cleaned out at least once per day (twice daily if inspection shows it is required) by hosing or other appropriate means. All uneaten food must be removed by hand before hosing, to ensure the pen is fresh and clean. Used litter and uneaten food must be placed in sealed plastic bags for disposal.

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

Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of the local government authority. Use of a trade waste service for collection and disposal of wastes is preferable. Wastes must not be incinerated.

After cleaning, sleeping areas must not be allowed to remain wet.

Disinfection of pens must be done whenever the pen is vacated or every seventh day with hospital grade disinfectants. Utensils must be rinsed after disinfecting to avoid poisoning. Manufacturer's instructions for the use of these agents must be followed.

All watering and feeding utensils must be cleaned daily.

Pests including fleas, ticks, flies, mosquitoes and rodents must be effectively controlled. Chemicals used for pest control must be either prescribed by a registered veterinarian and/or registered by the National Registration Authority (NRA) under the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code (Commonwealth) and should be used only in accordance with label instructions.

3.4 Security

Kennel buildings must be able to be securely locked. Design and materials used must ensure the security of the facility.

Each individual kennel must be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the animals. Any security methods used must allow for ready access to animals and ready exit for staff and animals from the premises in the event of an emergency.

All training establishments where dogs are boarded or protection training occurs must have an external perimeter fence at least 1.8 metres high surrounding the establishment to prevent the escape of animals. The external walls of the

facility may serve as the perimeter fence if an animal escaping from its pen or cage is restrained by these walls.

Dogs in training establishments must be safe from attack, stress or injury and their behavioural needs should be met.

3.5 Housing

Each dog training establishment must provide an area for reception, records storage, and display of information for clients. Premises must include washing and toilet facilities for staff.

Kennels must be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that ensures the good health and well being of the animals, whilst preventing escape or injury to humans.

Housing must provide protection from the weather (wind, rain, sun and extremes of climate), vermin and harassment from other animals.

Materials should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. Floors of animal housing areas of kennels must be made of an impervious material to assist cleaning and drainage. Wood, brick, dirt or grass floors are not acceptable.

The internal surfaces of the external walls of kennels must be constructed of impervious, solid, washable materials optimally curved at the wall/floor junctions to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.

Kennel floors must be sloped to enable wastes and water to run off. A collection drain must be provided to take away water after cleaning.

Pens may be separated by either solid partitions, galvanised chain wire or weld mesh wire dividers. Pens must be completely enclosed having either a solid or wire roof.

All kennels must be provided with a weatherproof sleeping area containing raised beds.

Where dog kennels are constructed indoors, temperature, humidity and ventilation must be considered. Ventilation must be adequate to keep animal housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts. Cage or pen areas must have an ample supply of fresh air.

3.6 Minimum pen sizes

All adult dogs must be housed one to a pen.

| Height of Dog at shoulder (cm) | Min. Area (sq.m) | Min. Width (cm) | Min. Height (cm) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 40-70 | 2.4 | 90 | 180 |
| 70 and above | 3.5 | 120 | 180 |

The minimum pen sizes are for one adult dog (older than 16 weeks).

One third of the area of each pen must be weatherproof and include raised sleeping quarters.

4 Protection training establishments

The minimum age of a dog before protection training is allowed is 12 months.

4.1 Protection training venues

Due to the noise factor and the potential danger to the public that protection training generates, certain venues such as public reserves and schools are not allowed to be used for this purpose.

4.2 Security requirements

A 1.8 metre high chain mesh fence must enclose the immediate training area to protect the public from dogs being agitated. This fence is in addition to the external security fence. These measures will ensure the secure containment of the dogs whilst being agitated and to ensure the public's safety.

4.3 Temperament and training assessment of dogs prior to commencement of protection training

All dogs must be assessed individually to ascertain their suitability for protection training. Only dogs with a stable temperament are to be accepted.

The following character traits are unacceptable in a dog for protection training:

- fear;
- nervousness;
- fear aggression/fear biter;
- nervous aggression.

It is the responsibility of the training establishment to ensure that a high standard of obedience training exists prior to the commencement of protection training. A handler must be able to demonstrate that the dog can be controlled reliably off-lead.

Only recognised guarding breeds of the large variety & cross of these breeds, are allowed to be trained in protection training. These Breeds are:

- German Shepherd
- Rottweiler
- Doberman
- Other breeds recognised by the Victorian Canine Association as large guarding breeds.

All other breeds are excluded including the fighting breeds.

4.4 Pre-requisites for people wishing to train their dog in protection training

Only Licensed Security Guards registered under the Private Agents Act 1965, are eligible to have their dogs trained as Protection Dogs, or to be trained in Protection Training.

Proof of Security Licence must be shown to the training establishment prior to commencement of Protection Training.

No member of the general public may be trained in protection training unless the above pre-requisites are complied with.

4.5 Categories for protection training

Professional security dogs and commercial yard dogs. These levels of training are only open to Bona-fide Security personnel including those supplying yard dogs to protect commercial premises.

Yard dogs & professional security dogs are allowed full suit & leg bites in their training.

4.6 Legal requirements of client

Protection training clients must be given an information pamphlet on their responsibility of owning a dog that has undergone protection training under Section 37, Division 3, Part 3 of the Act. The proprietor of a protection training establishment must also display this information at each of its venues.

4.7 Registration of clients on commencement of protection training

The proprietor of a protection training establishment must furnish relevant councils with details of all protection training clients including name, address, telephone and Security Licence Number.

