

**Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963**

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## **1. General**

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

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

### 1.2 Legislation

The principal legislation dealing with Animal Boarding Establishments is the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 which addresses the areas to be covered by the licence relating to animal welfare and management. It is essential that consumers and those responsible for premises management are aware of the licence conditions.

### 1.3 Insurance

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

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

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

Certificates of insurance must be prominently displayed.

### 1.4 Staff Facilities

Staff should be adequately trained in the safe handling of cats, emergency procedures to be followed, and all other aspects of the licence conditions which are pertinent to their work.

Adequate toilet and washing facilities must be available for staff in accordance with health and safety requirements.

An adequate First Aid Kit must be available for staff use.

Staff should also be regularly vaccinated against Tetanus.

### 1.5 Establishments receiving both Cats and Dogs

When the granting of the licence is being considered by North Norfolk District Council, there will be a presumption against cats and dogs being kept within sight of each other, unless good reason can be made otherwise.

In consideration of "Good Reasons" existing facilities and management must be taken into account.

## 2. **Licence Display**

If displayed externally the licence and its conditions should be protected from the weather. Preferably the licence should be displayed in the reception area.

The number of cats for which the premises is licensed, the number of isolation and holding units must be specified on the licence.

## 3. **Construction**

### 3.1 General

The conversion of existing buildings should be discouraged. Experience has shown that they may be more expensive to adapt and less efficient to operate.

Application for building works may well require approval from the building control departments and/or planning department.

The purpose of the plan is to aid interpretation of the conditions applied.

An approved plan need not be a detailed surveyors drawing. A site plan to scale of the whole site including domestic/staff accommodation will suffice.

The interior and exterior of the buildings should be kept in good decorative order and repair. Outer paths, gardens, exercise areas and general surroundings must be kept to a good, clean, presentable condition. Failure to comply with this recommendation may be a consideration in any decision by the local authority to withdraw the licence for any reason.

A safe system of work must ensure correct use of chemicals and materials used in the cattery and must include constructional details suitable to reduce the spread of infection, disease and contamination.

Materials used in construction must not contain chemicals harmful to cats. For example, phenol or creosote. Consideration should also be given to providing suitable finishes and adequate thermal insulation, which should be fireproof.

Where galvanised welded mesh is used the wire diameter must not be less than 1.60mm (16 gauge welded mesh) excluding any covering and mesh size must not exceed 25mm (1 inch).

Units may be of different construction, e.g., full-height houses, half-height penthouses or similar. Units may also be of the ideal outdoor type or indoor units, either built within an existing building (e.g. a barn) or purpose built as an indoor cattery. Wherever possible, such indoor units should be provided with an outdoor exercise area. Units may also be constructed in a rounded, i.e. individual units entered from a circular central area. If correctly constructed and managed to the following specifications, all these will provide better conditions for boarded animals, improved hygiene and safer systems of work.

In designing a building conversion to be used as a cattery, consideration should be given to providing a window with a shelf underneath, within the sleeping quarters, as cats are great spectators.

Ideally, in outdoor construction, there should be a 0.65m (2ft) gap between individual units as the resultant air-flow lessens the risk of cross-infection. In the absence of this gap, a full-height sneeze barrier between units is required. (see condition 3.2.3)

### 3.2 Walls

Suitable materials for the construction of partition walls would be properly surfaced brick/block constructions, moulded plastic, glass reinforced plastic (GRP), pre-formed plastic-surfaced board, etc. Sealing refers to 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.

Current best building practice should be followed when providing coving for junctions between vertical and horizontal sections.

A sneeze barrier is particularly effective in controlling droplet infection, which is the commonest disease problem in catteries.

For sneeze barriers it is preferable to use translucent GRP sheeting or high impact glass or similar, which allows some transmission of light. Where a full height sneeze barrier is provided it will be necessary to ensure ventilation works effectively. A gap between units is not mandatory. If incorporated in new buildings this gap must be a minimum of 625mm (2ft).

If there is no gap, a sneeze barrier must be provided to a minimum height of 1.2m (4ft). If a shelf is provided, the barrier must be extended to a minimum of 0.5m above the shelf and at least 1.5m beyond the shelf within the exercise area.

### 3.3 Floors and Concrete Bases

All wooden construction or framework should stand on non-absorbent (e.g. plastic) blocks to prevent damage to the wood.

### 3.4 Ceilings and Roofing

When roofing the exercise area consideration should be given to installing translucent ceiling material capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.

Where indoor units are provided, particularly within converted outbuildings, consideration should be given to ease of cleaning, energy conservation, wildlife access, lighting and ventilation. It is therefore advisable to have a ceiling height of as close to 1.8m (6ft) as possible. Where this is not practicable a higher ceiling may be permitted provided it meets the requirements of the condition.

### 3.5 Doors

For ease of working consideration should be given to the gates to exercise areas and doors to sleeping areas opening outwards.

A cat-flap should be provided in the door to the sleeping compartment to permit easy access to the exercise area. This flap should be closed at night. In catteries of penthouse construction where the litter tray is left outside at night, a swing flap should be used to prevent excessive heat loss in colder weather.

In an indoor cattery, there should also be a solid, full-height door between the sleeping compartment and the exercise area to permit staff access from the exercise area to the central corridor through the sleeping compartment. It is advisable to have a cat flap in this door in order to conserve energy.

In new units, the solid doors between units and the central corridor must have an adequate viewing panel to permit inspection of the whole area.

In an indoor cattery the danger of infection from shared air supply is heightened. Effective barriers to prevent cross-infection should be in place. i.e. Solid doors, partitions and ceilings.

3.6 Windows

Windows, when a security risk, must be protected by welded mesh, or be made of reinforced glass, polycarbonate or other impact resistant material.

In designing a building conversion to be used as a cattery, consideration should be given to providing a window, with a shelf beneath it, within the sleeping quarters, as cats are great spectators.

Each sleeping compartment should have its own window, with a shelf beneath it, to allow natural daylight into the unit and to permit the cat to look out.

3.7 Drainage

No guidance at this stage.

3.8 Lighting

Wherever practicable, each unit should have a source of natural light, both to the exercise and to the sleeping compartments.

Natural and artificial lighting must be of sufficient standard to enable efficient working after daylight hours.

3.9 Ventilation

Draughts can be the outcome of ventilation provided for animal health. Heating can equally be removed by ventilation. A balance is necessary between adequate ventilation and the unnecessary removal of warm air.

Ventilation is important as an aid to disease control, a protection against smell accumulation, and prevents excessive humidity of the atmosphere. High humidity should be avoided.

Siting of the bed is an important consideration. Providing a bed with adequate protective sides to allow the cat "depth" to seek protection, together with efficient individually controlled heating, are considerations in protecting the cat.

Moulded polypropylene beds which can be easily cleaned and disinfected are useful here.

#### **4. Numbers of animals**

##### **4.1 Number of Cats Permitted**

The number of cats permitted related to the number and size of the units and must be stipulated clearly on the front sheet of the displayed licence. The decision regarding the number of cats, as well as considering unit size and numbers, will take into account the effectiveness of site management.

Cats from the same family who normally live together may prefer to share a unit. It is a requirement that operators obtain written authorisation from the cat owner before unit sharing is allowed. Where sharing occurs, the cats must be provided with separate beds.

##### **4.1.1 *Holding Units***

The number of holding units provided should be agreed between the cattery proprietor and the local authority and noted on the licence. In general, holding units should constitute not more than 25% of the total number of residential units.

The use of holding pens should be kept to a minimum.

It is strongly recommended that any collars or flea collars be removed while cats are being boarded as fatal accidents regarding these have been known to occur.

##### **4.2 Unit Size, Layout and Exercise Facilities**

In existing units, the size requirements for units should be phased in over a number of years after consultation between the cattery owner and the local authority taking into account local circumstances.

During cattery construction, it is necessary to use an appropriate design and correct materials to ensure energy conservation and to minimise discomfort to the cat.

The sleeping area may be at ground level or in the form of Penthouses (raised sleeping areas). These latter must be a minimum of 3ft above floor level with a maximum depth of 3ft 6 inches.

All exercise areas must be covered with welded mesh and roofed with a translucent material capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.

It is strongly recommended that, in new units, the minimum floor area of the sleeping area be 1.5 sq m (16 sq ft) as this allows greater flexibility in usage, i.e, one or two cats may be boarded in all chalets.

Where galvanised welded mesh is used, the wire diameter must not be less than 1.60mm (16 gauge welded mesh) excluding any covering. The mesh size must not exceed 2.5cm (1').

All main entrance gates must be lockable.

#### 4.2.1 *Communal exercise areas*

New communal exercise area must never be permitted because of the risk of disease spread and fighting. Where they do exist, they must be phased out as an immediate priority.

The relevant sizes of units and number of cats in occupation in summary are as follows:

<u>Number of Cats</u>	<u>Size of Sleeping Area</u>	<u>Size of Exercise Area</u>
1	9 sq ft	18 sq ft
2	16 sq ft	24 sq ft
4	20 sq ft	30 sq ft

Greater than 4: the size required will be subject to the agreement and discretion of North Norfolk District Council.

It is strongly recommended that, in new units, the minimum floor area of the sleeping area be 1.5m<sup>2</sup> (16 sq ft) as this allows greater flexibility in usage, i.e., one or two cats may be boarded in all chalets.

#### 4.2.2 *Adverse Weather*

In adverse weather conditions the responsible person must decide whether or not cats are given free access to their exercise area.

## **5. Management**

### 5.1 Training

The licensee must formulate a written training policy for permanent, part time and seasonal workers. The following are regarded as essential topics to be covered in the programme:

- Animal Welfare
- Cleanliness and Hygiene
- Feeding and Food Preparation
- Disease Control
- Recognition and Treatment of Sick Animals
- Health and Safety
- Emergency Procedures



## 5.2 Transportation of Animals

All vehicles used by the establishment for the transportation of cats should be regularly serviced and kept clean. Suitable carrying baskets or containers for the safe transportation of cats must be used. All vehicles must be secure and should not be left unattended when transporting a cat.

## 5.3 Temperature of Units

Many units have been built without proper concern for the welfare of the cat. The materials used in construction or the lack of sufficient insulation may not offer adequate protection against seasonal temperature variations.

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 is exceeded due to constructional shortcomings rather than normal ambient temperature then artificial means of counteracting this high temperature should be introduced.

Where temperatures lower than indicated are reached, it may be more economical to provide localised sources of heat. The use of individually thermostatically controlled infra-red dull emitters is recommended. Ambient air in the bedding area should be kept at least 10°C (50°F). Heated beds may also be used, provided these are maintained in a safe condition. Convalescing or elderly cats may require higher ambient air temperatures.

The temperature of the isolation units should not be allowed to fall below 15.5°C (60°F) generally, unless specific advice is given to the contrary by the Veterinary Surgeon.

The difficulty of providing maximum temperature levels is acknowledged. 26°C (79°F) is a realistic temperature which should not be exceeded in normal circumstances.

It is important to remember that a minimum temperature of 10°C (50°F) is required in the bedding area and if inadequate attention has been given to construction and insulation it will be necessary to use additional heating and thereby increase running costs.

Failure to provide additional heating will cause cats to suffer. Particular attention should be paid to design and construction. Geographical orientation is also relevant. Aspect affects temperature and it is often difficult to maintain adequate temperature with north facing openings. Correct attention to orientation of the unit will allow maximum use of natural light.

Similarly in summer temperatures, poorly insulated exteriors will allow internal temperatures to build up (similar to car interiors) to excessive levels. Even with additional ventilation the cats will suffer.

Some summer temperatures will naturally exceed 26°C (79°F). Inadequate construction or ventilation of the units must not be an excuse to allow unnecessarily high temperatures being attained.

Where temperatures are likely to rise above the maximum levels specified in the notes there should be some means of mechanical or automatic cooling/ventilation.

A safe system of heating must be provided so that risks of electrocution and burning are avoided. Open flame appliances must not be used.

Maintenance and repair of the whole establishment must be carried out regularly to achieve the requirements listed above.

#### 5.4 Cleanliness

Arrangements must be made with the Waste Collection Authority or other waste management contractor authorised for the purposes of the duty of care, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, for the removal of other wastes from the establishment.

Sawdust or soil are not considered to be suitable litter material.

##### 5.4.1 *Cleaning and Disinfection*

There are a range of alternative cleaning regimes.

Basically, the regime should include:

1. Removal of bed, litter tray and all removable fittings.
2. Wash down, rinse and dry.
3. Apply disinfectant to manufacturer's stated instructions.
4. Allow to dry
5. Cleanse and disinfect all fittings.

The use of detergent and water will "wash down".

There is little point in putting down disinfectant only to wash it away in a short period of time. Bacteria, viruses and fungi can be controlled by using a suitable disinfectant.

Care should be taken to ensure the compatibility of different bactericides, fungicides and virucides if used together.

Great care should be taken when using any chlorine based chemical, e.g. bleach.

There is a balance between the cat enjoying a known environment and introducing infection and infestation in wickerwork baskets and old clothing/bedding etc. Staff handling between units further increases the risk of disease spread. While owners' own baskets and bedding may help a cat to settle, particularly during its first stay in boarding conditions, their use should be discouraged as there is no immediate control over cleanliness and parasite transmission.

Where such bedding is provided, the operator must ensure that it is clean and parasite free.

The use of scratching posts, sit boxes, etc is quite acceptable although care should be taken to ensure that the post is properly fixed and frequently replaced.

#### 5.5 Food and Water Supplies

Cats should be fed to a standard compatible with the maintenance of health. Inspectors will observe the general nutritional status of the cats and the type and quality of food in store and in the process of preparation. If necessary, a veterinary surgeon should be called in to advise. Bear in mind cats will usually be fed in accordance with the instructions of the owner.

Food should not be left for excessive periods within the unit in order to avoid smells and flies. More food and water may be required for old or young cats. No food should be left outside at night.

Disposable eating dishes, although expensive, are recommended as hygienic since they cannot transmit infection and are a saving of time and labour since they are immediately disposable. Expanded polystyrene is not a suitable material for this use.

#### 5.6 Kitchen Facilities

Kitchen facilities must be provided in an area separate from the domestic facilities. No household or boarded animals should ever enter this area.

#### 5.7 Disease Control and Vaccination

“Other relevant diseases” allow for the insertion of diseases which maybe as yet unknown but which may be regarded as important in future or which may be added according to circumstances e.g. Chlamydia.

Four weeks is the maximum time for all current vaccines to become fully effective. A shorter time is acceptable if suitable veterinary evidence is provided, based on manufacturer’s instructions. Feline respiratory disease includes herpes virus and calici virus.

It is important that there are facilities and procedures for cleansing and disease control and that staff are familiar with the procedures and understand what action to take in the event of an outbreak of disease.

Phenolic disinfections should not be used around cats and cats should be kept dry during cleaning of enclosures.

If there is evidence of external parasites (fleas, ticks etc) the cat should be thoroughly combed with a flea comb. It may then also be treated with a

proprietary insecticide except where a long-acting topical insecticide has already been administered.

If there is evidence of internal parasites the advice of a veterinary surgeon should be sought.

All insecticides, disinfectants etc. should be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, and hazard sheets kept for staff which explain the precautions to be taken by the user.

The first-aid kit for use on cats must be kept well stocked at all times. Advice on contents should be available from the establishment's veterinary surgeon.

It is important to consider procedures to be carried out in case of death or escape. All staff should be made fully aware of these procedures. They will also help to reassure owners that the establishment acted correctly in that situation. Any cat that has died on the premises must be referred to a veterinary surgeon and the licensing officer of the local authority must be informed. A veterinary practice should be appointed for the establishment. The name, address and telephone number of the establishment's veterinary surgeon must be displayed in a prominent position in a public area. The 24 hour telephone contact number of the veterinary surgeon used by the establishment should be displayed in a suitable place, close to the telephone and accessible to all members of staff.

## 5.8 Isolation

Isolation facilities must be provided at the rate of at least 1 isolation unit for up to 30 units and pro rata above that.

Isolation facilities must be used where the presence of infectious disease is suspected. Where stray cats are accepted by the cattery, they must be kept in a separate area away from boarded cats. Isolation facilities must only be used for this purpose in exceptional circumstances i.e. where stray intake is minimal.

In isolation units there must be a means of maintaining the temperature at a level suitable for the condition of the cat and dependant upon veterinary advice. Extremes of temperature in the isolation unit must be avoided and the temperature not allowed to fall below 15°C (60°F).

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

In new build isolation facilities separated 10 m from the main units must be provided.

## 5.9 Register

Computerised, loose-leaf, index card and book register systems are acceptable. If a book register is used, pages must be consecutively

numbered. Records of the owner's agreement to share may be kept on a separate form if a computerised system is used.

It is strongly urged that the establishment introduce formal boarding agreements, stating clearly the responsibilities of both parties during the duration of the boarding. The Licensing Officer of the local authority will consider the details recorded in the register together with the actual facts observed.

Owners should be encouraged to sign an authorisation for veterinary treatment.

#### 5.10 Identification of Units

An alternative system of identification can be used with the approval of the Licensing Authority, providing the system in use meets the criteria for identification and information provision for each cat and is readily accessible and easy to use.

The system of identification of units must be capable of containing relevant information such as feeding habits and frequencies, medicinal treatments, etc. If identified on the unit, it must not obscure the primary information. If additional information is stored electronically or manually away from the unit, the information must be readily and easily accessible.

#### 5.11 Supervision

Suitable intervals for visiting means intervals of not more than four hours, starting at 8.00 am, until 6.00 pm. A late evening visit, between 9 pm and midnight, is strongly recommended to check the welfare of the cats and that the heating is working.

#### 5.12 Fire Precautions

It is recommended that plans and details of the establishment are logged with the police and fire authorities. Fire protection advice must be sought from the Fire Prevention Officer regarding appropriate fire extinguishers and their correct siting, fire drills, fire escapes, etc. and implemented. The general maxim of "people first" in the event of fire is good advice.

Where rebuilding or providing new buildings, the Fire Prevention Officer will give advice on fireproofing requirements.

The advice given by the Fire Prevention Officer should be in writing and particular regard should be given to the safe storage of inflammable substances. Staff should know how to use the fire extinguishers. It is also advisable to install smoke detectors. Electric wiring within the units must be protected against damage by cats.

Cats should not have direct access to open flame heating devices.

## **6. Other Relevant Legislation**

### **6.1 Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

- i) There is a duty on all employers and employees to ensure safety of themselves, workmates and visitors to the site and contractors. This also extends to the self-employed.
- ii) An "accident book" must be provided to record details of accidents and "near misses". An annual review will indicate how to keep staff safer by introducing safer practices based on experience.
- iii) Regard should be had to providing safe systems of work for staff, particularly those involved in handling problem cats.
- iv) An establishment employing more than four people requires a written safety policy.
- v) There is a requirement for a risk assessment to be carried out to identify hazards in the workplace and assess risks, eg number of people affected etc, in order to assess any health and safety risk in an objective manner as far as possible.

Legislation is evolving all the time and reference should be made to enforcement authorities for up to date advice.

More details will be available from North Norfolk District Council or from Management of Health and Safety at Work-Approved Code of Practice ISBN 0-11-886330-4 available from HSE Books, tel no. 0797 881165 (mail order).

### **6.2 Environmental Protection Act 1990**

- i) Under Section 34, operators have a "duty of care" to ensure that all waste arising from their premises is disposed of without harm to human health or the environment. They may only pass their waste to registered carriers or appropriately licensed or authorised disposal facilities.
- ii) Part III of this Act deals with nuisance. When setting up a boarding establishment, it is most important to consider the potential problems of noise and odour nuisance in order to prevent possible legal action which could lead to closure at a later date. Environmental Health Officers are able to give further advice and guidance on nuisance problems and related statutory provisions.
- iii) The use of incinerators to dispose of animal carcasses may require licensing by your local authority who will advise you regarding the requirements of part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act.

If you use an incinerator you are advised to notify the local authority.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty of care on businesses to ensure that waste is disposed of by a registered carrier to an appropriately licensed or authorised disposal facility. Those wishing to dispose of waste on their premises, or operate an incinerator may need planning permission, and a waste management licence or authorisation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. They should seek advice from their Waste Regulation Authority or Environmental Health Department.

Cat faeces and "sharps" such as needles, scalpels, etc constitute "clinical" waste and are likely to be subject to specific disposal conditions.

### 6.3 Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Apply to every employer or self employed person, and you therefore have a duty to comply with these Regulations ensuring your electrical fittings and equipment are maintained in a safe condition.

In the event of something going wrong, you will be asked to say why you thought the equipment was safe, which means regular testing of fittings is advisable.

### 6.4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 (COSHH)

- i) These are known as the "COSHH" Regulations. They require you to keep chemical substances on your premises in a safe manner, and to review whether you are able to reduce the number of chemicals used and to see if you are able to use chemicals which are less hazardous in order to do the same job.
- ii) They also deal with zoonoses (diseases transmitted from animals to people, such as Salmonellosis, Toxocariasis and Toxoplasmosis) and you should bring suitable advice on risks and precautions to the attention of your staff, and ensure that they are suitably vaccinated.

For further advice, contact your medical practitioner and/or the environmental health department.

### 6.5 Controlled Waste Regulations 1992

The definition of clinical waste in these regulations includes animal tissue, blood or other body fluids, excretions, drugs or other pharmaceutical products, swabs, dressings or syringes, needles or other sharp instruments which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming into contact with it.

The Health and Safety Commission's guidance document 'Safe Disposal of Clinical Waste' advises on best practice in the handling and disposal of such waste and you can also seek advice from the local Waste Regulation Authority or the Environment Agency Regional Office.