



CANADIAN VETERINARY
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES MÉDECINS VÉTÉRINAIRES

339, rue Booth Street
Ottawa (Ontario) K1R 7K1
t • (800) 567-2862
f • (613) 236-9681
admin@cvma-acmv.org

Backgrounder: Canadian Veterinary Medical Association New Kennel Code

WHY?

- The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is responsible for the development and publishing of the new Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations (also known as the Kennel Code).
- Evolution of how society views and lives with dogs has changed greatly since the release of the last Kennel Code in 2007. The new edition of the Kennel Code reflects the evolving values of the human-animal bond.
- This newest Kennel Code incorporates new scientific evidence available in many aspects of dog breeding and kennel management, including behaviour and social needs, housing, medicine and nutrition.

WHAT?

- The new Kennel Code may apply to various environments in which dogs are kept for breeding, ranging from a private home to a large facility. Certain segments of the new Kennel Code may also apply to various environments where dogs are housed indoor and outdoor and include long-term boarding facilities, short-term daycare facilities, animal rescues, and boarding and training facilities. In some cases, pre-existing documents (e.g. *Canadian Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*) may complement or be better-suited references for standards of care in certain types of kennel environments
- The new Kennel Code covers the following topics: Animal Environment, Food and Water, Well-being, Husbandry including breeding practises, Transport, and End of Life Considerations. It also specifies considerations for working dogs and aging dogs.

WHO?

Breeders and Kennel Operators

- The new Kennel Code is designed as an important educational tool for breeders and kennel operators who want to be informed of new data/recommendations on housing, end of life issues, reproduction, record keeping, socialization, behaviour, and many other topics.
- The new Kennel Code is designed for members of the public considering purchasing a dog from a breeding facility. It informs them of what to be aware of when researching both the dog they are considering purchasing and what standards of care demonstrate a good breeding operation.

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Legislative Bodies

- The new Kennel Code is designed for legislative bodies looking to incorporate into law a comprehensive reference that will address the breeding and keeping of dogs. Its new format, which is similar to that used by the National Farm Animal Care Council's codes of practice for farmed animals, will allow the judicial system to more easily determine if the acceptable standards of care are being practised. Some examples of areas of animal care and husbandry that can be easily audited by referencing the Kennel Code include record-keeping, sanitation, provision of food, water, and veterinary medical care.

Veterinarians

- The new Kennel Code is designed to assist veterinarians who have dog breeders or kennel operators as clients. It gives an understanding of the role veterinarians play in establishing and maintaining an effective veterinarian-client-patient-relationship with facility owners/operators and the animals within them.
- The new Kennel Code will assist veterinarians to implement appropriate standards of care in these types of facilities, recognizing required and recommended best practices with regard to how dogs in these facilities are cared for.
- The new Kennel Code may be used as a reference for other international veterinary bodies' review and reference for the development of codes within their region.

HOW?

- The new Kennel Code was seven years in the making.
- Many volunteers of the CVMA took part in development of the new Kennel Code. Special thanks to Amy Morris of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and Drs. Colleen Marion and Sherlyn Spooner of the CVMA Animal Welfare Committee (AWC).
- The most recent version of the Kennel Code published in 2007 was used as the outline for this Kennel Code. The new Kennel Code was restructured to conform to the format used for the National Farm Animal Care Council's codes of practice for farmed animals. Each section, paragraph by paragraph, was reviewed and revised as needed. Revisions were based on relevant scientific articles, other international codes, and consultations from specialists in various professions.
- Once the working group completed their final draft of the Kennel Code it was shared with various key stakeholders for review. Stakeholders included other parties with a vested interest in dog care, husbandry, and breeding. Examples of these stakeholders included provincial veterinary governing bodies, provincial animal welfare law enforcement agencies, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS), the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC), and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC).
- More than 200 comments were received and reviewed. Changes to the Kennel Code were made accordingly.