



**Licence Conditions and Guidance for
Cat Boarding Establishments
Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963**

Last updated November 2016

Introduction

Local Authorities issue licences to proprietors of boarding catteries under the provisions of The Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963. The licence can stipulate a number of conditions to secure the following objectives:

- i) that the cats are kept in accommodation suitable in respect of construction, size, temperature, ventilation and cleanliness;
- ii) that boarded cats are adequately supplied with food and drink, and are visited at suitable intervals;
- iii) that the cats are kept secure;
- iv) that reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases;
- v) that appropriate steps be taken in the event of an emergency;
- vi) that a suitable consistent level of management is maintained.

Licence Display

It is essential that consumers and those responsible for premises management are aware of the licence conditions.

A copy of the licence and its conditions must be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position in, on or about the boarding establishment.

Insurance

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

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

Employer's Liability Insurance is mandatory for boarding establishment owners who employ staff. Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

Certificates of insurance must be prominently displayed.

Conditions

Environment

1. Physical Construction & Integrity

- 1.1 The cattery must be structurally sound.
- 1.2 Cats from different households must not share cat units.
- 1.3 The cattery must be constructed of materials that are robust, safe and durable and be well maintained in good decorative order and repair.
- 1.4 Materials used in construction or maintenance must not expose cats to any harmful chemicals.
- 1.5 The cattery must be built in compliance with good building practice (e.g. local authority guidelines), on a concrete base with a damp proof membrane. Where Building Regulations apply these must be adhered to.
- 1.6 There must be no sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards which present risk of injury to a cat.
- 1.7 Windows must be escape-proof at all times.
- 1.8 Doors must have secure latches or other closing devices.
- 1.9 All wire mesh/fencing must be strong and rigid and kept in good repair to provide an escape-proof structure.
- 1.10 Timber, if used, must be of good quality, well maintained and any scratched areas sealed or over-clad.
- 1.11 Any storage areas must be dry and free from vermin.
- 1.12 Electrical equipment must be installed in line with current legislation and maintained in a safe condition.

2. Drainage

- 2.1 Waste water must not run off into adjacent pens.
- 2.2 Adequate drainage must prevent pooling of liquids.
- 2.3 Any drain covers in areas where cats have access must be designed and located to prevent toes/claws from being caught.

3. Safety Corridor/Entrance Lobby

- 3.1 There must be an escape-proof area (safety corridor/entrance lobby) at the exit of each cat unit.
- 3.2 For catteries where there are facing units accessed by an indoor corridor, the corridor must be at least 1.2 m wide, or the doors of the units must be solid or have sneeze barriers.
- 3.3 At the end of the safety corridor there must be a securable door through which the inside of the cattery can be viewed from the outside and this must be kept closed when not in use.
- 3.4 The door from the cat unit to the safety corridor must be escape-proof, securable and strong enough to resist impact and scratching and kept closed at all times.
- 3.5 The floor must be finished to produce a smooth, impervious surface which is easy to clean and disinfect. Holes or gaps between tiles or paving slabs are not acceptable.
- 3.6 Outdoor safety corridors must be roofed.
- 3.7 External doors/gates must be lockable and staff must have easy access to keys in case of emergency.
- 3.8 Sufficient lighting must be provided in the safety corridor to illuminate all year round. Where practicable this should be natural light during the day.
- 3.9 The safety corridor must not be used as an exercise area.

4. Roofing

- 4.1 There must be a safe, secure, waterproof roof over all of the cat units (sleeping accommodation and run) and the safety corridor. For the run, materials used must be capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.

Cat Units

5. Lighting

- 5.1 There must be adequate lighting in the cat unit.

6. Ventilation & Humidity

- 6.1 Ventilation must be appropriate all year round (both cool in hot weather and avoiding cold draughts in winter). Localised draughts in the sleeping accommodation must be avoided.

7. Interior Surfaces

- 7.1 All interior surfaces to which cats have access must be durable, smooth and impervious, capable of being cleaned and disinfected, and be kept in good decorative order and repair.
- 7.2 Where concrete or other building blocks or bricks are used, they must be sealed to be smooth and impervious.
- 7.3 Surfaces which are peeling, scratched, chipped or in disrepair must be repaired or resealed to an acceptable standard, or replaced.
- 7.4 Ceilings must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.
- 7.5 Junctions between sections must be coved or sealed.
- 7.6 Floors must be finished to produce a smooth, non-slip, solid surface and all surfaces must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected. (There must be no open gaps if using concrete slabs or tiling).

8. Accessing the Cat Unit

- 8.1 Each unit must be designed to allow staff to access and clean all parts of the cat unit safely.
- 8.2 The unit must have a securable, full height door for access.
- 8.3 Each unit must be clearly marked (e.g. numbered) and a system in place which ensures that relevant information about the cat in that unit is readily available.

9. Litter Trays

- 9.1 Litter trays of a suitable size or type must be provided at all times.
- 9.2 Each unit must have space to allow for at least 60 cm separation between the litter tray, resting place and feeding area. This allows cats to sit, rest and eat away from areas where they urinate and defecate.
- 9.3 Trays must be impermeable, easy to clean and disinfect, or be disposable.
- 9.4 A safe and absorbent litter material must be provided.
- 9.5 In a multiple cat unit the number of trays must be appropriate to the number of cats.
- 9.6 Trays must be regularly and appropriately cleaned.

Sleeping Accommodation

Most cat boarding accommodation designs fall within two categories:

Full-height unit – cat sleeping accommodation in the form of a full-height ‘shed’ which opens into the exercise run and is accessed via a full-height door.

Penthouse unit – cat sleeping accommodation in the form of an enclosed raised ‘box’ which opens into the exercise run and is accessed via a ramp from the cat flap.

Different conditions, as detailed below, apply dependent on the unit design.

10. Size of Full-Height Unit Sleeping Accommodation

10.1 The following minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved in order to give cats a suitable and appropriate comfortable space and for ease of cleaning and management:

Existing buildings, floor area and dimensions of full height walk-in sleeping accommodation			
	Minimum area	Smallest dimension must be a minimum of:	Minimum height
One cat	0.85 m ²	0.9 m (eg 0.90 m x 0.95 m)	1.8 m
Up to two cats	1.5 m ²	1.2 m (eg 1.20 m x 1.25 m)	1.8 m
Up to four cats	1.9 m ²	1.2 m (eg 1.20 m x 1.60 m)	1.8 m

10.2 All resting areas/shelving must be large enough for each cat to lie on.

10.3 Facilities must be easily accessible and provide safe easy access to the shelf for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats if required.

10.4 Shelving or raised areas must be made of impervious, easily cleanable materials.

11. Size of Penthouse Sleeping Accommodation

11.1 The following minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved in order to give cats a suitable and appropriate comfortable space and for ease of cleaning and management:

Existing buildings, floor area and dimensions of penthouse sleeping accommodation (box)			
	Minimum area	Smallest dimension must be a minimum of:	Minimum height of box
One cat	0.85 m ²	0.9 m (eg 0.90 m x 0.95 m)	1m
Up to two cats	1.1 m ²	0.9 m (eg 0.9 m x 1.20 m)	1m
Up to four cats	1.7 m ²	0.9 m (eg 0.9 m x 1.90 m)	1m

11.2 Facilities must be easily accessible and provide safe easy access (ramp/steps) to the penthouse. Extra consideration may be needed for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats. Existing buildings, floor area and dimensions

12. Temperature in Sleeping Accommodation

- 12.1 There must be a means of measuring, monitoring and recording temperature (maximum and minimum temperatures) representative of the temperature in the cat sleeping accommodation.
- 12.2 Insulation and temperature regulation in the cattery must aim to keep the ambient temperature in the cat sleeping accommodation above an absolute minimum of 10°C.
- 12.3 There must be part of the cat's sleeping accommodation where the cat is able to enjoy a minimum temperature of 15°C - this additional heat may be in the form of a heated bed/pad etc.
- 12.4 The cat must be able to remove itself from the source of heat.
- 12.5 Heaters must not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk of burning or electrocution to cats or humans, or a risk of fire.
- 12.6 Open flame appliances must not be used.
- 12.7 All heating equipment must be installed and maintained in a safe condition.
- 12.8 Additional forms of heating can be in the form of heated beds, headed pads or similar but these must not be the main source of heat for the cats. Use should be tailored to the needs of individual cats.
- 12.9 Any sockets in the sleeping accommodation must be waterproof and as far out of reach

of cats as possible.

12.10 There must be a policy in place for dealing with high temperatures and a means of keeping cats cool.

13. Bedding

13.1 There must be a clean resting place to provide comfort and warmth which is situated out of draughts.

13.2 Soft bedding materials must be provided and adapted if necessary for old, young or infirm cats to help regulate their body temperature.

13.3 Bedding must be made of a material that is easy to wash/disinfect, or is disposable.

14. Access to Run

14.1 A cat must have access between the sleeping accommodation and run (e.g. a cat flap) so it can easily and safely access all parts of its unit.

Exercise Run

15. Exercise Run (in addition to and not including sleeping accommodation)

15.1 Any part of the run to which the cat has access must be easily cleanable and not damaged by scratching. Any replacement wood must be clad with a smooth impervious material.

15.2 The floor must be finished to produce a smooth, impervious surface and all surfaces must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected. There must be no open gaps if using concrete slabs or tiling.

15.3 Where cats have access to mesh (catteries with gaps rather than sneeze barriers), the diameter of the wire must not be less than 1.6 mm (16 gauge welded mesh). Mesh size must not exceed 25 mm in one direction and should be positioned on the inside of the framework of runs to prevent damage of uprights by cats scratching any woodwork.

15.4 All exercise runs must be roofed to provide protection from the elements.

15.5 Communal exercise areas must not be used.

16. Size of Exercise Run

16.1 The following minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved in order to give cats a

suitable and appropriate comfortable space and for ease of cleaning and management:

Existing buildings, floor area and dimensions of full height and penthouse exercise runs			
	Minimum area	Smallest dimension must be a minimum of:	Minimum height
One cat	1.65 m ²	0.9 m (eg 0.9 m x 1.85 m)	1.8m
Up to two cats	2.2 m ²	1.20 m (eg 1.20m x 1.85 m)	1.8m
Up to four cats	2.8 m ²	1.20 m (eg 1.20 m x 2.35 m)	1.8m

17. Sneeze Barriers

- 17.1 Full height, full width solid sneeze barriers must be installed between cat units. Alternatively, where the cattery is built with gaps between outdoor units rather than sneeze barriers, these must be a minimum of 0.6m wide.
- 17.2 Sneeze barriers must be in place on the end walls of the exercise run at each end of the cattery block to prevent contact with animals from outside.

18. Shelving or Raised Areas in Exercise Run

- 18.1 Shelving must be made of impervious, easily cleanable materials.
- 18.2 There must be a shelf or facility for providing a raised area in the exercise area.
- 18.3 All resting areas/shelving must be large enough for each cat to lie on.
- 18.4 Extra help (e.g. steps) to provide safe easy access to the shelf for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats must be available if required.

Fire & Other Emergencies

19. There must be a written emergency plan (agreed by the local authority) which must be on display and known to staff and a contingency plan should the premises be destroyed or uninhabitable.
- 19.1 Premises and activities must be risk assessed (including fire). These risk assessments must be recorded and relayed and understood by all staff.

19.2 Firefighting equipment must be provided, maintained in good working order (maintenance must be evident and should show date checked) and easily accessible.

19.3 Fire exits must be clearly marked and access left unrestricted.

19.4 The premises must comply with current legislation with regards to electricity and gas (if connected).

Diet

20. Drinking

20.1 Fresh water must be available at all times. Clean water must be provided daily in a clean container or changed sooner if it is visibly soiled.

20.2 Food and water must be kept separate (Joint feeding and water bowls must not be used).

20.3 Water must be positioned well away from the litter tray, as cats will not drink if it is placed too close to a toilet site.

20.4 Adequate water bowls must be provided for multi-cat units.

20.5 Water bowls must be non-porous and easy to clean/disinfect.

21. Eating

21.1 There must be exclusive facilities, hygienically constructed and maintained, for the storage and preparation of food for the cats.

21.2 Refrigeration facilities must be provided.

21.3 A sink with hot and cold water must be provided for the washing of food equipment and eating and drinking vessels.

21.4 Clean, safe containers must be provided for the storage of foods and must be insect and rodent proof.

21.5 Cats must be fed a balanced diet suitable for their age, health status, reproductive status and lifestyle. The type of food, specific diet or prescription diet is usually by agreement with the owner.

21.6 Food must be unspoilt, palatable, and free from contamination.

21.7 For healthy adult cats at least two meals a day must be offered at a minimum of 8 hours apart, as appropriate to the individual's requirements.

- 21.8 Unconsumed wet or fresh food must be removed before it deteriorates, and before the next feed time. Dry food can be fed as indicated by the manufacturer.
- 21.9 Food must not be left for excessive periods to prevent it being spoiled and attracting flies. This will vary with temperature conditions and type of food.
- 21.10 All food must be positioned well away from the litter tray, (minimum 60cm), as cats will not eat if it is placed too close to their toilet site.
- 21.11 One feeding bowl must be provided per cat.
- 21.12 Food bowls must be non-porous and easy to clean and disinfect, or disposable.
- 21.13 Food intake must be monitored daily and any problems recorded.
- 21.14 Veterinary advice must be followed if feeding debilitated, underweight or ill cats, or those with specific dietary requirements.
- 21.16 Cats displaying marked weight loss/gain must be evaluated by a vet and treated as necessary.

Behaviour

22. The behaviour of individual cats must be monitored on a daily basis and abnormalities or changes noted and acted upon if necessary.
- 22.1 Cats must be able to access different levels within the unit.
- 22.2 Cats must be given the opportunity for play and exercise.

23. Hiding Places

- 23.1 A hiding place must be provided for cats in the sleeping accommodation.

24. Play

- 24.1 Any toys provided must be safe and be disinfected between uses in the cattery, or disposed of. If provided by the owner toys must be kept within that cat's unit and used solely for that cat and returned to the owner and the end of the cat's stay.

25. Scratching

- 25.1 Cats must be provided with suitable facilities for scratching.
- 25.2 Any surface available for scratching must either be disinfected between uses for different

cats, or disposable. If provided by the owner it must be kept within that cat's unit and used solely for that cat and returned to the owner and the end of the cat's stay.

26. Noise

26.1 Cats must not be exposed to excessive noise of barking boarded dogs or other excessive/ continuous noise.

27. Long Stay Cats

27.1 A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) must be in place explaining how to ensure the health and welfare of long-term stay cats.

Company

28. Feline Company & Interactions

28.1 Cats from different units must not share exercise runs or an exercise area either at the same time or sequentially.

29. Human Company & Interactions

29.1 Cats must be always be handled humanely and appropriately to suit the requirements of the individual cat.

30. Multi-Cat Units

30.1 For any multi-cat unit (cats from the same home) cats must be monitored and consent obtained from the owner for separating cats, should problems arise (e.g. cats fighting or 'stressed').

30.2 There must be multiples of all resources (food and water bowls, litter trays and sleeping areas (warmed if required), depending on the number of cats, to ensure that some cats cannot monopolise resources and prevent the others from accessing them.

30.3 A separate bed must be provided for each cat.

30.4 A separate hiding place must be provided for each cat e.g. a cardboard box, igloo bed.

30.5 Separate feeding bowls (not double feeders) must be provided for each cat.

30.6 Several sources of water must be provided if multiple cats are housed.

Health & Welfare

31. Monitoring Cats

- 31.1 All cats must be observed regularly throughout the day. Cats must be checked daily for signs of illness and/or injury and to ensure that their needs are being met. Any signs of ill health or unusual behaviour must be recorded and advice sought without delay.
- 31.2 The cattery proprietor or responsible person must visit the cats at regular intervals (of no more than 4 hours apart during the working day), or as necessary for the individual health, safety and welfare of each cat.
- 31.3 Presence or absence of faeces and urine in trays must be noted daily. Any signs of abnormalities in excreta must also be noted or acted upon as appropriate.
- 31.4 Drinking and eating habits must be monitored and any problem investigated.

32. Record Keeping

32.1 The information kept must include the following:

- Date of arrival and departure.
- Name, sex, description of cat and microchip number.
- Number of cats sharing from same household.
- Name, address, phone number and email of owner (including emergency contact details).
- Name, address, email and phone number of emergency local contact (who is able to take the cat if necessary).
- Cat's veterinary surgeon.
- Cat's diet and relevant requirements.
- Cats' relevant medical history.
- Consent forms e.g. veterinary treatment, consent to share or separate cats if needed, record of baskets/toys etc. left at the cattery (Check vet consent forms i.e. own vet or designated vet if not in area).
- Record of vaccination.
- Any medical treatment must be recorded and visible to prevent mis-dosing.

33. Disease Control

- 33.1 Where work with rescue cats or breeding cats is also undertaken, this must be kept completely separate, and extra precautions taken to prevent the spread of disease.
- 33.2 When there is any cause for concern regarding the health status of a cat, that cat must be handled last and the unit must be cleaned after all the others.
- 33.3 Cats must remain in their assigned unit and not be moved to other units (rotation) or to a holding unit for cleaning purposes, except for moving to an isolation facility.

33.4 Standard operating procedures (SOPs) must be in place and followed to prevent spread of disease, and staff trained in these procedures.

33.5 Facilities must be provided for the proper reception, containment and disposal of all waste and meet with local authority approval.

33.6 Isolation facilities must be available.

34. Cleaning & Disinfectant Products

34.1 Products must be suitable to use and effective against the pathogens, (especially feline parvovirus (FIE) and ringworm)) for which the cats are at risk and under the conditions present in the environment in which they are used.

34.2 Cleaning agents and disinfectants must be non-toxic to cats.

34.3 The compatibility of different bactericides, fungicides and virucides (if used together and/or with a detergent) must also be taken into account.

35. Cleaning & Disinfecting Routines for Units When Cats Are Resident

35.1 There must be cleaning and disinfection routines in place for day-to-day management of the cats and for ensuring a cat unit and all equipment is cleaned and disinfected effectively before a new cat comes in.

35.2 Each unit must be supplied with its own dustpan, brush and scoop, to be used exclusively in, and kept in that unit, until departure of the cat, and then cleaned and disinfected before re-use, or disposed of prior to the next resident.

35.3 Litter trays must be emptied and cleaned and disinfected at least once a day, or more frequently as necessary.

35.4 Beds and bedding material must be checked daily and be maintained in a clean, dry and parasite-free condition.

35.5 Drinking vessels must be changed/cleaned and disinfected at least once a day.

35.6 Grooming equipment must either be cleaned and disinfected between use on different cats, or be disposable. If provided by the owner, it must only be used on that cat and must be sent home with the cat.

35.7 Toys and scratch posts must be cleaned and disinfected between use for different cats, disposed of, or returned to the cat's owner (if they came in with the cat).

36. Handling Cats

36.1 Hygiene protocols must be observed between handling cats. Hands must be washed/

disinfected or hand sprays or alcohol gel used between handling of each cat.

36.2 Protective garments must be changed and laundered with an appropriate disinfectant/ disposed of immediately after handling a cat with a suspected infectious disease.

37. Vaccinations, Fleas, Worms & Other Parasites

37.1 An up-to-date veterinary health record must be seen to ensure that cats boarded have current vaccinations against feline parvovirus (feline infectious enteritis) (FIE)) and against feline respiratory viruses (feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus).

37.2 Vaccination (including boosters) must have been completed, at the very least, 2 weeks before the cat's arrival in order to ensure maximum protection.

37.3 Homoeopathic vaccination is not acceptable as it will not protect against infectious diseases.

38. Isolation Facilities

38.1 The area must provide separate, self-contained facilities for the isolation of suspected infected cats and must have a separate entrance to the rest of the units.

38.2 Separate cleaning supplies and clothing must be designated for the isolation area and other cattery sections.

38.3 Protective clothing and footwear must be worn when handling cats in the isolation facility, and sanitation protocols adhered to, to avoid the transmission of disease. Whilst in use, the clothing should be kept in the isolation unit and not be removed other than for cleaning and disinfection.

38.4 Hands must be washed/disinfected between handling cats.

38.5 Separate feeding and water bowls, litter trays, litter, a dedicated safe cat basket, bedding and cleaning utensils must be stored in the isolation unit ready for immediate use.

38.6 Any cats in the isolation facility must be checked regularly and unless a separate person is caring for them, they should be visited after the other cats.

38.7 A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for barrier nursing and information must be provided for staff.

38.8 Should a cat need to be removed from its unit, it must be carried in a secure and disinfected cat carrier, and the carrier disinfected after use.

38.9 In emergency cases, such as admission of unvaccinated cats because of owner hospitalisation, there must be provision to be able to place these animals in isolation.

39. Veterinary Treatment & Healthcare

- 39.1 A veterinary practice must be appointed for the establishment. The name, address and telephone number of the establishment's veterinary service must be displayed in a prominent position for staff.
- 39.2 Where cats require wiping of eyes, grooming or other cleaning regimes, these must be carried out frequently enough to keep the cat clean and comfortable providing it is safe to do so.
- 39.3 When a cat is suspected of being ill or injured (staff should be trained to recognise when a cat requires veterinary care), a veterinary surgeon must be contacted for advice immediately. Any instructions for treatment given by a veterinary surgeon must be strictly followed with further advice sought if there is ongoing concern.
- 39.4 Medicines must be stored safely, securely, at the correct temperature and labelled correctly according to manufacturer's instructions. Any unused medications must be returned to the owner or prescribing vet.

40. Holding Units for Temporary Housing

- 40.1 If, in an emergency, holding units/pens are used, they must not be sited in the reception.
- 40.2 Cats must be provided with a bed, litter tray, food and water.

41. Transportation of Animals

- 41.1 Any transport legislation must be complied with.
- 41.2 Cats must be secured in durable carrying baskets any time they are transported/carried outside the cat unit (A spare cat carrier should be kept at the cattery for situations where owners do not arrive with their cat in a secure carrier).
- 41.3 All vehicles and equipment must be kept clean and disinfected after each collection or delivery.
- 41.4 Cats must not be left in vehicles except for transportation.

Guidance on Conditions

This guidance is aimed at all those who are tasked with inspecting, advising and licensing catteries under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 ('the 1963 Act'). It may also be useful to owners and managers of catteries and those planning to build catteries who wish to better understand what their legal requirements are under both the 1963 Act and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act') as well as other related legislation.

Environment

1. Physical Construction & Integrity

Poor housing has a substantially negative impact on both the health and wellbeing of cats. The cattery must be designed, built and managed to provide safe, disease free, comfortable, clean, draught free, animal friendly conditions, which are minimally stressful and which offer environmental choice for the animal, sensory stimulation, physical and mental exercise.

The correct design and construction of a cattery is vital to prevent escape, minimise disease spread and stress to the cats, and to make maintenance and hygiene management straightforward and achievable by cattery proprietors. For disease control there must be no possibility of cats within the cattery (other than those from the same household), or other animals outside the cattery, coming into direct contact with each other or contacting droplets sneezed out by cats.

Designs MUST include:

- Cat units with sleeping accommodation (with solid sides) and an individual attached run.
- Full height, full width, sneeze barriers between units. Alternatively, some catteries have gaps between units (minimum 0.6 m).
- An enclosed area (corridor or lobby) outside the cat unit to minimise risk of escape.
- Provision to isolate cats if necessary.
- Ancillary facilities including a separate kitchen with hot and cold running water and refrigeration for food.
- A separate hand-washing facility for staff.
- A litter tray cleaning area.
- A reception area.

A boarded cat is accommodated in a 'unit' comprising enclosed sleeping accommodation and an adjoining individual covered exercise run. The cattery must be safe, secure and free from hazards, to minimise any chance of injury to a cat or escape of a cat.

2. Drainage

Drainage must be effective to ensure there is no standing water in the cattery, as this can be a reservoir for infectious agents.

3. Safety Corridor/Entrance Lobby

An enclosed area (safety corridor/entrance lobby) is essential to ensure that if cats manage to slip out from their individual cat unit, they are still kept safely inside the cattery.

4. Roofing

Roofing provides protection from the weather and prevents escape of cats. In a timber construction it is strongly recommended that the run should also be roofed with wire mesh, as an added precaution against escape. The mesh should extend over the top of the run under the roof and be attached firmly to the framework. In catteries where substantial roofing is placed over the whole cattery (including the safety corridor) the need for wire mesh roofing is diminished. However, care must be taken to ensure that no gaps appear to allow escape of a cat.

Cat Units

5. Lighting

Lighting enables adequate observation of the animals and for cleaning and working in the cattery.

6. Ventilation & Humidity

Fresh air is essential for the maintenance of good health and well-being as well as limiting the spread of infectious disease. Proper ventilation removes heat, dampness, odour, airborne microbes and pollutant gases such as ammonia.

7. Interior Surfaces

For disease prevention units must be easy to clean and disinfect.

8. Accessing the Cat Unit

Each unit needs to be easily accessible and provide a means of identification for each cat.

9. Litter Trays

Cats are meticulous animals and a dirty litter tray may deter use. Natural behaviour is to scratch in loose material (litter), to dig a hole or cover waste. The tray should be large enough (average size is 30 x 42 cm (12" x 16")) to let the cat turn around and the litter deep enough (a minimum of 3 cm is recommended) to allow digging activity. Loose sawdust, shredded or sheet newspaper, or soil, are not considered acceptable as litter material.

Sleeping Accommodation

10. Size of Full-Height Unit Sleeping Accommodation

Cats need separate sleeping accommodation which in most cases (except some indoor catteries) must be separate from the run and provide somewhere for the cat to hide away.

Most unit designs fall within the guidelines detailed here:

Full-height unit – cat sleeping accommodation in the form of a full-height ‘shed’ which opens into the exercise run and is accessed via a full-height door.

Penthouse unit – cat sleeping accommodation in the form of an enclosed raised ‘box’ which opens into the exercise run and is accessed via a ramp from the cat flap. It can also be accessed by opening the front door(s) to the box.

The sleeping accommodation must be large enough to allow cats to move and lie comfortably and provide enough space to spread resources.

Shelves or raised areas are important to allow cats to rest high up. Shelving must be able to be kept clean, be large enough for cats to lie on (usually between 0.75 and 1.5 m above the ground) and accessible

11. Size of Penthouse Sleeping Accommodation

The standard requires that a minimum distance of 1.85m is given from the front of the sleeping unit. The space under the sleeping area is not to be taken into the overall footprint allowance for exercise run space.

12. Temperature in Sleeping Accommodation

Cats like warmth and some indoor cats are used to high ambient temperatures. In a cattery the cat needs an adequate ambient temperature and additional heating facilities if this cannot be guaranteed at times of excessively cold weather. Breed, body condition, medical condition, coat and age can affect an individual’s ability to maintain its body temperature.

13. Bedding

Bedding is important to help animals regulate their body temperature, to give traction and to keep animals comfortable. Old or infirm cats can have difficulty rising if surfaces are slippery, and old, very young or infirm animals may have difficulty regulating their body temperature.

14. Access to Run

A cat flap allows free access to the run while maintaining indoor temperature. It can be locked if necessary.

Exercise Run

15. Exercise Run (in addition to and not including sleeping accommodation)

The exercise run must be large enough to allow cats to play/exercise.

17. Sneeze Barriers

It is important to ensure that cats from different households cannot come into direct contact with one another or sneeze on each other.

18. Shelving or Raised Areas in Exercise Run

Shelves or raised areas are important to allow cats to rest high up where they feel more secure (usually between 0.75 and 1.5 m above the ground).

Fire & Other Emergencies

Appropriate steps should be taken for the protection of the animals in case of fire and other emergencies. This should include instructions on where staff and cats are to be evacuated to in the event of emergencies such as fire or flooding. An emergency telephone list should include fire, police and vets. Fire and electrical safety certificates should be available for inspection.

Diet

20. Drinking

Water is essential for all cats. It is especially important for those fed on dry food. Cow's milk should not be fed to cats because many cats have lactose intolerance. Wide water bowls allow cats to drink without bending their whiskers.

21. Eating

Cats have very specific dietary needs which can vary, dependent on a number of factors (i.e. age, health status, activity, weight). However, all cats are obligate carnivores and require a well-balanced, meat-based diet to stay fit and healthy. Ideally cats should be fed several small meals per day. Kittens, or cats with additional needs, will need more frequent feeding. The feeding of raw food diets is not recommended due to the risk of bacterial and parasite contamination and the public health risk. Cats should not remain inappetent (not eating) for longer than 2 days without seeking veterinary advice.

Behaviour

Good welfare depends on meeting both the mental and behavioural needs of cats, as well as their physical needs. How a cat behaves can indicate how successfully an individual is coping in its environment.

Physical and mental health can affect cat behaviour. Cats are intelligent active creatures but changes can upset them, as can being off their own territory. Some cats can become stressed or bored in a boarding situation. This can lead to poor appetite, shedding viruses or greater susceptibility to disease. Staff should be appropriately trained to recognise common behaviours and behaviour changes. A cat should never be punished as this is likely to make it more nervous or scared. A regular routine will help cats to predict what is going to happen. Ideally cats should be able to view the outdoors and have an interesting outlook.

23. Hiding Places

Hiding is a behaviour that cats can use to help them cope with changes in their environment. Cats hide to avoid interactions with other cats or people, or stressful situations. Providing cats with places to hide can reduce stress and can be as simple as providing a cardboard box, an igloo-type bed or other structures within the unit.

24. Play

Encouraging cats to play can be a good way of keeping them active. Cats are playful animals (but individuals vary in their desire to play) and enjoy playing with toys (especially those which mimic prey), and with people. Cats have a need to express the innate predatory behaviour which is natural for them and therefore show most interest in toys that mimic prey. Environmental enrichment such as changing toys regularly, can reduce boredom.

25. Scratching

Cats are highly motivated to show scratching behaviour and naturally use objects to scratch to mark their territory, strengthen their muscles and sharpen their claws. Cats often prefer scratch posts tall enough for the cat to use fully stretched.

26. Noise

Cat hearing is more sensitive than human hearing and thus noise levels uncomfortable for humans are likely to be very uncomfortable for cats. Excessive noise contributes to adverse behavioural and physiological responses. Cats are adversely affected by the sound of barking dogs. The cattery environment should be as calm and quiet as possible with noise producing equipment located as far away from animals as possible.

27. Long Stay Cats

Occasionally cats stay in a boarding cattery for periods over 3 weeks and these cats require

special consideration such as environmental enrichment, regular health checks and extra attention from staff.

Company

28. Feline Company & Interactions

It is important from a welfare perspective to ensure that any need that a cat has to be housed, with or apart from, other animals, is met.

The cat is by nature a solitary animal, and contact with or seeing unfamiliar/strange cats can be very stressful. Most adult cats will only be friendly to siblings or certain other cats they live with. Strange cats are usually avoided. Cats can find the presence of other cats very stressful and can suffer if they cannot avoid cats with whom they are not familiar or do not like.

Housing cats at high densities increases the potential for them to be stressed. Only cats from the same household may share a unit. Where possible cats must be able to avoid seeing other cats by being provided with hiding places and translucent (allowing light to pass through, but only diffusely, so that objects on the other side cannot be clearly distinguished) barriers between units.

29. Human Company & Interactions

Most cats enjoy and benefit from human company, but prefer to interact with people on their own terms. Cats socialised to humans can find human company stimulating and may show signs of stress when this interaction is decreased. However, other cats will prefer minimum contact.

Cattery staff should find out from the owner and monitor each cat to ascertain how much human contact it wants and adapt to provide this. A cat should never be forced to interact with a person/people, and a facility should be provided for a cat to avoid people should they wish.

Scruffing of cats (picking up a cat by the scruff of its neck) should not be done except as an absolute last resort.

30. Multi-Cat Units

Proprietors have a responsibility to monitor units where more than 1 cat is housed. Even though these cats originate from the same household, cats sharing a home may not necessarily get on well, especially when confined. Therefore proprietors must monitor cats to ensure that they are not experiencing stress/distress/aggression from another cat. Only cats from the same household can share a unit.

Health & Welfare

31. Monitoring Cats

In order to keep cats healthy the proprietor needs to have an organised system for registering and monitoring all cats at the cattery. It is recommended that a late-night round be carried out to check on all cats, heating etc.

The well-being of the boarded cat is paramount. It is recommended that all cats are weighed on entry and exit from the cattery. This allows the proprietor to monitor any changes and provides information should clients challenge the cat's condition on their return. This is especially important for older cats and kittens.

Geriatric, ill or debilitated cats should also be monitored more closely for appropriate management. It is recommended that cats that are boarded for longer than 2 weeks are weighed every 2 weeks, and older cats and kittens weighed weekly, and records kept.

32. Record Keeping

A register must be kept of all cats boarded and available to key members of staff and to local authority inspectors if requested. Records should be backed up and records kept for a minimum of 24 months. It is also useful to know if cats are insured, should problems occur.

33. Disease Control

Cats are vulnerable to a range of serious infectious diseases, therefore disease control and rapid response to any signs of illness is critical.

The potential for infectious disease problems escalates where many cats are kept together and a cat's immune system can also be affected by stress. As outlined elsewhere, construction materials and equipment need to be easy to clean and disinfect.

No cats should be allowed in the safety corridor or to share an exercise area (unless they come from the same household).

Infectious agents are spread in various ways. Feline leukaemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) need direct contact between cats, which should be impossible in the boarding situation. Cat flu viruses such as feline herpesvirus [FHV], feline calicivirus [FCV], and other respiratory pathogens such as *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, are spread in sneeze droplets, on hands, clothes, shoes, equipment and environment. Feline parvovirus (aka feline infectious enteritis (FIE)) can be spread on hands, clothing and shoes, litter trays and environment, and can remain in the environment for a long time. The source of feline parvovirus (FIE) is faeces from an infected cat and several other agents are spread via contact with other cats' faeces/litter trays and include Coronavirus, Salmonella and *Campylobacter* etc. Ringworm spores can remain infectious in the environment for prolonged periods of time.

Preventing cat-to-cat contact, ensuring excellent hygiene protocols and management protocols to minimise stress can reduce the risk of disease spread. The movement of people through the cattery should be minimised and supervised. If rescue cats are boarded, these should be handled last.

34. Cleaning & Disinfectant Products

Proper cleaning and disinfection helps to reduce the spread of infectious disease to both animals and people. Cats are particularly susceptible to poisoning from phenolic compounds (those that turn cloudy when added to water), therefore these must not be used.

35. Cleaning & Disinfecting Routines for Units When Cats Are Resident

Litter tray hygiene is very important as cats may refuse to use trays if they are soiled; faeces is also a high risk source of infection for some feline diseases. Litter trays need to be cleaned and disinfected in a separate area away from food preparation

Cats prefer clean, comfortable dry bedding. Bedding should not be a source of infection.

Cats can ingest infective agents from dirty dishes and may excrete viruses themselves in saliva. Clean and disinfected dishes reduce the risk of disease. Food and water dishes need to be cleaned and disinfected, and not at the same time in the same sink or area as litter trays or other items soiled with body waste. If only one sink is available, strict protocols need to be in place between use to ensure adequate disinfection after cleaning litter trays and before cleaning dishes, as faeces is the major source of many infective pathogens. Sinks need to be disinfected thoroughly between uses.

On a daily basis (and more often if necessary) the unit needs to be spot cleaned and any obvious food or waste removed, and all excreta and soiled material removed from all areas used by cats.

36. Handling Cats

Hand sanitiser dispensers should be available in all cat care areas and should only be used on clean hands. It should be noted that hand sanitisers are ineffective against some of the more dangerous pathogens (e.g. calicivirus) and cannot be relied upon as the sole means of hand sanitation. Washing of hands thoroughly or wearing of gloves is preferable.

Fresh protective garments should be worn when handling vulnerable individuals. Kittens and young cats should be handled before adult cats.

37. Vaccinations, Fleas, Worms & Other Parasites

There must be a policy for cats coming to the cattery having vaccinations against appropriate diseases (Occasionally there will be veterinary advice on a specific cat regarding vaccination and its health status and this should be taken into account). If owners have treated their cats for worms and fleas before entry to the cattery, the proprietor should note when this occurred

and what products were used.

38. Isolation Facilities

All establishments must have a means of providing isolation that will allow for the care of sick cats which develop signs of infectious diseases, to minimise the risk to other cats. How this is physically provided (ranging from being able to shut off an end unit of the cattery and using a separate door, to having a separate building) may vary. In many catteries the cat is taken straight to the vet (catteries are advised to check with the vet whether this service is available). If not, isolation protocols must be observed.

39. Veterinary Treatment & Healthcare

Access to veterinary care is vital for the cat, should it be required. If medication is necessary, it should only be used for the cat for which it is prescribed and following a veterinary surgeon's instructions.

40. Holding Units for Temporary Housing

Routine use of holding units is not recommended as they are small (minimum size should be 1 m in each dimension) and are an additional source of cross infection to cats. Holding pens should only be used in exceptional circumstances ideally for no longer than 12 hours and not in areas where other cats are housed. The licensed capacity of the cattery does not include holding pens.

41. Transportation of Animals

Transportation can increase risk for cats, both of disease (from unclean vehicles or carriers) or of escape. A vehicle can be viewed as an extension of the premises and therefore the same principles of hygiene, care and disease control apply. If the journey is long, appropriate resources must be provided.