

## Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963

### Guidance Notes for Licence Conditions

#### Dog Boarding Establishments

#### 1 Numbers of Animals

##### 1.1 Number of Dogs Permitted

**Notes:** The number of dogs permitted relates to the number and size of the kennels and must be stipulated clearly on the front sheet of the displayed licence. The decision regarding the number of dogs, as well as considering kennel size and numbers, will take into account the effectiveness of site management.

Dogs from the same family who normally live together, may prefer to share a kennel. It is a requirement that operators obtain written authorisation from the dog owner before kennel sharing is allowed. Where sharing occurs the dogs must be able to lie down comfortably in the sleeping area, with sufficient space for the door to open fully.

**Holding Kennels** – The number of holding kennels provided should be agreed between the kennel owner and the Local Authority. In general holding kennels should not constitute more than 25% of the total number of residential kennels.

**Identification and Control of Dogs on Site** – The Control of Dogs Order 1992 requires that all dogs, **whilst in a public area**, must wear a collar and tag stating the name and address of the owner. It is recommended that all dogs boarded at the establishment should wear a collar and tag identifying the name of the owner, or have the collar and tag secured immediately outside the kennel. This will assist in the identification. It will also assist staff with dog control if one tries to escape, or if there is a fire or other emergency. In the case of sharing it will be necessary to take the collars off and hang them outside the kennel.

**Dangerous Dogs** – Dogs subject to contracts under current Dangerous Dogs Legislation must have a copy of the licence and insurance certificate lodged with the boarding kennel.

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## 1.2 Kennel Size, Layout and Exercise Facilities

**Notes:** In existing kennels the new size requirements for sleeping areas should be phased in over a number of years after consultation between the kennel owner and the Local Authority taking into account local circumstances.

During kennel construction it is necessary to use an appropriate design and correct materials to overcome problems of noise emission and to ensure energy conservation. This is in order to minimise discomfort to the dog and to minimise the risk of nuisance to persons in the vicinity of the site.

**Adverse Weather** – In adverse weather conditions the responsible person must decide whether or not dogs are given free access to their exercise area.

In existing kennels the new size requirements for exercise areas should be phased in over a number of years after consultation between the kennel owner and Local Authority taking into account local circumstances. This exercise area should be roofed to a minimum of half the area, sufficient to give the dog protection against the weather.

Some of this should be translucent material capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.

**Communal Areas for Exercise:** In general, communal areas should be discouraged because of the risk of disease spread, in particular worms, and fighting. With the provision of individual exercise areas to each kennel, the extra provision of a communal area need not be provided. Surface ponding of water must not occur and land drainage should be provided where necessary if normal site drainage proves inadequate.

The risk of spreading disease, in particular worms, is increased by use of communal areas.

All communal exercise areas should be provided with an impervious cleansable surface at least around the perimeter (concrete, laid to a suitable fall to prevent ponding and promote drainage).

## 2 Licence Display

**Notes:** If displayed externally the licence and its conditions should be protected from the weather. Preferably the licence should be displayed in the reception area.

The number of dogs for which the premises is licensed, must be specified on the licence. Guidance to their numbers are found in these notes.

### Insurance

**Notes:** Adequate insurance indemnity should be arranged by the operator of the premises. This should be maintained at a sufficient level to cover the maximum number of dogs boarded. Several companies offer policies specific to animal boarding establishments. Details are often advertised in pet publications.

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Proprietors of animal boarding establishments are able to insure purely the liability aspects by taking out third party liability cover. In addition, you can insure against veterinary fees for accident and illness, death from accidents, death from illness and loss from theft and straying. You must insure against public liability.

Employers Liability Insurance is mandatory for boarding establishments owners who employ staff. Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

Certificates of insurance must be prominently displayed.

### **Staff Facilities**

**Notes:** Adequate toilet and washing facilities must be available for staff in accordance with health and safety requirements.

An adequate First Aid kit must be available for staff use.

Staff should be adequately trained in the safe handling of dogs, emergency procedures to be followed, and all other aspects of the licence conditions which are pertinent to their work. Staff should also be regularly vaccinated against Tetanus.

### **Establishments Receiving Both Dogs and Cats**

**Notes:** When the granting of the licence is being considered by the Local Authority, there will be a presumption against cats and dogs being kept within sight of each other, unless good reason can be made otherwise.

In consideration of "Good Reasons" existing facilities and management must be taken into account.

## **3 Construction**

### **3.1 General**

**Notes:** The conversion of existing buildings should be discouraged. Experience shows that they may be more expensive to adapt and less efficient to operate.

Application for building works may well require approval from the building control department and/or planning department.

The purpose of the plan is to aid interpretation of the conditions applied. An approved plan need not be a detailed surveyors drawing. A site plan to scale of the whole site including domestic/staff accommodation will suffice.

At least 20% of the individual exercise runs must be covered with a suitable mesh.

Where galvanised welded mesh is used for fencing the wire diameter must not be less than 2.0mm (14 gauge) excluding any covering and the mesh size must not exceed 5.0cm (2in).

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The interior and exterior of the buildings should be kept in good decorative order and repair. Outer paths, gardens, exercise areas and general surroundings must be kept in good, clean, presentable condition. Failure to comply with this recommendation may be a consideration in any decision by the Local Authority to withdraw the licence for any reason.

A safe system of work must ensure correct use of chemicals and materials used in the kennel and must include constructional details suitable to reduce spread of infection, disease and contamination.

**Wood in Kennels:** The purpose of avoiding wood on surface structures of kennel interiors is because of the possibility of damage to the material caused by scratching by animals. Worn and splintered material is difficult to clean, harbours bacteria, viruses etc and allows the splinters produced to penetrate the animals' skin.

The whole point of hygienic and safe practice is to provide easy to clean surfaces.

### 3.2 Walls and Partitions

**Notes:** This condition is to provide a physical barrier to infection. It will also reduce aggression while allowing socialisation.

Suitable materials for the construction of partition walls would be properly surfaced, impervious brick/block constructions, moulded plastic, glass reinforced plastic (GRP), pre-formed plastic surfaced board etc. Such solid construction may be from floor to ceiling, but this should not be detrimental to other welfare considerations such as the dog's outlook, lighting and ventilation. Sealing refers to the use of a proprietary water proofing agent for sealing the wall against damp-penetration. Under certain circumstances sealing of brickwork can only be achieved by rendering prior to sealing.

In individual exercise areas it is recommended that the solid partition be of a minimum of 675mm (27 inches) high from the ground and in existing construction this condition should be phased in over a suitable period taking into consideration existing construction and the condition of the kennels.

### 3.3 Floors

**Notes:** Floors of kennels and related exercise areas should be constructed in impervious material and be readily cleansable while providing sufficient grip for the animal to walk or run without sustaining injury.

Drainage channels should be provided near to the kennel edge so that urine is not allowed to pass over walk areas in corridors and communal access areas. It is reasonable to face a bedding area in the opposite direction to the exercise area if separate drainage channels are appropriately sited. Before beginning any alterations you are advised to contact the building control section of the Local Authority. Waste water outlets may need approval from the National Rivers Authority (contact your local area office for advice).

"Communal" facilities must not be used by more than one dog at any one time unless they are from the same household.

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Communal exercise areas should generally be discouraged – see Notes in Section 1

### 3.4 Ceilings

**Notes:** Where kennels are provided, within converted outbuildings, consideration should be given to ease of cleaning, energy conservation, wildlife access, lighting and ventilation.

### 3.5 Doors

**Notes:** See also General Construction for galvanised welded mesh use (Section 3.1)

Galvanised Weld Mesh should be a minimum of 2mm (14 gauge) in thickness. It is recommended that the spacing of the wire should not exceed 50mm (2 in)

When designing kennel doors regard should be paid to the Health and Safety of the person working in the kennel, for example large dogs may push against the door which may give rise to difficulties in securing the door and even to accidents to the person on the opposite side of the door when it opens outwards. Therefore consideration could be given to opening the outer door in an inward direction in the interests of staff safety.

### 3.6 Windows

**Notes:** Windows when a security risk must be protected by welded mesh, or be made of reinforced glass, polycarbonate or other impact resistant material.

### 3.7 Lighting

**Notes:** Natural and artificial lighting must be of sufficient standard to enable efficient working after daylight hours.

### 3.8 Ventilation

**Notes:** Draughts can be the outcome of ventilation provided for animal health. Heating can equally be removed by ventilation. A balance is necessary between adequate ventilation and the unnecessary removal of warm air.

Ventilation is important as an aid to disease control, a protection against smell accumulation, and prevention of excessive humidity in the atmosphere. High humidity increases the risk of kennel cough and should be avoided.

Siting of the bed is an important consideration. Raising the bed and providing adequate protective sides to allow the dog “depth” to seek protection are considerations in protecting the dog.

### 3.9 Maintenance

Maintenance and repair of the whole establishment must be carried out regularly to achieve the requirements listed.

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## 4 Management

### 4.1 Training

**Notes:** The licensee must formulate a written training policy for permanent, part time and seasonal workers. The following are regarded as essential topics to be covered in the programme:

Safe handling of dogs

Animal Welfare

Cleanliness and Hygiene

Feeding and Food Preparation

Disease Control

Recognition and Treatment of Sick Animals

Health and Safety

Emergency Procedures

Other aspects of the licence conditions which are pertinent to their duties

### Transportation of Animals

All vehicles used by the establishment for the transportation of dogs must be regularly serviced and kept clean. They must be fitted with cages of adequate size for the safe transportation of dogs and be provided with adequate ventilation. All vehicles must be secure and should not be left unattended when transporting a dog.

### 4.2 Temperature in Kennels

**Notes:** Many kennels have been built without proper concern for the welfare of the dog. The materials used on the kennel exterior may not offer adequate protection against temperature variations throughout the majority of the year.

There will be periods in the year where ambient external temperatures will cause temperatures to fluctuate above or below the recommended levels. If the higher temperature level is exceeded due to structural shortcomings rather than normal ambient temperature then artificial means of counteracting this high temperature should be introduced.

Where temperatures lower than indicated are reached the use of individual heating lamps for dogs may prove adequate. In some circumstances additional background heating will also be required.

The temperature of the isolation kennels should not be allowed to fall below 15.5°C (60°F) generally, unless specific advice is given to the contrary by the Veterinary Surgeon.

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The difficulty of providing maximum temperature levels is acknowledged. 26°C (79°F) is a realistic temperature which should not be exceeded in normal circumstances.

It is important to remember that a minimum temperature of 10°C (50°F) is required, and if inadequate attention has been given to construction and insulation it will be necessary to use additional heating and thereby increase running costs. Failure to provide additional heating will cause dogs to suffer. Particular attention should be paid to design and construction. Geographical orientation is also relevant. Aspect affects temperature. It is often difficult to maintain adequate temperatures with north facing openings. Correct attention to orientation of the kennel will allow maximum use of natural light.

Similarly in summer temperatures, poorly insulated exteriors will allow internal temperatures to build up (similar to car interiors) to excessive levels. Even with additional ventilation the dogs will suffer.

Some summer temperatures will naturally exceed 26°C (79°F). Inadequate construction or ventilation of the kennels must not be an excuse to allow unnecessarily high temperatures being attained.

Where temperatures are likely to rise above the maximum levels specified in the notes there should be some means of mechanical or automatic cooling/ventilation.

A safe system of heating must be provided so that risks of electrocution and burning are avoided. Open flame appliances must not be used.

### **4.3 Cleanliness**

Advice must be sought from the Environment Agency or local authority concerning removal of waste such as dog faeces and soiled material. In addition, foul waste water must be disposed of by discharge to the approved drainage system. Those wishing to operate an incinerator must seek advice from the Environment Agency and/or the local authority.

There are a range of alternative cleaning regimes. The regime should, however, include:

1. Removal of solids
2. Washing
3. Disinfection to manufacturer's stated instructions
4. Drying

The physical collection of faeces is usual ('poop scoop' or shovel and bucket). The use of detergent and water will 'wash down'. Pressure hoses or steam cleaning will wash down more effectively.

Bacteria, viruses and fungi must be controlled by the sanitising process. Because disinfectant is washed away after a short period of time, the long term activity of chemicals used to control viruses, bacteria and fungi should be considered.

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Great care should be taken when using any chlorine-based chemical, e.g. Bleach. Chemicals and materials must be used and stored according to the manufacturers instructions.

Combinations of bactericides, fungicides and virucides may prove expensive to use and may not necessarily provide the best system. Professional advice should be sought for the most effective method.

Staff working from kennel to kennel further increases the risk of spreading disease. Staff should be trained in good kennel hygiene. Complete disinfection of kennel and equipment must be carried out between occupancies.

There is a balance between the dog enjoying a known environment and introducing infection and infestation in wickerwork baskets and old clothing/bedding etc. Staff handling between kennels further increases the risk of disease spread. While owners' own baskets and bedding may help a dog to settle, particularly during its first stay in boarding conditions, their use should be discouraged as there is no immediate control over cleanliness and parasite transmission.

Where such bedding is provided, the operator must ensure that it is clean and parasite free.

#### **4.4 Food and Water Supplies**

**Notes:** Dogs should be fed to a standard compatible with the maintenance of health. Inspectors will observe the general nutrition status of the dogs and the type and quality of food in store and in the process of preparation. If necessary, a veterinary surgeon will be called in to advise.

Food should not be left for excessive periods within the kennel in order to avoid smells and flies. More food and water may be required for old or young dogs. No food should be left outside at night.

Disposable eating dishes, although expensive, are recommended as hygienic since they cannot transmit infection and are a saving of time and labour since they are immediately disposable. Expanded polystyrene is not a suitable material for this use.

#### **4.5 Kitchen Facilities**

**Notes:** Kitchen facilities must be provided in an area separate from the domestic facilities. No household or boarded animals should ever enter this area.

#### **4.6 Disease Control and Vaccination**

**Notes:** "Other relevant diseases" allows for the insertion of diseases which may as yet be unknown but which may be regarded as important in the future or which may be added according to circumstances.

It is true to say that with most vaccines it takes four weeks for an unvaccinated animal to gain full protection lasting 12 months. This would involve a course of two injections, the second three weeks after the first with full immunity achieved after another week.

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Further to advice from the Councils Veterinary Consultant it is accepted that a previously unvaccinated animal over 12 weeks would have a reasonable level of immunity one week after their first treatment and may be admitted to the premises at that time. The second treatment should be given according to the manufacturers instructions in order to give immunity for the year.

Animals where the vaccination has lapsed for more than three months should be considered to be unvaccinated and treated as described above.

Animals where the vaccination has lapsed for less than three months may be admitted to the premises one week after revaccination and are then fully vaccinated for one year.

This advice is based on information supplied by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, which controls veterinary drugs.

A shorter time is acceptable if suitable veterinary evidence is provided, based on manufacturers' instructions. For example, intra-nasal vaccination for *Bordatella bronchiseptica* (part of the Kennel Cough complex) is regarded as giving solid protection after only five days.

Vaccination against Kennel Cough should be encouraged. Kennel owners should seek the advice of their Veterinary Surgeon regarding accomplishment of this, as the disease is generally regarded as being multi-factorial.

It is important that there are facilities and procedures for cleansing and disease control and that staff are familiar with the procedures and understand what action to taken in the event of an outbreak of disease.

Phenolic disinfectants should not be used around dogs and dogs must be kept dry during cleaning of enclosures.

If there is evidence of external parasites (fleas, ticks, lice etc.) the dog should be thoroughly combed with a flea comb. It may then also be treated with an appropriate proprietary insecticide except where a long acting topical insecticide has been administered within the manufacturers recommended dosage interval.

If there is evidence of internal parasites the advice of a veterinary surgeon should be sought.

All insecticides, disinfectants etc. must be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and hazard sheets kept for staff which explain precautions to be taken by the user.

The first aid kit for use on dogs must be kept well stocked at all times.

The minimum contents should consist of;

Antiseptic solution (e.g. Chlorhexdine)

Sterile water for bathing eyes and wounds

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Cotton wool both for cleaning and bandaging

Bandaging material – including non adhesive wound dressing

(e.g. Melolin), elastic bandaging, and adhesive bandage (e.g. Vetrap).

Further advice on contents should be available from the establishment's veterinary surgeon.

It is important to consider procedures to be carried out in case of death or escape. All staff should be made fully aware of these procedures. They will also help to reassure owners that the establishment acted correctly in that situation. Any dog that has died on the premises must be referred to a veterinary surgeon and the Licensing Officer of the Local Authority must be informed.

A veterinary practice should be appointed for the establishment. The name, address and telephone number must be displayed in a prominent position in a public area. The 24 hour telephone contact number of the veterinary surgeon used by the establishment should be displayed in a suitable place, close to the telephone and accessible to all members of staff.

#### 4.7 Isolation

**Notes:** Isolation facilities must be provided at the rate of at least one isolation kennel for up to 50 kennels at the establishment and pro rata above that. The number should be noted on the Licence.

The requirement for 5m (16ft) distance between isolation facilities and main kennels is based upon consideration of the distance that a dog sneeze travels. Intervening buildings and constructional detail (i.e. window and door positions) should be taken into account. Individual circumstances may significantly vary the stated figure.

Isolation facilities must be used where the presence of infectious disease is suspected. Where stray dogs are accepted by the kennels they must be kept in a separate areas away from boarded dogs. Isolation facilities must only be used for this purpose in exceptional circumstances i.e. where stray intake in minimal. Condition 4.6.1 would apply to staff handling strays.

Protective clothing and equipment, for use only in the isolation facility, must be used to reduce the spread of infection.

#### 4.8 Register

**Notes:** Computerised, loose-leaf, index card and book register systems are acceptable. If a book register is used, pages must be consecutively numbers. Records of the owner's agreement for animals from the same household to share may be kept on a separate form if a computerised system is used.

It is strongly urged that the establishment introduce formal boarding agreements, stating clearly the responsibilities of both parties during the duration of the kennelling. The Licensing Officer of the Local Authority will consider the details recorded in the register against the actual facts observed.

Owners should be encouraged to sign an authorisation for veterinary treatment.

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## 4.9 Identification Of Kennels

**Notes:** An alternative system of identification to that of numbering can be used with the approval of the Licensing Authority providing the system in use meets the criteria for identification and information provision for each dog and is readily accessible and easy to use.

The system of identification of units must be capable of containing relevant information such as feeding habits and frequencies, medicinal treatments etc. If identified on the kennel it must not obscure the primary information. If additional information is stored electronically or manually away from the kennel the information must be readily and easily accessible.

## 4.10 Supervision

**Notes:** Intervals between visits should not exceed four hours, between 8.00am and 6.00pm. An evening visit may be appropriate but must be balanced against the possibility of disturbing the dogs and causing noise nuisance.

## 4.11 Fire Precautions

**Notes:** It is recommended that plans and details of the establishment are logged with the police and fire authorities. Fire protection advice must be sought from the Fire Prevention Officer regarding appropriate fire extinguishers and their correct siting, fire drills, fire escapes etc. and implemented. The general maxim of “people first” in the event of fire is good advice.

Where rebuilding or providing new buildings, the Fire Prevention Officer will give advice on fireproofing requirements.

The advice given by the Fire Prevention Officer should be in writing and particular regard should be given to the safe storage of inflammable substances. Staff should know how to use the fire extinguishers. It is also advisable to install smoke detectors.