Breeding of Dogs Act 1973

Guidance Notes for Licence Conditions

Dog Breeding Establishments

1 Bitches

1.1 The number of dogs permitted must relate to the number and size of the kennels available and should be stipulated clearly on the front sheet of the licence. The decision regarding the number of dogs permitted to be kept must take into account the maximum likely litter size as well as the effectiveness of site management.

2 Record Keeping

2.1 Records will provide useful information to the local authority inspector should problems arise. In addition to the records that are required to be kept by The Breeding of Dogs (Licensing Records) Regulations 1999, full details should also be kept on:

- KC registration;
- Microchip and tattoo numbers;
- Vaccination and worming regimes as well as other veterinary treatment given;
- Cleaning and disinfecting regimes;
- Feeding and exercise regimes;
- Accommodation temperatures;
- Isolation cases being managed and the regime in place;
- Vehicles used for transporting dogs;

3 Accommodation

3.1 General

The establishment should, at all times, be laid out and operated in accordance with an approved plan, to be attached to the licence. Before carrying out alterations, advice should be sought from the licensing officer of the local authority.
Where kennels are provided within converted outbuildings consideration should be given to cleaning, energy conservation, wildlife access, vermin control, natural lighting and ventilation.

Converting existing buildings may be more expensive to adapt and less efficient to operate than building new kennels. Proposed building works may require approval from the building control department and/or planning department.

The purpose of avoiding wood on surface structures of kennel interiors is because of the possibility of damage to the material caused by scratching or chewing by dogs.

Worn and splintered material is difficult to clean, harbours bacteria, viruses and so on, and may allow the splinters to penetrate the animal’s skin.

The interior and exterior of the buildings should be kept in good decorative order and repair. Outer paths, gardens, exercise areas and general surroundings should be kept in good clean, safe condition.

Where galvanised welded mesh is used for fencing the wire diameter should not be less than 2mm (14 gauge) excluding any covering the mesh size should not exceed 5cm (2in).

3.2 Walls and Partitions

Sealing is the use of a proprietary water proofing agent for sealing the wall against damp-penetration. Under certain circumstances sealing of brickwork can only be achieved by rendering prior to sealing.

Partition construction may be solid from floor to ceiling, but this should not be to the detriment of other welfare considerations such as the dog’s outlook, lighting, ventilation and socialising. Suitable materials for the construction of partition walls include properly surfaced impervious brick/block constructions, moulded plastic, glass reinforced plastic (GRP) and pre-formed plastic surfaced board.

Partition walls between kennels and individual exercise areas should be of solid construction to a minimum height of 1.2m (4ft).

Constructing a solid partition to a minimum height provides a physical barrier to infection. It will also reduce aggression while allowing the dogs to socialise.

3.3 Floors

Floors of kennels and related exercise areas should be constructed of impervious material and be easily cleanable while providing sufficient grip for the animal to walk or run without sustaining injury.

In new constructions, it is recommended that floors should be laid to a minimum fall of 1 in 80 leading to a shallow drainage channel or effectively covered deep drainage channel.

It is recommended that new kennels should incorporate a damp proof membrane.
Drainage channels should be provided near to the kennel edge so that urine cannot pass over walk areas in corridors and communal access areas. A separate drainage channel may be needed in the exercise area. Advice concerning waste water outlets must be sought from the Environment Agency and/or, the local authority.

3.5 Doors

When designing kennel doors regard should be had to the health and safety of the person working in the kennel, for example, large dogs may push against the door which may give rise to difficulties in securing the door and even to accidents to the person on the opposite side of the door when it opens outwards. A door which opens inwards may also reduce the possibility of escape.

3.6 Windows

Dogs should not be allowed to escape. When windows are so situated that they pose a security risk, welded mesh or reinforced glass, polycarbonate or other impact-resistant material should be used instead of glass.

3.8 Lighting

Lighting must be of sufficient standard to enable efficient working both during and after daylight hours.

It is recommended that breeding establishments should have a low level night light for a 12 hour period for after daylight hours.

3.9 Ventilation

A balance should be struck between providing adequate ventilation while avoiding unnecessary removal of heat and draughts. Checks need to be made during the day and night to allow for temperature fluctuations.

Ventilation is important in disease control. It provides protection against accumulation of odour and prevents excessive humidity. High humidity increases the risk of infectious bronchitis (“Kennel Cough”).

Bedding should have sufficient depth to allow the dog protection against draughts.

3.10 Kennel Size, Layout and Exercise Facilities

When constructing kennels, an appropriate design and correct materials should be used to overcome problems of noise emission and to ensure energy conservation. This is in order to minimise discomfort to the dog and risk of nuisance to persons in the vicinity of the site.

Dogs should be able to lie down, turn around and stand comfortably in the sleeping area, with sufficient space for the door to open fully.

Special consideration should be given to whelping bitches. Kennels should cater for the maximum number of puppies having regard to the size of the breed and litter size. To avoid crushing puppies, crush bars can be useful when breeding large or giant dogs or if the bitch is particularly clumsy.
In adverse weather conditions, the responsible person must decide whether or not dogs are given free access to their exercise area. The exercise area should be roofed to a minimum of half the area, sufficient to give the dog protection against the weather. Some of this should be translucent material capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.

It should be borne in mind that certain breeds are more adept at climbing than others. Therefore, depending upon the breed, consideration should be given to covering the whole of the exercise areas.

It is recommended that the exercise area is separate from the sleeping area and exclusive to that kennel for free use by the dog during the day.

3.11 Temperature in Kennels

The materials used on the kennel exterior should offer adequate protection against temperature variations throughout the year.

The difficulty of maintaining the ideal temperature is acknowledged, however, these are realistic temperatures and should not be exceeded in normal circumstances. Puppies under two weeks of age should be kept at a temperature between 26°C (79°F) to 28°C (82°F). Temperatures at dog level should be monitored and recorded daily.

There will be periods in the year where ambient external temperatures will cause temperatures to fluctuate above or below the recommended levels. If the higher temperature level is exceeded due to structural shortcomings rather than normal ambient temperature, then artificial means of counteracting this high temperature should be introduced.

Where temperatures fall below the recommended level, the use of individual heating lamps for dogs may prove adequate. In some circumstances additional background heating will also be required.

Failure to give adequate attention to construction and insulation may cause dogs to suffer and increase running costs. Geographical orientation will affect temperature, eg, north facing openings make it difficult to maintain adequate heating levels. Correct orientation of the kennel will allow maximum use of natural light.

Devices used for heating and cooling must be safe and free from risk of burning or electrocution. Manufacturer’s instructions should be followed.

3.12 Cleanliness

Advice must be sought from the Environment Agency or local authority concerning removal of waste such as dog faeces and soiled material. In addition, foul waste water must be disposed of by discharge to the approved drainage system. Those wishing to operate an incinerator must seek advice from the Environment Agency and/or the local authority.

There are a range of alternative cleaning regimes. The regime should, however, include:

1. Removal of solids
2. Washing
2. Disinfection to manufacturer’s stated instructions

3. Drying

The physical collection of faeces is usual ('poop scoop' or shovel and bucket). The use of detergent and water will 'wash down'. Pressure hoses or steam cleaning will wash down more effectively.

Bacteria, viruses and fungi must be controlled by the sanitising process. Because disinfectant is washed away after a short period of time, the long term activity of chemicals used to control viruses, bacteria and fungi should be considered.

Great care should be taken when using any chlorine-based chemical, e.g. Bleach. Chemicals and materials must be used and stored according to the manufacturers instructions.

Combinations of bactericides, fungicides and virucides may prove expensive to use and may not necessarily provide the best system. Professional advice should be sought for the most effective method.

Staff working from kennel to kennel further increases the risk of spreading disease. Staff should be trained in good kennel hygiene. Complete disinfection of kennel and equipment must be carried out between occupancies.

3.13 Accommodation within Houses

Where dogs are maintained in cages within the house, as happens with many small breeds (terriers, toys, and so on) these must be of sufficient size for the dog to lie down, stand up and turn around comfortably, and allow the dog to defecate away from the sleeping area. Local authorities may wish to refer to the International Air Transport Association Regulations (IATA) which provides useful guidelines for minimum cage sizes. It should be remembered that these size guidelines are adequate for short periods only and should not be regarded as suitable for permanent accommodation. Such cages should be used principally for sleeping quarters and animals should not be confined to them for long periods of the day. All dogs require adequate exercise and exercise space should be provided. How much space is a matter for discretion by the authorised inspector and will depend upon the size of the dog as well as the circumstances of each breeding establishment.

Thought should be given to the maximum likely litter size. There should be effective housing to care for the maximum number of puppies. To avoid crushing puppies, crush bars can be useful when breeding large or giant dogs or if the bitch is particularly clumsy.

The general assessment of domestic arrangements should be considered. If there are children in the house, there should be separate facilities because of cross infection concerns. In particular, during whelping the risk of Toxocara is increased. Food preparation should be carried out in hygienic conditions and there should be adequate refrigeration to keep food fresh. To avoid cross-contamination, there should be separate facilities for washing dishes and bedding. Inspectors should compare the size and use of the property with the proposed breeding activity to ensure that the operation of the breeding establishment is not compromised. In addition, the construction of the proposed licensed premises should be safe and well maintained.
The applicant should understand how to achieve the required standards of hygiene and disease control set by the conditions to which the licence is subject.

When bitches are whelping every effort should be made to maintain adequate standards of hygiene. Where whelping actually takes place is probably the most controversial aspect of dog breeding, both for domestic and non-domestic breeders.

Whelping should not take place in a domestic kitchen for cross contamination reasons.

Impermeable floor coverings should be provided to prevent fluids and discharges from fouling wooden floors and similar surfaces.

An adequate quantity of absorbent disposable material, eg newspapers, should be available and properly disposed of after use. Waste arising from the breeding establishment should be disposed of in an approved manner. Certain waste may only be passed to registered carriers or appropriate licensed or authorised disposal facilities. Those wishing to dispose of waste on their premises must seek advice from the Environment Agency or local authority.

Whether or not the bedding is adequate will be a matter for the inspector. Proprietary bedding materials are available in a range of materials that are easily cleaned and hard wearing. Suitable bedding should be chosen according to the size, coat density, heating and comfort factors needed for the dogs and puppies.

The condition of the dogs with regard to cleanliness of skin, bodyweight in relation to breed, and other well recognised signs of health will form the best evidence of the suitability of the breeder to carry on an establishment within the meaning of the 1973 Act. The inspector’s opinions of the breeding establishment will be based on intelligent assessment of the answers provided by the applicant to questions asked by the local authority, as well as what is revealed by any inspection. Veterinary advice should be sought if there is any concern about the health and welfare of the dogs.

The difficulty of maintaining the ideal temperature is acknowledged, however these are realistic temperatures and should not be exceeded in normal circumstances. Puppies under two weeks of age should be kept at a temperature between 26°C. (79°F.) to 28°C. (82°F.). Temperatures should be monitored and recorded.

The recommendations above for lighting, ventilation and temperature should be followed.

### Management

#### 4.2 Supervision

Ideally, a written training policy should be provided. Training of staff, whether permanent or temporary, should be demonstrated to have been carried out on all aspects of the care of all ages of dogs. Staff should be adequately trained in the work they are expected to carry out. For example, in handling dogs safely and in procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

The following are regarded as essential topics to be covered in the training programme relating to the care of dogs; Animal Health and Welfare; Cleanliness and Hygiene; Feeding and Food Preparation; Disease Control; Recognition of Sick Animals; Dog Handling; Health and Safety; Emergency Procedures.
There are a variety of animal care courses available and staff should be encouraged to attend. Relevant NVQs attained at Level 2 or the equivalent should enable staff to gain a minimum level of competency.

The licensee should have adequate staff ratios to number of dogs. Non-domestic breeding kennels should have a ratio of at least one member of staff to 30 dogs where the dogs are adult and not whelping or nursing puppies. However, whelping and nursing bitches are time-consuming. It is therefore recommended that at least one member of staff should be available for every five bitches which are either whelping or nursing puppies.

It is recommended that dogs should be checked regularly by a member of staff at least every four hours between 8am and 6pm. An evening visit may be appropriate but this must be balanced against the possibility of disturbing the dogs and thereby causing a nuisance due to excessive barking. Dogs should not be left alone for long periods of the day.

Checks should be more frequent when bitches are whelping or when puppies are not yet weaned.

Breeding establishments are the permanent home for some dogs and therefore provision of exercise facilities may be inadequate for the long term. Arrangements should be made for the dogs to be exercised at least twice a day. Dogs should not be kept permanently confined. Where dogs are exercised off the premises, reference should be made to the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and the Control of Dogs Order 1992.

The name and address and telephone number (including the emergency number) of the establishment’s veterinary practice should be displayed prominently within the establishment, preferably by the telephone.

4.3 Food and Water Supplies

Dogs must be fed sufficiently well to maintain health. Inspectors should observe the general nutrition of the dogs and check the quality of food in store and the process of preparation. If necessary, the veterinary surgeon should be consulted to advise.

To avoid flies and odours, food should not be left for excessive periods in the kennel, nor should food be left outside at night as this will attract vermin.

Special dietary considerations should be given to young and old dogs and to whelping and nursing bitches.

Nutrition is particularly important during pregnancy and lactation. It is recommended that a requirement of about 1.5 times that of the non-pregnant state is necessary for the last few (say three) weeks of pregnancy.

Lactation will last until the puppies are weaned. During lactation, the bitch must have sufficient food to satisfy the demands being made upon her. Consideration should also be given to how many puppies the bitch is nursing.

During lactation the bitch should be closely monitored for signs of complications (e.g., eclampsia).
The feeding level required for the bitch after weaning will depend upon her body condition. Where a proprietary food source is used the manufacturer’s guide should be followed.

Veterinary advice should be sought if in doubt about feed and nutrition.

5 Disease Control, Vaccination and Worming

5.1 General

Adequate precautions should be taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious and contagious diseases and parasites among dogs, and zoonoses among dogs, staff and visitors. Records should be kept of all vaccination and worming regimes.

Dogs should not be admitted to the establishment without proof of an up to date vaccination programme.

Where stray dogs are housed at the same premises, they should be kept in a separate area at least 5m from the breeding establishment and isolation facilities.

Infectious bronchitis (“Kennel Cough”) can be problematic in kennels, and staff should be aware of the symptoms. However, because vaccination will depend on the local level of infection, it is recommended that the advice of the veterinary surgeon is sought.

For the control of roundworms, pregnant and nursing bitches should be given additional worming treatment. Breeding bitches require particular attention and veterinary advice should always be sought. However, it is suggested that bitches are wormed before mating and then again after the 41st day of pregnancy with a broad-spectrum anthelmintic.

Bitches should be wormed at the same time as their puppies, which should be when the puppies are at two, four and six weeks of age. Thereafter, puppies should be wormed at regular intervals, according to the treatment manufacturer’s instructions.

From 16 weeks of age into adulthood, worming should be carried out routinely two to four times per year.

Advice concerning dogs with tapeworms should be sought from the veterinary surgeon.

Fleas, lice, ticks and harvest mites are common ectoparasites of dogs. Appropriate treatment must be carried out if they are found on any of the dogs. When treating these infestations it is important to take account of the life cycle of the parasite in order to achieve maximum control or even eradication. For instance, simply killing the adult flea is unlikely to provide adequate control.

Several mange mites affect dogs, including Demodex folliculorum, Sarcoptes scabei and Cheyletiella, all of which attack the skin, and Otodectes, which is most commonly seen in the ears. Any of these infestations can cause severe illness in both puppies and older dogs.

Some of these parasites can cause disease in humans.
Ringworm is a fungal infection which can be passed to humans. Early diagnosis and thorough treatment is essential if the disease is to be controlled, for both animals and humans.

The Veterinary surgeon should be consulted if any of these conditions is suspected or known. Particular care is required with pregnant bitches and suckling puppies when using treatments for these infestations. The manufacturer’s instructions should always be followed.

It is important that there are facilities and procedures for cleaning and disease control. Staff should know what action to take in the event of an outbreak of a disease and be familiar with the first signs of disease/illness. In addition, staff should be aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a dog being found dead. Sudden death of a bitch or a puppy should, if possible, be investigated and therefore advice should be sought from the veterinary surgeon.

Phenolic disinfectants should not be used around dogs. Dogs must be kept dry whilst kennels and enclosures are being cleaned.

All insecticides, disinfectants and so on, must be used and stored strictly in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. In addition, staff must be told of any precautions they should take before using such solutions. Hazard sheets should be posted at strategic points in the establishment. It may be necessary to provide protective clothing.

5.2 First-Aid Kit for Dogs

The first-aid kit for use on dogs and puppies must be kept fully stocked at all times. The veterinary surgeon should be consulted concerning its contents and a competent member of staff should be in charge of its maintenance.

5.3 Isolation Facilities

It is recommended that isolation facilities should be provided at the rate of at least one isolation kennel for up to 50 kennels at the breeding establishment and pro rata above that. The number should be noted on the Licence.

The requirement for 5m distance between isolation facilities and the main kennels is based upon consideration of the distance that airborne infection can carry. Intervening buildings and construction detail (i.e., window and door positions) should be taken into account because individual circumstances may significantly affect the recommended distance.

Isolation facilities must be used where the presence of infectious disease is suspected or known.

Protective clothing and equipment, for use only in the isolation facility, must be used to reduce the spread of infection.

A management regime should be followed where an isolation case is being handled. For example, isolation cases must be cared for after all other dogs have been attended to. Records of the isolation cases and the management regime to be followed should be kept.

Complete disinfection of the isolation facilities and equipment must be carried out once vacated.
6 Emergencies/Fire Prevention

Adequate fire prevention precautions must be in place. Appropriate steps should be taken in the event of an emergency.

It is recommended that plans and details for large breeding establishments are lodged with the police and fire authorities.

Fire prevention advice should be sought from the Fire Prevention Officer regarding appropriate fire drills, fire escapes and equipment. A written report should be obtained.

Staff should be familiar with the fire evacuation procedure by use of fire drills. Staff should also be trained in the use of fire extinguishers. Smoke detectors are recommended. Fire detection and fire fighting equipment must regularly tested and kept in the correct positions. Exit routes should be kept clear. Staff should not attempt to fight a fire unless they are confident that they can do so without injury.

7 Transport

Section 1(4)(e) of the 1973 Act is concerned with safeguarding the welfare of dogs ‘when being transported to or from the breeding establishment’. Dogs and puppies being transported to and from breeding establishments should be properly supervised to ensure compliance with the obligations under the 1973 Act. It is recommended that records are kept of the vehicles used when dogs are transported, as well as details of journeys undertaken. (See also the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997).

8 Sale of Dogs

8.1 It is an offence for the keeper of a licensed breeding establishment to sell a dog otherwise than at a licensed breeding establishment or a licensed pet shop.

8.2 It is an offence for the keeper of a licensed breeding establishment to sell a dog otherwise than to the keeper of a licensed pet shop knowing or believing that the person who buys it intends that it should be sold (by him or any other person).

8.3 It is an offence for the keeper of a licensed breeding establishment to sell a dog which is less than eight weeks old otherwise than to the keeper of a licensed pet shop.

8.4 It is an offence for the keeper of a licensed breeding establishment to sell to the keeper of a licensed pet shop a dog which was not born at a licensed breeding establishment.

8.5 It is an offence for the keeper of a licensed breeding establishment to sell to the keeper of a licensed pet shop a dog which, when delivered, is not wearing a collar with an identifying tag or badge.

The identifying tag or badge must clearly display information indicating the licensed breeding establishment at which it was born, the date of birth of the dog and the identification number, if any.