

Checklist for Pet Shops

The revised *Animal Welfare Code of Practice - Animals in Pet Shops* became effective in September 2008. All pet shops need to comply with the Standards in the Code. Copies of the Code are available from: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/codes>

This checklist is designed to help people in charge of a pet shop understand if they meet the requirements of the Code, and should be used in conjunction with the Code.

Person in Charge / Manager / Operator

- All employees are aware of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals legislation, and any other relevant legislation, and that they have responsibilities under the legislation.
- A copy of the Code and the business operating procedures is in a position which is accessible to staff, and staff are aware of where they are.
- Staff are knowledgeable and experienced in each species they are caring for, and are able to feed, water, protect, clean and generally care for animals.
- Staff are supervised to ensure that they are providing appropriate care and treatment for animals.
- Staff are aware of diseases which could be present in the animal population of the shop, and what to do if diseases are identified or suspected.
- Staff are aware of the risk of diseases which could be transmitted to humans.

Animal Housing

- It is not easy for people to open or interfere with enclosures.
- The enclosures have smooth surfaces which are easy to clean and disinfect.
- The enclosures meet the minimum requirements for size as required by the Code.
- All animals and enclosures holding animals are kept inside the pet shop.
- Each enclosure has a place for animals to withdraw, which is quiet, dark and well ventilated.
- Animal enclosures are well maintained so animals can't be injured.
- Aquaria meet the minimum requirements for water quality required by the Code.

Environment

- The temperature of the shop does not exceed 30 degrees Celsius and does not fall below 15 degrees Celsius.
- Animal enclosures are placed out of draughts and have adequate shade if they are in direct sunlight.
- The artificial lighting in the shop is turned off at night, and animals are protected from any external light at night.
- Enclosures are either naturally ventilated or air conditioned.

Security

- The pet shop is secure to prevent break-ins when not open.
- Animal enclosures (except fish tanks) are secured when the pet shop is closed.
- Fire fighting equipment which works is available and staff know how to use it.
- There is a written plan for getting people and animals out of the pet shop quickly in case there is an emergency. Staff know where this document is kept.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Dog and cat enclosures are cleaned and disinfected daily.
- All other enclosures (except aquariums) are cleaned and disinfected at least once a week.
- No enclosures are allowed to remain wet after cleaning.

- Food preparation and storage areas are cleaned daily.
- Vacant enclosures (except aquariums) are cleaned and disinfected before new animals are put in them.
- MSDS for all chemicals held at the shop are available to staff.

Pest Control

- There is a written plan for controlling pests (fleas, flies, lice, mosquitos and wild rodents). Staff know where this document is kept.

Care of Animals

- Animals are not distressed or injured by other animals or people.
- Different species are not housed in the same animal enclosure (except fish with fish, birds with birds or rabbits with guinea pigs).
- Prey animals are not able to see predator animals.
- Any animal that becomes stressed is moved to an area away from the public and checked regularly
- All animals are checked, fed and exercised, even on non-trading days.
- Animals have appropriate behavioural enrichment.
- If animals are being hand reared, there are facilities and expertise available.

Record Keeping

- Records are kept for 5 years at the shop for:
 - Where, when and from who animals are sourced (including the animal's date of birth).
 - When and to whom animals are sold.
 - The death (and cause) or euthanasia (and reason) of animals.
 - Any veterinary treatment of animals.
 - Trading in animals subject to other regulatory control, for example birds traded under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*.
 - The date of cleaning and disinfection for all enclosures.
- Staff know where the records are kept.

Health Checks

- All animals are checked daily to make sure that they are:
 - eating
 - drinking
 - defecating
 - urinating
 - behaving normally
 - not showing any obvious signs of illness or distress
 - able to move about freely
- Fish tanks and bird enclosures are checked daily to ensure animals are healthy and well.
- The person in charge is told of any sick animals.
- Newly acquired animals are not mixed with existing stocks for a minimum of 48 hours.
- People caring for animals are familiar with the signs of common diseases for the species kept.

Veterinary Care

- The shop has a relationship with a veterinary surgeon who is able to attend to animals, and provide advice about how to prevent disease.
- The contact details for the veterinarian are displayed in the pet shop.

- Sick animals are provided with first aid and/or veterinary treatment. Very sick animals are given veterinary treatment. Veterinary advice is sought for animals which die.
- Sick or injured animals are kept isolated and away from public view.
- A program to control parasites is in place.

Euthanasia

- Decisions to euthanase animals are only made by veterinarian or an Inspector (RSPCA or AWL).
- Dogs and cats are euthanased only by a veterinary surgeon or a person who is an authorised euthanasia technician.
- Euthanasia is done out of the sight of other animals or the public.

Food and Water

- Animals are fed a balanced and complete diet.
- Clean water is available at all times.
- Food and water containers are cleaned daily and are cleaned and disinfected if put into a different enclosure.
- Contaminated food and water containers are immediately removed and cleaned.
- Animals are monitored during feeding so all animals eat.
- Food and water containers are easily available to animals, and placed in a way which avoids spillage or contamination.
- Food is stored so it does not go off or become fouled.

Sale of Animals

- Dogs and cats are not sold to people less than 18 years of age.
- Other animals are not sold to people aged 16 or older.
- Animals can be sold to people aged less than 16 years if they have the written consent or are with their parent or guardian.
- An animal care fact sheet is offered to all new owners.
- A guarantee is offered to new owners which gives them 50% of the price back, within 3 days, and it must be displayed on the wall of the shop.
- All money must be returned if an animal dies and the new owner provides a statement from a veterinarian indicating that the death is related to the time the animal spent in the pet shop.
- No sick, injured or diseased animals are sold.
- The minimum age of animals offered for sale or advertised is:
 - Dogs - 8 weeks
 - Cats - 8 weeks
 - Rabbits - 6 weeks
 - Guinea Pigs - 4 weeks
 - Mice and Rats - 4 weeks
 - Birds must not be sold until they are self sufficient.

Transport

- All animals sold are boxed or suitably restrained to prevent injury, injury from other animals, extreme temperature and excessive stress.

Special Requirements for Dogs and Cats

- Dogs are microchipped, vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus and accompanied by a current vaccination certificate, before sale.

- Cats are microchipped, vaccinated against feline viral respiratory disease(s) and accompanied by a current vaccination certificate, before sale.
- Floors of animal enclosures are lined with absorbent disposable material.
- Cats are provided with litter trays containing a sufficient depth of suitable clean litter material.
- Litter trays are changed, washed and disinfected at least once every 3 days
- Dogs are exercised for at least 20 minutes daily either by allowing them access to a supervised exercise area to run freely, or by safely walking them on a lead.
- Bedding is provided, which is clean and changed frequently.

Special Requirements for Rabbits, Rats, Mice and Guinea Pigs

- Nest boxes are provided for breeding females.
- Wooden gnawing blocks are provided.
- Suitable non-toxic bedding is provided and discarded daily.

Special Requirements for Fish

- Good water quality is provided and filtration equipment is adequate.
- Sick fish are (if necessary) separated from other fish to prevent the spread of disease or aggression by other fish.
- Measures are in place to prevent the escape of fish.
- Adequate heating is provided.

Special Requirements for Birds

- Sick birds are attended to and separated from other birds to prevent spread of disease or molestation by other birds.
- Birds are caught by the least stressful method and subjected to minimal handling.
- Staff that handle birds have a specialised knowledge.
- No bird wings are pinioned. Clipping is undertaken under the guidance of a veterinarian or an experienced bird-keeper.
- Hand reared birds are fully feathered and self sufficient before sale.
- Perches, roosting areas and feed/water stations are provided.
- Perches are appropriate to the species held, and placed to prevent contamination of food and water containers. Perches do not allow birds' tails to contact the enclosure substrate.
- Birds are not fed off the floor unless it is a species requirement.
- Birds are fed fresh fruit, greens, nectar or seeding grasses as appropriate.
- Environmental enrichment is provided.