



# Dog Breeding Establishment Guidelines

## Introduction

I am delighted to introduce these guidelines on dog breeding establishments, as provided for by Section 15 of the Dog Breeding Establishments Act, 2010, I am confident the guidelines will help to increase awareness regarding welfare standards and will aid good practice in dog breeding throughout the country.

The guidelines are written in a direct manner, using as little technical language as possible. I hope that they will be of use to professional breeders, sportsmen and women and the amateur breeder with a few dogs who, while not covered by the Act, would want what's best for their dogs.

The guidelines are set out in two parts for ease of reference-

**Part 1** deals with the construction and maintenance of establishments, including temperature, noise, bedding, hygiene, pest control and storage of food and chemicals.

**Part 2** deals with the registration, operation and management of establishments including staffing, the welfare of the dogs, veterinary and health checks, and possible inspection by an authorised officer.

The draft guidelines reflect common sense and good practice. Breeders acknowledge that the welfare and performance of their dogs go hand in hand. Therefore, any well run dog breeding establishment would already have most of the requirements in place.

In this regard, I want to especially emphasise the unique position of registered hunt clubs in rural life and assure their members that the implementation of the

Act will have due regard to their traditional practices, particularly in respect of communal kennels, flooring, bedding and feeding routines.

Local Authorities will use these guidelines to assist legitimate establishments who wish to maintain or improve the welfare standards of animals in their care in a positive spirit of consultation. In the unfortunate event that enforcement under the Act is required, it must be signed off by the qualified veterinary officer of the Local Authority.

The guidelines will be placed on the Departments website.

**Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D.,**

**Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government**

**21 December, 2011**

# **PART 1**

## **Construction and Maintenance of a Dog Breeding Establishment**

### **1. GENERAL STANDARDS FOR ALL DOG BREEDING ESTABLISHMENTS**

- 1.1. **In order to comply with the Act the owner or manager of a dog breeding establishment should:**
- 1.1.1. provide accommodation and equipment which suits the physical, behavioural and social requirements of the dogs held
  - 1.1.2. protect the dogs from other animals and adverse environmental conditions
  - 1.1.3. provide sufficient space for dogs to stand, move around freely, stretch fully and rest
  - 1.1.4. provide sufficient quantities of appropriate food and clean water to maintain good health and support optimal growth and reproduction
  - 1.1.5. protect the dogs from disease, distress, injury, fear and pain
  - 1.1.6. maintain the hygiene of the breeding premises and health of the dogs held
  - 1.1.7. ensure the premises is appropriately licensed under the Control of Dogs Acts 1986 to 2010.

### **2. ANIMAL HOUSING**

#### **2.1 Location**

- 2.1.1 Buildings which house dogs should be located away from sources of excessive noise or pollution that could cause injury or stress to animals.
- 2.1.2 Buildings which house dogs should not be a source of nuisance such as excessive noise or smell.
- 2.1.3 All kennels should have an adequate supply of clean water which should be available to all dogs at all times.
- 2.1.4 Suitable isolation facilities should be available on site.

#### **2.2 Construction**

- 2.2.1 The Dog Breeding Establishment should:
- protect dogs from rain and wind
  - provide adequate shade
  - provide a sheltered sleeping area
  - be suitable for dogs as regards temperature, humidity and ventilation

- 2.2.2 Kennels should be separated from each other by a suitable barrier that will minimise noise, prevent fighting injuries and prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- 2.2.3 The floor surface for all kennels should be constructed of an impervious material that facilitates thorough cleaning, disinfection and drainage in order to prevent/control disease. Similarly all surfaces that may come in contact with dogs should be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected. Grassed or landscaped sections may form part of large outdoor runs and must be adequately maintained.
- 2.2.4 Whelping bitches should be provided with a separate area away from interference by other animals.

### **2.3 Size and Number of Occupants**

- 2.3.1 Dog housing, whether for a single dog or for a group of dogs should provide enough space for each dog to feed, sleep, sit, stand, lie with limbs extended, stretch and move about unimpeded.
- 2.3.2 The accommodation of dogs in any way other than loose in a kennel is not acceptable and, in particular, the use of portable crates as a kennel will not be permitted.

### **2.4 Temperature**

- 2.4.1 Dogs should be protected from extremes of temperature.
- 2.4.2 Special consideration should be given to young and old dogs which are more sensitive to changes in temperature. They may require special provision of heating or cooling.

### **2.5 Noise**

- 2.5.1 Noise from barking dogs should be managed to ensure that the premises is not a source of noise nuisance. For example noise may be reduced by limiting external stimulation by having partitions between kennels or the use of blinds, by holding dogs in singles or in compatible groups, by situating kennels so that they do not face each other , or by any other appropriate noise attenuating measure.

### **2.6 Lighting**

- 2.6.1 Lighting should be as close as possible, in duration and intensity, to natural conditions.
- 2.6.2 Sunlight is the preferred means of lighting, provided shaded areas are available to the dogs.
- 2.6.3 Artificial light should be provided where necessary to allow animal housing areas to

be thoroughly cleaned and dogs to be checked.

## **2.7 Ventilation**

Suitable ventilation should be provided and should ensure that dampness, draughts, noxious odours and the spread of infectious disease is minimised.

## **2.8 Bedding and Sleeping Area**

- 2.8.1 All kennels should be provided with an appropriate sleeping area. Ideally this should be a separate, raised sleeping area, free of draughts. Where required, suitable bedding should be provided.
- 2.8.2 Bedding, where provided, should be kept clean and dry and changed as appropriate.
- 2.8.3 Whelping bitches should be provided with a suitable whelping area that is provided with clean bedding.

## **2.9 Safety**

- 2.9.1 In the event of an emergency any security methods used should allow for ready access by staff to dogs, and ready exit of staff and dogs from the premises.
- 2.9.2 Under Health and Safety legislation adequate fire-fighting equipment must be readily available.

## **3 HYGIENE**

### **3.1 Cleaning and disinfection**

- 3.1.1 In order to facilitate cleaning and disinfection dog kennels, housing and exercise areas should be kept clean and maintained in a good state of repair.
- 3.1.2 To aid a thorough sanitation programme a convenient method of delivering water, such as the appropriate number and location of hose points should be available

### **3.2 Pest Control**

- 3.2.1 A suitable vermin control programme should be in place.

### **3.3 Waste Disposal**

- 3.3.1 All dog breeding establishments should be constructed such that all waste, including

washings, urine and faeces is managed by a suitable waste, drainage, storage and disposal system.

- 3.3.2 All waste should be collected and stored in suitable, closed, lidded, leak proof containers held in a dedicated waste storage area. Waste removal or storage should not be a source of nuisance or public health risk.

## **4 EXERCISE**

4.1 A Dog Breeding Establishment should have a suitable exercise facility in order to:

- allow dogs to urinate and defecate
- allow dogs contact with humans and, if appropriate, with other dogs
- allow dogs to be checked over
- allow dogs to exercise appropriately.

## **5 FOOD STORE**

5.1 A Dog Breeding Establishment should have a suitable enclosed room or area to store dog food. The food store should;

- allow food to be stored in vermin proof conditions
- guard against extremes of heat, cold and condensation
- be secure from contamination
- be located to facilitate orderly feeding of dogs

## **6 CHEMICAL STORE**

6.1 A Dog Breeding Establishment shall have a suitable enclosed room or area to safely store chemicals, including cleaning agents and disinfectants. The storage area should be secure, suitably located for operational reasons and should not be a source of contamination.

## **7 EQUIPMENT AND WASHING FACILITY**

7.1 The dog breeding establishment should have a suitable facility to properly wash all equipment, including utensils.

# PART 2

## Operation and Management of a Dog Breeding Establishment

### 1. REGISTRATION

- 1.1 Any premises containing six or more female dogs over 6 months of age and capable of breeding, is a Dog Breeding Establishment as defined under the Act.
- 1.2 In accordance with Section 15 of the Act the operator of a Dog Breeding Establishment **must** apply to the local authority responsible for the area in which it is situated for registration as a Dog Breeding Establishment. For existing Dog Breeding Establishments, an application for registration must be submitted within 6 months of the commencement of the Act.
- 1.3 The **application should be completed** without delay and returned to the relevant local authority. Unless the premises is fee exempted as described by section 9 (18) of the Act, it must be accompanied by the appropriate registration fee. Any false or misleading information will invalidate the application and will be an offence under the Act. Fee exempt premises include registered hunt clubs<sup>1</sup>, charitable organisations (Charities Act 2009 or having a Revenue CHY number), and commercial boarding kennels.
- 1.4 In processing the application, the local authority may visit the premises and/or may request further information. In such instances the local authority will give at least 24 hours notice for the initial assessment visit.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of these guidelines, fee exemption under the “hunt club” means a registered hunt or game club—

(a) registered with a national hunting association that is a member of—

(i) the Hunting Association of Ireland or

(ii) the Irish branch of the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union (FACE),

and

(b) that operates in accordance with the guidelines for kennel management issued by the HAI.

- 1.5 If registration is granted the applicant will be notified within 14 days. A registration certificate will be issued to the applicant who should display this certificate in a prominent location at the establishment. The details of the registration will also be entered into a register maintained by the local authority and will include details of the applicant, the address of the dog breeding establishment, the maximum number of litters over 6 months that may be kept and, if applicable, any conditions attached to the registration.
- 1.6 Where a local authority proposes to either attach conditions or refuse the application, it will notify the applicant in writing and the applicant may make representations to the local authority within 14 days after receiving this notification. These representations will be considered by the Local Authority Veterinary Officer - as outlined in Section 18(1) (a) of the Act.
- 1.7 The local authority shall notify the applicant of its decision within 14 days of making that decision. Appeals against a refusal or against any conditions attached to the registration may be made to the appropriate District Court within 14 days of receipt of the notification, or such longer period as a judge of the District Court may determine.

## **2. STAFF**

- 2.1 Staff must comply with dog welfare legislation and must have experience in handling dogs. Formal training in animal care is encouraged.
- 2.2 Staff should be competent and be aware of their responsibilities.
- 2.3 An adequate number of staff/persons should be available, appropriate to the size of the establishment and the number of dogs being kept

## **3. ANIMAL CARE**

- 3.1 Grooming must be to at least a minimum standard of care required for that breed. Coats should not be left unduly dirty, tangled or unkempt.
- 3.2 Dogs should be protected from distress or injury.
- 3.3 Dogs should be protected from excessive or rough handling.
- 3.4 Dogs should be fed adequately and regularly to maintain good health as appropriate to their breed.
- 3.5 Clean water must be available to all dogs at all times.
- 3.5 Bedding, where provided, should be appropriate and cleaned at suitable intervals



- 3.6 To ensure bio-security all reasonable measures should be taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious disease. This also applies to both staff and persons visiting the premises.
- 3.7 A suitable treatment and prevention programme to control endoparasites (eg roundworms, tapeworms, etc.) and ectoparasites (fleas, lice, etc.) should be in place
- 3.8 A suitable vaccination programme, as advised by a veterinary practitioner, should be in place.
- 3.9 All dogs should be exercised appropriately. Such exercise regimes will facilitate dogs to urinate and defecate, stretch limbs, allow contact with humans and dogs if appropriate, and allow dogs to be checked for signs of ill health

#### **4. HYGIENE**

- 4.1 In order to facilitate cleaning and disinfection, dog kennels, housing and exercise areas should be kept clean and maintained in a good state of repair.
- 4.2 Faeces should be removed at least once daily.
- 4.3 Kennels and associated housing and exercise areas should be cleaned and disinfected as appropriate, and on a risk basis e.g. before new dogs or puppies are introduced or after an outbreak of infectious disease.
- 4.4 After cleaning/disinfection, housing or kennels should be free of surface water.
- 4.5 Cleaning and disinfection agents should be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. The manufacturer's instructions in respect of the correct use, dilution and contact time for the product should always be followed.
- 4.6 A suitable vermin control programme should be in place

#### **5 HEALTH CHECKS**

- 5.1 Each dog should be checked at least once a day to monitor its health and well-being, and more frequently as appropriate, for example in the case of whelping bitches.

- 5.2 The person checking the dogs should observe their general health, for instance checking that they are eating, drinking, defecating, urinating and are of normal appearance.
- 5.3 Any change in the health status of any dog should be reported promptly to the person in charge. Prompt veterinary attention should be obtained as appropriate.
- 5.4 Dogs known or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease should not be admitted to the premises or else placed in suitable isolation.

## **6 VETERINARY CARE**

- 6.1 The operator of the premises should be a client of a veterinary practice.
- 6.2 Any dog(s) showing signs of disease/ill-health should receive timely and appropriate treatment including, where necessary, veterinary examination and treatment
- 6.3 Veterinary attention must be obtained immediately in cases of suspected exotic diseases such as rabies.

## **7 RECORDS AND IDENTIFICATION OF DOGS**

- 7.1 A Dog Breeding Establishment operator should establish and maintain a system to record the details of births, deaths, sale, movement or other event relating to dogs kept within the establishment. These records must include all microchip details, dates of whelping of each bitch, number of pups in each litter (including the number of live and dead pups), and details of sale or disposal. The premises should also have a separate record of all bitches, over 6 months of age and capable of breeding.
- 7.2 For a period of 12 months after this Act comes into force, all dogs over 12 weeks of age on the premises must be micro-chipped and the details recorded on a suitable database.
- 7.3 After this 12 month period, all dogs over 8 weeks of age on the premises must be micro-chipped and all dogs must be micro-chipped prior to being moved out of the premises.
- 7.4 Records of all micro-chipped dogs must be recorded in a register maintained at the Dog Breeding Establishment and this register must be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- 7.5 The requirement to microchip shall not apply to a dog breeding establishment that is a registered hunt or game club member where the dogs concerned are registered in a register maintained by the Hunting Association of Ireland or the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union. The register held by

these clubs and/or evidence of registration, which will be available for inspection by an authorised officer, must contain the following details;

- a reproduction of the mark imprinted on the skin or coat of the dog to enable its identification;
- the name of the owner of the dog and the address at which he or she resides;
- the address of the dog breeding establishment at which the dog is kept;
- the date of birth and sex of the dog;
- the dog's colouring and any particular feature or features that distinguish the dog.

7.6 The operator of a dog breeding establishment shall notify the particulars of any sale or transfer of a dog kept by him or her at that establishment in writing to—

(a) the local authority in whose functional area the dog breeding establishment is situated,

or

(b) the person charged with the maintenance of a database to which paragraph (aa) (inserted by section 24) of section 19(2) of the Act of 1986 applies.

## **8 INSPECTION OF A DOG BREEDING ESTABLISHMENT BY AUTHORISED OFFICER**

8.1 A person appointed by a local authority as an authorised officer under this Act is allowed to inspect a dog breeding establishment at all reasonable times. Routine inspections will be by arrangement. The inspection process should be managed by the authorised person as outlined by Section 18(1) (a) of the Act.

8.2 An authorised officer may inspect, take copies or remove and detain any books, records or other documents found in the course of an inspection and may require the operator to answer any questions relative to the dog breeding establishment. Obstruction of an authorised officer will be an offence under this Act.

8.3 In cases of significant deviation from the standards outlined in the Act an authorised officer may serve a Fixed Payment Notice or an Improvement Notice. An Improvement

Notice will outline the remedial actions required and the time scale within which these actions need to be completed. An Improvement Notice may be appealed in the District Court within 7 days of service. Enforcement actions will be overseen by a Local Authority Veterinary Officer (authorised person as outlined by Section 18(1) (a) of the Act).

- 8.4 In cases where the authorised officer is of the opinion that a serious and immediate threat exists to public health or animal health and welfare a closure notice may be issued, requiring the operator of the dog breeding establishment to cease the breeding and keeping of dogs at the premises and to surrender the registration certificate. A closure notice must state the grounds for this action, and will outline the measures required to be taken by the operator to enable any dogs affected to be kept at suitable alternative accommodation at the expense of the operator. A copy of the notice will be affixed to the premises by the local authority who will also publish the notice.. This notice may be appealed in the District Court within 7 days of service. Enforcement actions will be overseen by a Local Authority Veterinary Officer (authorised person as outlined by Section 18(1) (a) of the Act).

# **ANNEX 1**

## **Transportation of Dogs**

The transportation of dogs and puppies to and from a commercial dog breeding establishment is covered by specific European legislation (Council Regulation (EC) No. 1 of 2005). The authority responsible for enforcing this legislation is the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). The requirements of this legislation in relation to commercial dog transport are summarised in the DAFM “Guidelines for the Welfare of Non-farming (“Other”) Species During Commercial Transport” which are available at <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/transportofliveanimals/NBASGuidelinesotherspeciestransport050710.pdf>

Managers of dog breeding establishments should familiarise themselves with the contents of these guidelines. It is their responsibility to ensure that dogs and puppies in their care are transported in line with the guidelines, in particular in relation to the following:

- Fitness for transport (section 1.1 of the DAFM guidelines provides a detailed list of conditions that would render a dog unfit for transport),
- Transport practices (issues such as appropriate segregation of dogs during transport, feeding/watering requirements and care of sick or injured dogs).
- Transport vehicles (including general requirements applicable to all vehicles used to transport dogs and additional requirements, including the need for DAFM approval, for vehicles transporting dogs on journeys greater than 8 hours in duration).
- Requirements for commercial dog transporters to be authorised by DAFM if they are transporting dogs on journeys in excess of 65km.

Further information on any of the issues included in the DAFM guidelines can be obtained from the DAFM website or by contacting the DAFM Transport Section on 01 5058647.