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**PET BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS**

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**CODE of PRACTICE**

**for**

**BOARDING CATTERIES**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND INTERPRETATION OF CODE

This Code of Practice Version 3 released on 15th April 2008 is effective immediately. In circumstances where establishments have been certified to the old cattery standard, and where the changes are of a structural nature, there will be up to a 2 year lead in period for changes to be effected.

This Code of Practice has been prepared following the guidelines of ISO Guide 7.

This code sets out minimum standards and recommendations relating to all aspects for the care and management of cats in animal boarding establishments.

Requirements are based on those elements contained in the:

- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals in Boarding Establishments issued by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC); (note: these standards do not supersede any legal requirements in the Animal Welfare Act 1999 or relevant Codes of Welfare). A copy of the Act is accessible at: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz>.
- Minimum Standards for Pet Boarding establishments published by the Boarding Kennel & Cattery Association of New Zealand;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments published by the State of Victoria - Australia.

Minimum Standard - requirements of this Code:-

"Must" is highlighted within the text.

- When "must" is displayed in this document, it is a minimum requirement.
- In previously approved establishments under the old Cattery Standard Version 2, where the requirement has changed to a "must", this implies that any changes to the establishment that are of a structural nature, will need to comply with this code and there will be up to a 2 year lead in period.
- In previously approved establishments under the old Cattery Standard Version 2, where the requirement has changed to a "must", and is of a non-structural nature, timeframes must be provided with the auditor and worked towards achieving within a 3 to 6 month period.

Recommended Best Practice:-

"Should" is highlighted within the text.

Recommended best practice is identified by use of the word "should".

- Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for cats than is provided as a minimum standard.

Recognising that animal welfare requirements continue to evolve, the document will be reviewed on a 2 yearly basis by AsureQuality or when changes in legislation or codes of practice impact on requirements. The Animal Welfare (Temporary Housing) Code of Welfare expected to be issued by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), will inform the revision of this document due in 2009.

**The AsureQuality Pet Boarding Advisory Committee (representing stakeholders) and AsureQuality Management will be invited to participate in the review. Control of the document will be in accordance with AsureQuality procedures.**

## 2 DEFINITIONS

Animal	Means a cat or kitten
Antiseptics	Disinfectants that are safe to use on living tissue
Behaviour	The action, reaction or functioning of cats in various circumstances
Boarding	Taking custody of a cat at a place other than its normal place of residence for accommodation, care or training for a fee or reward
Breed	A group of animals within a species having common ancestors and certain distinguishing characteristics, usually developed by deliberate selection.
Cage	A structure or enclosure that does not contain space for a cat to exercise
Companion Cat	Common domestic cat/kitten that lives with humans as a companion and is dependant on humans for its welfare.
Day Boarding	An animal is housed during the day only and is not housed overnight
Disinfectant	Compounds that kill bacteria, fungi and viruses. They do not kill bacterial spores
Estrus	The restricted period of time during which the female is sexually receptive; commonly referred to as being "in heat"
Euthanasia	The term is derived from the Greek "eu" for "good" and "thanatos" for "death", or an easy death. The euphemisms for euthanise include "destroy, put down", or most commonly, "put to sleep"
Establishment	Any group of buildings (including yards) used for the purpose of housing cats
Inoculation	See 'Vaccination'
Kitten	A cat less than 6 months of age
Lethargy	Behaviour displayed as excessive quietness, absence of play in kittens, extended sleep periods, lack of interest at feeding and can be a sign of illness
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Neuter	Surgically alter a tom or queen so that it is no longer capable of reproduction (castrate or spray)
Overnight Boarding	Animal stays at facility for at least one night
Person in Charge	Owner of the cat, proprietor of a pet boarding establishment
Queen	A female cat that has not been desexed
Separation anxiety	A behaviour pattern characterized by constant crying, chewing or hyperactivity and which commonly follows separation of the dam and her litter. It can also be displayed by a cat separated from a family habitat, person or companion animal
Spay	To surgically remove the uterus and ovaries from a female cat
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Stud	An entire male cat intended for breeding (sometimes referred to as a "tomcat")
Temperament	A cat's character, disposition, and tendencies; the behavioural characteristics of a cat that are relatively stable over time and across similar situations
Vaccination	The inoculation of a cat by a registered veterinary surgeon with any product that contains living or dead antigens

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE WELLBEING OF CATS IN BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS**

### **3 PREFACE**

Preventive medicine is the dominant theme in good cattery management. Despite the best efforts to prevent illness or accidents, emergencies do happen.

The following is a list of responsibilities, which form the basis of the total management of the establishment. By adhering to the Code of Practice, people involved in the animal boarding industry demonstrate to the general community their concern for the welfare of the animals in their care.

Animal welfare can be thought of as the way an animal's health and well being are affected by its interaction with its physical and social environments. Since humans can alter or control an animal's environment, animal welfare means that people have duties and responsibilities towards animals. The greater the level of interference with or control of an animal's environment, the greater our responsibility.

### **4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OWNER/MANAGER**

The Animal Welfare Act of 1999 establishes fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals in New Zealand. These obligations are to provide for the physical health and behavioural needs of animals. The detail of these needs is found in the code of welfare. The codes set out minimum standards and promote best practice in all aspects of the care of animals.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 a "person in charge" (proprietor) is a person who has an animal in their possession, custody, care, or under their control and supervision. The proprietor has a duty of care towards the animals in their establishment.

All boarding establishments should carry a minimum amount \$1 000 000 of standard broad form public liability insurance cover. Insurance cover should be discussed with an IBANZ registered insurance broker to ensure that all aspects of the insurance policy are understood.

#### **4.1 Physical, health and behavioural needs**

There are statutory obligations in relation to the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals where the needs of the animal must be met in a manner that is in accordance with both:-

- Good practice; and
- Scientific knowledge

And where it is necessary to ensure that animals have:-

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- Provision of appropriate comfort and shelter
- Prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of injury, disease or infestation with parasites
- Freedom from distress
- Ability to display normal patterns of behaviour

#### **4.2 Distress**

There is an obligation to alleviate pain or distress of ill or injured animals as per the Animal Welfare Act of 1999 in instances where:-

- The animal is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

## 5 ADMINISTRATION:

### 5.1 Office/cattery Hours

- The **office hours** must be clearly stated at the entrance to the establishment and visible to members of the public, even when the office is closed.
- The cattery **hours** must be clearly stated at the entrance to the facility.
- Contact and emergency phone numbers must be displayed at the entrance and be clearly visible to members of the public, even when the office is closed.

### 5.2 Terms and Conditions

Every pet owner must be provided with, read and fully understand and sign acceptance of the Terms and Conditions under which they elect to leave their pet at the chosen facility. If there are any queries, these must be addressed before signing the document.

Ideally a copy of the Terms and Conditions should be displayed in the reception area.

#### **Provisions that should appear in the document are: -**

- That the management of the facility will transport/contact a Veterinarian at the owner's expense should the need arise and at the discretion of the management.
- To administer medicines as prescribed by the veterinarian.
- Daily/hourly rates, special charges for holidays.
- Grooming rates, if additional and requested by the pet owner.
- Permission to euthanase a cat if the veterinarian determines it would be cruel to keep it alive (see section 11.7).
- Owner's permission to carry out a post-mortem in the case of an unnatural death occurring (see section 11.6).
- The Terms and Conditions must be signed and dated by the pet owner, thereby providing authority to the cattery management to act in the best interests of the cat/s under a veterinarian if deemed necessary.
- It is recommended that In the case of elderly cats (Golden Age Contract), the owners should sign consent that in the event of death occurring in their absence, a post mortem is not necessary.

### 5.3 Record Keeping

The following information should be recorded for each pet admitted for boarding: -

- The cat's name, sex and age, breed, species, and any distinguishing features
- If the cat has been desexed
- Name, address, contact phone number of the owner
- Emergency/alternate contact name, address, telephone number and cellphone number
- Date of admission
- Expected date of collection
- Medical history
- Dietary requirements/usual food
- Grooming requirements
- Vaccination status (must be current as per the date the next booster is due as shown on the vaccination certificate),
- It is recommended a copy of the vaccination certificate be kept
- Name, telephone number and address of the attending veterinarian
- Cats condition, and weight (if possible)
- Cat's belongings, i.e. blankets, toys, collars
- Cat's temperament
- Special characteristics

- If a cat is known to be unsocial, great care should be taken that this cat is not given access to the communal play area.
- Medication and a description for which condition it is being administered. The owner should advise if a repeat prescription is required in the event that the cat's visit is extended and the necessary arrangement made.
- Dosage and frequency of medication

#### **5.4 Admission requirements**

- All cats entering boarding establishments must be identified and all reasonable special requirements requested by the owner or attending veterinarian must be complied with, such as administration of medication, feeding of special diets, and grooming.
- All cats admitted must meet all vaccination protocol requirements.
- Written confirmation must be obtained from the owner's practicing veterinarian or specialist veterinarian advising if their cat cannot be vaccinated due to a condition such as cancer or immune deficiency, etc.
- The owner must be made aware that the cat's immune system will not be as robust and protected as that of a cat which has been fully vaccinated, and that the cat is boarded at its own risk. The cat is to be kept away from other cats as much as possible, but not isolated. The cat should be exercised on its own.
- Kittens can be admitted to boarding facilities providing they have received all their vaccinations at least 10 - 14 days prior to admission
- All cats admitted must meet all vaccination protocol requirements.
- Kittens must be supervised visually while being housed with other cats.
- Kittens bred in a cattery situation, must be isolated in a separate building to regular boarders and all possible precautions taken so that there is no possibility that the regular boarders could contract any potential infectious disease. Regular boarders must be tended to before kittens, or staff specifically allocated to attend to the kittens.
- Queens boarded should have details of their next expected heat recorded (if this is possible) so that this can be managed in the cattery environment.
- If an owner arrives without the required certification, the cat/s must wait in the car until the necessary verification can be confirmed from the pet owner's veterinarian.

#### **5.5 Staff**

- There must be sufficient staff ratio per cat to ensure that the highest level of care can be given to all cats. The staff ratio should be relevant to the type of cattery, design and layout of the cattery.
- Staff should have respect for animals and be trained by management on the handling of cats. They should be provided with procedures, which give a complete description on the various aspects of running the cattery that is relevant to their duties. Procedures should be reviewed and updated annually with a front page signoff that this has been completed.
- Staff training details such as training records and qualifications should be maintained by management.
- Minimum age of staff: No person under the age of 14 years of age should be employed in this type of facility.

## **5.6 Complaints**

- Boarding facilities should have a complaints process that is followed and of which staff are aware.
- All relevant details pertaining to the complaint, such as date, time and nature of the complaint must be recorded either on the owner's record card or placed on file.
- If the complaint is in the form of a letter, all correspondence must be filed and archived for at least 2 years in the event that the complaint is referred to the SPCA or MAF for further investigation.
- All complaints must be properly addressed and responses communicated to the complainant.

## 6 MONITORING OF THE BOARDING FACILITY

With the constant change in technology, it has to be taken into account that pet boarding establishments can be monitored in an efficient and effective way, as long as all the below-mentioned areas are covered. Establishments must have someone in charge 24 hours a day 7 days a week while cats are boarded.

### 6.1 Resident on the boarding facility property

- The Owner, Manager or a responsible person who is intrinsically involved in the day to day running of the facility must reside on or adjacent to the property or monitoring systems must be in place where owner/manager resides off the property.
- If the Owner or Manager has left the property, and there is no staff present, an emergency contact number must be displayed and clearly visible on the gate/door to the boarding premises. A contact person should be in possession of a key to the facility to allow access to any emergency services.

### 6.2 Remote monitoring of the boarding facility

At close of day, when no management, owner/s or staff is present on the boarding premises, other reliable methods should be employed to ensure that the facility can be effectively monitored and is secure: -

- Movement sensors, which are activated if any unauthorised movement occurs (cats out of their units or unauthorised personnel).
- Monitors in the cattery area, which the owner/s or management can view at any time of the day or night, i.e. via connection to the home with monitors, and/or via cellphone viewing.
- A burglar alarm system should be installed.
- A smoke alarm system must be installed and this must also have the ability to alert either the owner/s or the fire department.
- An automated sprinkler system is recommended.
- Emergency contact numbers must be displayed and clearly visible on the gate/door to the establishment.
- To avoid unauthorised entry or theft after hours, all entrances and exits must be securely locked.
- Remotely monitored boarding facilities must not be left unattended for more than 10 hours and only after the cats have been fed and watered.
- In the event that this type of establishment is unattended for up to a 10 hour period, monitoring should occur at least once during this time to ensure all is in order.

## 7 ESTABLISHMENT DESIGN

The carrying capacity of the establishment must not exceed the recommended number allowed for when the premises were built.

### 7.1 Location

- The location and construction must comply with local government requirements.
- They must be located away from areas where there is constant abnormally high noise levels as well as pollution and which is likely to cause stress or injury to the animals.
- In a location that drains well and is not prone to flooding.

### 7.2 The cattery owners must:

- Provide accommodation and facilities to suit the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held.
- Provide enough space for each animal held to feed, sleep, sit, stand, and lie with limbs extended, and be able to move about.
- Be aware of any physical defect or impairment that a cat may have when allocating a unit.

### 7.3 Cats may be housed:-

- Either in banks of cages (no more than three tiers).
- With a solid surface horizontally between each unit.
- Where there is no possibility of scraps or liquids going from one level to the next.
- The whole structure must be sturdy and well balanced.
- Walk in modules.

### 7.4 The Cattery must be:-

- Separated by wire dividers, solid partitions, or solid and wire dividers.
- Of sufficient strength so that the wire dividers containing the animals should not exceed 50mm square.
- Able to accommodate kittens present and the mesh divider in the area that the kittens are housed should be no more than 25mm<sup>2</sup> in these instances.
- Constructed in such a way that the joints and corners are properly sealed.

### 7.5 Semi-Communal Cattery:-

**Cats are housed individually or from the same family (with the signed permission of the owners), and will be for feeding and sleeping only.**

- Cats will have access during the day to play areas, which are specially designed for this purpose, unless their temperament is such that they should not be exposed to other cats.
- The night boxes must be a minimum of **600mm x 600mm x 600mm** including a sleeping shelf and must be able to be securely shut or locked at night.
- The exercise area must allow 1.2 square metres per cat with no more than 50 cats occupying this area at any one time, i.e. 1.2m<sup>2</sup> is 1m x 1.2m, therefore 50 cats would fit into an area fractionally over 8m x 7.2m.
- A reasonable amount of litter boxes must be provided in the semi-communal area according to the number of cats, and must be cleaned regularly throughout the day.
- Cats must have access to this communal exercise area for at least 1 hour twice a day.
- There should be “toys” and a scratch pad made available, and which should be cleaned regularly.
- Cats must have access to water in the communal exercise area.
- ID collars must be worn identifying each cat.

## **7.6 Semi-individual Cattery:-**

**Cats do not have access to a communal exercise area.**

- These units will include night boxes for feeding and sleeping, as well as an exercise run, which must be no less than **1.8 height x 1.2m length x 600mm wide**.
- For an additional cat occupying the same space, an additional 1.2 square metres is required. There must be at least two metres between facing units.
- Cats admitted to a semi-individual cattery must have signed permission from the pet owners giving permission for their cat to share the cage, in the event that this transpires.
- The litter box/es must be cleaned frequently.
- ID collars must be worn identifying each cat.

**For catteries built after February 2008, the following is recommended:-**

- The nightboxes must be a minimum of 600mm x 600mm x 600mm.
- The exercise area is recommended to be no less than 1.8m height x 2.4m length x 1.2m wide.
- Wire dividers should be no less than 25mm

## **7.7 Individual Cattery:-**

**Are designed so that each unit has a solid partition and cats do not mix with each other.**

- They are housed individually and the units will contain a sleeping and play area.
- The exercise area of no less than **1.8m height x 1.2m length x 600mm wide**.
- It's unnecessary to have a night box in this type of unit.
- If nightboxes are included, they should be no smaller than 600mm x 600mm x 600mm.
- There must be at least 2m between facing units, unless the windows are not facing each other, then the units can be closer. These units provide accommodation for only one cat.

**For catteries built after February 2008, the following is recommended:-**

- The nightboxes must be a minimum of 600mm x 600mm x 600mm.
- The exercise area is recommended to be no less than 1.8m height x 2.4m length x 1.2m wide.
- Wire dividers should be no less than 25mm

## **7.8 Common Identifiers**

Each cat must have:-

- An Id collar.
- Each cat must have access to clean water at all times.
- Each cat must have access to a litter box at all times.
- Each cat must have access to a nightbox (except in an individual cattery situation, where alternative bedding would suffice).

### **7.9 Entrances:-**

- Double-doors must provide the access point for entry to the cattery and exit from the cattery.
- There must be sufficient space for the first door to be opened, and for a person to stand between these two doors and for the first door to close and the second door to be opened, thereby preventing cats from escaping.
- Windows, which can be opened, must be securely screened to prevent cats escaping.

### **7.10 Cat Identification:-**

- Each unit must be clearly marked and the facility must ensure that the cat/s in a particular unit corresponds with the office and kitchen records. Records of cats on specific diets or medication must also be maintained and must align with cattery unit identifiers.

## **8 ENVIRONMENT FOR CATS:**

### **8.1 Temperature:**

Catteries must be of such a design and construction that cats are protected from extremes of temperature: -

- When hot be able to move under shelter, but have a good flow of air coming through and should be adequate to keep animal housing areas free from dampness, noxious odours and draughts.
- When cold and raining, cats must be able to move into an enclosed area that offers protection.
- Recommended temperatures are between 15°C and 26°C. An establishment should have a means of monitoring the temperature and should be checked from time to time, i.e. a thermometer on the wall in one or two key areas, dependant on the size of the establishment.

### **8.2 Lighting:**

- There should be sufficient lighting so that cats can be checked at any time and the cattery can be thoroughly cleaned.

### **8.3 Shade & Ventilation:**

- Cattery areas must be adequately ventilated to keep animal housing areas free from dampness, noxious odours and draughts.
- Areas where cats are housed under metal roofing without outdoor areas available need to be monitored to ensure that temperatures do not become extreme. Outer doors should be able to be opened to ensure good ventilation is applied.

### **8.4 Bedding:**

- Cats must be provided with clean bedding on arrival.
- If bedding becomes wet or emanates an odour, it must be changed.
- Owners should be encouraged to provide a clean toy, bedding or blanket from the household, which the cat is familiar with. This must be inspected and itemised on admission.

### **8.5 Construction: Flooring and Drainage**

#### **The flooring of the animal housing must:**

- Provide a safe and solid foothold (not be slippery).
- Be impervious, non-absorbent and non-porous, i.e. sealed concrete, sealed grouting, and sealed or painted wood and therefore ensuring that the surfaces can be cleaned to a hygienic and high standard.
- Where a collection drain is provided, it should be fitted with fine mesh wire baskets to trap hair and waste, and be cleaned daily.
- Sloped to enable waste and water to run off into gully traps and constructed in such a fashion as not to be a danger to staff or animals, as well as to dry-off the area as quickly as possible.

### **8.6 Framework and Doors**

- It is strongly recommended that the framework, posts and doors of the cattery which are constructed out of timber, treated or untreated, and which are accessed by cats, should be sealed with paint or a sealant, which can easily be washed and sanitised.
- Alternatively, a non-porous veneer, which seals off the timber, will also be acceptable. Treated or untreated wood is porous, and is prone to harbouring viruses and bacteria.
- Joints and corners should be properly sealed.

### **8.7 Security:**

- Buildings must be securely lockable with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the animals held.
- Any security method used must allow for ready access to animals and ready exit of staff and animals from the premises in the event of an emergency.
- All buildings in which animals are housed should be fitted with double doors to prevent the loss of animals, which may escape from cages or other facilities.

### **8.8 Cleaning and Disinfection:**

Catteries and exercise areas must be cleaned to:

- Prevent disease as well as ensure the comfort of the cats.
- Cleaned out at least once a day, using a non-toxic disinfectant effective against viruses, bacteria and fungi.
- Disinfected before new cats are introduced.
- Disinfected with an appropriate product after an outbreak of infectious disease.
- Cattery units, play areas and nightboxes must be dried as quickly as possible.
- Disinfectants and cleaners should be stored away from animals and members of the public.
- Staff (if employed) must be aware of the manufacturers instructions on disinfectants and cleaners with regard to accurate dilution rates, contact times and use-by dates and such products should be used accordingly in order to ensure that viruses and bacteria, which may be present, are killed.
- Care must be taken to clean up any spillage that might have occurred.

### **8.9 Waste Disposal:**

- Must be in accordance with the requirements of the local authority.
- Solid waste must be collected from all parts of the facility and disposed of in a suitable fashion, e.g. in an offal pit (if acceptable to the relevant council), septic tank, biogas digester, waste disposal bins (to be placed in a double-bag which is to be leak proof), etc.
- Liquid waste must be able to drain out of the facility into a septic tank or soak hole or approved legal link-up to council drainage.

### **8.10 Pest Control:**

- Efforts must be made to effectively control pests, including flies and rodents.
- Pesticides must be applied with extreme caution and the manufacturers instructions adhered to.

## 9 ISOLATION FACILITIES

- Isolation facilities must be available in the event that a cat is suspected of, or has been diagnosed as having an infectious condition. It is recommended that approximately 10% of the boarding capacity be made available for this purpose.
- If a separate building away from the main facility is not possible, then access to and from the isolation part of the shared building should be totally separate from all other entrances and exits used by other cats.
- If the isolation section of the building does not have a separate entrance, there must be solid partitioning between the isolation section and non-isolation section of the building.
- If the infection is of a contagious nature, additional precautions need to be taken to prevent the spread of infection, i.e. the use of disposable overalls, booties and gloves and disinfectant baths/basins both within and outside the isolation area.
- The isolation units must not be used during peak periods when the establishment is filled to capacity, in the event that an infectious outbreak does occur and these units are required.
- A cat suspected of having a contagious infection must be taken to the veterinarian immediately.
- Cats which have had contact with the infected cat need to be monitored carefully, and if possible, those cats should be isolated.
- Sick cats which are not infectious or infected, but which may be stressed by contact with other cats, should be separated but not necessarily isolated.
- Cats in isolation must have no contact with other healthy cats at the facility.
- Veterinary advice must be sought in the management of the specific outbreaks of disease.
- Staff should be trained in managing sick cats in isolation.
- Ideally specific staff should be allocated to tending cats with an infectious disease.
- If specific staff are not able to be allocated to tend to infectious cats, uninfected cats should be tended to before sick cats. This must appear in the Isolation Procedure.
- Isolation areas must have its own drainage, ventilation and water supply systems. Surfaces must be sealed and impervious and in good condition with no cracks where seepages can occur.
- Reusable containers should be cleaned and sanitised separately from those used by healthy animals.

## 10 VACCINATION AND HEALTH PROTOCOL

- Vaccination time frames vary depending on the type of vaccination.
- Vaccinations must be current as per the date the next booster is due as shown on the vaccination certificate and specified by the attending veterinarian.
- On admission, it should be established that the vaccinations would cover the cat for the duration of their stay and it would be a good practice to either record the dates that the next boosters are required or take a photocopy.
- If for whatever reason, the vaccinations do not cover the cat for the duration of the stay, the cattery owner must make arrangements to have the vaccinations updated and should be in possession of the vaccination certificate/s. If the cattery owner does not have the vaccination certificates in their possession (as in the case of an emergency requiring the cat/s stay for a longer period of time), the cat/s must be taken to the owner's veterinarian, who can verify that booster vaccinations are required.

### 10.1 Diseases in Cats:-

#### **Feline Infectious Enteritis** (also known as **feline parvovirus** or **feline panleucopenia**).

Is a small, hardy virus that attacks the infected cat's gut and causes brain damage in unborn kittens. Parvoviruses are very dangerous as they are able to survive long periods, sometimes even years, in the environment. Cats infected with FPV can continue to excrete the virus for at least six weeks following infection. Parvoviruses are resistant to many disinfectants and it is vital that an effective disinfectant is used. Most cats contract FPV from a contaminated environment rather than from infected cats. Unvaccinated adult cats are also susceptible especially if booster vaccinations have lapsed. Despite its name, cats usually have no diarrhoea. Temperature is variable and can be subnormal. Cats often seem hungry or thirsty, sitting hunched over a food or water bowl but are unable to eat or drink. No specific treatment is available and it is vital that any suspected cases are nursed in isolation, as this is a highly contagious disease. Protective clothing must be worn and hands washed thoroughly after handling any cat or kitten suspected of having the disease. Cats often die from dehydration and massive secondary infection, so fluids and broad-spectrum antibiotics are crucial. Severely dehydrated cats will usually require intravenous fluids and veterinary support is essential.

Feline infectious enteritis is spread by direct faecal-oral contact and also indirectly following contamination of the environment or objects by an infected animal, eg, on food dishes, grooming equipment, bedding, floors, clothing or hands. Boosters must be given annually.

### 10.2 Rhinotracheitis:

Feline rhinotracheitis virus (feline herpesvirus type 1 or FHV-1) causes acute respiratory illness known as rhinotracheitis (or feline herpesvirus infection). The virus affects domestic and wild cats worldwide.

Rhinotracheitis is characterized by respiratory symptoms such as sneezing, nasal discharge, rhinitis (inflammation of the nose), and conjunctivitis (inflammation of the membrane lining the eyelid). It also affects the reproductive tract and can cause complications during pregnancy.

Rhinotracheitis is part of the feline upper respiratory infection complex, which is a group of viral and bacterial infections (e.g., calicivirus, chlamydiosis) that cause sneezing and discharge from the eyes and nose. Cats often have two or more of these upper respiratory infections at the same time, and FHV-1 is one of the most common.

**10.2.1 FHV-1** is shed through the discharge from an infected cat's eyes, nose, and mouth. Contact with these secretions is a potential mode of transmission. The most common mode of transmission appears to be contact with contaminated objects that an infected cat has touched or sneezed on including cages, food and water bowls, litter trays, pet owner's clothing, and the pet owner's hands.

FHV-1 can be transmitted by direct contact with an infected cat's mouth, nose, or eye discharge. Several days of close contact are necessary for infection to occur. Sneezing and coughing can spread the virus as far as 4 feet. Many cats that are infected with FHV-1 never completely get rid of the virus. These cats are known as latent carriers. Even though they may not show symptoms, they harbour the virus in their nerve cells. Latent carriers spread the infection and are a major source of new infections.

### 10.3 Calicivirus:

Feline calicivirus (aka FCV), is a common virus that affects cats, and is characterized by upper respiratory symptoms, pneumonia, oral ulceration, and occasionally arthritis. It is a somewhat mild flu-like condition and rarely causes serious complications.

Calicivirus and feline rhinotracheitis virus together are responsible for nearly 85% to 90% of all URIs in cats. Incidence Calicivirus occurs worldwide and affects all breeds of cats. Vaccination has reduced the incidence of clinical disease, but it hasn't decreased the prevalence of the virus. The virus is spreading, even though fewer cats show symptoms

**Causes:** numerous strains of feline calicivirus exist and different strains cause different symptoms (for example, one particular strain can cause ulcers on the paws as well as in the mouth). It usually affects the throat, and sometimes the lungs; it can also infect the intestines. Calicivirus often occurs with another upper respiratory infection, such as feline herpesvirus (FHV), rhinotracheitis virus, or chlamydiosis.

**Transmission:** Calicivirus is spread through direct contact with the saliva, eye and nose discharges, and sometimes the faeces of an infected cat. Since kittens share close quarters and are less hygienic than adult cats, rates of infection and transmission are much higher. Higher outbreaks occur in shelters and catteries as well. Outbreaks can occur in overcrowded, poorly ventilated, or unsanitary conditions.

FCV is resistant to many disinfectants and can survive outside the cat's body for as long as 8 to 10 days, so it may be present in dishes, litter trays, and clothing, even after a thorough cleaning.

Many cats remain contagious for years, even though they may not show signs of disease thus many are latent carriers.

**Treatment:**

As it is a virus, treatment is primarily supportive. As with all URI's, hygiene and sanitary precautions are of the utmost importance. Dehydration is also a large risk, particularly with kittens. The use of a product to boost hydration and electrolytes is recommended.

### 10.4 Parasites:

Can get on a host and remain 'on deck.' These are called ectoparasites (ecto=outside). Examples of ectoparasites are fleas and ticks. Other parasites move to the inside cabins of the host and are called endoparasites (endo=in). Roundworms, heartworms, and tapeworms are examples of endoparasites.

If worming has not been done in the last three months, the pet must be treated at the owner's expense. A broad-spectrum drug effective against hookworm, whipworm, roundworm and tapeworm should be used. Long-term boarders should be wormed as appropriate.

Cats should be treated regularly for ectoparasites (fleas and ticks). Owners must declare if their animals are known or suspected to be suffering from an Infectious disease or parasite infestation. Animals' known to have these conditions should be isolated and treated appropriately or refused admission. Should an animal disease or parasite infestation be suspected, the manager should seek veterinary advice and adopt immediate quarantine and disease control procedures.

Long-term boarders (longer than 2 months) must be re-treated for fleas and ticks and (longer than 3 months) worms.

### **10.5 Immunisation:**

Cats should have been fully vaccinated (including the eight day (kittens) or two-week (adults) period for immunity to become established), before admission into a cat boarding facility. It is recommended that a copy of the certificate is kept on file.

If an owner arrives without the required certification, the cat/s must remain in the car until the necessary verification can be confirmed from the pet owner's veterinarian. If the cat/s do not have a current vaccination certificate, and the cattery owner is prepared to accept the cat/s, they must be inoculated immediately and placed in an isolation facility for two weeks. Care must be taken with cross-contamination and the owner and staff must proceed in the same manner as for infected cats using the isolation facility.

### **10.6 Certificates:**

The following information should be viewed on the inoculation certificate: -

- The name of the owner
- The name of the animal
- Identification of the animal, including species, breed, colour, age and sex
- The name and address of the vet and clinic
- Name and qualifications of the veterinarian
- Veterinarian's signature
- The type of vaccine and trade name used
- The date the vaccine was administered
- The recommended date(s) for re-vaccination

If an original certificate has been replaced, a copy or replacement certificate will have been issued and should be clearly marked as "COPY" or "DUPLICATE" or "REPLACEMENT". If the original veterinarian was unable to sign such a replacement certificate, then the words "according to our records" and a signature of a verifying veterinarian shall be sufficient for certification.

### **10.7 Diseases of the Skin:**

Dermatitis or eczema is a very common problem in cats, and there are many causes including allergies and parasite diseases, infections, nutritional imbalances and hormonal disorders. As soon as a skin disorder is detected, seek immediate veterinary treatment, as delays make recovery longer and treatment more difficult and expensive.

### **10.8 Sarcoptic Mange:-**

Commonly known as scabies is caused by the parasite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. These microscopic mites can invade the skin of healthy cats or kittens and create a variety of skin problems, the most common of which is hair loss and severe itching. While they will infect cats, other animals and even humans, they prefer to live their short lives on dogs.

## 11 HEALTHCARE

### 11.1 Animal Wellbeing

All cats must be checked at least once daily to monitor their health. The following observations should be made to check that the cat:-

- Is eating normally
- Is drinking normally
- Is defecating normally
- Is urinating normally
- Is behaving normally
- Is of normal appearance with no obvious wounds
- Is able to move about freely
- Has a normal coat
- Vocalisation
- Check the eyes, nose, ears and underside

All staff should have on the job training or have attended an external course in first aid for animals. All relevant training should be recorded in the staff training file. If there are any changes in health status, these must be reported promptly to the management of the establishment in order that prompt action can be taken. Each cat should be examined daily for signs of external parasites and treated for any that are found.

### 11.2 Veterinary Attention

The cattery management must be aware of which veterinary after hours services are available to them in their area in the event of an emergency, and if their regular veterinary clinic/practice is unavailable.

The pet owner must be made aware that the cattery's regular veterinarian would be consulted in an emergency instead of using the pet owner's regular veterinarian.

In the event that a cat falls ill, the cattery owner/manager should liaise with the cat owner's veterinarian to establish if there are any medical conditions that they need to be made aware. Lack of continuity of veterinary care can compromise the cat's health.

Veterinary advice should be sought by the manager of the boarding facility, or their nominee, for any animal showing one or more of the following signs (but are not limited to):

- Abnormal dullness, lethargy, agitation/excitement
- Increase or decrease in thirst and/or appetite
- Runny nose, runny or inflamed eyes
- Discharges
- Pale or yellowish gums and inner eyes
- Persistent scratching or biting of skin, or shaking of head
- Unusual smell from ears or mouth
- Repeated sneezing
- Coughing
- Abnormal breathing (including persistent increased rate)
- Vomiting
- Severe diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained
- Lameness
- Inability to stand or walk
- Hanging head
- Bleeding or swelling of body parts
- Apparent pain
- Fits (seizures) or staggering

- Bloating of abdomen
- Difficulty or inability to urinate or defecate
- Significant weight loss or weight gain, or change in girth of the cat
- Lack or loss of appetite
- Swellings
- Red or brown coloured urine
- Any other serious physical or behavioural abnormality
- Significant wounds, inflammations or irritations
- Extensive hair loss

Medications must only be used in accordance with veterinary advice.

### 11.3 First Aid for Animals

Guidelines for equipping a first aid box: -

Scissors (curved)	Tweezers
Tape	Saline solution (saline 0.9%, for flushing eyes & wounds)
K-Y Jelly	Thermometer
Nail Clippers	Gauze Swabs
Emergency Blanket	Pliers (side cutters)
Examining Gloves	Pen Light
Dressing (telfa pads)	Ordinary Blanket (for carrying animals)
Antiseptic Solution (iodine diluted to 4%)	Skin coat wash
Cotton wool	Bandages (crepe, vet wrap)
Leather Gloves	Blanket

Some of these items may not necessarily be found in the first aid box but may be housed on the property in areas where they are utilised daily.

Strict controls must be exercised on the replacement of used first aid equipment. Any first aid work carried out on any cat must be recorded on their file and reported to the owner/s or their contact as soon as possible.

### 11.4 Medication

There must be strict guidelines in the cattery's procedures regarding the administration of medication.

- If a cat is admitted with a requirement for medication, this must first be noted on the cat's record card, computer or medicine card.
- The following information must also be noted on the medication card where the medication is stored:
  - The owner's name
  - The name of the cat.
  - Times and dates that the medication is administered.
  - Name and signature of the staff member administering the medication.
  - This information must be kept in the event that proof is required with regard to administering of the medication.
  - Medication must be stored in a secure area and must only be dispensed by authorised staff.

## 11.5 Emergency Resuscitation

Cattery owners/management should provide on the job training or attend a formal course to be able to administer emergency resuscitation. Knowledge of first aid for both animals and humans would be preferential.

## 11.6 Death while in Care

- If a cat dies while in the boarding establishment, the management must attempt to contact the owners of the cat, or if they cannot be reached, the alternate contact person must be contacted and informed.
- If the owner or alternate contact cannot be contacted, the owner's veterinarian must be informed and must establish the cause of death.
- If the cause of death is not obvious, the owner's veterinarian must carry out a post-mortem to establish the cause of death.
- It is important to establish the cause of death as soon as possible, as this might be due to an infectious disease, and which could have severe ramifications for the entire cattery.
- All details surrounding the death of the cat must be documented on their record card as well as all conversations between the owner/contact and the cattery detailing times and dates of calls.
- The owner's permission must be obtained for disposal of the cat, or the body must be frozen and kept for post-mortem/owner disposal.
- In the case of elderly cats the owners should sign consent that in the event of death a post mortem is not necessary.

## 11.7 Euthanasia

*Legal obligations as per the Animal Welfare Act of 1999 stipulate that:-*

*"The person in charge of a cat has an overall responsibility for the welfare of the cat in his or her care.*

*The owner or person in charge of a cat must:*

- *ensure that the physical, health and behavioral needs of the cat are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge*
- *where practicable, ensure that a cat that is ill or injured receives treatment that will alleviate any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the cat or that it is killed humanely.*

*The person in charge of a cat must not without reasonable excuse:-*

- *keep a cat alive when it is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress".*

It is the responsibility of the establishment to ensure that a sick or injured cat receives veterinary attention as soon as possible (to the extent that an after-hours veterinarian is consulted), to ensure that there is minimal suffering. The person in charge should try and contact the owner's veterinarian in the first instance, but if the animal is suffering then there would be an obligation to find the most convenient vet. The establishment is the custodian of the cats in its care (with authorisation provided by the owner as referred to in the Terms and Conditions (section 5.2).

**11.7.1** If it is the opinion of the veterinarian that an animal should be destroyed because reasonable treatment will not be sufficient to make the animal respond and the animal will suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress if it continues to live, the person in charge must as soon as possible:-

- Consult with the owner, if he/she can be found within a reasonable time; and
- If the owner asks for a second opinion from a veterinarian as to whether the animal should be destroyed, allow the owner to obtain a second opinion.

**11.7.2** If the owner of a severely injured or sick animal cannot be found within a reasonable time, or if the owner of a severely injured or sick animal:-

- Does not, on being found, agree to the destruction of the animal; and
- Does not obtain within a reasonable time a second opinion from a veterinarian as to whether the animal should be destroyed;

The veterinarian must, without delay, destroy the animal. A Veterinarian could be liable if there is an unreasonable delay in destroying an animal that is suffering.

A written report must be obtained from the veterinarian and the owner and owner's veterinarian must be provided with a copy of the report.

It is therefore good practice for a boarding establishment to ensure that they obtain contact numbers and have clear authority to act on the owner's behalf and in their absence, as this could also involve a cost.

MAF and SPCA Inspectors, and in the case of the Waitakere City (but no other councils) the Animal Welfare, Waitakere as well as the Police have the same powers of destruction as a veterinarian.

## **11.8 Abandoned Animals**

Management of an establishment must have a policy for dealing with unclaimed cats. All attempts to contact the owners must have been exhausted, as well as making every effort to establish the owner's whereabouts from the alternate contact as specified by the owners on admission.

## **11.9 Distress**

- Many cats find the sight and particularly the sound of items such as fireworks very distressing. Lightning, thunder and gunshots may also have a similar effect.
- Cats should be kept in an area with the least possible exposure to the sight and sound of the disturbance.
- If possible, cats should be enclosed in the night box area until the incident has passed.
- Prior to events such as Guy Fawkes, advice should be sought for particularly nervous cats and medication may be appropriate if it is impractical to removed cats from the area.
- Alternative distraction techniques should be applied, i.e. music, tv, etc.

## 12 ANIMAL WELFARE OFFENCES

The owner or person in charge of an animal commits an offence when they:-

- Fail to comply, in relation to the animal in section 4.1 or;
- Fails, in the case of an animal that is ill or injured, to comply, in relation to the animal, in section 4.2

## 13 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

### 13.1 Fire/flood emergency contingency plans

Each pet boarding establishment is different, with the size and complexity of the building/s influencing how an emergency procedure would be carried out. To this end, each establishment must devise their own emergency procedures to be carried out.

Fires can appear small and inconsequential, and it may appear worth trying to extinguish in the first instance. However, a small fire can quickly become uncontrollable. In the event of a fire, it is good practice to first EVACUATE. Call the emergency services immediately. It is important to note that if you are fighting the fire or any other emergency, always have someone watching your back.

- All staff must be aware of the emergency procedures as set down by the cattery owner/management in the event of fire or flooding or any other emergency.
- Roles should be established with the staff members and a good practice would be to enact a fire drill at least once a year.
- The emergency procedure must be available and visible at all times and can be in the form of a diagram with the layout of the cattery, with emergency exits specified. This must also provide the emergency contact numbers in large bold print for the fire department, police station, hospital and facility veterinarian.
- If there is evidence of a fire or if there is another emergency, roles should be put into action as previously determined by management in the emergency procedures:-
  - All cattery areas that are in the same building as the fire must be evacuated
  - A staff member must dial 111 to alert the emergency services, explaining that this is a pet boarding establishment. It is recommended that two different people using different phones call 111 outside the cattery.
- A floor plan of the cattery with the exits clearly marked should be prominently placed around the cattery.
- Fire and/or smoke alarms must be fitted (if this is relevant to the way an establishment is constructed) throughout the building, and there must be a sufficient number of fire extinguishers throughout the premises in easily accessible places.
- It is recommended that a sprinkler system is fitted.
- Exits in the cattery must be clearly marked, and must not be blocked by boxes or paraphernalia.
- There should be a regular discussion with staff on the emergency drill to be followed in an emergency situation.
- Visits from local Fire Brigade and other services should be encouraged.

### 13.2 Hazardous Substances

- Every establishment should decide whether there is a requirement to hold an OSH manual, which should contain a Hazardous Substance Register, Accident Register and Material Safety Data Sheet.
- All staff must be familiar with the health and safety aspects of dealing with any chemicals that are held on site.
- All hazardous substances within the facility must be clearly marked and all staff must be aware of their hazardous nature.

- They must be kept in an area where animals and children cannot reach this product, and stored in leak-proof containers.
- Once empty, these containers must be disposed of in the appropriate manner for hazardous containers, and not reused for other substances.

### **13.3 Staff Health**

Staff health must be protected by the provision of appropriate work clothing, adequate hand washing facilities and tetanus immunisation (through a GP). Cattery Management should advise their staff on disease-causing organisms that could be transmitted to humans (zoonoses) and personal hygiene procedures must be such that transmission should not occur.

## 14 FOOD PREPARATION

### 14.1 Food Preparation Areas:

- The food preparation area must be separate to the sleeping and exercise areas.
- Food preparation areas must have surfaces that are easy to clean and have a smooth and impervious surface.
- There must be hot and cold running water available.
- There must be a washing up area adequate for the size and capacity of the facility.
- Dry food should be kept in sealed leak-proof containers, to discourage rodents.
- Wet food must be stored in either the fridge or freezer in this area. Frozen food must not be refrozen once thawed.
- Care must be taken when thawing food so as not to attract rodents and flies.
- Food should be thawed in a covered container.

### 14.2 Food Preparation and Feeding of Cats:

- If it is observed that a cat had eaten very little food, the cat should be monitored to establish whether he is a "grazer" and this is his normal pattern of eating, or whether there is a medical reason for this and the appropriate action taken..
- A reasonable amount of time should be allowed for feeding before food is removed and disposed.
- Some cats only eat later, so allowances should be made for cats that prefer to eat at another time, i.e. when the cattery is quiet, however, in these circumstances, safe rodent control must be paramount.
- The cat should then come under strict observation and if any unusual behaviour is observed, as described in point 7.2 Veterinary Attention must be sought.

### 14.3 Utensils

- Dishes must be made of a hard, chew-proof material.
- Dishes for food must be cleaned/sanitised after each meal.
- Dishes for water must be cleaned/sanitised daily.

#### 14.4 Diet

- A facility must have a range of food available in the event that a cat refuses what is offered. The change in diet must be recorded.
- Care must be taken that cats with a sensitive disposition do not have a reaction to a particular food.
- If a cat is on a special diet, this must be recorded on the office card as well as on the kitchen chart/board/card. Pet owners can supply their own food.
- Staff must be made aware of why the cat is on special food in order to observe any potential problems (eg crystals (W/D, S/D, C/D food, prone to vomiting so on I/D food, kidney problems, or diabetic etc)
- Cat owners must ensure that the cattery management are aware of any allergies the cat has, and the management must ensure that all staff are advised, and this must appear on the office card and the kitchen chart.
- Sufficient food which is of a high nutritional value and which will maintain their state of health must be offered to cats for their size and weight.
- Staff must be aware of any significant weight loss that is occurring, even if the cat is eating all the food provided. Detecting weight loss visually in cats can be difficult particularly if they are medium or long-haired.
- The manufacturer's instructions regarding quantity per kg must be adhered to.
- Both wet and dry food should be made available.
- Cats must have potable water freely available throughout the day.
- The cattery management should decide what time is best for feeding the cats, and this time should remain consistent.
- If the food has not been eaten a thorough check of the cat must be carried out to establish any underlying causes, i.e. sickness, distress.
- Information on feeding when sharing accommodation must be obtained from the owners.
- The owner/s must be advised what food is available at the boarding establishment, since it may differ from what the cat is generally fed at home.

## 15 TRANSPORTATION OF CATS

The transportation of animals must be in accordance with the requirements of Section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999

*“And must ensure that the welfare of the animal is properly attended to, and that, in particular, the animal is provided with reasonably comfortable and secure accommodation and is supplied with proper and sufficient food and water. Animals must be transported in the shortest practicable time.*

### 15.1 Transportation of Cats:

- No cat that is boarded in any establishment shall be moved from that facility, other than to a veterinary clinic, without the consent of the owner's contact, or at the discretion of the management of the establishment, in the event that the owner's contact cannot be contacted. When the owner/s collect their cat/s, a report (either verbal or written), should be given to the owner/s on the events that took place.
- Cats must be provided with adequate ventilation when being transported in a vehicle.
- If cats are carried in a purpose-built transport box, it must be fixed in the vehicle in a position where it is well ventilated and free from exhaust fumes and road dust.
- Cats must not be left unattended in a vehicle when heat is likely to cause distress to the cat.
- Cats should not be carried in a closed boot of a car unless this is the most appropriate manner in which to transport an injured cat over a short distance.

#### **Any vehicle especially designed or regularly used for transporting cats must:**

- Protect cats from injury
- Have non-slip floors
- Provide easy access and operator safety
- Protect against extremes of temperature
- Allow for proper ventilation
- Be easy to clean and disinfect
- Be secure enough to prevent the unauthorised release of cats
- Be supplied with clean, secure cages or carry baskets for cats and with separate compartments or partitions for larger cats where multiple cats are being carried.

## **16 GROOMING**

- It is important to groom a cat if it becomes dirty or emits an unpleasant odour.
- Cat's coats and paws should be checked daily as part of their daily routine and groomed if necessary.
- Combing of longhaired cats daily is recommended to prevent the coat becoming matted as this can cause skin conditions.
- Cats must not be returned to their owners in a smelly and dirty condition.
- If cats are admitted in a condition where they emit an unpleasant odour, are dirty or are matted, the owner must be informed that the cat needs to be groomed immediately.

## **17 PROCEDURES**

Depending on the size and complexity of the facility, documented procedures relating the key activities should be established and made available to all staff.

General Procedure, dealing with the day to day running of the establishment, with the below mentioned sections being included:-

- Staff training records Section 5.5
- Complaints Procedure Section 5.6
- Isolation Procedure Section 9
- Emergency Procedure Section 13
- Administration of Medication (Section 11.4)