Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Statutory guidance

Cat boarding licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities

Updated 1 June 2024

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This guidance is for local authority inspectors in England. You should read it alongside the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

To decide if an activity is covered by the regulations and needs a licence to operate, you should consider all of the following guidance.

All cat boarding activities need a licence if they're carried out as a commercial business.

To decide if an activity is a business and will need a licence, consider if the operator:

- makes any sale or carries out the activity to make a profit
- earns any commission or fee from the activity

You should also consider HMRC's 9 badges of trade.

If someone has a trading income below the HMRC trading income allowance, they do not require a licence for their activities.

If someone has a trading income above the HMRC trading income allowance, they do not automatically qualify as a business.

To be in scope, they must:

- provide housing for other people's cats, as part of, or as the only activity of, the business
- arrange housing for other people's cats - for example, businesses which connect pet owners with people willing to look after their animals for no fee, just minor expenses - they must meet conditions in schedules 2 and 4 of the regulations
- provide overnight housing for cats in purpose built cattery units
- home board cats, when they are kept in cattery units

Every business must keep an up-to-date list of all their premises where they carry out activities covered by the LAIA 2018 regulations.

Activities that fulfil one or more of the following criteria do not require a licence:

- veterinary practices where the housing provided is part of the cat's treatment
- businesses that look after the cat within their owner's home such as cat sitters

Minimum standards

It is expected that all businesses will meet and maintain minimum standards. If on a renewal inspection you identify minor failings that do not compromise welfare standards, follow the risk-based approach to renewing a licence.

To grant a new animal activities licence for cat boarding, you must check that businesses meet all of the minimum standards in this guidance.

Higher standards

Businesses that meet the higher standard will get a 4 or 5 star rating in the animals activity star rating system.

Higher standards are required or optional. To achieve a higher rating, businesses boarding cats need to achieve:

- 100% of the required higher standards
- at least 50% of the optional higher standards

If a business meets the higher standards, it will qualify for a longer licence that's valid for 2 or 3 years rather than one year. This lowers the cost of the licence.

See Animal activity licensing process: statutory guidance for local authorities for an explanation of the animal activity star rating system and how it incorporates a risk assessment of the business.

Part A – General conditions (Schedule 2 of the Regulations)

Paragraph numbers relate to the conditions in the schedules of the regulations.

1.0 Licence display

> 1.1 A copy of the licence must be clearly and prominently displayed on any premises used for the licensable activity.

> The licensed premises address must be displayed on the licence. It must be displayed in a public-facing area of the premises such as the entrance.

> 1.2 The name of the licence holder followed by the number of the licence holder's licence must be clearly and prominently displayed on any website used in respect of the licensable activity.

2.0 Records

> 2.1 The licence holder must ensure that at any time all the records that the licence holder is required to keep as a condition of the licence are available for inspection by an inspector in a visible and legible form or, where any such records are stored in electronic form, in a form from which they can readily be produced in a visible and legible form.

> 2.2 The licence holder must keep all such records for at least 3 years beginning with the date on which the record was created.

Electronic records must be backed up.

3.0 Use, number and type of animal

> 3.1 No animals or types of animal other than those animals and types of animal specified in the licence may be used in relation to the relevant licensable activity.

The licence applies only to boarding cats. If you are concerned about the welfare of other animals, you should inform the relevant person in the local authority, the police or a suitable animal welfare organisation.

> 3.2 The number of animals kept on any premises at any time must not exceed the maximum that is reasonable taking into account the facilities and staffing.

The licence must clearly state the maximum number of cats that are allowed on the premises. Undeclared numbers are a breach of the licence, especially if staffing levels are not increased.

You should take into account any other cats that are on the premises (such as pets) and the impact on facilities and staffing. If a cat is located in a different part of the facility, it wouldn't necessarily need to be included in the figure for the licence.

4.0 Staffing

> 4.1 Sufficient numbers of people who are competent for the purpose must be available to provide a level of care that ensures that the welfare needs of all the animals are met.

The business must have enough staff to fully meet the welfare needs of each cat.

Each member of staff should have 25 cats or less to care for.

If there is evidence that the cats' welfare needs are not being met, you should consider the staffing levels against:

- the size of premises
- the layout of the premises (the number of cats that are allowed in each separate area)
- the qualifications and experience of staff
- advice from the local authority's veterinary officer
- use of part-time staff or volunteers

> 4.2 The licence holder or a designated manager and any staff employed to care for the animals must have competence to both:

- identify the normal behaviour of the species for which they are caring
- recognise signs of and take appropriate measures to mitigate or prevent, pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour

You should look at training records as evidence of suitable induction training of staff in:

- animal welfare, including recognising poor welfare
- animal handling
- animal behaviour
- cleanliness and hygiene
- feeding and food preparation
- disease prevention and control
- recognition and first aid treatment of sick or injured animals

Staff who care for the cats must either:

- hold a formal qualification, such as a Level 2 Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulated qualification appropriate for their role
- show they have relevant and sufficient knowledge and experience

If no accredited training course exists that is appropriate to the activity, then other evidence of training must be provided, such as industry generated courses.

Individuals undertaking an Ofqual regulated qualification must have suitably progressed in 12 months and have completed the qualification within 2 years.

> 4.3 The licence holder must provide and ensure the implementation of a written training policy for all staff.

The staff training policy must be reviewed and updated each year. It must include:

- an annual appraisal

- planned and continued professional development
- recognition of knowledge gaps

This applies to all staff including the licence holder.

Staff participation can be shown by:

- keeping records of the courses they are taking
- keeping records of written or online learning
- keeping up to date with any research or developments for specific breeds
- annual appraisal documents

Evidence of staff attendance or completion of the training must be provided.

Required higher standard for staffing

There must be at least one full time member of staff for every 20 cats, or a higher number of qualified staff.

Optional higher standard for staffing

There must be at least one member of staff that has a relevant Ofqual regulated Level 3 qualification.

5.0 Suitable environment

> 5.1 All areas, equipment and appliances that animals can access must present minimal risks of injury, illness and escape.

> They must be constructed in materials that are robust, safe and durable, in a good state of repair and well-maintained

Timber must be good quality and well kept. Any damaged areas must be sealed or over-clad. Wood must be smooth, treated, properly maintained and waterproof.

Interior surfaces, including floors, must be smooth and waterproof. Surfaces must be able to be disinfected, where appropriate. Floors must have a non-slip, solid surface. Junctions between sections must be covered or sealed.

There must not be any sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards which could injure a cat.

Windows and doors must be:

- escape proof
- strong enough to resist scratching
- capable of being secured properly

Access doors must not be propped open.

All wire mesh or fencing must be strong and rigid. It must be kept in good repair to prevent escape.

External doors or gates must be lockable. Staff must have easy access to keys in case of an emergency.

Gaps or openings must be small enough to prevent a cat’s head passing through, or trapping any limb or body parts.

Unit doors should open inwards to protect the health and safety of staff. If this is not possible, there must be a documented procedure to demonstrate the safety of staff.

Door openings must be constructed in a way that the passage of water or waste is not prevented. Water or waste must not be allowed to gather because of inaccessibility.

If cats have access to mesh, the diameter of the wire must not be less than 1.6 millimetres (16 gauge welded mesh). Mesh size must not exceed 25 millimetres in one direction. It should be positioned on the inside of the framework of runs to prevent damage of uprights by cats scratching any woodwork.

Any drainage must be effective to make sure there is no standing or pooling of liquids. A minimum gradient of 1:80 is advised to allow water to run off. Waste or water must not run off into neighbouring pens or cat units.

Units must open onto secure corridors or other secure areas so that cats cannot escape from the premises.

Units should be designed so cats can exercise and be handled within the unit.

> 5.2 Animals must be kept in an environment suitable to their species and condition (including health status and age) at all times, with respect to:

(a) their behavioural needs

(b) its situation, space, air quality, cleanliness and temperature

(c) the water quality (where relevant)

(d) noise levels

(e) light levels

(f) ventilation

Cats must not be restricted to areas that get too hot or too cold, causing them distress. The insulation and temperature must keep some part of the sleeping area between 15°C and 26°C. The temperature must never go below 10°C.

Additional heat may be provided by heated beds or pads, but they must not be the main source of heat for the cats. The cat must be able to remove itself from the source of heat.

Heaters must not be sited in a way or location where they present a risk of burning or electrocution to cats or humans, or risk a fire.

Cats must be monitored to check if they are too hot or too cold. If a cat is showing signs of heat or cold intolerance steps must be taken to protect the welfare of the cat.

Cats must not be exposed to:

- excessive or continuous noise - such as dogs barking
- draughts

Ventilation must be provided in interior areas to avoid excess humidity.

> 5.3 Staff must ensure that the animals are kept clean and comfortable.

Cats must benefit from routine health regimes, including grooming. If necessary this must include cleaning of the eyes, keeping long fur from matting and inspection for parasites.

Cats must not routinely be removed from their cattery unit whilst it is being cleaned unless it is causing stress for the cat and there is a safe alternative temporary unit.

> 5.4 Where appropriate for the species, a toileting area and regular opportunities for toileting must be provided.

Cats must have a litter tray. Scented litter must not be used.

Bedding must be changed, cleaned and disinfected between cats or when soiled.

> 5.5 Procedures must be in place to make sure housing and any equipment within it is cleaned as often as necessary and good hygiene standards are maintained. The housing must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Units must be inspected each day and kept in a clean condition. This must be done in line with the documented cleaning and disinfection procedure.

Each occupied unit must be cleaned at least once each day.

Units must be disinfected between new occupants and when necessary. Effective spot cleaning is allowed.

If a pest problem is identified, a pest control programme must be put in place.

> 5.6 The animals must be transported and handled in a manner that protects them from pain, suffering, injury and disease. This includes considering housing, temperature, ventilation and frequency.

All animals must be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation.

The licence holder must demonstrate that a suitable vehicle is available to transport the cats. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder.

Cats must always be transported in a suitable, strong cat carrier.

This applies to travel:

- within the cattery
- in a vehicle
- to and from a vehicle

Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected after each collection or delivery of any new cats.

Cats must not be left in vehicles for unreasonable periods. They must never be left unattended in a car or other vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk to the cat. Consideration must be given to whether it is necessary to transport cats when the temperature poses a risk.

Enough breaks must be given for water and food where appropriate.

> 5.7 All the animals must be easily accessible to staff and for inspection. There must be sufficient light for the staff to work effectively and observe the animals.

Where practicable this must be natural light, but artificial light must be available. If artificial lighting is used it must be within a range of 10 to 12 hours daily.

Lights must be turned off overnight to provide a period of darkness.

> 5.8 All resources must be provided in a way (for example as regards frequency, location and access points) that minimises competitive behaviour or the dominance of individual animals.

If cats from the same household share a unit there must be multiples of all resources equal or greater than the number of cats.

Examples of resources include:

- food
- water
- litter trays
- resting and sleeping areas
- enrichment items (such as toys)

> 5.9 The animals must not be left unattended in any situation or for any period likely to cause them distress.

All cats must be checked often throughout the day. The licence holder or responsible person must visit the cats at regular intervals no more than 3 hours apart (from 8am until 6pm). Cats must also be checked as often as needed for their individual health, safety and welfare.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for cats

All cats must be checked at least once at an appropriate interval out of hours (between 6pm and 8am) by a person or CCTV.

Temperature in the sleeping area must be between 18°C and 26°C.

The environment must have a layout and design that gives the cats choice.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment cats

Ventilation must be a managed, fixed or portable, air system to maintain appropriate temperatures in all weathers. This can be an air conditioning unit or removable fans - but these must be safely installed away from cats.

6.0 Suitable diet

> 6.1 The animals must be provided with a suitable diet in terms of quality, quantity and frequency. Any new feeds must be introduced gradually to allow the animals to adjust to them.

Adult cats must have at least 2 meals a day at least 8 hours apart, as appropriate to the cat's needs.

Dietary requirements that are agreed with the owner must be followed. If there are concerns about an individual cat's diet, veterinary advice must be sought.

One feeding bowl and one water bowl must be provided for each cat. These must be separate containers.

Food and water must be kept away from each other and away from the litter tray (at least 60 centimetres apart).

> 6.2 Feed and (where appropriate) water intake must be monitored, and any problems recorded and addressed.

If a cat has no appetite for longer than 48 hours, veterinary advice must be sought. Seek advice from a vet earlier if there are specific concerns or known health problems.

Water intake must be checked and veterinary advice sought if a cat is not drinking or is drinking too much.

The general condition of the cats must be observed. Cats displaying significant weight loss or gain must be checked by a vet and treated as needed.

> 6.3 Feed and drinking water provided to the animals must be unspoilt and free from contamination.

Food bowls should be emptied and cleaned following feeding so that food, particularly wet food, is not left out until the next feeding time.

Fridges for feed storage must be provided.

Feed must be stored away from risk of vermin and in cool and dry places.

> 6.4 Feed and drinking receptacles must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected, or disposable.

Receptacles must be:

- non-porous
- cleaned daily
- disinfected between different cats
- disinfected at least once every week
- disposed of if damaged

> 6.5 Constant access to fresh, clean drinking water must be provided in a suitable receptacle for the species that requires it.

Fresh, clean drinking water must be provided each day. It must be in a clean container and changed or refreshed as often as needed.

Several water bowls must be available to make sure all the cats have access to water.

> 6.6 Where feed is prepared on the premises, there must be hygienic facilities for its preparation, including a working surface, hot and cold running water and storage.

A separate hand wash basin with an adequate supply of hot and cold water must be available for staff to wash their hands. This must be connected to a suitable drainage system.

Soap and hygienic hand drying facilities must also be available.

The food preparation area must be kept clean and free from vermin at all times.

Receptacles for a cat's food and drink must not be used for any other purpose.

7.0 Monitoring behaviour and training

> 7.1 Active and effective environmental enrichment must be provided to the animals in inside and outside environments.

The business must have a documented programme that shows how they provide an enriching environment to the cats.

All cats must have access to:

- appropriate toys
- scratching posts
- hiding places

Items must be checked each day to make sure they remain safe.

Feeding enrichment can be provided too, unless a vet advises against it.

> 7.2 For species whose welfare depends partly on exercise, opportunities to exercise which benefit the animals' physical and mental health must be provided, unless advice from a vet suggests otherwise.

Cats must not be taken from their individual units except in an emergency or for veterinary treatment.

Communal exercise areas are not acceptable.

> 7.3 The animals' behaviour and any changes of behaviour must be monitored. Advice

> must be sought, as appropriate and without delay, from a vet or, in the case of fish, any person competent to give such advice if adverse or abnormal behaviour is detected.

The behaviour of each cat must be monitored each day. Changes in behaviour must be recorded and acted upon if there are signs of:

- suffering
- stress
- fear
- aggression
- anxiety

Staff must get advice from a vet, who may refer the cat to a suitably qualified animal behaviourist.

> 7.4 Where used, training methods or equipment must not cause pain, suffering or injury.

Cats are not likely to be trained when staying in a boarding cattery.

> 7.5 All immature animals must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to:

(a) learn how to interact with people, their own species and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare

(b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities in their environment

Habituation and socialisation happens early in cats - mostly before 8 weeks of age. It's not likely that kittens under 8 weeks of age will be boarding in a cattery. If they are, they should be with their mother.

Kittens would be very susceptible to disease. They would also need an appropriate environment to learn and develop.

Optional higher standards for monitoring animal behaviour
Behavioural observations must be recorded daily.

8.0 Animal handling and interactions

> 8.1 All people responsible for the care of the animals must be competent in the appropriate handling of each animal to protect it from pain, suffering, injury or disease.

Cats must always be handled humanely and appropriately to suit their individual needs. Handling must minimise stress and distress such as anxiety, fear, frustration and pain.

Cats must never be punished so that they become frightened or display agitated behaviour. People must have the competence to handle cats correctly. They must be able to identify cats that are anxious or fearful about contact.

A cat must not be picked up by the scruff of its neck (scruffing), unless it is an absolute last resort.

> 8.2 The animals must be kept separately or in suitable compatible social groups appropriate to the species and individual animals. No animals from a social species may be isolated or separated from others of their species for any longer than is necessary.

Cats from different households must never share a unit. If cats from the same household share a unit, the owner must have given written consent. The cats must also be monitored. Consent from the owner must include authority to separate cats, if there are any problems.

> 8.3 The animals must have at least daily opportunities to interact with people where such interaction benefits their welfare.

Cats must have human interactions specific and appropriate to their needs. The needs of individual cats will be reassessed each day.

A cat must never be forced to interact with a person or people. A cat must be able to avoid people if it wishes.

Required higher standard for animal interactions

If more than one cat shares a unit, daily behavioural observations must be recorded and acted upon. These should especially focus on any signs of stress or aggression.

9.0 Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

> 9.1 Written procedures must:

(a) be in place and implemented covering

(i) feeding regimes

(ii) cleaning regimes

(iii) transportation

(iv) the prevention of, and control of the spread of, disease

(v) monitoring and ensuring the health and welfare of all the animals

(vi) the death or escape of an animal (including the storage of carcasses)

(b) be in place covering the care of the animals following the suspension or revocation of the licence or during and following an emergency

The procedures must demonstrate how the conditions in this guidance are met.

> 9.2 All people responsible for the care of the animals must be made fully aware of these procedures.

> 9.3 Appropriate isolation, in separate self-contained facilities, must be available for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals.

The business must have a facility to isolate any cat that is:

- injured
- sick
- infectious or carrying a serious infectious disease

If a cat is in the isolation facility for more than 12 hours, the facility must follow the same size and facility requirements as a normal cattery unit.

If the isolation facility is at another location, such as a local veterinary practice, the licence holder must be able to show evidence that it’s ready to use (for example, a letter from the practice).

All staff must understand the procedures to prevent the spread of infectious disease between cats.

When staff are handling cats in the isolation facility, they must:

- wear protective clothing and footwear
- follow cleaning procedures

The clothing must be kept in the isolation facility and only removed for cleaning and disinfection.

Protective garments must either be:

- changed and laundered with appropriate disinfectant
- disposed of after handling a cat with a suspected infectious disease

The following items must be stored in the isolation facility and ready to use:

- separate feeding and water bowls
- a dedicated safe cat basket and bedding
- litter trays and litter
- cleaning utensils

Any cats in the isolation facility must be checked as often as the other cats. Staff must visit them after the other cats. If a separate person is caring for cats in the isolation facility this does not apply.

> 9.4 All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread among the animals and people of infectious diseases, pathogens and parasites.

The business owner must see an up-to-date veterinary vaccination record for all cats.

The cats must have current vaccinations against:

- feline panleukopenia
- feline parvovirus, also known as feline infectious enteritis
- feline respiratory viruses (feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus)

Certification from a vet of a recent protective titre test may be accepted instead of a booster vaccination. The certificate must state that it is valid for the current period. It is the licensee’s decision whether to accept such a certificate.

Vaccines used must be licensed for use in the UK. Homeopathic vaccination is not acceptable.

If there is evidence of external parasites, such as fleas, ticks or lice, the cat must be treated with a product authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). The product must be licensed for use in the UK.

Treatment must only happen after either:

- having a consultation with a vet, using the product as directed
- getting written consent from the owner or nominated person to treat the cat

> 9.5 All excreta and soiled bedding for disposal must be stored and disposed of in a hygienic manner and in accordance with any relevant legislation.

Waste (urine and faeces) must be:

- in a clearly-marked bin which is emptied each day or when full - whichever is sooner
- removed in line with the documented cleaning and disinfection procedure

Storage of waste must be away from areas where food or animals are kept.

> 9.6 Sick or injured animals must receive prompt attention from a vet or, in the case of fish, an appropriately competent person and the advice of that vet or, in the case of fish, that competent person must be followed.

When a trained first aider suspects a cat is ill or injured, contact a vet for advice immediately. The business must record any instructions for treatment and seek further advice if there’s ongoing concern.

They must contact the cat’s owner or nominated person.

> 9.7 Where necessary, animals must receive preventative treatment by an appropriately competent person.

Any preventative treatment must be given with the written consent of the owner and under the direction of the vet.

> 9.8 The licence holder must register with a vet with an appropriate level of experience in the health and welfare requirements of any animals specified in the licence and the contact details of that vet must be readily available to all staff on the premises used for the licensable activity.

The vet's details must be displayed where they can be easily seen by all staff members.

This must the include:

- name
- address
- telephone number
- out of hours telephone number

The veterinary practice must be within a reasonable travel distance.

When cats are boarding, the licence holder must get written consent from the cat's owner to state which vet will be used.

> 9.9 Prescribed medicines must be stored safely and securely to safeguard against unauthorised access, at the correct temperature, and used in accordance with the instructions of the vet.

All courses must be completed to the specifications given by the vet.

Any unused medications must be returned to the owner or prescribing vet.

A fridge must be available to store any medicines that need to be kept at certain temperatures.

> 9.10 Medicines other than prescribed medicines must be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer or vet.

> 9.11 Cleaning products must be suitable, safe and effective against pathogens that pose a risk to the animals. They must be used, stored and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and used in a way which prevents distress or suffering of the animals.

Disinfectant products must be able to kill viruses and bacteria (viricidal and bactericidal).

The choice of cleaning and disinfectant products must be based on:

- suitability
- safety
- compatibility
- effectiveness

Extra care must be taken to use products that are not toxic to cats, but may be safe for other animals, for example phenolic disinfectants.

Staff using cleaning products must be competent in the safe use of detergents and fluids.

Cleaning products must:

- be kept out of the reach of animals
- never be left in the cat unit

Any equipment that has been used on an infectious or suspected infectious cat must be cleaned and disinfected after use or disposed of.

Medication must only be used with prior consent of the owner or after a discussion with a vet.

> 9.12 No person may euthanise an animal except a vet or a person who has been authorised by a vet as competent for such purpose or:

(a) in the case of fish, a person who is competent for such purpose

(b) in the case of horses, a person who is competent, and who holds a licence or certificate, for such purpose

Only a vet can euthanise a cat.

The licence holder must keep a record of:

- all euthanasia
- the qualified vet that carried it out

Euthanasia must not take place until the owner or nominated person gives consent - unless it is crucial for the welfare of the cat.

> 9.13 All animals must be checked at least once daily or more regularly as necessary to check for any signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour. Vulnerable animals must be checked more frequently.

> 9.14 Any signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour must be recorded and the advice and further advice (if necessary) of a vet (or in the case of fish, of an appropriately competent person) must be sought and followed.

Inspectors must be able to access any record and associated checklists.

Presence or absence of faeces and urine must be monitored each day. Any abnormalities must be recorded and acted upon as needed.

Cats staying long-term (over 3 weeks) must be checked for weight-loss or gain. If there are any concerns, advice must be sought from a vet.

Optional higher standard for protecting cats from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Designated on site isolation facilities must be available. They must be the same size and have the same facility requirements as a normal cattery unit.

10.0 Emergencies

> 10.1 A written emergency plan, acceptable to the local authority, must be in place, known and available to all the people on the premises used for the licensable activity. It must be followed where necessary to ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect all the people and animals on the premises in case of fire or in case of breakdowns for essential heating, ventilation and aeration or filtration systems or other emergencies.

Entrances and fire exits must be clear of obstructions at all times.

Suitable firefighting, prevention and detection equipment must be available. It must be maintained and in good working order.

Buildings must have at least one working smoke detector (or other suitable fire detection system) installed in a suitable location on each separate level or floor. Where appropriate, there must be at least one carbon monoxide detector.

An emergency drill programme must be in place with annual testing, or as required by fire risk assessments. All new members of staff must have this training as part of their induction programme.

There must be a plan for housing of the cats if the premises become uninhabitable.

There must be a written policy in place for dealing with extremes of temperature and weather conditions (hot and cold).

All electrical installations must be installed by a qualified person and maintained in a safe condition. They must be sited in a way that does not present a risk.

All equipment must be maintained in a good state of repair and serviced according to manufacturer’s guidelines.

> 10.2 The plan must include details of the emergency measures to be taken for the extrication of the animals should the premises become uninhabitable. It must also include an emergency telephone list with fire service and police contact details.

> 10.3 External doors and gates must be lockable.

> 10.4 A designated key holder with access to all animal areas must at all times be within reasonable travel distance of the premises and available to attend in an emergency.

In a non-domestic setting, an emergency contact name and number must be displayed on the outside of the premises.

A reasonable distance is interpreted as no more than 30 minutes travelling time in normal conditions.

Required higher standard for emergencies
A competent person must be on site at all times.

Part B – Specific conditions: providing boarding in catteries for cats (schedule 4, part 1 of the regulations)

Paragraph numbers relate to the conditions in the schedules of the regulations.

2.0 Suitable environment

> 2.1 Cats within the licensed premises must be prevented from coming into direct contact with other animals from outside the premises.

Sneeze barriers must be in place to prevent contact with animals from outside.

They must be placed:

- on the end walls of the exercise run
- at each end of the cattery block

> 2.2 There must be a safe, secure, waterproof roof over the entire cat unit.

Materials used for the exercise run must be capable of filtering UV light and providing enough shade.

> 2.3 A cat unit may only be shared by cats from the same household.

> 2.4 Communal exercise areas are not permitted.

> 2.5 Each cat unit must be clearly numbered and there must be a system in place which ensures that information about the cat or cats in each cat unit is available to all staff and any inspector.

A one page summary of the cat or cats must be outside each unit or kept in an accessible place for staff.

The summary must include:

- the cat’s name

- its age
- its sex
- any relevant medical, behavioural or dietary information

> 2.6 Each cat unit must provide the cat with sufficient space to:

(a) walk

(b) turn around

(c) stand on its hind legs

(d) hold its tail erect

(e) climb

(f) rest on the elevated area

(g) lie down fully stretched out without touching another cat or its walls

Minimum sizes for cat units

The size of a cat unit includes the sleeping area plus the run area. The minimum height for all cat units is 1.8 metres.

These minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved to give cats a suitable and appropriate comfortable space.

Minimum sizes for walk in sleeping accommodation

A unit for one cat must be at least:

- 0.85 square metres for the area
- 0.9 metres for the dimension, for example 0.9m by 0.95m

A unit for up to 2 cats must be at least:

- 1.5 square metres for the area
- 1.2 metres for the dimension, for example 1.2m by 1.25m

A unit for up to 4 cats must be at least:

- 1.9 square metres for the area
- 1.92 metres for the dimension, for example 1.2m by 1.6m

New builds should not have the one cat size option.

Minimum sizes for penthouse sleeping accommodation

Penthouse sleeping accommodation is an enclosed boxed sleeping area or pod raised off the ground. The pod needs to be high enough to be able to clean underneath, but not too high that would make cleaning inside the box difficult.

Facilities must be easily accessible and provide safe easy access by a ramp or steps to the penthouse. Extra consideration must be given for elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats.

The minimum height for all penthouse sleeping boxes or pods is one metre.

A box or pod for one cat must be at least:

- 0.85 square metres for the area
- 0.9 metres for the dimension, for example 0.9m by 0.95m

A box or pod for up to 2 cats must be at least:

- 1.1 square metres for the area
- 0.9 metres for the dimension, for example 0.9m by 1.20m

A box or pod for up to 4 cats must be at least:

- 1.7 square metres for the area
- 0.9 metres for the dimension, for example 0.9m by 1.9m

New builds should not have the one cat size option.

Minimum sizes for exercise runs in full height walk in and penthouse style units

The minimum height for exercise runs must be 1.8 metres.

Runs for one cat must be at least:

- 1.65 square metres for the area
- 0.9 metres for the dimension, for example 0.9m by 1.85m

Runs for up to 2 cats must be at least:

- 2.2 square metres for the area
- 1.2 metres for the dimension, for example 1.2m by 1.85m

Runs for up to 4 cats must be at least:

- 2.8 square metres for the area
- 1.2 metres for the dimension, for example 1.2m by 2.35m

For new builds, the measurement of the run area for penthouse units must include the area in front of the penthouse, not the area underneath it. Cats do not use the underneath area.

The 'one cat' size option has also been removed for new builds.

Older catteries will have one cat size unit and shorter runs - this is acceptable. New builds must use the bigger dimensions.

> 2.7 Each cat unit must have sufficient space for each cat to sit, rest, eat and drink away from the area where it urinates and defecates.

Each unit must have space for at least 60 centimetres separation between the litter tray, resting place and feeding area. This allows cats to sit, rest and eat away from areas where they urinate and defecate.

> 2.8 Cats must have constant access to their sleeping area.

A raised bed may help to avoid cats sleeping in any draughts. All beds and bedding areas must be kept clean, dry and parasite free.

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

A cat must not be left without bedding, unless instructed otherwise by the cat's owner.

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

Access between the exercise and sleeping accommodation must be through a securely fitted and suitably sized cat flap. It must be capable of being securely propped open if needed.

> 2.9 A litter tray must be provided at all times in each cat unit. A safe and absorbent

> litter material must be provided. Litter trays must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

In a multiple cat unit, the number of trays must be appropriate to the number of cats.

Trays must be impermeable, easy to clean, disinfect or dispose of.

The tray must be:

- large enough for the cat to turn around - at least 30 centimetres by 42 centimetres
- deep enough for digging in litter - at least 3 centimetres deep

The following materials are not considered acceptable to use as litter:

- loose sawdust
- shredded newspaper
- sheet newspaper
- soil

> 2.10 Each cat unit must include an elevated area.

These must be large enough for a cat to lie on and available in the sleeping accommodation or the run.

Facilities must be available to give safe, easy access to elevated areas for any elderly, ill, very young or disabled cats.

> 2.11 Adjoining cat units must have solid barriers covering the full height and full width of the adjoining wall.

For new builds, sneeze barriers must be at a minimum translucent. This means allowing light to pass through, but only enough so that objects on the other side cannot be clearly distinguished. This reduces stress when cats cannot see each other.

New builds using gaps between units must have a full height full width translucent sneeze barrier on one side of the gap.

> 2.12 Any gaps between cat units must be a minimum of 0.6 metres wide.

The width of the corridor between facing units must be at least 1.2 metres. If the width of a corridor is less than 1.2 metres, sneeze barriers must be applied to the front of the units.

> 2.13 Any cat taken out of a cat unit must be secured in a suitable carrier.

A spare cat carrier must be kept at the cattery in case the owners do not arrive with their cat in a secure carrier.

> 2.14 The sleeping area must form part of the cat unit and be free from draughts.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for cats

Cat units must be 1.5 times the minimum area sizes in this guide. The calculation of the total area can include raised areas.

Sneeze barriers must be completely opaque rather than translucent.

They will be:

- up to 600 millimetres and behind any shelves
- 300 millimetres above and to the side of any shelves

Each cat must have access to at least 2 raised areas - one of which must be in the sleeping area and one must be in the exercise area.

3.0 Monitoring behaviour and training

> 3.1 There must be an area within the unit in which the cat can avoid seeing other cats and people if it so chooses.

Cats must be provided with a hiding place. This can be as simple as providing any of the following in the units:

- a cardboard box
- an igloo-type bed
- the cat's own carrier
- other structures

Any reusable structures need to be replaced or cleaned and disinfected between each cat.

> 3.2 Each cat unit must include a facility for scratching. Any surface within a cat unit available for scratching must either be disinfected between uses by different cats or disposed of.

Each cat must have a scratching facility which can be disposed of, such as carpet squares or one that is waterproof such as wood. The scratching facilities must be capable of being cleaned.

If a scratching facility is provided by the owner it must be kept within that cat's unit and used for that cat only. It must be returned to the owner at the end of the cat's stay.

> 3.3 All cats must be provided with toys or feeding enrichment (or both) unless advice from a vet suggests otherwise.

> 3.4 All toys and other enrichment items must be checked daily to ensure they remain safe and must be cleaned and disinfected at least weekly.

If toys or feeding enrichment equipment are provided by the cat's owner, they must be kept within that cat's unit and used for that cat only. They must be returned to the owner at the end of the cat's stay.

All toys and enrichment equipment must be cleaned and disinfected between different cats.

Toys must be disposed of if they are not safe.

4.0 Records

> 4.1 A register must be kept of all the cats on the premises which must include:

(a) the dates of each cat's arrival and departure

(b) each cat's name, age, sex, neuter status and a description of it or its breed

(c) each cat's microchip number, where applicable

(d) the number of any cats from the same household

(e) a record of which cats (if any) are from the same household

(f) the name, postal address, telephone number and email address of the owner of each cat and emergency contact details

(g) in relation to each cat, the name, postal address, telephone number and email address of a local contact in an emergency

(h) the name and contact details of each cat's normal vet and details of any insurance relating to the cat

(i) details of each cat's relevant medical and behavioural history, including details of any treatment administered against parasites and restrictions on exercise

(j) details of each cat's diet and related requirements

(k) any required consent forms

(l) a record of the date or dates of each cat's most recent vaccination, worming and flea treatments

(m) details of any medical treatment each cat is receiving

Consent forms must cover:

- veterinary treatment
- consent to share or separate cats if needed
- consent for toys or interaction preferences
- record of baskets or items left at the cattery

5.0 Protection from pain, injury, suffering and disease

> 5.1 A cat must remain in its assigned cat unit, except when it is moved to an isolation cat unit or to a holding cat unit.

> 5.2 Where any other activity involving animals is undertaken on the premises, it must be kept entirely separate from the area where the activity of providing boarding for cats takes place.

Units housing rescue or breeding cats must be separated by a door or solid partition. Extra precautions must be taken to prevent the spread of disease. A separate member of staff should attend to these cats.

> 5.3 All equipment must be cleaned and disinfected before a cat is first introduced into a cat unit.

> 5.4 A preventative healthcare plan agreed with the vet with whom the licence holder has registered under paragraph 9(8) of Schedule 2 must be implemented.

> 5.5 A holding cat unit must only be used in an emergency and must not be used for longer than is necessary and in any event for no longer than a total of 12 hours in any 24 hour period.

> 5.6 In this paragraph, 'holding cat unit' means a cat unit, separate from any other cat unit, in which a cat may be housed temporarily.

A holding cat unit should be a minimum of 2.25 square metres for the floor area and 0.7 metres for the height. It needs to be able to fit a litter tray and bowls. A fold-up crate is acceptable.

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