

PET SHOP BEST PRACTICES

The Animal & Veterinary Service (“AVS”) is a cluster of the National Parks Board, a statutory board constituted under the National Parks Board Act (Cap. 198A).

MANAGEMENT OF PET BUSINESSES

RECORD KEEPING

1. The use of stock books, enclosure labels and daily cleaning record sheets is encouraged. Where records are computerised, there should be a back-up copy kept. Records kept should have space for notes or observations on any significant changes in the animal’s condition or behaviour since arrival.

ANIMAL HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

ENCLOSURE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

2. Enclosures should be of solid construction, such as sealed concrete or brick, and strong doors to withstand impact and scratching. Any mesh or chain wires used should be of sufficient strength to contain the animals.
3. Where metal bars or frames are used, they should be of a suitable gauge with adequate spacing to prevent animals from getting stuck or escaping. Where metal edging is used, it should not present a risk of injury to the animals.
4. Door openings should be constructed to allow easy removal of water and waste.
5. A sloped floor for animal housing and individual exercise areas is recommended as it facilitates removal of waste and water after cleaning.
6. Collapsible or flimsy cages should not be used. If used, they should only be used for holding animals temporarily while display cages are being cleaned. All such cages must be placed directly on the floor or on a stable structure.
7. Design and construction should allow ready checking of animals and regular provision of food and water.
8. Cages should be easy to move in the event of an emergency.

ENCLOSURE FITTINGS & FACILITIES

9. Sleeping areas should be insulated appropriately to provide comfort.
10. When using bottles with a drink nipple for drinking water, the tip should allow free flow of water on activation and should not come into contact with the bedding or food.
11. Exercise areas should not be used as sleeping areas.
12. Accessories provided in the accommodation should be suitable to the animal species concerned.
13. Materials, such as newspaper (in sheets or shredded) or urine liners, should be provided to facilitate toilet training.

WARMTH & LIGHTING

14. Young, old or sick animals should be provided with additional heat as necessary, e.g. in the form of heat lamps or hot water bottles. Care should be taken to prevent scalding.
15. Lighting should be as close as possible, in duration and intensity, to natural conditions of the animal(s) and should not generate excessive heat. Natural light is the preferred means of lighting, provided that shaded areas are available.
16. Artificial light should be provided, where needed, to allow animal holding area to be thoroughly cleaned and animals checked.

NOISE

17. Animals should not be exposed to loud or sudden noises which may distress them.
18. Noise from barking dogs should be reduced. This can be achieved by:
 - placing dogs so that they do not see each other
 - limiting external stimulation (e.g. by partitioning between animal housing or using blinds)
 - housing dogs singly or in compatible pairs
 - turning the lights off after feeding
19. Cats and small mammals should be kept away from dogs as they may be disturbed by barking.
20. Animals should be protected from excessive noise and vibration. This can be achieved by ensuring the animals are buffered from the public by barriers or signage with instruction not to disturb the animals.

CLEANING

21. Hand-washing facilities or personal protective equipment(s) (such as disposable gloves) should be available for use when handling animals.

WASTE DISPOSAL

22. All waste products, including faeces, bedding, food wastes and dead animals, should be disposed of in sealed plastic bags promptly and hygienically, and in accordance with all relevant regulatory requirements.

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

FOOD PREPARATION

23. Proper and hygienic facilities should be provided for the storage and preparation of food.
24. Food and water containers should be stable, non-chewable and non-toxic. The containers should be pest proof and easy to clean and disinfect. Disposable eating dishes may be used.
25. Food should be prepared in a separate kitchen area in a hygienic manner. It should be stored appropriately, i.e. dry foods should be stored in a rodent-free place, and fresh and cooked meats should be stored under refrigeration.
26. Sharing of food and water containers should be avoided. This is to prevent the spread of disease or aggression between animals.

ANIMAL HEALTH CARE

DISEASE PREVENTION

27. There should be adequate facilities, equipment and materials, such as disinfectants and disposable gowns, gloves and masks for handling isolation cases.
28. There should be isolation protocols for workers to follow, which should include hand washing, disinfection and proper disposal of used gowns, gloves and masks.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PET RETAILERS

MANAGEMENT OF PET RETAIL BUSINESS

29. There should be documentation to show that the animal's parents and grandparents have been tested (where possible) to ensure that they are free of genetic problems.

SALE OF ANIMALS

30. There should be a clear understanding between buyer and seller about the options available in the event the animal falls ill or dies, i.e. with respect to whether there is any replacement, refund or compensation.

FOR SHOPS SELLING DOGS

CONFINEMENT AND TETHERING

1. The ground should be level and comfortable for the dogs and should not be waterlogged.
2. The confinement area should be secured to prevent the dogs from escaping, roaming, and prevent intrusion by other animals and people.

GENERAL

3. Each premises should have an exercise area for dogs.
4. Puppies should be provided with objects that promote general well-being, such as toys, chewing items and towels.
5. One feeding container should be provided for each dog. However, puppies from the same litter that are under 12 weeks of age may be fed from the same bowl.

FOR SHOPS SELLING CATS

CONFINEMENT AND TETHERING

1. Cats should be provided with litter boxes of a size that is suitable to their body sizes with sufficient litter material.
2. Kittens should be provided with objects that promote general well-being, such as toys and scratch posts.
3. One feeding container should be provided for each cat. However, kittens from the same litter under 12 weeks of age may be fed from the same bowl.

FOR SHOPS SELLING SMALL MAMMALS (CHINCHILLAS, RABBITS, GUINEA PIGS, HAMSTERS, AND GERBILS)

CONFINEMENT AREA

1. Small mammals should be provided with a chewing block to keep their teeth trim and in good condition.
2. Chinchillas, gerbils and hamsters should be provided exercise wheels.

3. Small mammals should be fed a diet that has pellets and additional supplements of greens or hay appropriate to the species.
4. Small mammals should be provided with suitable bedding material which is cleaned and discarded daily.
5. Chinchillas should be maintained in a quiet, low-stress environment which is insulated from outside disturbances. They should not be placed near the window and provided with low-intensity soft lighting, hiding places (retreats) and raised resting areas.
6. Chinchilla cages should have solid sides, a piece of clear acrylic as the door, and enough ventilation holes for air and easy viewing. If wire mesh is to be used, it should be fine enough to prevent escape and injury.

FOR SHOPS SELLING BIRDS

HOUSING ENCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR BIRDS

1. In order to maintain hygienic standards, cages and aviaries with solid floors should be covered with a suitable non-toxic disposable material.

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

2. Food should be placed where it is least likely to be spoiled or contaminated. Open containers should not be located below perches.

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