

Code of Animal Welfare

For Pet Owners



Introduction

Responsible pet owners provide appropriate care to their pets so that they are in a good state of welfare, i.e. the pets are healthy, comfortable, well-nourished and safe.

This Code of Animal Welfare (for Pet Owners) sets Minimum Standards and explains the responsibilities of pet owners to help you understand how to provide a good and comfortable life for your pet.

As an owner of an animal, you have a duty of care to the animal in your charge. An owner of an animal includes a person in charge of the animal. You would be considered the person in charge of an animal if the animal is, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, in your possession, custody or control, or under your care or supervision.

Failure to meet the Minimum Standards set out in this code may be used as evidence of (i) failure to comply with your duty of care towards an animal, (ii) animal cruelty, or (iii) any other offence committed under the Animals and Birds Act.

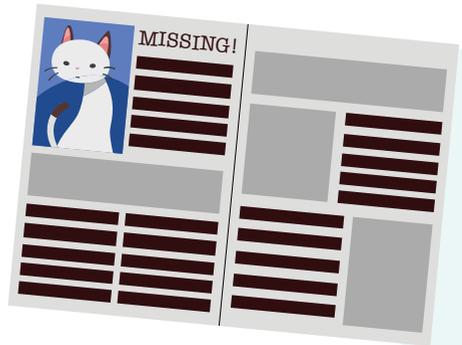
Minimum Standards

Unless specified otherwise, the following Minimum Standards apply to all pets.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY OF PET OWNERS

You should not leave your pet at any place, whether temporarily or permanently, without first making reasonable arrangements for its care. If your pet is lost, you should make a missing pet report with the Police or Animal & Veterinary Service (AVS) and make an effort to find it such as putting up 'missing pet' advertisements, or appealing to neighbours and animal welfare groups for help.

You should secure your doors and gates to prevent your pet from escaping.



2. ANIMAL HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Environment

Your pet needs a safe, well-ventilated, comfortable and clean environment to eat, rest, sleep and hide. It should not be exposed to excessive noise, sunlight, heat, humidity or strong winds.

2.2 Confinement

Your pet should be kept in a safe area so that it cannot easily escape or be released accidentally. Pets that are not compatible should be housed separately, even if they are of the same species.

Your pet should be kept in an area that is large enough for it to move around comfortably. The area should also be free of obstructions and sharp objects.

DOGS AND CATS



Provide your pet with a clearly defined area for it to rest, eat, exercise and explore. It should also have access to an appropriate place, separate from its resting area, which it can use as a toilet area. Cats kept in cages should be let out for supervised exercise daily.

RABBITS, GUINEA PIGS, GERBILS, HAMSTERS AND CHINCHILLAS



Other than clean and dry bedding, your pet should also be given defined areas for rest, feeding, exercise and exploration.

BIRDS



The cage should be large enough so that your pet's tail and outspread wings do not touch the sides of the cage. Perches should be appropriate in size, length and material for a comfortable grip. As some birds like parrots tend to chew the cage wiring, make sure the cages are made of materials that are safe and non-toxic.

Make sure that feed and water containers are placed in areas that cannot be contaminated by your pet's faeces.

You should provide nest boxes and hiding places for birds that are kept in aviaries. For birds that are kept in cages, a cloth should be draped over in the evening to let it rest and feel secure.

2.3 Tethering



Tethering means to fasten your pet to a chain, leash, lead, halter or rope to restrict its range of movement.

If your pet is tethered, the equipment used, the area and the way it is tethered should be safe and comfortable for it. Tethers should be fastened to a secure object that would not move, fall or hurt your pet. Choke chains should not be used for tethering.



A choke chain is a continuous loop that slips through itself to form a collar at one end. It is placed high up on a sensitive area of the dog's neck, behind the ears. A choke chain could tighten around the neck of your dog and result in strangulation. Therefore, it should only be used under supervision.

Tethers should not cause entanglement and strangulation. For birds, the tether should be long enough to allow it to move about comfortably. For dogs, the tether should be at least twice the length of the dog (nose to base of tail), and the anchor point should be low enough so that the dog can lie down comfortably.



3. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT AND CARE

3.1 Diet and Feeding

Provide your pet with a well-balanced and nutritious diet in adequate amounts at regular intervals. Your pet's diet should be suitable for its individual needs, depending on its age, level of activity, sex and state of health. Clean drinking water should always be available.

3.2 Healthcare

Observe your pet daily and seek veterinary attention promptly if you notice any signs of injury, illness or disease.

3.3 Activities to Promote Well-being

Provide your pet with regular exercise and interaction (as appropriate to its species and health). Avoid using training methods and aids in a manner that may cause unnecessary pain or suffering.

3.4 Handling and Transport

Your pet should be handled or transported in a manner that will not cause it injury or undue distress. It should be comfortable, safe and properly secured. If you are using a cage or carrier, you should ensure that your pet is able to comfortably stand, turn around and lie down.



Your pet should not be transported in a car boot or any enclosed space with poor ventilation. It should also not be left unattended in vehicles. When travelling, make sure that your pet is not at risk of falling out. If carried in an open-top vehicle, care should be taken to ensure that it is not exposed to excessive rain, wind and sun.

3.5 Care for Pregnant and Infant Animals

Veterinary attention should be sought for your pregnant pet if it is experiencing birthing difficulties. After giving birth, a safe and comfortable environment should be provided for the mother and its offspring.

Infant pets should be fully weaned and able to take solid food before they are separated from their mother. Use milk replacers only if the mother does not produce enough milk or your pet is orphaned.

3.6 Special Care

3.6.1 Wing Clipping



Wing clipping means to trim the feathers of a bird to reduce its ability to fly so as to prevent escape.

Wing clipping, if done, should not cause undue stress and harm to your pet bird.

3.6.2 Cold Climate Dog Breeds

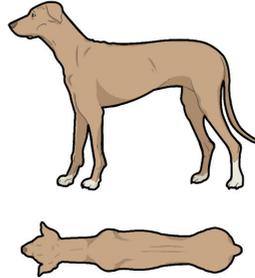
Cold climate dog breeds should be provided with adequate shade, fan ventilation or air-conditioning to keep cool. Do not subject them to physical exertion under the heat, and groom them regularly to prevent the accumulation of dead hair.



Body Condition Score Chart For Dogs

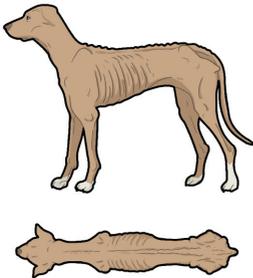
Ideal

Well proportioned. The ribs can be felt and there is no excess fat covering. The waist and abdominal areas are obvious and can be clearly differentiated from the chest.



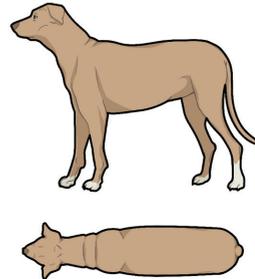
Emaciated

There is obvious loss of muscle mass and no discernible body fat, such that the dog's bones, including the ribs, lower backbone (lumbar vertebrae) and hip (pelvic) bones, can be easily seen from a distance.



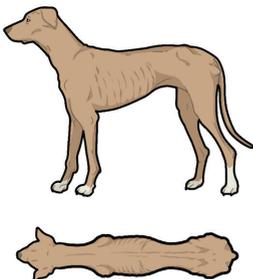
Overweight

The ribs are difficult to feel because of heavy fat cover. There is obvious fat over the lower back (lumbar) area and base of tail. The waistline is barely visible.



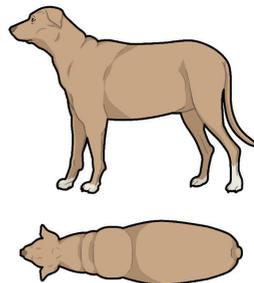
Thin

The ribs can be easily felt and may be visible. No fat can be felt. The lower backbone (lumbar vertebrae) is visible. Hip (pelvic) bones are becoming prominent. The waist and abdominal area has a sunken appearance.



Obese

There is a thick layer of fat over the whole body, including the neck, chest, backbone, base of tail and legs. The waistline is not visible. The abdominal area is rotund.



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** The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore is dissolved effective 1 April 2019. All farm, food and fishery functions will be managed by the Singapore Food Agency while the animal and veterinary functions will come under the purview of the Animal & Veterinary Service, a cluster under the National Parks Board. For more information, please refer to our website/press release.*

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