



Submission

# Draft Code of Welfare (Dogs) 2023



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# Introduction

**This is a draft Code of Welfare submitted to NAWAC for consideration. This document has not been issued by the Minister for Agriculture and does not replace the current Code of Welfare (Dogs) 2018 or any other related legislation.**

Codes of welfare are developed by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC). Under section 70 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act), the Minister, NAWAC, or any other person may prepare a draft code of welfare. If a specific industry or organisation believes a new code, or an updated code, is needed, they can invest their own resources to develop a draft code before sending it to NAWAC for consideration. NAWAC Guidelines for Writing a Code of Welfare can be found [here](#).

Please note that as such, this draft code released by SPCA in its current form reflects the work of a writing group comprising seven national stakeholders\* to draft an updated code of welfare for dogs, which has yet to be reviewed by NAWAC.

**This introduction is not part of the Code of Welfare but is intended to indicate its general effect.**

## Purpose

Owners and persons in charge of dogs have a responsibility to understand and meet the welfare needs of their dogs. The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance to the owners and persons in charge of dogs about the standards they must achieve to meet their obligations under the [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#).

This Code of Welfare encourages all persons responsible for dogs to adopt the highest standards of day-to-day care and handling, and to equal or exceed the minimum standards.

## Background

The [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#) (“the Act”) provides for the welfare of animals in New Zealand. The Act establishes the fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals and provides for the development and issue of codes of welfare. It obliges people who own or are in charge of animals to provide for their welfare.

Codes of welfare expand on the basic obligations of the Act by setting minimum standards and recommending best practice for the care and management of animals.

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\* Companion Animals New Zealand (CANZ), Companion Animal Veterinarians (NZVA-CAV), Dogs New Zealand (Dogs NZ), New Zealand Institute of Animal Management (NZIAM) New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA), New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association (NZVNA), SPCA New Zealand (SPCA), and Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa (VAWA).



This Code of Welfare also references regulations issued under the Act. Regulations are prescribed under the Act and impose enforceable requirements on owners and persons in charge of animals.

Penalties for failure to comply with the regulations are specified in the relevant regulations. This Code is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all obligations under the Act or regulatory requirements. Owners and persons in charge of animals are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and understand all Act and regulatory requirements that are relevant to them including all applicable Codes of Welfare.

Under the Act, a “significant surgical procedure” may only be carried out by a veterinarian or their supervised student, unless a regulation says otherwise. The regulations clarify who can carry out certain procedures and how they should be done.

## Who should read this Code of Welfare?

This Code of Welfare is intended for all persons responsible for the welfare of dogs, including those kept as companions (pets), for breeding or showing, housed in temporary housing facilities, used in sport, as working dogs, or in research, testing or teaching, or for any other purpose.

Under the Act, the “owner” and every “person in charge” of an animal are responsible for meeting the legal obligations for the welfare of animals under their care.

For dogs, the owner of the animals may place them in the care of others who become the person in charge, but this does not derogate from their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of the Act are met.

Responsibility for meeting minimum standards relating to the provision, design and maintenance of facilities and equipment, the allocation of operational responsibilities and the competence and supervision of performance of employees will lie with the owner and person in charge of the animals.

Responsibility for meeting minimum standards during the operation of tasks will lie with the person responsible for carrying out that task. That person is “in charge” of the animals at that point in time. The identification of the person in charge will depend on the minimum standard in question.

## Why is this important?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this Code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Act. A person who is charged with an offence against the Act can defend themselves by showing that they have equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this Code.

This Code includes information and example indicators for each minimum standard. The list of indicators is not exhaustive but is given to provide guidance on how a minimum standard may be met.

Owners and persons in charge of animals are not required to comply with the recommendations for best practice in this Code but are encouraged to do so to provide higher standards of welfare.

## Legislative background

This Code does not provide an exhaustive list of the Act’s requirements, and owners and those in charge of animals should note that they must comply with the minimum standards in this Code, the general



provisions of the Act, and any regulations issued under the Act. A copy of the Act and animal welfare regulations are accessible at: [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz).

## Other information

Other codes of welfare in existence provide minimum standards and recommendations for best practice in particular circumstances, such as temporary housing. These should be consulted where appropriate (see [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)).

Part 6 of the Act provides further requirements for dogs used in research, testing, and teaching (see [www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/DLM49664.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/DLM49664.html)).

Codes of welfare must be accompanied by a report that sets out the deliberations that the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) undertook when developing the codes of welfare including the standards and recommendations for best practice, the nature of any significant differences of opinion during drafting and consultation, and any matters that should be dealt with by regulation. Code reports can be accessed online (see [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)).

Although efforts to include relevant regulations within this Code have been made, there may be other regulations which are relevant to you. The full list of all animal welfare regulations should be consulted where appropriate (see [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz)).

Other national and local legislation pertains to dog ownership in New Zealand which may be relevant to you.



# PART 1: General Requirements



## 1.1 Application

This Code applies to all persons responsible for a dog, including those who keep dogs as companions (pets), dog breeders, those who sell, rescue, or rehome dogs, those who are in charge of dogs in temporary housing, use dogs for research, testing, and teaching, or use dogs for sport, as working animals, or for any other reason.

Examples of working dogs include disability-assist dogs, dogs used by government agencies (e.g. MPI dogs), dogs used for livestock management. Examples of dogs used for sport include sled pulling dogs, racing greyhounds, show dogs, dogs used for hunting, and dogs used in agility, obedience, nose work, Rally-O, Treibball, Flyball, and other dog sports.

This Code does not cover dog fighting, which is an offence under the Act.

## 1.2 Interpretation and Definitions

Refer to [Appendix I – Interpretation and Definitions](#) for additional information.

# PART 2: Dog Ownership



## Introduction

Dogs are sentient animals meaning they have emotions, feelings, perceptions, and experiences that matter to them. They are valued within New Zealand society both as companions (pets) and working animals. Dogs are also used in breeding and showing, in sport, and in research, teaching and testing.

This Code is based on current science, knowledge and technology available at the time of issue. It does not replace the need for owners and persons in charge of dogs to have experience in handling dogs, to keep up to date with developments in the day-to-day care and review their practices regularly to improve their dog's welfare.

## 2.1: Handling

### Introduction

Dogs and handlers benefit from gentle and respectful dog handling. The use of low stress, force and fear free handling techniques is less stressful for dogs than more forceful handling or restraint. Use of forceful handling or restraint can impact the human-animal bond, increase dog's fear, risk of injury to both the dog and handler, and development of behavioural problems, both within that interaction and in response to future handling.

Information on training is provided in [Part 8.2: Training Dogs](#) of this Code.

See [Appendix II: Principles of Low Stress Handling](#).



## 1. Minimum Standard – Handling

- a. *Techniques that minimise stress must be used when handling dogs.*
- b. *Dogs must not be handled in a way that causes unnecessary pain, fear or distress.*
- c. *Dogs must be lifted and held securely with their full body weight supported.*
- d. *Owners and persons in charge of dogs must not allow another person to handle the dog in a way that causes unnecessary pain, fear or distress.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 1 – Handling

- Owners and persons in charge of dogs can demonstrate appropriate handling (MS1 a).
- Owners and persons in charge do not use intimidation or excessive restraint when handling a dog, including striking, choking, kicking, or ‘alpha roll’ (MS1 b).
- Dogs do not incur injuries associated with improper handling (MS1 b).
- Dogs are not fearful of being handled by the owner or person in charge (MS1 b).
- Dogs are not lifted by legs, tail, collar or scruff (MS1 c).
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs do not allow people to mishandle their dogs, including striking, choking, kicking, ‘alpha roll’, sitting on the dogs and poking or pulling on sensitive areas of dogs (MS1 d).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Persons handling dogs in stressful settings (e.g. veterinary clinics, animal shelters, and animal control) should receive training in Low Stress Handling.
- b) Cooperative care techniques, where animals are trained using reward-based methods to not only tolerate handling but actively participate in day-to-day care tasks, should be used.
- c) Dogs and puppies should not be restrained by “scruffing” or being grabbed and held tightly by the nape of their neck.
- d) Parents/guardians/educators should teach children in their care how to properly interact with a dog.
- e) Children should not be left alone with a dog and, when handling dogs, they should be actively supervised by an adult.
- f) Dogs should be socialised to gentle handling (e.g. stroking, grooming).

### General Information

Human and dog interactions should be respectful. Dogs should be handled in such a way as foster confidence, for example, carrying should be minimised. Picking up dogs should be avoided unless the dog indicates they want to this to happen, to assist dogs navigating obstacles, or for safety reasons. Care should be taken when dogs are disturbed from resting or eating, or when interacting with resources highly valued by the dog (e.g. food, chews, bed, or toys). Some dogs can find some common human behaviours, such as hugging, stressful and interactions should be tailored to the individual dog.

Dogs benefit from approaches used to encourage dogs to participate voluntarily with routine handling. Cooperative care involves training an animal to not only tolerate handling and animal care procedures (e.g. taking medication or claw trimming), but to be an active, willing participant in these experiences.





Where a dog has to be restrained as part of a necessary handling procedure, they should be allowed to choose the position they hold their head, or body including their limbs, and to change these positions whilst being handled. This can reduce how much a dog struggles and leads to fewer indicators of fear, anxiety, and distress than more forceful restraint. Where a dog needs to be restrained in a manner where they cannot choose their position the minimal restraint needed to allow the task to be performed safely should be used, in accordance with Low Stress Handling principles ([see Appendix II](#)).

“Scruffing” describes restraint of a dog by firmly gripping the loose skin at the back of the dog’s neck. Dogs should not be “scruffed” to hold them in a restraint nor whilst being lifted as it can cause a dog fear, pain and distress, and provoke or escalate defensive dog aggression. Some restraint techniques may also exacerbate existing health conditions (e.g. respiratory problems). For example, brachycephalic (flat-faced) dogs and those with existing respiratory problems, or glaucoma and protruding eyes are particularly at risk of welfare harm such as breathlessness (“air hunger”) or high intraocular (eye) pressure.

Educating children to respect dogs and how to interact with them appropriately can keep both dogs and children safe. It is important that dogs and children are actively supervised while interacting.

## 2.2 Purchasing or Adopting a Dog or Puppy

### Introduction

Before acquiring a dog, a person should consider if they can provide for their initial and ongoing physical, health, behavioural, mental, and emotional needs. A person should also consider if they have the time and financial resources to be a responsible dog owner for the life of the dog.

Transfer of ownership includes selling or purchasing, adopting, rehoming, or gifting a dog or puppy. A new owner needs to be provided information about the dog’s relevant medical, behavioural, socialisation history and recommended procedures for settling the dog into their new environment.

Adequate socialisation is important to help puppies develop into confident, well-adjusted adult dogs.

Breeder requirements are covered in [Part 6.1: Breeding](#) of this Code.

### 2. Minimum Standard – Purchasing or Adopting a Dog or Puppy

**a. Persons selling, rehoming, or gifting a dog or puppy to another person must provide the following information about the dog:**

- > *medical history, including desexing status, vaccinations, dental health, and parasite treatments;*
- > *behavioural history;*
- > *microchip number (dogs over 12 weeks of age) and where to register or update owner information with their local council and any other recognised database within New Zealand (unless exempted);*
- > *current feeding regime, and importance of making only gradual changes to the diet.*

**b. New owners and persons in charge must be able to adequately care for the dog or puppy.**

**c. New owners or persons in charge must socialise puppies whilst also taking all reasonable steps to protect them from exposure to diseases until they are fully vaccinated.**



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 2 – Purchasing or Adopting a Dog

- Available medical and behavioural records (e.g. aggressive behaviour), including desexing status (e.g. desexing certificate, if desexed), vaccination, parasite treatment, and microchipping (dogs over 12 weeks of age) records are given to the new owner. (MS2 a).
- Three or four days supply of food is provided to the new owner (MS2 a).
- A new owner or person in charge of a dog can demonstrate they can adequately provide for and attend to the physical, health, behavioural, emotional, and mental needs of the dog (MS2 b).
- Puppies who have not completed their course of core vaccinations are not taken to areas where there is high risk of exposure to infectious disease, as determined in consultation with a veterinarian. (MS2 c).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Before acquiring a dog, a person should be familiar with the responsibilities of ownership and the welfare needs of dogs and be prepared to undertake those responsibilities for the life of the dog (around 10-13 years and up to 20 years depending on size and breed).
- b) When selecting a dog, a person should consider their ability to provide socialisation, ongoing training, and meet their physical, health, behavioural, mental, and emotional needs, and compatibility with lifestyle.
- c) Before acquiring a dog, a person should be aware of potential known inherited welfare problems. See [Part 6: Breeding Dogs](#) for more information.
- d) Breeders, animal welfare and rescue organisations, council pounds, pet stores, research, testing and teaching facilities, and other organisations or businesses selling or rehoming dogs should provide the new owner with the following information:
  - > puppy or dog proofing the home;
  - > settling a dog into a new environment;
  - > ongoing care requirements, including grooming and exercise;
  - > appropriate housing, which should provide for opportunities for the dog to express important behaviours including play, socialising, exploration, toileting, sleeping, eating, and drinking;
  - > appropriate handling and basic training, including toilet training and socialisation;
  - > body condition assessment; and
  - > legal requirements and a copy or link to this Code of Welfare, and where to find information related to owning a dog.
- e) A person who intends to purchase a dog or puppy from a breeder should only source them from a reputable registered breeder.

### General Information

An owner or person in charge of a dog should be aware of local bylaws that limit the number of dogs permitted on a property.

Certain dog breeds (and their crosses) may be associated with higher energy requirements, higher maintenance requirements (such as more frequent grooming), behavioural traits, or inherited health issues which impact care requirements.

Dogs will want to investigate new surroundings but may be fearful of new sights and smells. Dogs should be gradually introduced to their new surroundings and members of the household. Initial interactions with other household animals should be closely supervised and managed.



Canine pheromone diffusers and sprays can be helpful to alleviate anxiety for the dog.

Puppies should be socialised to facilitate development into confident, well-adjusted adult dogs and minimise the risk of behavioural problems. The goal of socialisation is for puppies to have positive experiences, not neutral or bad ones. This involves gradually introducing a puppy to experiences such as handling by people, the professional grooming environment, exposure to novel experiences, vaccinated dogs, cats and other animals, vehicles and household appliances. Sound recordings or online videos can be used to gradually introduce puppies to loud or startling noises, such as fireworks. Puppy socialisation classes can provide puppies with opportunities to positively engage with other appropriate puppies in a controlled, supervised environment. Treats can be used to build positive associations but puppies' behaviour should be monitored to ensure they do not become overwhelmed.

## 2.3: Identification

### Introduction

It is important that dogs are identifiable with a reliable and accurate method in order to reunite them with their owner in case they become lost, impounded, or stolen.

Unless exempted under the Dog Control Act 1996 (e.g. dogs kept solely or principally for the purposes of herding or driving stock), dogs require a registered microchip and council registration tag to ensure a dog is identifiable.

See:

- [Regulation 47 – Collars and Tethers.](#)

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) A dog's microchip should be registered on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (in addition to registration with their local council).
- b) Owners should ensure their information is updated on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (in addition to updating this information with their local council) when there is a change of address or other owner information.
- c) A microchip should be checked regularly to ensure it has not migrated or failed.
- d) Collars should have a tag attached showing the owner's name and contact details.

### General Information

Using a registered microchip for a dog as a primary identification method is reliable because the chip cannot be easily removed, dislodged, or lost without surgical intervention. Owners should keep microchip details up to date. It is a requirement of the Dog Control Act 1996 that, upon rehoming of the dog, both the previous and new owners advise the council/s concerned of the change of ownership.

Microchips can also be recorded on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register, which is a national, private database which can be accessed by veterinarians and animal welfare organisations.

A collar and tag showing the owner's name and contact details can help identify a dog. Collars should be correctly fitted to reduce the risk of the collar becoming caught or entangled on an object or the dog's body part. As a guide, two fingers should be able to fit snugly between the collar and neck. Collars should be regularly checked for signs of irritation, matting or injury.



## 2.4 Relinquishing (Changing) Ownership

### Introduction

While ownership of a dog should be undertaken as a commitment for the entire life of the dog, sometimes it becomes necessary to relinquish ownership due to challenges, such as changes in financial or family circumstances or relocation. Some challenges, such as barriers to accessing resources to meet the needs of a dog or puppy, for example food or veterinary care, may be short-term and resolvable with supportive services.

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Prior to rehoming, owners and persons in charge of a dog should explore supportive services that may enable them to keep their dog or puppy.
- b) Owners and persons in charge of a dog should be aware of responsible rehoming in the event there are changes in circumstances that may require a change in ownership.
- c) An owner or person in charge of a dog should take steps to ensure a new owner can provide an environment to meet the dog's physical, health, behavioural, mental, and emotional needs.
- d) Owners and persons in charge of a dog should have their dog undergo a veterinary health check and ensure vaccinations and other treatments are up to date prior to rehoming.

### General Information

Where it is in the best interests of the dog, an owner or person in charge of a dog should explore supportive services prior to taking steps to relinquish their dog. Supportive services can help with the cost of veterinary procedures, such as desexing and microchipping, or cost of food.

Owners considering relinquishing ownership of their dog should make efforts to rehome the dog themselves. Potential ways to find a new owner include contacting the original breeder, (if this was the source of the dog), placing advertisements on websites including social media, newspapers, community notice boards, or rehoming to a family member or friend who is prepared to undertake the commitment of ownership. Care should be taken to ensure the new owner is prepared to take responsibility for the ownership of the dog for the life of the animal. If a suitable alternative owner cannot be found, the owner should contact animal welfare and rescue organisations for assistance in finding a new home.

If a dog has severe, untreatable behavioural problems that negatively impact their welfare or the safety of the community, euthanasia may need to be considered as a last resort.

It is an offence under the Act to abandon an animal (including a dog) in circumstances where no provision is made to meet their physical, health, and behavioural needs.



# PART 3:

## Food and Water



### 3.1 Food and Feeding

#### Introduction

Dogs need a nutritionally balanced diet, appropriate for their life stage and energy requirements, in quantities that meet their requirements for good health and welfare.

Food and nutrient requirements of dogs vary widely. Factors to be considered include the dog (i.e. their age, sex, size, state of health, growth rate, breed, level of activity and exercise, and physiological state), and the food (i.e. its nutritional composition, quality and frequency of feeding). Consideration should also be given to previous feeding levels, the introduction of a new food and any potential periods of food deprivation (e.g. during transportation).

'Complete and balanced', processed or raw, commercial dog foods provide all the nutrients required for a healthy dog at the labelled life stage. Most commercially available foods provide a guide to quantity to be fed. Owners need to be aware that individual variation means that recommended amounts will not always be appropriate, so body condition score in dogs should be carefully monitored.

Homemade diets need to be carefully formulated and prepared to ensure they are nutritionally balanced and reduce the risk of microbial contamination. Specialised diets are available for dogs with some specific health problems.

### 3. Minimum Standard – Food and Feeding

- a. *Dogs must be fed adequate quantities of food and nutrients to enable each dog to:*
  - > *maintain good health and welfare;*
  - > *meet their physiological demands, including those resulting from the level of physical activity, growth, pregnancy, lactation, and exposure to cold; and,*
  - > *avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.*
- b. *Puppies must be provided with ready access to a complete and balanced puppy food from the age of four weeks.*
- c. *Puppies that have been weaned must be fed a minimum of twice a day.*
- d. *Dogs must be fed at least once a day.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 3 - Food and Feeding

- Nutritionally complete and balanced diets appropriate for the age, size, and physiological status of the dogs is present in the home or facility (MS3 a-b).
- Dog's faeces appearance is "normal" (i.e., well formed, neither dry or liquid, no evidence of diarrhoea, constipation, mucous, blood etc.) (MS3 a).



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dog diets should be tailored to their individual needs.
- b) Where required, a veterinarian or another suitably qualified person should be consulted regarding dog nutrition (i.e. an animal nutritionist).
- c) An individualised plan should be developed in consultation with a veterinarian or another suitably qualified person for feeding puppies from weaning until the dog is physically mature.
- d) Where disease is present in a dog, special attention to diet may be required. Advice should be sought from a veterinarian or another suitably qualified person who is experienced in the care and feeding of dogs.
- e) Prescription diets for certain medical conditions should be fed as instructed by a veterinarian or other qualified person.

## General Information

Dog food labelled as "complete and balanced" means the product is intended to be fed as a dog's sole diet and is formulated to meet one of the dog food nutrient profiles established by the European Pet Food Industry (FEDIAF), the Association of America Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), or other internationally recognised standards or guidelines. <http://www.aafco.org/>.

Puppies can be offered a gruel (e.g. blended moist growth food with warm water) to stimulate food intake from three weeks of age. Puppies should be fed small quantities at regular intervals (i.e. three to four times throughout the day) and this can be gradually reduced to once a day when the dog reaches physical maturity; however, the optimum frequency of feeding will vary depending on the individual and the dog's level of activity.

A dog's nutritional requirements will differ when growing, given significant exercise or work, during pregnancy or when lactating. Up to twice their usual ration may be required for dogs living outside in cold weather to provide the extra energy needed to keep warm. Bitches need an energy- and nutrient-dense, highly digestible diet balanced for vitamins and minerals from six weeks of gestation. Depending on the number of puppies being fed, a lactating bitch may require up to three times the usual amount to ensure her milk supply for the rapidly growing puppies and to prevent metabolic diseases such as eclampsia. Dogs and bitches may have a lower energy requirement after they have been desexed and the amount of food provided should be modified accordingly. People should take care when feeding table scraps as not all foods safe for humans are safe for dogs. Table scraps should not be fed in place of a complete and balanced diet. People considering feeding alternative diets (e.g. homemade, raw, or plant based) to their dogs should do so in consultation with their veterinarian, a board-certified veterinary nutritionist, or other suitably qualified persons. A diet of lean meat only is not balanced and is not appropriate for prolonged periods.

If there is any doubt concerning an appropriate feeding regime for a dog, advice should be sought from a person qualified and experienced in dog nutrition.

## 3.2 Risky Foods and Objects

### Introduction

As dogs are natural scavengers and tend to eat quickly, they may eat harmful material. Puppies are especially at risk because they like to chew.



Food should be stored carefully, with dry food in a rodent-proof container and moist or perishable food (meat, dog rolls and opened cans) in a refrigerator.

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) The dog food is free from harmful objects that could cause health problems (e.g. plastic, metal, wool).
- b) Food should be stored appropriately, as per label instructions.
- c) There is no evidence of rodent contamination in or around the dog food.
- d) The dog food is not mouldy or dusty.

### General Information

All food given to dogs should be free from harmful objects that could cause intestinal problems. Indigestible objects that can cause intestinal obstruction include wool, corn cobs, plastic dog roll wrap, small toys and balls, and plastic bags.

Bones need to be fed with care. Cooked bones (including chicken) and fish bones should not be fed as they can cause bowel damage or constipation. Small raw bones may present a risk of obstruction or perforation. Large, raw bones present fewer problems but may cause short term diarrhoea and contribute to tooth wear and fracture.

Mouldy food should not be fed as it carries the risk of fungal toxin ingestion which can cause seizures and severe illness. Some human foods can be toxic to dogs even in small amounts, for example chocolate, grapes, macadamia nuts, and foods containing xylitol (a sugar substitute).

Refer also to [Part 3.3: Disease and Illness Related to Diet](#) and [Part 7.8: Toxic and Harmful Substances](#).

## 3.3 Disease and Illness Related to Diet

### Introduction

Feeding unbalanced or inadequate diets to dogs can cause significant health and welfare problems including abnormal growth, obesity, reproductive issues, vitamin deficiency, and poor oral health. Dogs benefit from routine dental examinations to maintain dental health and detect problems early on.

Obesity is common in dogs and can lead to diseases such as heart and kidney disease, diabetes, arthritis and skin conditions. Underfeeding leads to dogs becoming underweight, leading to negative health consequences.

### 4. Minimum Standard – Disease and Illness Related to Diet

- a. *Owners, or persons in charge, who observe a dog to be showing significant changes in appetite for more than 48 hours, diarrhoea that does not resolve, or strains to pass faeces and/or urine must seek attention from a veterinarian.*
- b. *Owners, or persons in charge, must regularly check dogs for signs of potential oral health problems.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 4 – Disease and Illness Related to Diet

- There is documented evidence (e.g. clinical records) that a veterinarian has been consulted where significant changes in appetite, defecation, or urination arise (MS4 a).
- A dog does not have difficulties with eating, visibly loose teeth, or foul breath (MS4 b).
- A dog's teeth and gums are not excessively stained, have tartar accumulation, foul breath, red or bleeding gums (MS4 b).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should receive regular veterinary dental checks and veterinary dental care, as required.
- b) Dogs should be trained to have their teeth brushed regularly with a dog specific toothpaste or provided with dog dental treats or chews to help maintain oral health.
- c) Dogs should not be exercised soon after a large meal or fed shortly after vigorous exercise.

### General Information

Veterinary advice and investigation of cause are usually needed to diagnose and treat a dog that has signs of disease related to diet.

Diet also affects oral and dental health in dogs. Dogs' teeth and gums will benefit from chewing on harder food, such as raw bones that they cannot splinter, dry kibble food, and from regular cleaning. There are a range of products available including diets, toys, toothbrushes, and pet safe toothpastes that are beneficial for oral health (for example, the Veterinary Oral Health Council seal indicates a product has met a pre-set standard of plaque and calculus (tartar) retardation in dogs).

Exercising too soon after a large meal, or feeding shortly after vigorous exercise, increases the risk of gastric (stomach) dilation and torsion (bloating and twisting) occurring. At risk dogs, such as larger, deep chested breeds, should be fed two smaller meals per day rather than a single larger meal. Water should be given in small amounts before and after exercising.

Also see [Part 3.2](#) regarding the feeding of risky foods and objects.

## 3.4 Body Condition

### Introduction

An adult dog should be well-proportioned and have an observable waist behind the ribs when viewed from above and from the side. Ribs should be palpable (able to be felt) but have a light fat covering over them. The abdominal fat pad should be minimal.

Body condition varies between individual dogs and breeds and also depends on the dog's level of physical activity. Some breeds that have a naturally lean or athletic build (e.g. whippets, greyhounds) may exhibit a body condition below that listed as 'ideal'. A body condition scoring system is provided in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#).





## 5. Minimum Standard – Body Condition

- a. *Dogs are fed and managed to maintain appropriate body condition.*
- b. *If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score of 1 or 2 as defined in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#), in this Code, immediate veterinary attention must be sought and remedial action taken.*
- c. *If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score of 3 as defined in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#) in this Code appropriate remedial action must be taken to increase the dog's body weight.*
- d. *If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score of 6 or 7 as defined in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#) in this Code, appropriate remedial action must be taken to decrease the dog's body weight.*
- e. *If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score of 8 or 9 as defined in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#), in this Code, immediate veterinary attention must be sought and remedial action taken.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 5 – Body Condition

- Where dogs are kept in temporary housing facilities, housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or housed in kennels and kept for breeding or sport, records of regular monitoring of body weights or body condition scores are documented (MS5 a).
- Dogs with body condition score of one or two, or dogs with body condition score of eight or nine, are under veterinary attention (MS5 b&e).
- Dietary modification and environmental improvements are in use to allow for increased body condition for dogs with body condition score of three (MS5 c).
- Dietary modification and environmental improvements are in use to allow for reduced body condition for dogs with a body condition score of six or seven (MS5 d).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) a) A dog's body condition score should be maintained at "ideal" as defined in [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#) in this Code. A score of four or five may be appropriate depending on breed or age of the dog.
- a) b) Dog's body weight and condition score (refer to [Part 3.4: Body Condition Score](#) and [Appendix III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#)) should be recorded regularly and meet the ideal range for the breed or type of dog.

### General Information

Body condition scoring should be performed using both visual and hands-on assessments; the extent of fat deposits can only be accurately assessed by feeling the tissues over the dog's ribs, backbone, pelvis, and abdomen, especially in dogs with thick or long hair coat.

The amount of food offered needs to be increased if a dog is losing condition, or decreased if it is becoming overweight. If weight loss/gain persists after modifying diet, veterinary advice should be sought.



The life expectancy of an obese dog is 25 % less than that of a normal dog. Excessive weight can also impact quality of life through joint damage and pain, reduced mobility, exacerbated arthritis, and overheating. Exercise programmes for weight loss need to be designed carefully so that the level of exercise increases gradually as the dog's fitness level increases and to take account of any co-existing conditions such as arthritis which might be exacerbated by exercise.

## 3.5 Water

### Introduction

Water is an essential daily requirement for the proper functioning of the whole body. Sufficient clean, fresh water should always be available and accessible for all dogs.

See:

- [Regulation 13 – Dogs must have dry and shaded shelter](#)

### 6. Minimum Standard – Water

*Dogs must have access to water, appropriate to their needs, that is palatable to the dog, not harmful to health, and available in quantities sufficient to maintain vital bodily functions.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 6 – Water

- Clean, fresh drinking water is available and accessible (MS 6).
- Dogs have access to water that is not frozen (MS 6).
- Dogs do not show signs of dehydration, such as skin tenting (MS 6).

#### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Water should be provided in heavy containers (e.g. ceramic, glass, or metal), which do not easily tip over.
- b) Multiple sources of water should be provided in case of one source failing (e.g. water containers are tipped over or the water dirtied).
- c) The quantity, quality and availability of water should be checked twice daily.
- d) There should be enough water sources for each dog to have free access to clean, fresh water.
- e) For commercial facilities, water has been tested and is free from contaminants.

#### General Information

Water requirements vary between individuals and also depend on workload, weather conditions (especially temperature), type of food provided, and requirements of lactation. As a general guide, dogs require 50-70 ml of water per kg body weight daily.

Dogs who eat dry food need more water than those eating canned food or pet food rolls. Milk is not an appropriate source of fluid for dogs and consumption can lead to stomach upsets and diarrhoea. Dehydration can become a serious problem (especially for puppies) when diarrhoea or other conditions occur that cause excessive fluid loss from the body.



# PART 4: Containment and Housing



## 4.1 Containment and Housing

### Introduction

Housing should provide opportunities for dogs to experience positive welfare, through provision of clean, comfortable bedding and opportunities for the expression of behaviours such as exercising, play, resting, stretching, eating and toileting.

Dogs may be contained to a property by keeping them indoors, in a fenced area, or confined in a kennel or shaded enclosure with attached run, tether, or a running line. Appropriate containment of unsupervised dogs prevents them from roaming, injuring, or otherwise harming themselves, other animals, and people.

The length of time that dogs are contained, and the way that it is done, can have a significant positive or negative impact on their welfare. Prolonged containment (confinement or tethering) can have a significant negative impact on a dog's physical and mental health and their ability to satisfy their behavioural, mental, and emotional needs ([Part 8: Behaviour, Enrichment, and Training](#)).

Dog crates may sometimes be used to limit a dog's movement while recovering from injury, if advised by a veterinarian, but are not suitable for use as permanent housing.

See:

- [Regulation 47 – Collars and tethers](#)

### 7. Minimum Standard – Containment and Housing (other than for transport or under veterinary care)

- Dogs must not be contained (confined or tethered) in a way, or within an environment, that causes them injury or distress.*
- Any collar, harness, or tether on a dog must not—*
  - > *cause a cut that bleeds or discharges; or*
  - > *cause a skin abrasion that bleeds or discharges; or*
  - > *cause a swelling; or*
  - > *restrict the dog from breathing normally, panting, or drinking.*
- Dogs must not be tethered by head collars, choke-chains or other devices which tighten around the neck.*
- Dog permanently housed, or confined for the majority of the day, must:*
  - > *have sufficient room and height to move around freely and display appropriate, normal behaviour without touching another dog or the walls.*
  - > *have at least two continuous one-hour periods daily off their tether or out of their containment, with freedom to explore their immediate environment.*
- Dogs confined for a minority of the day must have sufficient room and height to enable them to move around freely and display appropriate, normal behaviour.*
- Additional space and resources (e.g. lying area) that allow dogs to retreat from each other must be provided where multiple dogs are housed together.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 7 – Containment and Housing (other than for transport or under veterinary care)

- Where dogs are not desexed, male dogs are not housed with or next to female dogs in heat (MS7 a)
- Dogs are only tethered to a running line, not a fixed point, at the land/premises owned or occupied by the dog owner or person in charge (MS7 a).
- Collars, harnesses, or tethers used to contain dogs do not cause cuts or skin abrasions that bleed or discharge, or swellings not impact their ability to breathe normally, pant, or drink (MS7 b).
- Dogs confined for more than 12 hours have sufficient space to:
  - > sit, stand, and stretch at full height;
  - > walk;
  - > wag their tail;
  - > turn around; and
  - > lie down fully stretched out in or beside their bed
  - > feed, sleep, rest, and toilet in separate and appropriate areas without needing to touch the walls or another dog (MS7 d).
- Dogs are not permanently housed in portable crates, transport boxes, or the crawl space under any building (MS7 a&d).
- Inspections of dogs show no signs of damage to tails (e.g. ‘happy tail’) due to tails wagging against the sides of dog housing (MS7 d).
- Dogs do not show physical signs of confinement or tethering for prolonged periods (e.g. muscle atrophy/wastage, fly bite dermatitis, callouses, overgrown claws) (MS7 d).
- Dogs do not show behavioural signs of confinement or tethering for prolonged periods (e.g. stereotypic behaviours, excessive barking, overgrooming/self-mutilation, pronounced aggression or fear, or toileting in sleeping or eating areas) (MS7 d).
- The environment does not show signs of dogs being tethered or confined for prolonged periods (e.g. heavily worn ground surface at the extremity of the tether or edge of run, or a collar, tether or kennel that is either locked or showing signs of not having been released recently) (MS7 d).
- Dogs confined for less than 12 hours have sufficient space to:
  - > sit, lie, and stand at full height;
  - > stretch;
  - > wag their tail; and
  - > turn around (MS7 e)
- Access to feed and water is not impeded by space restrictions or excessive competition (MS7 f).
- For multiple dogs housed together, there is at least one bed available per dog (MS7 f).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should be contained by providing a secure environment where they are able to express appropriate normal behaviours such as exploration, physical exercise and freedom of movement when unsupervised.
- b) Dogs with unsupervised outdoor access should be contained to an appropriately fenced property.
- c) Collars should be checked frequently, particularly in young growing dogs, and loosened before they become tight to prevent effects such as chafing of the skin or restriction of breathing.
- d) Dogs can be housed communally if they are supervised during introductions, known to interact well together and are able to isolate themselves when they choose to.



## General Information

The Dog Control Act 1996 has requirements for containment of dogs.

For temporary housing requirements see Code of Welfare Temporary Housing of Companion Animals.

If it is not possible to appropriately fence a property, dogs should be kept indoors or provided with a suitable outdoor kennel with an attached run, a tether attached to a running line, when left unsupervised. Electronic boundary fencing is aversive and may lead to development of behaviour problems, such as aggression. It is not a reliable method of containing dogs to a property. See [Part 8.3: Training](#), for more information.

Where dogs are routinely contained, provisions are required to provide opportunities for physical exercise and mental stimulation, such as walks off the property and playing with humans or other appropriate dogs. See [Part 7.7: Exercise](#), for more information.

Where a dog is temporarily tethered there should be nothing within reach of the dog that could injure them or with which the tether could become entangled. If the tether is long enough that the dog can climb onto nearby objects then, to prevent the dog hanging themselves, the tether needs to be long enough that the dog can reach the ground on the other side of the object. Swivel clips, running lines, and light, strong chains are less likely to become tangled than ropes, and cannot be chewed through.

A correctly fitted collar allows space between the collar and the neck so that it does not restrict breathing or chafe against the hair and skin of the dog's neck, but is secure enough that the dog cannot slip their head from the collar.

Information on appropriate design of kennels and methods of containment may be obtained from animal organisations with expertise in the care of companion animals and other codes of welfare such as the [Code of Welfare: Temporary Housing of Companion Animals](#).

Compatibility of dogs should be considered in housing arrangements to maximise opportunities for positive social interactions and avoid conflict. Dogs living in multi-dog settings may be housed in close proximity to each other or in a communal area. Attention needs to be paid to space allowance, compatibility, biosecurity within such settings to limit the opportunity for disease to spread and reduce stress and the risk of negative interactions that could compromise welfare.

## 4.2 Lying Areas and Bedding

### Introduction

Dogs need a dry, lying area with bedding or soft surface and enough space to stand, turn around and lie down comfortably both in and beside their bed. Dogs need an area for sleeping and eating that is separate from their toileting area.

See:

- [Regulation 13 – Dogs must have dry and shaded shelter](#)



## 8. Minimum Standard – Lying Areas and Bedding

- a. *Dogs must have access to separate and appropriate areas for feeding, sleeping and resting, and toileting.*
- b. *Dogs must have access at all times to a lying area that:*
  - > *is large enough to allow the dog to stand up, turn around, stretch, and lie down;*
  - > *is dry;*
  - > *is clean; and*
  - > *provides a soft lying surface or has suitable and sufficient bedding material.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 8 – Lying Areas and Bedding

- Dogs are provided with separate areas for feeding, sleeping and resting, and toileting (MS8 a).
- Dogs are observed lying in a bed or there is evidence that a dog uses the bed, such as presence of fur or worn areas (MS8 b).
- Dogs are not required to sleep on concrete or metal surfaces. Where kennel and run areas are made of hard surfaces (e.g. concrete or metal), dogs are provided with a raised platform, shelf, bed made of a softer material, or bedding (MS8 b).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs have the choice of different lying surfaces.
- b) Where dogs are kept in temporary housing facilities, housed for use in research, testing, and teaching, or housed in kennels, they should have the choice of moving to a separate enclosure or compartment for urination and defecation (e.g. double compartment housing).

### General Information

A soft lying surface or bedding should be available to all dogs. The type of bedding or lying surface required depends on factors such as the behaviour of the dog (e.g. history of destroying or consuming bedding), body condition of the dog, the length of their coat, and age and housing materials. While metal and concrete sleeping areas are easier to clean, these hard surfaces may be cold and can cause pressure sores and exacerbate arthritis. Sleeping beds raised off the ground will increase comfort where dogs live in these types of kennels. Supportive bedding is of particular benefit to older dogs, dogs with arthritis, and short-coated lean dogs which may develop calluses or sores over the elbows and hocks.

## 4.3 Temperature, Ventilation and Lighting

### Introduction

Dogs benefit from access to natural light for important behaviours, such as resting and sleeping in the sunlight. Dogs need access to shelter that provides warmth, cooling and fresh air as needed, is free from draughts, excessive temperature fluctuations, and provides adequate ventilation.

See:

- [Regulation 13 – Dogs must have dry and shaded shelter](#)



## 9. Minimum Standard – Temperature, Ventilation and Lighting

- a. Measures must be taken to enable dogs to keep warm in cold weather and cool in warm weather.
- b. Sufficient shelter and shade must be provided to protect dogs from exposure to the weather and extremes of heat or cold.
- c. Dogs must be situated in a well-ventilated environment and provided natural or artificial light of appropriate light/dark that supports circadian rhythms.

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 9 – Temperature, Ventilation and Lighting

- Kennels are insulated and draught-free (MS9 a).
- There is sufficient artificial or natural shade from the sun in warm temperatures and weatherproof shelter during cold, wet, windy, or otherwise unpleasant conditions (MS9 b).
- Light levels during inspection are sufficient to ensure that dogs are clearly visible (MS9 c).
- Enclosures are protected from excessive light at night, even if it is generated from outside the premises (MS9 c).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Environmentally controlled housing areas (e.g. facilities with mechanical control of ventilation, temperature, and humidity) are consistently maintained between 16-27 degrees Celsius with 30-70% humidity.
- b) Where dogs are kept in temporary or permanent housing facilities, temperature, humidity, and air exchanges should be monitored and recorded on a weekly basis, and remedial action taken if they exceed the minimum.

### General Information

Dogs housed outdoors should be provided with well-ventilated, insulated housing such as a kennel with a run. Insulation should be installed under and around the kennel. Dogs need shade during warm weather and sufficient shelter, including a dry sleeping area, during cold or wet conditions.

In cold or extreme weather, dogs should be brought indoors. Where this is not possible, additional measures to keep dogs warm should be provided including providing additional bedding or a source of heating (e.g. plug in heat lamp) or a coat. Dogs should be exposed to a balance of light and dark conditions to maintain circadian rhythms.

Cool water and cold tiles placed in the dog's resting area can help them to cool down when temperatures rise. Metal kennels or kennels with a metal roof can become extremely hot in warm weather so dogs need access to a shaded area with effective ventilation. Ventilation should be controlled to manage dampness and noxious odours and to minimise the airborne spread of infectious diseases.

## 4.4 Housing Materials and Maintenance

### Introduction

Kennels and runs should be constructed in materials that are robust, safe and durable, and kept in a good state of repair.



## 10. Minimum Standard – Housing Materials and Maintenance

*Housing must be constructed and maintained in such a way as to prevent dogs from being injured.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 10 – Housing Materials and Maintenance

- There are no hazards or equipment upon which dogs may injure themselves in areas to which they have access, for example, entanglement with tether or injury due to poorly constructed or maintained housing.

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Kennels should be constructed of solid, non-permeable materials that are easy to clean, preferably raised above ground level, and be stable.
- b) Floors should provide a non-slip, solid surface.
- c) Dog housing should not be made from toxic materials, for example, arsenic treated timber, lead based paint.

### General Information

Some building materials may be harmful or toxic to dogs and their presence in the dog's environment can pose a health risk. Toxic materials, such as lead-based paint or wood treated with arsenic, cause a risk of poisoning and should be avoided. [Part 7.8: Toxic and Harmful Substances](#) provides more information.

The floors of runs should be solid or slatted with no gaps capable of injuring the feet. Dog-runs on the ground need to be well drained and kept clean of faeces and the area changed regularly to prevent a build-up of hookworms in the area (refer to [Part 7.4: Diseases of the Skin Diseases of the Skin](#))





# PART 5: Hygiene and Sanitation



## Introduction

Good hygiene is important in order to maintain the health and welfare of dogs and to minimise disease and distress.

See:

- [Regulation 13 - Dogs must have dry and shaded shelter](#)

### 11. Minimum Standard – Hygiene and Sanitation

- Faeces and urine must not be permitted to accumulate to such an extent that they pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.*
- Adequate ventilation must be provided to prevent the build-up of harmful levels of moisture, dust, and gases such as ammonia.*
- Immediate and appropriate action must be taken to reduce ammonia levels if they are detectable to a human.*
- Food and water containers must be kept clean and sanitised regularly to prevent contamination that may pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.*
- Methods used to clean housing areas must not cause pain, injury, or distress.*
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs kept in temporary or permanent housing facilities must remove any contaminated bedding, faeces, and urine daily and sanitise housing regularly and between different occupants.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 11 – Hygiene and Sanitation

- Areas in which dogs are housed and exercised are clean (MS11 a,f).
- Lying areas and bedding are not contaminated with faecal matter or urine. Soiled bedding is removed and replaced (MS11 a,f).
- Dogs are clean, their coat is free of faecal material and urine staining, and they show no signs of skin disorders from unsanitary living conditions (MS11 a,f).
- Dogs are able to access food, water, lying and toileting areas without walking through faeces (MS11 a).
- No abnormal toileting behaviour is observed (e.g. toileting in sleeping or feeding areas) (MS11 a).
- Ammonia cannot be detected by human smell (MS11 b&c).
- Inspections of dogs show minimal signs of discomfort, distress or disease associated with high ammonia levels (e.g. sneezing, coughing, heavy breathing, or eye irritation) (MS11 b).
- Food and water containers are clean (MS11 d).
- Dogs are removed from, or moved to a physically separate section of, kennels and runs before these areas are hosed out (MS11 e).



- Products used for cleaning or disinfection are appropriate, effective against the pathogens of concern, and used correctly to avoid causing pain, injury, or distress (MS11 e).
- For dogs kept in temporary or permanent housing facilities:
  - > hygiene protocols detailing daily and weekly cleaning routines including removal of contaminated bedding and waste are clearly documented;
  - > protocols for regular washing of bowls and utensils are documented (MS11 f).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Kennels and runs should be checked twice daily and any contaminated bedding, faeces and urine removed.
- b) Food and water bowls should be washed daily for dogs kept in temporary or permanent housing facilities.
- c) Where larger and/or changing populations of dogs are kept, hygiene measures should be of a standard that minimises the risk of cross-infection.

### General Information

Where dogs are housed in kennels or runs, and especially where they are grouped close together or housed communally, care needs to be taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. It is recommended that kennels are constructed of materials that are able to be easily cleaned.

Dogs are highly motivated to avoid toileting in areas where they eat or sleep. Access to a separate toileting area, and regular removal of faeces from this area is important for their welfare. Adequate drainage, including ensuring drains are kept clear from debris, will assist with keeping kennels and runs clean. Drains in dog's housing areas need to be covered and inaccessible to the dog and designed to avoid dogs' claws or paws from becoming caught.

Kennel and run surfaces, as well as food and water containers, can be kept clean by removing gross organic matter (e.g. faeces, urine, uneaten food, slime), followed by cleaning and disinfection. Allowing the recommended contact time for the disinfectant product and ensuring surfaces are completely dry is important for effective disinfection. Care should be taken to avoid dogs coming into contact with cleaning products, as some may cause respiratory distress or irritation.

Fixed soft furnishings and carpets may harbour parasites and infectious agents and be difficult to clean (e.g. carpets). Consistent toilet training routines (e.g. regular, scheduled toilet breaks) will assist with toilet training but accidents are likely to occur while dogs are learning. Regular sanitising of bedding improves hygiene and comfort.



# PART 6: Breeding Dogs



## 6.1 Breeding

### Introduction

The availability of new homes for puppies needs to be considered before breeding occurs. It is important for owners and persons in charge of dogs to take steps to avoid accidental mating.

Breeders should ensure that the dog is healthy, and physically mature before they are used for breeding. At all times, the health and welfare of the dogs, and their future offspring, needs to remain paramount.

Indiscriminate breeding without regard to inherited welfare problems can compromise dog welfare due to the potential for increased risk of clinical disease, such as hip dysplasia, heart disease, spine abnormalities (e.g. vertebral malformations), difficulty breathing, blindness, and heritable behavioural problems. Information on inherited disorders of specific breeds is available from veterinarians and from reputable online sources (e.g. WSAVA Hereditary Disease Guidelines).

National dog breeding organisations and local affiliated clubs exist in New Zealand. Breeding organisations should have standards and codes of ethics which align with international best practice.

See:

- [Regulation 59A – Surgical reproductive procedures](#)
- [Regulation 59B – Transcervical insemination](#)

### 12. Minimum Standard – Breeding

- A person who plans to breed dogs must be registered as a member of a national dog registration body.*
- Males and females must be managed so as to prevent accidental mating.*
- For planned breeding of dogs, the owner or person in charge, must first determine there are sufficient, suitable homes available for the puppies.*
- Dogs used for planned breeding must be physically mature, in good health and physical condition, and not exhibit severe behavioural problems.*
- Planned mating must be supervised and carefully managed.*
- When breeding dogs, the owner or person in charge of the dogs must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the genetic make-up of both parents will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of known inherited welfare problems.*
- Where dogs are bred, there must be sufficient numbers of competent persons in charge to meet the physical, health, behavioural, mental, and emotional needs of all dogs in their care.*
- An owner or person in charge of a dog must not deliberately breed a dog with litter mates, parents, or offspring.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 12 – Breeding

- Males are securely housed in a separate space from bitches in heat (unless intended for breeding) (MS12 b).
- Accidental mating is rare (MS12 b).
- Documentation showing efforts to assess availability of homes or evidence of demand for puppies (e.g. waiting lists or expressions of interest) are available to view (MS12 c).
- Dogs with severe potentially heritable behavioural problems (e.g. generalised anxiety or severe aggression) are not bred (MS12 d).
- Mating is supervised and carefully managed by suitably experienced or qualified people to avoid physical injury (e.g. fighting, separating while tied) (MS12 e)
- Where tests for inherited welfare problems are available (e.g. hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, DNA testing for genetic markers of diseases, some eye diseases, Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (“BOAS”)), the appropriate tests have been performed and good breeding decisions made based on results (MS12 f).
- For dogs with extreme conformation (physical features) associated with known welfare problems (for example short faces, short legs, long backs, excessive skin folds etc), breeding decisions are made to select for more moderate conformation (MS12 f).
- Breeders keep records of animal breeding, including lineage and age at breeding and any inherited welfare problems in litters (MS12 h).
- Pregnancies between siblings, parents, or offspring are not allowed to progress (MS12 h).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) A breeding club, organisation, or breeder registration body should:
  - > have standards and codes of ethics to which members adhere;
  - > operate a documented scheme that allows for monitoring and eventual prevention of known inherited diseases and extreme conformation (physical features) that is associated with known welfare problems;
  - > have competency requirements to which they adhere to maintain membership with the organisation; and
  - > be independently audited, and appropriate referrals made to the registration body for non-compliance.
- b) Breeders should report records of every inherited disease and health test results to the breeding club, organisation or dog breeder registration body to assist progress in reducing these diseases.
- c) Breeders should maintain a record of new owner contact details and reported early deaths and severe medical problems.

### General Information

Those interested in dog breeding should be well informed about what is involved before they start and consider how they will manage the challenges and problems that may arise. Breeding dogs and rearing puppies requires expertise and close supervision. Ensuring that there are homes for the puppies before breeding will reduce the risk of unwanted dogs.

The scent produced by bitches in heat can attract dogs from far away. If an accidental mating has taken place, veterinarians can provide advice on managing (including terminating) an unwanted pregnancy.



Dogs are able to breed from approximately five months of age, with smaller breeds starting puberty earlier and larger breeds later. Undesexed dogs should be separated before puberty starts to ensure that accidental mating does not take place. If an accidental mating has taken place, owners and persons in charge of dogs should immediately access veterinary advice on managing an unwanted pregnancy (including termination).

National dog breeding clubs and organisations in New Zealand can promote best practices to ensure the health and welfare of breeding animals and those that are bred for sale, rehoming or other transfer of ownership. Ensuring members adhere to ethical standards and meet competency requirements for providing care for dogs used for breeding is important for dog welfare. These clubs and organisations operate schemes which enable early detection and identification of common inherited disorders (such as BOAS, hip and elbow dysplasia and retinal atrophy). Breeders should research and test wherever possible to gain as much information as they can about both the stud dog and bitch before any mating is carried out.

## 6.2 Desexing

### Introduction

Responsible dog ownership includes desexing of dogs not registered for breeding to avoid accidental mating and reproductive health issues. Desexing of dogs is a significant surgical procedure under the Act and can only be carried out by a veterinarian, or a person who is acting under the direct supervision of a veterinarian and who is a student undergoing training to become a veterinarian.

See [Part 7.10 Significant Surgical Procedures](#) for more information.

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs not intended for breeding or conformational showing should be desexed as early as possible, based on veterinary advice.

### General Information

Desexing decisions should be made in consultation with a veterinarian. Direct medical benefits of desexing include reduction or elimination of infections and cancers of the reproductive system, and an associated increased lifespan. There is no benefit to a bitch from having a litter of puppies before being desexed and the risk of mammary cancer increases if dogs are desexed after the first and subsequent heats.

Desexing can be safely carried out at a young age and is typically a faster procedure with a quicker recovery time. Desexing can be carried out safely from six weeks of age. Desexing at this age is generally performed in situations where re-homing with future population control is of the highest priority. An increase in the rate of dog desexing will enable better control of the dog population, reduce the surplus of unwanted dogs, and protect the dogs' health and welfare. Veterinarians, pet shops, dog breeders, local councils and animal welfare and rescue organisations can facilitate this process by continuing to encourage the dog owning public to have their dogs desexed.

Desexing at a young age does not stunt growth but may delay the closure of growth plates if it occurs before sexual maturity. Delaying desexing until after skeletal maturity will not prevent developmental joint diseases caused by harmful genetics (e.g. hip or elbow dysplasia) or joint diseases caused by overfeeding (e.g. anterior cruciate ligament injury).



Desexed dogs of all ages may experience weight gain after desexing, and this can be controlled by appropriate diet and exercise. Desexing at any age is associated with an increased the risk of urinary incontinence in bitches. Desexing, whether of companion or working dogs, generally causes no significant increase in negative behaviours and it does not in itself make the animal become less active.

Although desexing is the preferable option, bitches can be prevented from coming into heat by using pharmaceutical products which may be obtained after consultation with a veterinarian. Similarly, there are pharmaceutical products which can be used to achieve temporary chemical castration of male dogs which may be obtained after consultation with a veterinarian.

## 6.3 Bitches in Heat, Mating, and Artificial Insemination (AI)

### Introduction

For dog breeders, expert advice should be sought and then consideration given to the frequency at which dogs are used for breeding and the age at which breeding commences and ends. Decisions to breed a bitch should include consideration of age, skeletal maturity, number of previous litters and the delivery method of previous litters.

Bitches generally come into heat (oestrus) at intervals of about six to twelve months. Each heat period lasts approximately three weeks. Bitches may be bred by natural mating or artificial insemination (AI).

See:

- [Regulation 59A – Surgical reproductive procedures](#)
- [Regulation 59B – Transcervical insemination](#)

### 13. Minimum Standard – Bitches in heat , mating, and artificial insemination (AI)

- Bitches must not be bred before 18 months of age or skeletal maturity, whichever comes later.*
- Bitches must not be bred after six years of age, unless under veterinary advice.*
- Bitches must not have more than three litters in a two-year period.*
- The maximum number of litters in the lifetime of a bitch must not exceed four.*
- Bitches must not be bred if they have had a litter delivered by caesarean section, with one additional litter permitted only under veterinary advice.*
- Preventative health care must be carried out on bitches and stud dogs to be used for breeding, under veterinary advice.*
- Surgical AI must not be performed.*
- Transvaginal and transcervical insemination must only be performed by a competent person with experience and expertise in the procedure.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 13 – Bitches in heat, mating, and artificial insemination (AI)

- Breeders' records show that:
- bitches are not bred at less than 18 months of age or before reaching skeletal maturity (whichever comes later);
  - > bitches are not bred after six years of age, unless there is documented evidence of veterinary approval;
  - > a bitch has not produced more than three litters in a two-year period or four litters across her lifetime; and
  - > a bitch has not been bred following a caesarean, unless there is documented evidence of veterinary approval; and
  - > breeding dogs received preventative health care, in accordance with veterinary advice (MS13 a-f).
- Surgical AI is not performed (MS13 g).
- A record is kept of the date and persons performing transvaginal and transcervical inseminations (MS13 h).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Veterinary advice should be sought before mating bitches for the first time at five years of age or more.
- b) The maximum number of litters in the lifetime of a bitch should not exceed three.
- c) Dogs who are unable to breed naturally due to health or conformation should not be bred using artificial insemination (AI).

### General Information

Age of physical and sexual maturity varies with the breed and the individual dog. Skeletal maturity may be as early as ten months in smaller breeds while in large breeds it may not occur until 16 to 18 months. Breeders need to ensure that a dog is physically mature before they are used for breeding.

Puppies should be bred and reared without compromising either the parent or puppies' welfare at any time. Where surgeries are planned as part of breeding (e.g. caesarean), there are welfare risks associated with multiple anaesthesia and surgeries.

Artificial insemination (AI) is a technique used to enable dogs to become pregnant without a natural mating. Artificial insemination (AI) allows the use of semen from stud dogs worldwide, eliminating the need to transport dogs for breeding and increasing the pool of potential stud dogs. Artificial insemination (AI) reduces potential risks associated with natural mating.

Use of artificial insemination (AI) should be carefully considered to avoid unintended welfare consequences. Dogs who cannot be bred via natural mating due to health or conformation reasons should not be bred using artificial insemination (AI) as these genes may pass onto their puppies, possibly affecting the health and welfare of future dogs.

Non-surgical insemination includes transvaginal or transcervical insemination. Non-surgical artificial insemination methods do not require general anaesthesia or surgery and can be completed in a few minutes by a competent operator. Transcervical insemination results in the same or improved conception rates when compared with surgical artificial insemination.



Surgical artificial insemination involves general anaesthesia of the animal, removing the uterus, introduction of semen into the uterus, replacement of the uterus, and closure of the surgical site. Surgical artificial insemination is not permitted due to the associated welfare risks and the availability of lower risk alternatives, such as transcervical insemination.

## 6.4 Pregnancy and Whelping

### Introduction

The length of gestation in the dog is about 63 days. Information about the stages of pregnancy, whelping and lactation can be obtained from veterinarians, other competent people, and other reputable sources.

Complications during whelping may sometimes occur. Monitoring of bitches is important to assist with timely detection of whelping difficulties and appropriate intervention.

### 14. Minimum Standard – Pregnancy and Whelping

- a. *Bitches that are due to whelp, or are whelping, must be provided with a suitable whelping area with clean, dry, comfortable bedding, located in a safe, warm, adequately enclosed space and quiet environment.*
- b. *Bitches that are due to whelp, or are whelping, must be inspected frequently to ensure that they are not experiencing whelping difficulties.*
- c. *If a bitch is exhibiting any signs that indicate that she is experiencing difficulties at any point during whelping, expert assistance must immediately be sought.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 14 – Pregnancy and Whelping

- A separate area that is suitable for whelping is provided to the bitch (MS14 a).
- Clean, dry, and comfortable bedding material is provided to the bitch and puppies (MS14 a).
- Bitches due to whelp are monitored for signs of whelping difficulties (e.g. green or bright red discharge before the first puppy is born, prolonged contractions for more than one hour without a puppy, weakness or lethargy) (MS14 b).
- Bitches who require whelping assistance are attended to with urgency (MS14 c).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) If whelping boxes are used, they should be placed in a warm but well-ventilated environment. Advice on design should be obtained from an expert such as an experienced dog breeder, veterinarian or allied veterinary professional.
- b) A competent person with experience or expertise should be on-site or available on call to monitor whelping dogs and to undertake emergency assistance if necessary.
- c) A veterinarian should be on call in the event there is an emergency during whelping.

### General Information

Pregnant dogs should be provided access to a whelping area one to two weeks prior to whelping so they can become familiar with the area. A whelping box should be provided before whelping and the bedding





material should be replaced after whelping has taken place. The whelping area or box will need to have ongoing provision of fresh bedding to maintain hygiene. A person assisting a bitch during whelping should practice good hygiene including thorough hand washing.

The bitch can exhibit a sharp drop in body temperature 12-24 hours before whelping. Monitoring the bitch's temperature during the last days of pregnancy can give an indication of when whelping may begin, however a temperature drop does not always occur and so cannot be relied upon as an indicator.

Newborn puppies require frequent checks to ensure they are feeding, warm and there are no apparent health concerns. People need to practice good hygiene, such as frequent hand washing, to minimise the spread of pathogens to the bitch and puppies. For their safety, puppies' movements should be restricted by keeping them within a pen enclosure for the first several weeks of their life.

## 6.5 Lactation and Weaning

### Introduction

Puppies rely on a bitch's milk to obtain all nutrients for the first few weeks of life. From three to four weeks of age, they spend more time exploring their immediate environment and less time with the bitch. At this stage solid food can be introduced and the bitch may begin to seek time alone.

Weaning should be gradual to reduce the stress on the puppies and the bitch. Puppies should be completely weaned onto solid food by six to seven weeks of age, and for two weeks before they are rehomed.

### 15. Minimum Standard – Lactation and Weaning

- a. *Where the bitch allows, puppies must have access to nurse from the bitch for the first six weeks of age.*
- b. *The bitch must be given the choice of spending time away from her puppies.*
- c. *Puppies must be weaned for at least one week before being sold or rehomed or other transfer of ownership.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 15 – Lactation and Weaning

- There is a documented welfare reason why puppies under six weeks of age do not have access to their mother for nursing (MS15 a).
- The bitch is able to remove herself from her puppies (e.g. there is a barrier which contains the puppies but allows the bitch to leave) (MS15 b).
- Puppies are weaned for at least one week before being sold or rehomed or other transfer of ownership.

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Puppies should be allowed to progressively wean from their mother.
- b) Puppies should be regularly checked and weighed to ensure they are gaining weight.



## General Information

Puppies are dependent on their mother for feeding, toileting, and keeping warm for the first four weeks of age. Early milk (colostrum) provides puppies with some protection from disease and reduces mortality in puppies, highlighting the importance of leaving puppies to feed from the bitch.

Close supervision of bitches with puppies, appropriate feeding and exercise, frequent cleaning of the area in which they live and supplementary feeding of puppies from the age of three weeks, where required, is beneficial for their welfare. Some bitches may reject puppies or show maternal aggression (aggression towards their puppies) and require intervention. Veterinarians can provide advice in relation to large litters where puppies may need supplementary feeding from a very young age.

Puppies will become more active, start eating solid food, and begin the weaning process by three to four weeks of age and bitches will usually begin restricting access to themselves at four to five weeks. Weaning is usually completed by six to eight weeks (i.e. the puppy feeds entirely on solid food).

Weaning time should balance the welfare needs of both the bitch and the puppies. Weaning should be gradual and needs to be completed at least two weeks prior to rehoming.

## 6.6 Removal of Puppies from the Bitch and Supply of Puppies and Dogs

### Introduction

It is important a puppy's welfare to remain with the bitch and litter until eight weeks of age. This reduces the risk of development of behaviour problems.

A person or organisation selling, rehoming, or otherwise transferring ownership of a puppy or dogs needs to provide new owners with information concerning proper care to meet the dog's welfare needs. See the [Code of Welfare: Temporary Housing of Companion Animals](#) for more information on selling and rehoming.

### 16. Minimum Standard – Removal of Puppies from the Bitch and Supply of Puppies and Dogs

- a. *Puppies must be at least eight weeks of age, able to feed independently and be in good health when made available for sale, rehoming, or other transfer of ownership unless:*
  - > *the puppies have been orphaned and must be rehomed to ensure that they are able to obtain milk from another bitch or be hand raised; or*
  - > *early removal from the bitch is deemed necessary by a veterinarian.*
- b. *People supplying dogs or puppies for sale, rehoming, or other transfer of ownership must disclose predispositions to inheritable and heritable welfare problems.*
- c. *People in charge of dogs who are bred must have a socialisation plan in place for all puppies under their care.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 16 – Removal of Puppies from the Bitch and Supply of Puppies and Dogs

- Puppies under the age of eight weeks remain with the bitch and litter unless there is a suitable reason for separation (MS16 a).
- Except under exceptional circumstances, puppies offered for sale, rehoming or other transfer of ownership are no less than eight weeks (MS16 a).
- In exceptional circumstances, where people supply a puppy for sale, rehoming, or other transfer of ownership under the age of eight weeks, they ensure the new owner is competent to provide care for underage puppies.
- Breed-specific potential inherited welfare problems are disclosed to new owners (MS16 b).
- Results of any health tests performed on the parents of the puppy (MS16 b).
- Puppies are socialised in a home environment prior to rehoming (MS16 c).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Puppies should have begun socialisation with humans as early as three weeks of age.
- b) Puppies should be reared with their littermates until they are at least eight weeks of age.
- c) Orphaned puppies should be reared in an environment with other puppies until they are at least eight weeks of age.
- d) People selling, rehoming or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies should allow potential new owners to meet and interact with the puppy, littermates and the puppy's mother, and father if possible.

### General Information

Between the ages of approximately three to 12 weeks, puppies go through a sensitive socialisation period. As this sensitive socialisation period begins before puppies are old enough to leave their mother, socialisation should begin before sale, rehoming, or other transfer of ownership to reduce the risk of development of future behaviour problems. Sufficient, but not excessive, handling of young puppies from the age of three weeks will help them to socialise to people and later adjust to a new home. By the age of three weeks, puppies should begin exposure to new items such as dog toys, surfaces, materials, and household noises.

For further information on the important process of socialisation, refer to [Part 2.2 Purchasing or Adopting a Dog or Puppy](#)



# PART 7:

## Health



### 7.1 Ill Health and Injury

#### Introduction

Owners and persons in charge have a responsibility to maintain their dogs in good health and to treat injury and disease when it occurs. The health and welfare of the dog should be assessed daily, including observing whether the dog is eating, drinking, urinating, defecating and behaving normally.

The signs of ill health are included in [Appendix IV](#) and signs of pain and pain assessments are listed in [Appendix V](#).

#### 17. Minimum Standard – Ill Health and Injury, and Distress

- a. Each dog must be assessed daily for the signs of ill health, or injury.
- b. Owners, or persons in charge of dogs, who observe their dogs showing any of the following:
  - > signs of pain, such as changes in behaviour;
  - > suffering or distress;
  - > rapidly or chronically deteriorating health;
  - > serious injury;
  - > difficulty breathing;
  - > uncontrolled, profuse, or persistent bleeding;
  - > unexplained, rapid, or significant weight loss or gain; or
  - > signs of heat stroke; or
  - > dystocia
- c. must seek immediate attention from a veterinarian.
- d. If a dog is suffering from unreasonable pain or distress that is untreatable, then the dog must be euthanased immediately.
- e. Dogs must only be treated with products registered for use on dogs or according to veterinary advice.

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 17– Ill Health and Injury

- Dogs are observed to eat, drink, move, breathe, and behave normally (MS17 a).
- Persons in charge of dogs in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work have the following available for inspection:
  - > dog health records show that all treatments have been administered appropriately;
  - > a dog first aid kit is kept on site and all staff are aware of the contents of the kit, can demonstrate knowledge of how to treat a minor injury and to recognise when veterinary assistance is required;



- > there is evidence that staff and volunteers collectively possess the skill and knowledge required to recognise and seek treatment advice for ill-health and injury, (e.g. qualifications in animal care or other relevant field); and
  - > daily inspections and remedial outcomes are documented (MS17 a).
- No sick, painful, or injured dogs are left untreated (MS17 b).
- Dogs do not show signs of heat stroke (MS17 b):
  - > Dog appears confused.
  - > Uncoordinated/wobbly on their feet.
  - > Bright red tongue or dark gums.
  - > Difficulty breathing.
  - > Tremors, seizures.
  - > Diarrhoea/vomiting.
- There is documented evidence that a veterinarian was consulted, and their advice followed, for dog health problems (MS17 b).
- When required, euthanasia is undertaken as soon as possible (MS17 c).
- Dogs are not given registered medicines for humans or other animals unless instructed by a veterinarian (MS17 e).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should have a health check conducted by a veterinarian or allied veterinary professional at least once a year.
- b) Owners and persons in charge should seek veterinary services from a companion animal veterinarian.
- c) Dogs of unknown ownership, who are showing signs of illness or injury should receive immediate veterinary attention to alleviate pain or distress.
- d) The driver of a vehicle who is aware they have injured a dog should stop and render assistance.
- e) Reasonable steps should be taken to locate the owner or person in charge of dogs who are found injured or unhealthy.
- f) Owners and persons in charge who know that their dogs will be distant from veterinary care (e.g. when hunting, at sport or working) should carry a first aid kit appropriate for dogs.
- g) Owners and persons in charge should take steps to alleviate signs of heat or cold stress.

### General Information

A veterinarian or allied veterinary professional under veterinary supervision can provide treatment for a dog experiencing ill health or injury. Courses on first aid for animals are available through some veterinary clinics and animal care education providers.

Only products specifically registered for use on dogs under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997, or those prescribed by a veterinarian, should be used for treatment as some products are not suitable and may be toxic to dogs.

[Part 10](#) of this Code deals with humane killing and euthanasia.

### Bite injuries

Bite injuries may appear relatively insignificant but can be worse than they look and advice should be sought from a veterinarian.



## Dogs Injured by Motor Vehicles

Accidental injury to dogs while they are on roads is common and there is a recognised moral obligation for the driver of a vehicle who injures any animal, including a dog, to stop and give assistance. An injured dog should not be left at the roadside. Advice should be sought from a veterinarian.

## Dealing with Injured Dogs

When in pain or distress, and whether familiar or not, an injured dog may bite during attempts to assist them. An appropriate muzzle should be considered to prevent biting. If an injured dog is unable to walk and needs to be moved, a blanket or similar item can be used as a stretcher to minimise movement of the body and reduce the risk of exacerbating serious injuries. If the owner cannot be found within a short period of time, the injured dog should be presented to a veterinarian.

## Thermal stress

Risk of heat stress can be exacerbated by exercise, warm temperature, age, coat type, pregnancy, medical conditions, obesity and dog conformation (for example, brachycephalic dogs (those with shortened noses such as pugs and bulldogs)).

Signs of heat stress include shade seeking, excessive drooling, or excessive panting. Signs of cold stress include shivering, huddling or cold limbs. Dogs showing signs of heat stress should have access to water and be placed in a cool, shaded area. Heat stroke may occur when the ambient temperature overcomes dogs' ability to dissipate heat. Heat stroke is a medical emergency and requires immediate veterinary care.

## 7.2 Prevention and Management of Infectious Disease

### Introduction

Vaccination is an important means of controlling infectious diseases. Infectious diseases can rapidly spread among unvaccinated dogs, with consequent negative impacts on animal welfare. If a dog becomes infected, early veterinary attention is imperative.

Minimum standards and recommendations for best practice relating to ill-health ([Part 7.1: Ill Health and Injury](#)) also apply to the care of dogs with infectious diseases.

Additional steps are needed to reduce the risk of infectious disease outbreak where dogs are kept in a high stress environment, housed where there are dogs of unknown vaccination status, or housed with large numbers or dynamic populations of dog. For more information see the [Temporary Housing of Companion Animals Code 2018](#).



## 18. Minimum Standard – Prevention and Management of Infectious Disease

- a. Puppies must receive a complete course of core vaccinations beginning at six to eight weeks of age.
- b. Owners and persons in charge of dogs must make a reasonable effort to keep records of their dog's vaccination history.
- c. Where there is evidence of an infectious disease, or a dog is known to be infected, owners and persons in charge of the dog must take suitable steps under veterinary guidance to prevent the dog from infecting other dogs.
- d. Owners and persons in charge of dogs kept in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work must take appropriate biosecurity steps to prevent and manage the risk of outbreak infectious disease.

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 18 – Prevention and Management of Infectious Disease

- Owners and persons in charge of dogs or puppies can produce documentation showing their vaccination history (MS18 a&b).
- Where there has been an outbreak of an infectious disease, housing and equipment that has been exposed to infected dogs is sanitised and bedding materials sanitised or destroyed (MS18 c).
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs kept in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work have available for inspection documents which describe biosecurity plans and measures that demonstrate:
  - > provisions are in place to control disease from incoming animals;
  - > animals suspected of having a contagious disease are placed in isolation for observation and/or veterinary treatment; and
  - > in the event of a disease outbreak, animals are quarantined to reduce the spread of infection and details of the intervention are documented (MS18 d).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should be provided with protection against infectious disease by vaccination according to veterinary recommendations.
- b) Puppies should be managed to prevent contact with unvaccinated dogs or areas accessible to unvaccinated dogs until approximately one week after their final vaccinations.
- c) Preventative health plans for breeding bitches and their litters should be carried out according to veterinary recommendations.
- d) The vaccination status of dogs should be up to date before entering a stressful or high-risk environment such as kennels.
- e) Settings, such as temporary housing facilities, that are high-risk for the spread of infectious disease should vaccinate their dogs and puppies in accordance with vaccination protocols specific for shelter environments.



## General Information

Dogs are commonly vaccinated against diseases such as parvovirus, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis and canine infectious respiratory disease complex (canine cough).

Puppies are particularly susceptible to infectious diseases. Puppies should be carried, or otherwise prevented from walking on the ground, in public places until approximately one week after their final vaccinations. Contact with other dogs should be limited to healthy and vaccinated dogs, and unvaccinated puppies should be restricted to areas that are not accessible to unvaccinated dogs.

It is essential for puppies' health that they receive their full course of core vaccinations. Vaccination programmes normally begin at six to eight weeks of age, and are complete by 16 weeks of age, depending on individual circumstances. Thereafter, an annual veterinary health check is recommended, including an assessment of any need for a booster vaccination. Titre testing for adult dogs may be used to assess their current level of protection against infectious disease and the need for booster vaccination.

High-risk situations include animal shelters, pounds, boarding kennels, dog shows, dog parks, and neighbourhoods with low community vaccination rates. Animal shelters and council pounds are high stress environment and house a dynamic population of animals of unknown vaccination status. Earlier and more frequent vaccination is recommended for puppies housed in shelters and council pounds in accordance with recommended shelter vaccination schedules.

## 7.3 Prevention and Management of Parasitic Disease

### Introduction

Effective treatments and preventive programmes are available for treatment of internal parasites, such as roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms, and external parasites, such as fleas, mites, ticks, lice, and flies.

Minimum standards and recommendations for best practice relating to ill-health ([Part 7.1 Ill Health and Injury](#)) also apply to the management of dogs with parasitic diseases.

### 19. Minimum Standard – Prevention and Management of Parasitic Diseases

- a. Dogs must be treated for parasites if there are signs of infestation.*
- b. Dogs with urine or faeces scald, fly strike or fly bite dermatitis must be treated immediately.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 19 – Prevention and Management of Parasitic Diseases

- Dogs do not show signs of parasite infestation such as;
  - > excessive scratching at their skin or ears;
  - > excessive chewing at the skin or coat;
  - > presence of fleas or flea dirt on dog's skin or coat;





- > parasites or parasite eggs visible or identified by faecal testing;
- > scooting or licking at the anus;
- > excessive flaky skin, scabs, or scale;
- > hair loss or excessive matting (MS19 a).
- Dogs' ears are clean and free of signs of parasites (MS19 a).
- Dogs do not show signs of fly strike, such as the presence of maggots (MS19 b).
- Dog do not show signs of fly bite dermatitis such as erosions or ulcers at or near the ear tips or most dorsal area of the ear (MS19 b).
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs showing signs of parasitic disease have documentation which demonstrates their dogs have received appropriate and timely veterinary care and/or parasite treatment (MS19 a–b).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) An internal and external parasite management plan should be developed with advice from a veterinarian or allied veterinary professional.
- b) Dogs should be provided with appropriate preventive care, such as internal and external parasite treatments, in accordance with science and good practice.
- c) Bitches should be treated for roundworms during pregnancy to prevent their spread to the puppies.
- d) Puppies should be wormed with an effective roundworm treatment as recommended by a veterinarian.

### General Information

Internal parasites, such as intestinal worms, are a common disease problem and public health risk (see [7.5 Diseases Transmissible to Humans \(Zoonoses\)](#) below). Regular monitoring and worming prevents infestation.

Internal parasites are particularly prevalent in young dogs or puppies. Loss of body weight plus a tendency to a prominent belly, dry coat and regular licking at the anus are signs that may indicate the presence of roundworms. Since bitches can transmit roundworms via their milk, all puppies should be regularly wormed with an effective roundworm treatment. If there are indications that a dog is infested with internal parasites, this can be confirmed by faecal examination and then treated with an anthelmintic authorised by a veterinarian.

External parasites that live on the skin of dogs include fleas, mites and lice. Ticks are prevalent in some parts of the country. Long-haired dogs may have more difficulty with external parasites if their fur becomes matted through lack of grooming. Dogs can develop hypersensitivity to parasites and show extreme skin irritation, even with very low parasite numbers. Fleas are common and their populations can increase rapidly in warm environmental conditions. Fleas or flea dirt (black coils that turn red when moistened with water) may be seen in the dogs' coat or skin. Most of the flea's life cycle is spent, not on the dog, but in their environment, therefore carpets and bedding should be cleaned and/or treated.

Effective treatment of fleas requires that all animals in the household, including cats, are treated.

The signs of mange, which is caused by mites, include hair loss, flaky skin, redness, sores and sometimes itchy skin. Some types of mange also affect humans.



The ears of dogs, especially young dogs, should be checked regularly. An ear mite infestation may cause hair loss, flaky skin, redness, scratching of the ears, and a dark-brown discharge inside the ears.

Fly strike occurs when flies lay their eggs on skin, especially if conditions are unsanitary, dogs are subjected to prolonged tethering or confinement, or dogs are unhealthy (e.g. with urine scald or matted coats that contain faeces). Fly bite dermatitis is observed as erosions or ulcers at or near the ear tips or most dorsal area of the ear. These lesions can be intensely pruritic and result from biting flies. Fly bite dermatitis is common in dogs housed outdoors.

Crowded and unsanitary living conditions assist the spread of many parasites. Advice on the appropriate treatment of the environment and animals should be sought early from a veterinarian where there is an infestation of any parasite as treatment can be difficult in advanced cases.

## 7.4 Diseases of the Skin

### Introduction

Dermatitis and itching are common problems, and causes may include allergies, ringworm, bacterial infection, nutritional imbalances, and hormonal disorders. Skin cancers are more common in dogs with white or non-pigmented ears or noses.

### 20. Minimum Standard – Diseases of the Skin

*Dogs with acute or ongoing chronic skin and ear disease must not be left untreated.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 20 – Diseases of the Skin

- Dogs do not show signs of untreated skin disease including excessive itchiness (MS20 a).
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs seek veterinary advice for skin itch, redness, lesions, lumps, smell, and coat changes (MS20 a).
- Skin folds on the face, tail base and vulva are free from infection (MS20 a).
- Owners and persons in charge of dogs with ongoing allergies have a management plan with a veterinarian (MS20 a).

#### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Owners and persons in charge of dogs should take reasonable steps to reduce their dogs' risk of development of UV induced skin damage and skin cancer. The regular application of appropriate animal sunscreen on nose and ears is helpful but not fully preventative.

#### General Information

Skin on the ears, nose and lower abdomen, especially on or near the pubic area in white-skinned, short-haired breeds, is commonly affected by sun damage because the poorly haired skin offers minimal shielding from the sun.

The most common causes of skin allergies in dogs are atopic dermatitis (caused by hypersensitivity to environmental or dietary allergens) and flea allergy dermatitis (caused by hypersensitivity to fleas).



Skin diseases can be associated with excessive chewing and scratching, hair loss and skin thickening. Few of these conditions are resolved without veterinary treatment. Delays in seeking help may lead to worsening of the condition if the dog damages their skin further or develops secondary bacterial infections requiring additional treatment.

## 7.5 Diseases Transmissible to Humans (Zoonoses)

### General Information

Some diseases (e.g. ringworm, roundworm, hook worm, and campylobacter) can be transmissible between dogs and other species, including humans (zoonotic diseases). Owners and handlers can unknowingly transfer diseases from dog to dog.

Veterinarians, allied veterinary professionals, and owners or persons in charge of dogs kept in temporary housing facilities, housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or housed in kennels and kept for breeding should take steps to prevent the spread of zoonotic disease, including advising new owners of these steps.

Where there is concern about a zoonotic disease or one has been diagnosed, a discussion with a veterinarian is recommended to enable the owner of the dog to make an informed decision on the best course of action for both dog and owner.

## 7.6 Care of Claws and Coat

### Introduction

Dogs should be regularly groomed to maintain claw and coat condition.

Minimum standards and recommendations for best practice relating to ill-health ([Part 7.1 Ill Health and Injury](#)) also apply to the management of a dog with ailments relating to claws and coat.

### 21. Minimum Standard – Care of Claws and Coat

- a. The coats of dogs must be groomed or clipped at a frequency that will prevent discomfort, pain, or distress.*
- b. Claws, including dew claws, must be checked regularly and kept at an appropriate length for normal function.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 21 – Care of Claws and Coat

- Dogs do not experience pain or distress due to failure to attend to, or inappropriate attempts to attend to, matted fur (MS21 a).
- Long-haired dogs are groomed to avoid the coat becoming soiled, matted, impeding their movement, or causing skin or other disease (MS21 a).
- Hair over eyes is trimmed or tied so as not to affect vision (MS21 a).
- Dogs' claws are kept at an appropriate length to prevent injury or pain (MS21 b).
- Dogs' claws are shortened avoiding damage to the nail bed or other soft tissue when (MS21 b).



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Owners, or persons in charge should examine their dog's coat regularly.
- b) Cooperative care techniques should be used to encourage the dog to participate voluntarily in grooming (e.g. claw trimming).

## General Information

Long haired dogs may require regular clipping or their hair tied back to ensure they can move freely and see where they are going.

Hygiene around the perineum, anus and tail is particularly important in dogs with long hair to reduce soiling and the risk of flystrike and skin infection. Mats can be gently brushed out or clipped off by the owner but when matting is severe dog owners should seek expert assistance as they can cause discomfort and pain.

Grass seeds can penetrate the skin, ears, and between the toes of dogs. Owners should regularly check dogs for grass seeds during the late summer period.

Bathing dogs is generally not necessary if the dog is kept in a clean environment, but it can reduce unpleasant odours.

Dew claws, the claws of older dogs, and the claws of dogs who get little or no exercise on hard surfaces, may become overgrown. Long claws need careful trimming with sharp clippers or a dremel (nail grinder) taking care not to damage the quick of the nail (the nail bed) which will be painful and result in bleeding and possibly infection. Alternatively, scratch pads can be used but may not be as effective for dew claws.

Cooperative care techniques use reward-based training methods to encourage dogs to voluntarily participate in grooming. Veterinarians, allied veterinary professionals, professional dog groomers, dog trainers, and breeders can provide assistance and advice on grooming and trimming claws.

## 7.7 Exercise

### Introduction

Exercise is important for both physical and mental health. Insufficient exercise can contribute to the development of behaviour problems. Exercise is usually a matter of walking and running on or off a leash, but dogs are also exercised in other ways, e.g. by swimming or using exercise equipment such as treadmills.

### 22. Minimum Standard – Exercise

- a. *Dogs must receive daily exercise sufficient to maintain their health and welfare.*
- b. *To limit the risk of injury or over-exercise, exercise equipment must be used appropriately and dogs supervised at all times during use.*



## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 22 – Exercise

- Dogs are not exercised to exhaustion (MS22 a).
- Exercise equipment, such as treadmills or swimming pools, are used under supervision only (MS22 b).
- Dogs are not tethered to electric treadmills (MS22 b).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) The level and type of exercise should be appropriate for the age, skeletal development, health, breed type, and level of fitness of the dog.
- b) Dogs being exercised should be under control at all times, or exercised in an enclosed area where they cannot come to harm.
- c) Care should be taken when exercising heavily pregnant and lactating bitches.

### General Information

Exercise requirements vary between dogs. Over-exercising of growing dogs, especially those of larger breeds, may result in muscle or joint problems. Older dogs require relatively less exercise but physical activity remains important for both health and mental stimulation.

Regular exercise is important for dogs used for work, sport or hunting to maintain their fitness, especially during periods of little or no work.

Exercise is generally appropriate for pregnant bitches until the last two weeks of pregnancy. Lactating bitches do not usually require regular exercise while their puppies are very young.

Dogs should not be exercised soon after a large meal or fed shortly after vigorous exercise. See [Part 3.3: Disease and Illness Related to Diet](#) for more information.

When exercising dogs beside a vehicle or push bike, care needs to be taken for the dog's fitness and safety. If using exercise equipment, such as treadmills, dogs should be gradually introduced to using the equipment using reward-based training methods. Treadmills designed for use by humans are generally not suitable for use with dogs. Dogs should not be tethered to exercise equipment and need to be actively supervised at all times while using this equipment.

Exercise on hard surfaces such as tarmac and long working hours can lead to worn footpads, especially where dogs are unaccustomed to this. Extremely hot surfaces, such as sandy beaches and hot asphalt in summer, will burn footpads.

## 7.8 Toxic and Harmful Substances

### Introduction

As natural scavengers, dogs are susceptible to accidental poisoning by many substances e.g. vertebrate pest baits, poisonous plants, recreational drugs, household cleaners, antifreeze, contents of rubbish bins and contaminated water. Dogs can also be poisoned by eating carcasses of poisoned animals.

Refer also to [Part 3.2: Risky Foods and Objects](#).



## 23. Minimum Standard – Toxic and Harmful Substances

- a. Owners and persons in charge of dogs must take all practical steps to ensure that dogs are not exposed to poisons and harmful substances.
- b. Owners and persons in charge of dogs known to have eaten a harmful substance or showing signs indicative of poisoning must seek immediate veterinary attention.

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 23 – Toxic and Harmful Substances

- Toxic or harmful substances are stored appropriately and are not accessible to dogs in the dog's home environment, enclosure, or exercise area (e.g. arsenic treated timber, lead based paint) (MS23 a)
- Dogs do not have access to sources of polluted water (MS23 a).
- Dog housing or exercise areas that are outdoors should not contain or be overhung by poisonous plants (e.g. karaka, kōwhai) (MS23 a)
- Veterinary attention is sought for dogs showing signs of poisoning including tremors, seizures, frenzied behaviour, vomiting, sudden drowsiness or collapse (MS23 b)

### General Information

Dogs can be poisoned by many substances. Care should be taken to prevent exposure to poisonous plants (indoor and outdoor), household and garden chemicals such as insecticides or fungicides, lead paints or objects, and timbers treated with arsenic.

If a dog has eaten a poison or if the dog is showing clinical signs of toxicity, the dog and suspected poison should be taken to a veterinary clinic immediately. Dogs should not be made to vomit, unless under veterinary advice, as this may cause further harm.

Dogs are commonly poisoned by baits containing anti-coagulant poisons that prevent blood clotting that are laid to control rats, rabbits and possums, and by the carcasses of the poisoned animals. Slug bait poisoning is also common. It is important to know if pest control measures are being used in a dog's vicinity.

Some poisons, such as 1080 and brodifacoum, can remain active for many months in the carcasses of poisoned rabbits, possums and other species. Signs of poisoning in dogs depend on the class of poison consumed. Signs of 1080 poisoning include frenzied behaviour, fear and panic, howling, cowering which may rapidly progress to fits and death. Signs of anti-coagulant poisoning may include bruising of the skin, bleeding from the gums, blue, black or red stools, blood in the urine, lethargy, weakness, coughing, laboured breathing, lameness, seizures and sudden death.

Clinical signs of poisoning may appear immediately or several days after ingestion. Dogs are particularly susceptible to 1080 poison and, while the outcome is usually fatal, there may be a chance of survival if veterinary treatment is sought immediately (i.e. within 30 minutes of ingestion). Care should be taken to prevent access to slow moving water or water polluted with toxins such as sheep dip, horticultural sprays, antifreeze, algal blooms, etc.



## 7.9 Care of Older Dogs

### Introduction

Dogs are generally considered senior when they are in the last 25 % of the expected lifespan for that breed. As dogs age, their needs often change and some adjustments to their care may be required. Some diseases of senior dogs may be interpreted by the owner as part of the natural ageing process but in many cases the difficulties of advancing age can be managed by treatment and nutrition. Veterinary and nutritional advice and specific treatments should be sought to help the aging dog.

### 24. Minimum Standard – Care of Older Dogs

*An owner or person in charge of a dog must manage and treat age-related diseases in accordance with veterinary advice.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 24 – Care of Older Dogs

- Veterinary advice for disease related to older age is followed (MS24).

#### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Senior dogs should receive regular veterinary checks (every six months) to ensure that their health and welfare is maintained by early diagnosis and treatment of age-related diseases.

#### General Information

As dogs age, their need for warmth, soft bedding, better traction, and nutritious and easily-digested food increases. Senior dogs may benefit from additional bedding or dog coats for warmth.

Senior dogs generally require less exercise and are less tolerant of high workloads than younger dogs, but this will vary with factors such as breed type and health. Nevertheless, physical activity remains an important contributing factor for good physical and mental health, joint health and mobility, bowel function, prevention of constipation and general welfare.

Heart disease, metabolic disease, cancers and arthritis, and canine dementia are common age-related diseases of dogs. Difficulty standing up, weight change, and excessive drinking and urination are common signs of age-related disease.

Senior dogs may sometimes show signs of canine dementia (also known as Canine Cognitive Dysfunction). Signs include forgetting house training, confusion or disorientation, changes in sleep patterns, getting stuck in corners, pacing, and anxiety. A management plan can be developed to improve quality of life in consultation with a veterinarian.

## 7.10 Significant Surgical Procedures

### Introduction

Surgical procedures need to be conducted in a manner that minimises pain and distress.

The Act sets criteria for whether a procedure carried out on an animal is a significant surgical procedure. The criteria are set out in Section 16 of the Act.



If any person has to determine whether a procedure carried out on an animal is a significant surgical procedure under the Act, the person must determine the question by considering the following criteria:

- a) whether the procedure has the potential to—
  - > cause significant pain or distress; or
  - > cause serious or lasting harm, or loss of function, if not carried out by a veterinarian in accordance with recognised professional standards; and
- b) the nature of the procedure, including whether this involves—
  - > a surgical or operative procedure below the surface of the skin, mucous membranes, or teeth or below the gingival margin; or
  - > physical interference with sensitive soft tissue or bone structure; or
  - > significant loss of tissue or loss of significant tissue.

Only a veterinarian, or a person who is acting under the direct supervision of a veterinarian and who is a student undergoing their training to become a veterinarian, are able to perform a significant surgical procedure, unless a regulation says otherwise.

For all animal welfare regulations please see [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz). Note that not all of the surgical procedures included within these regulations meet the criteria of a significant surgical procedure, some have been regulated for clarity only.

See also the regulations listed below:

- [Regulation 51 – Docking dogs’ tails](#)
- [Regulation 55J – Freeze branding dogs](#)
- [Regulation 55L – Prohibition on hot branding of animals generally](#)
- [Regulation 56 – Removing dogs’ first digits \(dew claws\)](#)
- [Regulation 56D – Cutting teeth of animals](#)
- [Regulation 58D – Prohibition on cropping dogs’ ears](#)
- [Regulation 59A – Surgical reproductive procedures](#)
- [Regulation 59B – Transcervical insemination](#)
- [Regulation 59C – Cystocentesis](#)
- [Regulation 59E – Epidurals](#)
- [Regulation 59F – Urinary catheterisation](#)

### 7.10.1 Debarking

Debarking is a surgical procedure that involves removing laryngeal tissue from a dog. The purpose of debarking is to remove the sound made when a dog barks. Debarking a dog restricts their ability to express normal behaviours.

#### 25. Minimum Standard – Debarking

*Debarking must not be performed.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 2 – Debarking

- Debarking surgery is not performed.





## General information

Debarking is considered a convenience surgery that carries risks associated with general anaesthesia and the procedure, including a substantial risk for development of scar tissue and glottis stenosis (narrowing of the throat) which may require further surgical intervention.

Excessive barking is commonly associated with an underlying welfare issue. Debarking reduces the noise associated with the barking but does not address the cause of the behaviour.

Information on behaviour and training is provided in [Part 8](#) of this Code.

### 7.10.2 Removal of dew claws

Dew claws are vestigial digits found on the inside of the lower limbs of a dog. Articulated dew claws are firmly attached to the leg. Most front limb dew claws are articulated. Articulated claws may also be found on a dog's hind limbs.

See:

- [Regulation 56 – Removing dogs' first digits \(dew claws\)](#)

#### 26. Minimum Standard – Removal of Dew Claw

- A front limb first digit (dew claw) or articulated hind limb first digit (dew claw) of a dog of any age must not be removed unless all of the following apply:*
  - > *the dew claw is removed by a veterinarian or veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian throughout the procedure;*
  - > *the dew claw is removed for therapeutic purposes; and*
  - > *the dog is given appropriate pain relief at the time of the procedure.*
- A non-articulated hind limb first digit (dew claw) of a dog of four days of age or older must not be removed except by a veterinarian or veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian throughout the procedure where the dog is given pain relief at the time of the procedure.*
- If a non-articulated hind limb first digit (dew claw) of a dog under four days of age is removed by a person other than a veterinarian, that person must possess the knowledge, training and competence, in relation to that procedure, that is necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the dog.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 26 – Removal of Dew Claw

- Front limb first digits (dew claws) and articulated hind limb first digits (dew claws) are not removed, unless for therapeutic purposes (MS26 a).

## General Information

The removal of articulated dew claws often requires cutting through bone. This can result in complications including pain, haemorrhage, infection, and scarring if not performed correctly. In addition, articulated dew claws may function to prevent foot injury by providing support when running and to keep objects steady while a dog is chewing them.



While it is possible that the claw of any digit may become overgrown and catch, or become ingrown, it is more appropriate to manage this by regularly trimming or filing the claw rather than amputating a digit.

Dew claws should be monitored to ensure they do not become overgrown (see also [Part 7.6: Care of Claws and Coat](#)).

### 7.10.3 Tail docking

Tail docking is the shortening of a dog's tail for cosmetic reasons, either surgically or using bands to cut off blood supply. Routine tail docking (or 'banding') is prohibited.

The shortening of tails for therapeutic reasons is referred to as amputation. Tails may only be shortened surgically by a veterinarian for therapeutic reasons (for the purpose of responding to an existing disease or injury) in accordance with the minimum standard below.

See:

- [Regulation 51 – Docking dogs' tails](#)

#### 27. Minimum Standard – Tail Docking

*a. Tail docking must not be performed.*

*b. Tails must not be amputated unless all of the following apply:*

- > *the tail is amputated by a veterinarian or veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian throughout the procedure; and*
- > *the tail is amputated for therapeutic purposes; and*
- > *the dog is given appropriate pain relief at the time of the procedure.*

#### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 27 – Tail Docking

- Tails of dogs and puppies are not docked (MS27 a).
- Dogs and puppies with amputated tails have documentation detailing:
  - the name of the veterinarian who performed or supervised the procedure;
  - why the tail was amputated; and
  - Long-acting pain relief was provided at the time of the procedure (MS27 b).

#### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Injury of the tail can lead to serious complications and any significant injury to the tail (e.g. prolonged bleeding, exposed tissue, kinks, paralysis), should be assessed by a veterinarian to determine the best course of treatment.

#### General Information

Tail injury may be painful and debilitating and may not necessarily resolve itself. Care needs to be taken to ensure that damage to the tail is minimised and that any injury or damage is treated appropriately. See [Part 7.1: Ill Health and Injury](#).



# PART 8: Behaviour, Enrichment, and Training



## 8.1 Behaviour

### Introduction

Dogs need opportunities to express appropriate, normal behaviours. Dogs provided with enough space, enrichment, appropriate training and handling, and a suitable companion do not usually exhibit behavioural problems.

Dogs will have individual differences in how social they are with other dogs. Some dogs prefer other dogs as companions, whereas others prefer to not interact with other dogs.

### 28. Minimum Standard – Behaviour

- a. *Dogs must not be physically punished.*
- b. *Dogs must have opportunities for appropriate social interactions.*
- c. *Dogs housed together must be managed to prevent distress, aggression, or injury.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 28 – Behaviour

- Dogs are not punished in a manner which could cause pain or injury to a dog (e.g. kick, punch, or struck with an object) (MS28 a).
- Dogs who are social with other animals are provided opportunities to socialise with appropriate other animals (MS28 b).
- Dogs have the opportunity for positive social interactions with people (MS28 b).
- Dogs who have previously shown aggressive behaviour towards each other are separated, or supervised where separation is not possible (MS28 c).
- There are no injuries caused as a result of aggression between dogs housed together (MS28 c).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) Companion animals living together should be compatible and behaviours which may cause stress to other animals in the household should be managed appropriately (e.g. dogs should be prevented from chasing cats or other animals).
- b) Bonded dogs should not be permanently separated unless absolutely necessary.
- c) Owners and persons in charge of dogs should recognise and respond appropriately to aggression between dogs.
- d) Dogs should be managed so exposure to fireworks and other frightening stimulus is minimised.
- e) Advice should be sought at the early stages of a behavioural problem from a dog behaviour consultant or veterinarian with behavioural expertise.
- f) Where an owner or person in charge of a dog is at all uncertain how the dog will respond to other dogs, livestock or wildlife, the dog should be restrained in a manner that keeps all animals safe.



## General Information

Genetics, socialisation, training, desexing and level of supervision all contribute to the manner in which a dog will behave.

Dogs are often required to suppress normal behaviours to meet human expectations. Dogs also commonly experience extended periods of isolation and may have few opportunities to exercise agency (choice). Dogs may experience welfare compromise when placed in situations where they lack the skills needed to cope or due to inappropriate attempts to manage their behaviour, such as use of physical punishment. Where possible, dogs should be given opportunities for choice and control in a manner which does not compromise safety.

Normal dog behaviours such as barking, destructive behaviour, jumping up and pulling on the leash can be seen as problematic or unwanted. Behavioural problems are often due to a dog feeling fearful or experiencing anxiety. Changes in behaviour may also have a medical basis (e.g. pain), be age-related, or result from inappropriate handling, changes to the dog's home environment or use of punishment.

Where problem behaviours or behavioural problems occur, a reputable dog trainer, dog behaviour consultant, or a veterinarian with behavioural expertise may be able to suggest procedures for modifying these behaviours. The earlier that behavioural problems are addressed, the greater the chance of correcting them. Sometimes, medication may be used as part of a behavioural modification plan.

## 8.2 Enrichment

### Introduction

Provision of enrichment is important for all dogs. Enrichments fall into five categories; social (e.g. social play with humans or other dogs), physical (e.g. toys, paddling pool), nutritional (e.g. food puzzles or scatter feeding), sensory (e.g. opportunities to explore new smells on a walk), and occupational (e.g. training, agility).

Providing dogs with enrichment promotes normal development, provides opportunities for positive mental experiences, agency (choice), and reduces the risk of developing abnormal or unwanted behaviours.

### 29. Minimum Standard – Enrichment

- a. *Dogs must be provided with enrichment items or daily activities suitable to the individual dog.*
- b. *Enrichment items or activities must not cause injury and or distress to the dog.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 29 – Enrichment

- Dogs demonstrate behavioural diversity and positive social interactions (MS29 a).
- Dogs have the choice to engage in enrichment activities (MS29 a).
- Dogs have access to toys or other enrichment items and there is evidence of interaction (e.g. scratch or bite marks on toys or chews) (MS29 a).
- Dogs are taken on walks where they have opportunity to sniff, or are engaged in other activities (e.g. scent training, social play with humans or other dogs) (MS29 a).
- Enrichment items provided are made from dog safe material, with no choking hazards, protrusions or abrasive surfaces (MS29 b).



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should have opportunities to participate in suitable activities with their human family.
- b) Enrichment should aim to address dogs' social, physical, nutritional, sensory, and occupational behaviours.
- c) Enrichment items should be rotated, and novel items introduced regularly, to encourage the dog to interact and provide environmental variability.

## General Information

Dogs vary in what they find enriching and this may be influenced by their genetics, socialisation and life experiences. For example, socialising with other dogs may be enriching for one dog but a significant source of stress for another dog. It is important to monitor a dog's behaviour to ensure enrichment is appropriate for the individual. A dog's behaviour should be monitored so that enrichment can be removed or changed if the dog has lost interest or no longer enjoys the activity.

Dog welfare is most at risk in barren environments. Chronic inescapable boredom due to inappropriate living conditions or a lack of suitable companionship can be extremely aversive for dogs and can contribute to unwanted behaviours such as aggression, excessive barking, or destructive behaviours.

In some cases, dogs may need to be restricted to an area, for example for human safety or to promote recovery from injury (e.g. impounded dogs classified as "dangerous" or dogs restricted to crate rest following surgery). In these situations, enrichment needs to be adapted to meet these restrictions. For example, scatter feeding for "dangerous" dogs housed in council pounds without compromising human safety.

## 8.3 Training Dogs

Dogs can be trained to carry out a variety of behaviours. While training is particularly important for teaching puppies skills they need, training should continue at all ages. Training techniques should be appropriate for the individual dog.

See:

- [Regulation 47 – Collars and tethers](#)

### 30. Minimum Standard – Training

- a. *Training must apply reward-based methods.*
- b. *Training methods must not cause dogs to experience fear, pain, or distress.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 30 – Training

- Training methods use rewards such as food, petting, play, praise, or environmental rewards (MS30 a).
- Pain, physical discomfort, or intimidation is not used to train dogs, including striking, choking, kicking, or 'alpha roll' (MS30 b).
- Owners and persons in charge of temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work can demonstrate knowledge of reward-based training techniques (MS30 a).



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should be trained to minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviour and so that they are under control at all times.
- b) Training sessions should be short and determined by the animal's reactions.

## General Information

Dogs should be taught the skills they will need to live with humans, such as being left alone temporarily, impulse control, recall, and loose leash walking. Reward-based training methods foster the human animal bond. Rewards may include food, petting, play, environmental rewards, and praise, based on an individual dog's preferences and motivations.

Insufficient or inappropriate training may cause dogs to develop problem behaviours including excessive barking, chasing cars or bikes and destructive behaviour.

Physical punishment is ineffective for training dogs with serious behavioural problems, such as aggression. While use of physical punishment can be effective at temporarily suppressing behaviours, it does not address the underlying cause of the behaviour and may contribute to escalation of the behaviour or development of additional behavioural issues.

"Pack theory" is a punitive approach to training based on the idea of a person or owner using dominance to become the 'alpha' of the 'pack'. This theory has been thoroughly debunked. Use of punitive techniques, which rely on intimidation or physical punishment to achieve compliance compromise welfare and can increase the risk of problem behaviours.

## 8.4 Muzzles and Training Aids

### Introduction

Aversive training devices, such as choke chains, prong or pinch collars, electronic collars (remote transmission, bark-activated, and boundary control devices), can have a significant, negative long-term impact on the welfare and behaviour of a dog.

Tools may be used to help manage behaviours or to address behaviours in combination with training. Muzzles are used to help manage behaviour for a number of reasons including to prevent a dog biting or scavenging, to safeguard wildlife or to protect dogs from poison baits. They are also a legal requirement in respect of certain classifications of dog under the Dog Control Act 1996.

See:

- [Regulation 12 – Muzzles on dogs](#)
- [Regulation 47 – Collars and tethers](#)

### 31. Minimum Standard – Muzzles and Training Aids

- a. *Training equipment must not be used in a way that causes fear, pain, injury or distress.*
- b. *Harnesses, collars, head collars and muzzles must not—*
  - > *cause a cut that bleeds or discharges; or*
  - > *cause a skin abrasion that bleeds or discharges; or*



- > *cause a swelling; or*
- > *prevent the dog from breathing normally, panting, drinking, or vomiting.*

**c. Muzzles that restrict panting, drinking, or vomiting may be used if—**

- > *the muzzle is used under constant supervision to prevent injury to any human or animal during veterinary treatment or handling; or*
- > *the muzzle is used by—*
  - » *an inspector or auxiliary officer while exercising his or her functions, duties, or powers under the Act; or*
  - » *a dog control officer, dog ranger, or warranted officer exercising his or her functions, duties, or powers under the Dog Control Act 1996.*

**d. The following training devices, must not be used:**

- > *training collars which deliver electric shock, citronella spray, water vapour, air pressure or a high frequency sound;*
- > *pinch or prong collars; or*
- > *choke chains.*

### Minimum Standard No. 31 Example Indicators – Muzzles and Training Aids

- Dogs are appropriately introduced to wearing training equipment (MS31 a).
- Harness, collars, and head collars are well fitted and there are no signs of injury caused by inappropriate use (MS31 b).
- Muzzles are well fitted and appropriate for the intended purpose (MS31 c-d).
- Punishment based training equipment, including choke chains, pinch or prong collars, and electronic or ultrasonic training aids are not present (MS31 d).

### Recommended Best Practice

- a) All dogs should be trained to wear a muzzle, to ensure they will accept it readily, in the event it is needed (e.g. as condition for travel on public transport or when handling an injured dog).

### General Information

Tools such as crates or baby gates can be used to limit access to areas of the house. A crate suitable for the size of the dog can be useful to help with toilet training and helping a dog to feel secure in a new environment. Dogs need to be trained to tolerate being confined in a crate.

Dogs who cannot be reliably controlled off leash during exercise or training should be kept on a leash or long line.

Clickers or other markers can be useful tools for training. They can make training more efficient as they can be used to mark the moment the dog performs the desired behaviour.

Electronic training devices can be harmful and increase the risk of problem behaviours such as aggression. Choke chains can be harmful. Pressure applied to the neck of dogs may restrict breathing or cause injury. Choke chains can become caught on objects then cause distress or strangulation and on long haired breeds they may become entangled in the hair causing pain and/or restricting breathing.



# PART 9:

# Transportation



## Introduction

The Act requires that every person in charge of a vehicle must ensure that any animal carried in a vehicle is secured and their welfare attended to while being transported in or on a vehicle. Additional information about transport is contained in the [Code of Welfare: Transport within New Zealand 2018](#).

To ensure the safety of both the dog and the occupants of the vehicle, dogs should be secured while being transported in a vehicle. When carried in a vehicle, dogs should be protected from extreme temperatures, excessive noise, and in a manner to ensure adequate ventilation.

See:

- [Regulation 14 – Dogs left in vehicles](#)
- [Regulation 15 – Dogs on moving motor vehicles](#)

## 32. Minimum Standard – Transportation

- Dogs must be safely and appropriately secured while being transported.*
- Dogs must be provided with adequate ventilation while being transported.*
- Dogs must not be transported loose in a stock crate with livestock.*
- If dogs are carried in a purpose-built transport box fixed to a vehicle, it must be well-ventilated and free from exhaust fumes and road dust.*
- If dogs are transported in a crates or carrier, they must have sufficient space to sit, turn around, and lie down while being transported.*
- If dogs are transported on the open deck or open trailer of a moving motor vehicle (other than a moped, a motorcycle, or an all-terrain vehicle) on a public road —*
  - > *the dogs must be secured in a way that prevents them from falling or hanging off; and*
  - > *if a dog is secured by a tether, the tether must be short enough to prevent the dog's legs from reaching over the sides of the open deck of the vehicle or open trailer, but long enough to allow the dog to stand and lie down in a natural position.*
- Farm dogs may be unsecured on the open deck or open trailer of a moving motor vehicle on a public road while involved in driving or managing livestock (for example, when moving livestock from one paddock to another that is down the road).*
- Dogs must not be carried on the open back of vehicles during extremes of weather unless shelter is provided.*
- A person who leaves a dog in a stationary vehicle must ensure that the dog does not display signs of heat stress, including shade-seeking behaviour, as well as one or more of the following signs consistent with heat stress:*
  - > *excessive panting; or*
  - > *excessive drooling.*





## Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 32 – Transportation

- When travelling in vehicles, dogs are safely and appropriately secured using a harness, tether, crate, carrier, or dog guard (MS3 a&f).
- Dogs do not travel with their heads completely out of the window of a moving vehicle (MS32 a).
- Dogs are not transported in the closed boot of a car, where the boot is a separate, enclosed compartment (MS32 a-b).
- Where a crate or transport box is used, there is sufficient air flow to allow adequate ventilation and to avoid heat or cold stress (MS32 b).
- Dogs are not transported loose in stock crate with livestock, in transport box mounted on the tow bar, or under the vehicle, where they are likely to be exposed to exhaust fumes (MS32 c-d).
- Where a dog is contained in a crate, carrier, or transport box during transport, they have space to sit, turn around, or lie down (MS32 e).
- Dogs do not show signs of heat stress (e.g. shade seeking, excessive panting or drooling) (MS32 h-i).
- Dogs do not show signs of cold stress during transport (e.g. shivering, huddling, cold limbs) (MS32 h-i).

## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Dogs should be secured while transported using a crash tested harness, crate or carrier, that is secured according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- b) Dogs should not be transported in the front seats of a car, unless confined to the passenger foot well.
- c) When dogs are transported, non-slip surfaces should be provided.
- d) If a dog is transported on a farm motorbike, the driver should ensure the dog is protected from hot surfaces and provide a non-slip cover for the dog to assist them to retain balance when the vehicle is moving at speed or cornering.
- e) When dogs are tethered on the back of an open vehicle for transport, the tether should be attached so that the cab provides protection against the wind.
- f) Dogs should not be left unattended in vehicles unless:
  - > for a short time; and
  - > the vehicle is parked in shade with more than one window left open to allow air to circulate; or
  - > with air conditioning running.
- g) When groups of dogs are transported together, unfamiliar dogs, or those not known to be compatible, should be physically separated.
- h) When dogs are transported together in a group, there should be easy and safe access to all dogs by the owner or person in charge.
- i) Dogs awaiting loading onto aircraft should be kept in a secure, tranquil and quiet environment and should be sheltered from the elements.
- j) Dogs should not be sedated for transportation, unless under veterinary advice.
- k) Dogs that are at an increased risk of heat stress, including those who are brachycephalic, very old or young, sick, obese, or heavily pregnant, should not be transported in warm weather unless necessary.



## General Information

Dogs should be safely and appropriately secured while being transported in a vehicle to reduce the risk of accident due to distracting the driver, and the risk of the dog becoming a projectile in the event of an accident. Dogs should not be transported in the front of the vehicle, unless in the passenger foot well, as they can be killed or injured by deploying air bags. Dogs can be seriously injured or escape if allowed to travel with their heads completely out of the window of a moving vehicle.

The temperature in a closed vehicle in full sun can reach 50°C in less than 15 minutes. This will cause an enclosed dog's temperature to rise rapidly, followed by extreme distress and rapid death. Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation, requiring immediate veterinary intervention (see section 7.1). Dogs who have been stressed in this way should be cooled by wetting down and providing small amounts of cool water to drink. Veterinary assistance should be sought immediately.

Dogs being transported over long distances, either by road or by air, have additional requirements such as provision of water. Where dogs or puppies are to be transported over long distance, veterinarians and animal transport agents can provide useful advice. For air travel, including export, the International Air Transport Association ([www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)) provides guidelines, which all domestic carriers follow. Many airlines will not transport brachycephalic dogs due to their increased risk during transport.

Sedation of dogs for transportation is not generally recommended as it can negatively impact cardiovascular and respiratory function, affect dogs' balance and does not reduce the anxiety of animals. Anti-nausea or anti-anxiety medication may be prescribed by a veterinarian for dogs who experience motion sickness or anxiety related to transport.

Any person wishing to export a dog or puppy from New Zealand to any country, including New Zealand dependencies, should seek advice from MPI or a licensed animal transport agent as to any requirements they must meet.



# PART 10:

## Humane Killing\*



### Introduction

It is an offence under the Act to kill an animal such that they suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

A humane killing requires brain activity to cease as rapidly and painlessly as possible, with death ensuing as soon as possible. Euthanasia is the induction of a painless and rapid death for the benefit of the animal (i.e. to mitigate suffering). A lethal injection administered by a veterinarian is the recommended method for killing a dog.

### 33. Minimum Standard – Humane Killing

- a. *When a dog is killed, they must be handled, restrained, with death induced in such a manner that they do not suffer any unnecessary pain or distress prior to death.*
- b. *When a dog has been humanely killed or euthanased, death must be confirmed.*
- c. *Captive bolt or firearms may only be used:*
  - > *in an emergency, where no other appropriate methods are available or practicable;*
  - > *be undertaken only by a fully competent person using an appropriate firearm; and*
  - > *taking special care to safeguard people and other animals in the area.*
- d. *Dogs of any age must not be killed by:*
  - > *drowning;*
  - > *strangulation or hanging;*
  - > *inhalation of car exhaust fumes (carbon monoxide poisoning); or*
  - > *blunt force trauma.*

### Example Indicators Minimum Standard No. 33 – Humane Killing

- Dogs are humanely killed or euthanased by methods prescribed in relevant codes of welfare and as per relevant, accepted guidelines (MS33 a-d).
- The dog is managed gently and calmly at all stages of the procedure (MS33 a).
- Death is confirmed following the procedure (MS33 b).
- Dogs are not routinely killed using a firearm or captive bolt (MS33 c).
- Dogs are only killed by firearm or captive bolt in emergency situations, such as where:
  - > a dog is worrying stock; or
  - > no other appropriate method is available and withholding death by firearm or captive bolt will result in prolonged, unrelieved pain and suffering of the animal; or
  - > there is imminent danger to human life (MS33 c).

*\*Please note: Section titles are set by NAWAC. SPCA prefers the term 'End of Life'.*



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) An owner or person in charge should consult with a veterinarian ahead of a dog requiring euthanasia to develop a plan for the day of and discuss the procedure and follow up processes.
- b) When a dog is to be humanely killed or euthanased, this should be performed by a veterinarian using sedation and an intravenous injection of a drug registered for this purpose.
- c) Dogs should not be killed or euthanased within view of other dogs.

## General Information

Decisions to end an animal's life may be difficult and emotive. There are tools available to assess quality of life which may facilitate decision making. In addition, veterinarians and allied veterinary professionals can provide advice and support.

Dogs which are difficult to handle may need to be sedated first. Some methods of humane killing require a secondary method (e.g. captive bolt followed by pithing) to ensure death. Where dogs are humanely killed or euthanased it is important to confirm death using a combination of criteria (e.g. lack of pulse, breathing, corneal reflex, and response to firm toe pinch, inability to hear respiratory sounds and heartbeat using a stethoscope, graying of mucous membranes, and rigor mortis). None of these signs alone, except rigor mortis, confirms death.

The Act provides for the euthanasia of a severely injured or sick dog by a veterinarian, in whose opinion, the animal should be euthanased because reasonable treatment will not be sufficient to make the animal respond, and the animal will suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress if they continue to live. A warranted inspector or auxiliary officer under the Act may also perform this task; or provide authority to a veterinarian to euthanase an animal.

A veterinarian, warranted inspector or auxiliary officer under the Act may euthanase a dog without the permission of the owner, if the owner of the dog cannot be found within a reasonable time or the owner does not agree to the euthanasia of the dog and the owner does not obtain within a reasonable time a second opinion from a veterinarian as to whether the animal should be euthanased.

It is an offence to kill a dog of any age by drowning. Drowning causes an animal to experience severe and prolonged suffering. During drowning a dog will experience severe anxiety, pain, and "air hunger", where the animal feels an urgent need to breath but can't, before losing consciousness prior to death.

It is an offence to kill a dog of any age by hanging or strangulation. During hanging it is not possible to stop the blood flow to and from the brain by compression of the neck in dogs so death will be due to strangulation. Strangled dogs will experience breathlessness and may also suffer pain and distress caused by other injuries and pathologies that occur during the process of strangulation.

It is an offence to kill a dog of any age using car exhaust fumes (carbon monoxide poisoning). The pain and discomfort of breathing in exhaust fumes and the length of time it may take for the animal to lose consciousness and die is inhumane.



# PART 11:

## Contingency Planning



### Introduction

Contingency plans for emergencies such as natural events (e.g. earthquakes, floods, fires, storms, snow or drought, volcanic eruptions, biosecurity events and infrastructure failures) need to be in place to ensure the welfare of animals. Dogs should be included as part of readiness plans.

MPI has checklists for emergency planning and companion animals and can be found here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/funding-rural-support/adverse-events/animals-in-emergencies/>

See also the [National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015 Section 75: Animal Welfare](#).

### 34. Minimum Standard – Contingency Planning

- a. *Persons in charge of dogs in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work must have a contingency plan.*
- b. *Persons in charge of dogs in temporary or permanent housing facilities must ensure the facilities systems (such as fire systems, alarms, etc.) are effective and functioning to prevent loss of life during fires and other adverse events.*
- c. *Owners and persons in charge of dogs must take all reasonable and practicable steps to evacuate their dogs following a civil emergency, if this is possible without endangering human safety.*

### Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 34 - Contingency Planning

- Persons in charge of temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work:
  - > have a written contingency plan that addresses anticipated adverse events which might affect the welfare of the dogs;
  - > are familiar with the contingency plan and what is required to implement it;
  - > have followed the contingency plan, where an emergency has occurred;
  - > have biosecurity protocols in place to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks and address relevant actions; and
  - > are aware of the CDEM regional plan for animal welfare emergencies (MS34 a).
- Alternative sources of food and water are available in case of emergencies (MS34 a).
- Adequate safety measures are in place to prevent loss of life (MS34 b).
- There is a plan in place to evacuate animals if this is appropriate (MS34 c).
- Where a civil defense emergency has occurred, all reasonable and practicable measures were taken to evacuate dogs and prevent death or injury (MS34 c).



## Recommended Best Practice

- a) Owners and persons in charge of dogs should:
- > follow weather forecasts and heed weather warnings;
  - > ask for assistance, if needed, from local and regional authorities including CDEM and veterinarians;
  - > ensure their dogs are crate trained; and
  - > have bedding (such as a blanket), leash, muzzle (where needed), a supply of any necessary prescription medication (where applicable), and food on hand to enable evacuation in emergencies.

## General Information

New Zealand is subject to regular natural adverse events. Planning ahead for different emergencies and disasters can help minimise stress on both people and their dogs. It is recommended owners and people in charge of dogs have a plan for a family member, friend or neighbour to care for their dogs if they cannot.

## Natural Hazard Events

Natural events can cause disruption to power and water supplies. Persons in charge of dogs should ensure sufficient food and water is available, enclosures can withstand adverse weather conditions, ventilation systems work effectively and have backup, and watering systems will continue to work effectively. Climate change may cause extreme weather events in areas where they have previously been rare. There are situations when people and dogs need to be evacuated in emergencies.

Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM, located within local Councils) are responsible for leading responses to adverse events. During adverse events the Ministry for Primary Industries is responsible for coordinating the response for animal welfare.

## Infrastructure Failures

Contingency plans for infrastructure failures such as power outages, that can affect water, lighting, and ventilation need to be in place.

## Biosecurity and Disease events

Owners and persons in charge of dogs should have biosecurity plans to prevent and address possible disease incursion. This is particularly important for facilities which house large numbers of dogs, including dogs of unknown vaccination status or dogs from different households.

Further information on preparing for emergencies and adverse events may be obtained by referring to the MPI website at [www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/).



## PART 12:

# Welfare Assurance System



## Introduction

The maintenance of good records is an integral part of a welfare assurance system and good management. This section relates to persons in charge of dogs kept in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work only.

## Recommended Best Practice

- a) The elements of the welfare assurance system should provide for the recommendations for best practice of this Code.
- b) Guidelines, codes of practice, etc., should be independent and aim for transparency, high standards and ethical practice (i.e., over and above the law).
- c) It should be drafted and enforced independently from the industry or commercial activity.
- d) There should be provision for regular audits to be carried out transparently and independently.
- e) There should be an enforcement and compliance framework (such as appropriate investigation, mandatory reporting, and sanctions by, registration bodies).
- f) The welfare assurance system should be easily accessible to all personnel, and they should adhere to it.
- g) The welfare assurance system should provide for all incidents resulting in significant sickness, injury, or death of animals to be fully investigated and documented.
- h) The welfare assurance system should require continual review of existing practices and procedures that will improve the welfare of dogs.
- i) Animal handling procedures should be included as written procedures in the welfare assurance system.
- j) The welfare assurance system should institute a process to facilitate employees to come forward and raise animal welfare concerns.
- k) The documented system should identify:
  - > positions of individual persons who are responsible for carrying out specific tasks;
  - > methods and procedures the owner or person in charge of the dogs will implement to achieve specified tasks;
  - > system and frequency of checks on the dogs, facilities, and equipment;
  - > training, competence, and supervision of persons carrying out specified tasks;
  - > procedure for recording numbers and circumstances for all animal injuries and deaths and the corrective actions taken; and
  - > corrective actions that will be taken in the event of non-compliance with the requirements of the programme.
- l) The documented system should be reviewed using performance-based audits on at least an annual basis. Corrective actions should be completed as required by the audits.



## General Information

The adoption or adaptation of an industry generic welfare assurance programme for welfare and management procedures may meet this standard.

Where improvements to current practice are identified, these are communicated to the persons in charge of dogs in temporary housing facilities, dogs housed in a facility for research, testing and teaching, or dogs housed in kennels and kept for breeding, sport, or work via appropriate technology transfer methods, such as seminars, workshops, and industry newsletters.

There is currently no industry body for dogs as a collective. Where there is a specific sector industry body (e.g. NZIAM, Greyhound Racing New Zealand), it is expected that the results of an investigation may have implications for current industry management practices, a report outlining the incident and implications should, as soon as it is available, be forwarded to the appropriate industry body for consideration.





## APPENDIX I:

# Interpretation and Definitions

### Act

The Animal Welfare Act 1999.

### all-terrain vehicle

Has the same meaning as in regulation 15(6) of the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018.

### allied veterinary professionals

The term allied veterinary professional is a condensed term covering allied and veterinary professionals. In general terms, an allied veterinary professional (AVP) is all/any of those professional roles including a veterinary nurse, technician, technologist, or allied animal healthcare professional.

### animal

a) As defined in the Act:

- > Means any live member of the animal kingdom that is –
- > A mammal; or
- > A bird; or
- > A reptile; or
- > An amphibian; or
- > A fish (bony or cartilaginous); or
- > Any octopus, squid, crab, lobster, or crayfish (including freshwater crayfish); or
- > Any other member of the animal kingdom which is declared from time to time by the Governor-General, by Order in Council, to be an animal for the purposes of the Act; and

b) Includes any mammalian foetus, or any avian or reptilian pre-hatched young, that is in the last half of its period of gestation or development; and

c) Includes any marsupial pouch young; but

d) Does not include –

- > A human being; or
- > Except as provided in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c), any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage.

### articulated hind limb first digit

A fully developed digit of the hind limb consisting of a proximal phalanx (bone) and a distal phalanx (bone), with a claw attached (which digit is commonly referred to as an articulated dew claw).

### bitch

A female dog.

### body condition score

A scoring system used to classify the condition of animals, based on the assessment amount of fat and/or muscle covering they have (see [Appendix II: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs](#)).

### choke chain

A chain of metal links which, when looped through an eye at the end, forms a noose with a free- running end. The chain tightens around the neck when the free end is drawn.



### **cooperative care**

An approach to handling, grooming and veterinary care that encourages the dog to be an active partner in the process.

### **dangerous dog**

As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996.

### **disability assist dog**

As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996. Includes dogs who assist the sight- and hearing-impaired.

### **dock**

Shortening or removing the tail by any method.

### **dog**

Member of the species *Canis familiaris*. Refers to any dog, whether a companion or a working dog. Includes a puppy unless otherwise stated.

### **dog behaviour consultant**

A person experienced and holding qualifications or certification in applied animal behaviour and understanding of behaviour modification who is able to provide advice on training and addressing behavioural problems in canines.

### **euthanasia**

Induction of a painless and rapid death where this is for the benefit of the animal (i.e. to mitigate suffering). A lethal injection administered by a veterinarian is the recommended method for killing a dog.

### **good practice**

NAWAC takes to mean a standard of care that has a general level of acceptance among knowledgeable practitioners and experts in the field; is based on good sense and sound judgment; is practical and thorough; has robust experiential or scientific foundations; and prevents unreasonable or unnecessary harm to, or promotes interests of, the animals to which it is applied. Good practice also takes account of the evolution of attitudes about animals and their care.

### **heat**

Oestrus. The time in the reproductive cycle when a bitch shows an interest in mating. Normally around ovulation (release of the egg).

### **heritable**

Traits passed on from parents to offspring that are not necessarily due to genetics (e.g. may also be influenced by other factors such as environment, maternal behaviour, etc.).

### **humane killing**

Induction of death in a humane manner. A humane killing requires brain activity to cease as rapidly and painlessly as possible, with death ensuing as soon as possible.

### **ill-treat**

As defined in section 2 of the Act: “in relation to an animal, means causing the animal to suffer, by any act or omission, pain or distress that in its kind or degree, or in its object, or in the circumstances in which it is inflicted, is unreasonable or unnecessary.”

### **inheritable**

Traits that are passed on from parents to offspring that are entirely due to genetics.

### **kennel**

A container that provides shelter for the animal to rest and sleep. Also known as a nightbox or dog house.



### **low stress handling**

An approach to handling animals which aims to minimise the stress an animal experiences as a result of interacting with people. Principles of low-stress handling are included in [Appendix II](#).

### **menacing dog**

As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996.

### **microchip**

A microchip transponder that complies with regulation 4(1) of the Dog Control (Microchip Transponder) Regulations 2005.

### **minimum standards**

Minimum standards provide the details of specific actions people need to take in order to meet the obligations of the Act. They are identified in the text by heading, and generally use the word ‘must’ or similar. They are highlighted in boxes within the text.

### **moped, motor vehicle, and motorcycle**

Have the same meanings as in section 2 of the Land Transport Act 1998.

### **non-articulated hind limb first digit**

A vestigial structure consisting of a terminal phalanx (bone), with a claw attached, that is connected to the hind limb only by skin and soft tissue (which digit is commonly referred to as a non-articulated dew claw).

### **owner**

As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who –

- > owns the animals; and
- > is a member of the parent’s or guardian’s household living with and dependent on the parent or guardian.”

### **pain relief**

Any anaesthetic, analgesic, or sedation administered with the aim of providing effective and significant alleviation of pain.

### **person in charge**

As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes a person who has an animal in that person’s possession or custody, or under that person’s care, control, or supervision.”

### **physiological state**

Relates to the functioning of the body, its organs and body systems.

### **prong collar (or pinch collar)**

A chain made of metal or hardened plastic links with prongs positioned against the neck on each link.

### **puppy**

A dog less than twelve months of age.

### **racing greyhound**

A greyhound dog or bitch registered with the New Zealand Greyhound Racing Association for the purposes of racing or breeding.

### **recommended best practice**

NAWAC takes to mean the best practice agreed at a particular time, following consideration of scientific information, accumulated experience and public submissions on this Code. It is usually a higher standard



of practice than the minimum standard, except where the minimum standard is best practice. It is a practice that can be varied as new information comes to light. Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for animals than is provided as a minimum standard. Recommended best practices are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “should”.

#### **registration**

The registration of dogs with a local authority, as required by the Dog Control Act 1996.

#### **run**

An enclosed area which allows the dog space in which they can move around, urinate and defecate.

#### **running line**

Running line means a measure of rope, wire or cable fixed at two stationary ends to which a dog’s tether can be attached allowing free movement between the two ends.

#### **permanent housing facility**

A permanent housing facility is any facility that houses dogs on a permanent or long-term basis.

#### **scientific knowledge**

NAWAC takes to mean knowledge within animal-based scientific disciplines, especially those that deal with nutritional, environmental, health, behavioural and cognitive/neural functions, which are relevant to understanding the physical, health, behavioural, mental, and emotional needs of animals. Such knowledge is not haphazard or anecdotal; it is generated by rigorous and systematic application of the scientific method, and the results are objectively and critically reviewed before acceptance.

#### **shade seeking**

A dog that is compulsively seeking out and placing, or attempting to place, itself in the shadiest, coolest part of the vehicle that it can access.

#### **shelter**

Cover or protection from weather including sun, rain, wind and snow.

#### **SPCA**

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

#### **stray dog**

A free-roaming dog that relies on humans either directly or indirectly for food.

#### **stud dog**

An entire adult male dog used for breeding.

#### **temporary housing facility**

As defined in the Temporary Housing of Companion Animals Code 2018.

#### **tethering**

Securing a dog to a fixed object or running line by a collar, or harness.

#### **therapeutic purposes**

For the purpose of responding to an existing disease or injury.

#### **veterinarian**

As defined in section 4 of the Veterinarians Act 2005.

#### **veterinary nurse**

A person who holds a veterinary nursing qualification recognised by the New Zealand Veterinary Nurses’ Association (NZVNA).



### weaning

The process that begins with the introduction of supplementary food to puppies and ends when the puppies are nutritionally independent of milk.

### whelping

Parturition or the act of giving birth.

### working dog

A dog whose primary purpose is to provide practical assistance to humans, as defined in the Dog Control Act 1996.

### zoonoses

Diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans.



## APPENDIX II:

# Principles of Low-stress Handling

- 
- Principle 1** Start with a comfortable environment.
- 
- Principle 2** Keep the animal from pacing, moving nervously or excitedly, squirming, or suddenly trying to escape.
- 
- Principle 3** Support the animal well by having your hands, arms and body positioned appropriately. The animal should not feel as if they will fall or is off balance.
- 
- Principle 4** Be aware that physically positioning animals or asking them to perform behaviours when they are nervous, scared or confused can cause them to resist handling. Thus, when they act confused or scared, it's important to move deliberately and slowly to avoid a reflex resistance or escape behaviour.
- 
- Principle 5** Know how to place your hands and body to control movement in any direction.
- 
- Principle 6** Wait until the animal is relaxed before starting a procedure.
- 
- Principle 7** Use the minimum restraint needed for the individual.
- 
- Principle 8** Avoid prolonged (more than two seconds) or repeated fighting or struggling.
- 
- Principle 9** Use distractions and rewards when appropriate.
- 
- Principle 10** Adjust your handling based on the animal and their response to restraint and learn to adjust your sample-taking technique.

(Source: [Sophia Yin's Ten Principles of Handling: The Fundamentals of Low Stress Handling](#))



# APPENDIX III: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs



**WSAVA**  
Global Nutrition  
Committee

## Body Condition Score



### UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

### IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

### OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

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Kealy RD, et al. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *JAVMA* 2002;220:1315-1320.  
Lafamme DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Canine Pract* 1997;22:10-15.

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(Source: WSAVA)



## APPENDIX IV:

# Signs of Ill Health

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The signs of ill health in dogs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Abnormal dullness or lethargy, abnormal agitation/excitement, or seizures
- An unexplained increase or a decrease in thirst and/or appetite
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent bleeding from an orifice (e.g. mouth, nose, genitals, or anus)
- Bleeding that continues for more than two minutes from a skin wound
- Straining to pass urine or faeces
- Change in urine colour or cloudiness
- Persistent sneezing, persistent coughing or persistent abnormal breathing
- Lameness, unsteady gait or inability to stand or walk
- Significant weight loss or weight gain, or change in girth of the dog
- Swellings or lumps, (presence of abscesses)
- Paleness of gums
- Persistent scratching or biting of skin, or persistent shaking of the head
- Presence of scabs without incidence of known injuries
- Areas of hairlessness
- Unpleasant smell from ears or mouth
- Weeping and/or inflamed eyes
- Discharge from nose
- Disorientation
- Too hot or too cold
- Abnormal posture, such as hunched posture or hind quarters raised and front end on the floor
- Changes in behaviour (e.g. uncharacteristic aggression, refusal to jump in car or go upstairs)





## APPENDIX V:

# Pain Assessment

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Accurately assessing and treating pain in dogs is important to prevent negative impacts to their welfare. Signs of pain in older dogs are sometimes considered an inevitable part of the aging process however, in many cases, pain relief can significantly improve quality of life. Pain indicators may include\*:

- Lameness
- Difficulty standing up from lying or getting up stairs
- Abnormal gait or stiffness
- Reluctance to move
- Reaction to palpation or limb guarding
- Withdrawn or hiding
- Decrease in appetite
- Overall activity decrease
- Sudden changes in behaviour (e.g. uncharacteristic clinginess, social withdrawal, playing less, or aggression)
- Hunched-up posture
- Shifting of weight
- Licking or self-mutilation of a particular body region
- Lower head posture
- Blepharospasm (eyelid contractions)
- Avoiding bright areas
- New noise sensitivity
- Growling, groaning, yelping, whining, or crying
- Eyes closed

\*Some indicators may be attributed to other causes, but pain should be ruled out.

Validated pain scales for clinical use should be used in conjunction with a veterinarian or allied veterinary professional and include:

- Glasgow Short Form Scale measures four behavioural indicators of acute pain expression.
- Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs (LOAD) a 13 item screening questionnaire for owners to assess chronic pain related to osteoarthritis.
- Canine Brief Pain Inventory (CBPI) is an 11 item questionnaire for owners to rate severity of chronic pain and the degree to which the pain interferes with function.
- Sleep and Nighttime Restlessness Evaluation (SNoRE) is a six item questionnaire for owners to rate severity of disturbed sleep due to chronic pain.
- Client Specific Outcome Measures (CSOM)

