



## **ASSOCIATION OF DOGS AND CATS HOMES**

# **Code of Practice**

## **Together for dogs and cats**

The Association of Dogs and Cats Homes was formed in 1985 to unite Dog and Cat Welfare Organisations in matters of concern and importance to stray and unwanted dogs and cats.

### **The purpose and primary objectives of the Association are to:**

- a. Develop good practice, maintain high standards, and influence others working in the rescue and/or rehoming of dogs and cats to provide high welfare standards.
- b. Address common problems and issues (e.g. micro-chipping, neutering policy, VAT and Gift Aid).
- c. Explore and, where appropriate, negotiate price reductions through economies of scale.
- d. Exchange information and provide mutual support where practicable, which may include the movement of dogs and cats to enhance the prospect of rehoming.
- e. Combine resources to encourage workable, welfare enhancing legislation.
- f. Exchange knowledge about the construction and refurbishment of facilities.

NB: Membership of the ADCH does not imply or provide a 'Quality Mark' and must not be used to imply such.

If you require any further information about the 'Association of Dogs and Cats Homes' please visit our website at [www.adch.org.uk](http://www.adch.org.uk) or contact:

David Warner - Secretary  
Association of Dogs and Cats Homes  
C/o National Animal Welfare Trust  
Tyler's Way, Watford-By-Pass  
WATFORD  
Hertfordshire  
WD25 8WT

## **Introduction**

This Code of Practice, promoted and compiled by the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes, aims to raise standards of care amongst animal rescue organisations that care for dogs and/or cats and thereby enhance their public respect.

This Code sets an agreed minimum level of care for dogs and cats kept by rescue organisations and to which members of ADCH should aspire, but should not be seen as a kite mark.

## **Animal Welfare**

**The paramount aim of any animal rescue organisation must be the welfare of the animals in their care and organisations must subscribe to *Good Practice* in all aspects of animal welfare.**

## **Good Practice**

The welfare of the animals within an organisation must be of paramount importance. Listed below are recommendations and guidelines which, if applied, provide minimum standards, and should, where practicable, be adhered to:

### **Animal Housing:**

All animal housing must meet the requirements laid down by the Statutory Codes of Practice.

### **Bedding:**

All animals must be provided with a bedding area or bench, large and suitable enough to allow the animal to lie comfortably. Clean and appropriate bedding must be provided.

### **Temperature:**

The sleeping accommodation must be capable of being maintained at an ambient temperature appropriate for species and breed.

### **Lighting:**

The accommodation must be adequately lit, by natural daylight with adequate supplementary artificial lighting to allow proper working and cleaning of compartments.

### **Ventilation:**

Must maintain a draught free atmosphere in the sleeping quarters of the animals and ensure an adequate number of air changes where applicable.

### **Cleanliness:**

The accommodation and ancillary establishment, kitchen, corridors, runs etc., must be maintained in a state of cleanliness conducive to maintenance of disease control and animal comfort. All excreta and soiled material should be removed at least once daily and more often if necessary, from all living and exercise compartments and disposed of in a manner approved by the appropriate government regulations or guidelines. The

floors of the living compartment must be clean and dry. Care must be taken to protect animals from disinfectant poisoning associated with cleaning routines.

#### **Litter Trays:**

Cats must be provided at all times with a litter tray (or more than one where there are multiple cats kept together). Facilities must be provided for the collection of all used bedding and cat litter and other waste material. All material must be disposed of in a manner approved by the appropriate government regulations or guidelines.

#### **Routines:**

Animals must be adequately supplied with suitable food and potable (safe to drink) drinking water must be available at all times. Where bedding material is used it should be maintained in a clean and dry state. Moveable benches should be removed for thorough cleaning at least twice weekly.

#### **Exercise:**

All animals should have the opportunity to exercise on a daily basis. There should also be encouragement for staff and volunteers to play and interact with the dogs and cats.

#### **Grooming:**

All animals must be groomed when necessary and steps taken to ensure dogs and cats are free of parasitic infestation and coats are free of mats.

#### **Supervision:**

Whilst animals are at the establishment there must, whenever practical, be a competent person in close proximity to the premises. Animals must, so far as is practicable, be visited at suitable intervals. A suitable interval is taken to be not more than 4 hours between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Animals requiring veterinary supervision should be visited more frequently.

#### **Disease Control:**

All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious disease among animals. There must be a solid barrier between cat pens. Adequate isolation facilities must be provided either on site or at a local veterinary practice. Routine disinfecting of a cage or kennel at a change of occupancy should be adequate to protect the new occupant from the disease or parasites of its predecessor. A complete change and disinfection of bedding, water and feeding utensils are required. Care must be taken to protect animals from disinfectant poisoning associated with cleaning routines. Precautions should particularly be taken to minimise the risk of outbreak of disease in all communal animal areas.

#### **Feeding Equipment & Storage:**

Feeding utensils must be satisfactorily cleaned or disposed of after each feed. A food preparation area must be provided and be separate from staff facilities and kennels. It must be kept clean and vermin free at all times. Refrigeration facilities must be provided where fresh foods are used. All bulk supplies of food must be kept in vermin proof containers.

#### **Emergency Action:**

Appropriate steps must be taken for the protection of animals in case of fire or other emergencies. Where practicable a responsible person shall at all times be on the premises or in close proximity for the purpose of giving warning and taking other

necessary steps in the event of fire or other emergency. Written procedures should be displayed in larger premises, and disseminated as appropriate so that all staff and visitors are aware. Recommendations from the Fire Officer should be obtained. A qualified first aider and first aid kit must be available. Evacuation procedures should be practised regularly and records kept of these practices.

#### **Veterinary Care:**

Each organisation should nominate a veterinary practice or surgeon who shall advise on the health of animals entering and resident within the organisation. The veterinary practice or surgeon should advise on prevention of disease including vaccinations and parasite control and should explain the 'on-call' facilities for animals requiring veterinary care. All veterinary products must be stored, used and disposed of as required by the product datasheet and COSHH legislation, or relevant local legislation.

#### **Transport of Animals:**

Vehicles should be suitable for transportation of animals, ensuring the safety and comfort of animals in transit as well as ensuring suitable restraint. Animals must not be left in vehicles for unreasonable periods of time and vehicles should be maintained to high standards and comply with relevant EU and national Transport Regulations. Particular attention should be paid to temperature control in both hot and cold weather.

#### **Behaviour Modification:**

Where possible each organisation should aim to provide an individual responsible for the evaluation and recommendation of positive behavioural programmes to enhance the opportunity for adoption of dogs and cats that exhibit behavioural or social difficulties.

#### **Training of Animals:**

Any training of animals must be carried out by staff who have themselves been trained in modern, positive reinforcement training techniques. It is expected that staff involved with training will have an understanding of the characteristics of each species and rely on reward orientated stimuli to modify behaviour. The use of physical punishment apparatus such as electric shock collars is not acceptable.

#### **Euthanasia:**

Euthanasia should only be recommended if extreme physical or behavioural conditions exist which make rehoming impossible. It is essential that this be carried out by or under the direction of a veterinary surgeon by the use of an approved injection.

#### **Welfare Legislation:**

Members must comply with legislation which covers the way in which animals are treated; more details are given in the section on animal welfare legislation.

## **Rehoming Practices**

**The organisation must be committed to a high standard of responsible Rehoming Practices.**

**The following procedures are advised to ensure the responsible rehoming of any dog or cat:**

### **Animal Assessment:**

To assess the characteristics of each particular animal in order to match it with the most suitable type of home. All animals taken in should be thoroughly scanned for a microchip. Microchip readers must be regularly checked to ensure they are functioning correctly.

### **Owner Assessment:**

To obtain information about the new owner/keeper and their family to ensure their circumstances and facilities fit the requirements of the particular animal they are about to rehome. Where necessary, to visit the home of the prospective owner/keeper to ensure the facilities are suitable and provide further information about the animal.

### **Animal Preparation:**

Ensure the new pet where possible is fully vaccinated, wormed, and has some form of identification prior to leaving the shelter. All animals should have a full veterinary examination on arrival and (ideally) on departure. The health certificate, if given, is complementary rather than an alternative, to the veterinary examination. A vaccination record card must be given to the re-homer where appropriate.

### **Permanent Identification:**

In addition to current legislative requirements, permanent identification (microchip or tattoo) registered with an appropriate database should be achieved prior to rehoming with the exception of young animals deemed too small or on veterinary advice.

### **Neutering:**

Wherever possible the organisation should have the animal neutered and aim to promote and encourage neutering. Advice on the benefits and reasons for neutering should be given. When neutering has not been possible, a system for ensuring the animal is neutered as soon as possible after rehoming should be in place.

### **Owner Support:**

To provide advice to the new owner on any relevant details about the new pet and its future care, both behavioural and veterinary. The organisation should offer that they take the animal back if the rehoming is unsuccessful.

### **Customer Care:**

A high standard of Customer Care should be achieved.

**All rescue organisations should aspire to a non-destruction policy of healthy animals.**

## **Administration**

**The organisation must keep full, written records of all animals for which it is responsible. Records must be kept up to date and be open for inspection by any relevant authority.**

### **Records:**

A register must be kept containing a description of all animals received into the establishment, noting date of arrival and departure, and the name and address of the new owner/keeper. The Register must be kept available for inspection at all times by any authorised person. Records of veterinary treatment must also be kept.

**Organisations should endeavour to have staff training programmes and staff should be kept up to date in all aspects of animal care, welfare, training and behaviour issues.**

### **Staff Training:**

Where an organisation has paid employees, they should be fully trained according to the organisation's standard procedures. There should always be induction training for new staff; particularly those not experienced in animal handling.

## **Legal Requirements**

**The animal rescue organisation must have a *proper legal structure* and be a not-for-profit organisation or a registered charity. If a charity, the organisation must have an approved Deed, Memorandum and Articles of Association or similar, lodged with and accepted by their relevant Charities Governing Body such as the Charity Commission for England & Wales, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator in Scotland or as appropriate to your jurisdiction.**

### **Proper Legal Structure:**

It is recognised that in the case of small organisations this may not be achieved immediately, but any successful rescue organisation will grow and should aspire to achieving a proper legal structure. This is particularly important if donations are involved. A formal legal structure should also include a constitution, charitable status and appointed Trustees.

***Bank accounts* should be in the name of the organisation and accounts filed correctly.**

### **Bank Accounts:**

Even the smallest organisation should ensure that all moneys are kept in dedicated accounts and that payments are authorised in a way that will enable simple accounts to be drawn up. All banking transactions should be properly recorded. Once legal status has been achieved, full accounts, properly audited, become a legal requirement.

**The organisation will be expected to comply with current *Animal Welfare Legislation*.**

**Animal Welfare Legislation:**

The way in which animals are treated is subject to appropriate legislation in your country. To achieve good practice, animal welfare must always be of over-riding importance in the activities of any organisation. Good Practice is the subject of on-going development and is covered in the Animal Welfare Section of this document. A list of all relevant statutes required at the time of writing is also shown. In the case of 'new build', the Working Party Report of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health should be used and can be obtained from the CIEH Chadwick Court, 15 Hatfields, London SE1 8DJ. Telephone 020 7928 6006 or the Secretary (See Animal Housing Page 3 for other appropriate construction requirements). Those operating outside the UK should refer to appropriate legislation.

**The animal welfare organisation must comply with current *Health & Safety* requirements in force in the country in which you are based and/or operate.**

**Health & Safety:**

In the UK, Health & Safety standards should be met in respect of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992. Details can be obtained from your local authority Environmental Health department. Organisations employing staff are expected to have a Health and Safety Policy covering all aspects of Health & Safety in the place of work.

**The animal welfare organisation must adhere to *Equal Opportunities* requirements and provide the statutory level of *staff care*.**

**Staff Care/Equal Opportunities Statement:**

All members of staff should be treated fairly, regardless of gender, age, racial origin, religious persuasion, sexual orientation or disability.

**Insurance:**

The organisation must be fully insured for employee and public liability.

## **Starting a New Charity**

**For those considering starting a *new rescue charity* that will care for dogs and cats, the following points should be considered (please note that this advice and the contacts given may only be relevant within England and Wales):**

- A. Is there a need for such a charity? If a local or national charity already exists, it may be better to develop liaison with it rather than starting a new organisation.
- B. Have Trustees and competent staff who are committed to provide full time care with sufficient knowledge about the care of dogs and cats been nominated?
- C. Can sufficient funds be found to sustain the charity?

For further information in starting a New Charity, you should consult the relevant regulatory body for the jurisdiction that you are based, or intending to operate in.

The Charity Commission for England & Wales: [www.charity-comission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-comission.gov.uk)

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator for Scotland [www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

## **General Animal Acts:**

*Copies of the following Acts can be obtained from:*

### **The Office of Public Sector Information**

Admiralty Arch  
North Side  
The Mall  
London  
SW1A 2WH  
Telephone: 01603 723011  
[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### ***General Animal Acts:***

Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963  
Animal Health Act 1981  
Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984  
Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act  
Animal Health Act 2002  
Animal Health (Amendment) Act 1998  
Animal Health Order 1995  
Animal Welfare Act 2006  
Animals Act 1971  
Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962  
Animals (Sea Transport) Order 1930  
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

Animals (Scotland) Act 1987  
Breeding of Dogs Act 1973  
Breeding of Dogs Act 1991  
Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999  
Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937  
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005  
Dangerous Dogs Act 1989  
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991  
Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997  
Dangerous Dogs Compensation and Exemption Schemes Order 1991  
Dogs Act 1871  
Dogs Act 1906  
Dogs (Amendment) Act 1928  
Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996  
Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953  
Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983  
EC Council Regulations 1/2005 on the Protection of Animals during transport  
Environment Act 1995  
Environmental Protection Act 1990  
Environmental Protection Dogs (Fouling of Land) Regulations 1996  
Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992  
Guard Dogs Act 1975 (Only section 1 applies)  
Local Government Act 1988 (Dog registration scheme)  
Movement of Animals (Records) Orders 1989  
Performing Animals (Regulations) Act 1925  
Performing Animals Rules 1925 and 1968  
Pet Animals Act 1951 (As amended)  
Pet Animals Act 1951 (Amendment) Act 1983 (Licensing of pet shops)  
Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984  
Road Traffic Act 1961  
Road Traffic Act 1962  
Sales of Goods Act 1979 (Re-homing for a fee)  
Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (Police taking animals)  
Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 1992  
Veterinary Surgery (Blood Sampling) Order 1983  
Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972  
Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 2006  
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Amended)  
Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996