



Animal Care Guidelines for the Retail Pet Industry

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Animal Care Guidelines for the Retail Pet Industry

By the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

Pet stores that house companion animals are held to high standards—by government regulators, the animal welfare community, the media, and consumers. Furthermore, pet owners look to these stores as models of animal care and turn to store staff for advice on a wide variety of animal welfare issues. Therefore, it behooves all pet retailers to not only practice state-of-the-art animal husbandry techniques, but also to ensure the humane care of the animals they sell or adopt out of their stores.

The best way for pet retailers to ensure that all animals on their premises are maintained and cared for humanely is to implement written operating procedures based on professionally accepted practices, and to train and require all employees to follow these procedures.

The “Animal Care Guidelines for the Retail Pet Industry” have been designed to help pet retailers implement operating procedures governing animal care. Retailers can easily incorporate some or all of the guidelines into their own operating manuals or educational materials. Furthermore, they can use these guidelines to supplement relevant Federal, state or local laws and/or regulations that already apply to their stores.

Retailers who adopt the procedures outlined in “Animal Care Guidelines for the Retail Pet Industry” will help ensure that their animals receive appropriate care and handling, demonstrate to the public and to regulatory officials that their facilities are professionally managed, and serve as exemplars for the pet-loving public.

Due to the wide variety of animals maintained in retail pet stores, it is impossible to describe specific care and handling recommendations for every species in a single document. We therefore encourage retailers to employ common sense and utilize the most appropriate husbandry practices when implementing the concepts conveyed in these guidelines for animals with highly specific or unique husbandry needs.

Selling Animals in a Responsible Manner

- Take reasonable care to acquire, sell, trade or release for adoption only animals that are apparently free of disease, parasites, injuries or abnormalities.
- Refrain from selling, donating or releasing for adoption any animal showing signs of, or suspected of having, infections, diseases, illnesses, parasites, injuries or abnormalities—unless you provide the purchaser/transferee with written information describing the animal's condition at the time of the sale and the new owner agrees to provide immediate and necessary veterinary care, if required.
- Be informed about any permits or licenses required, as well as any Federal, state, or local county or city standards applicable to the pet retailers.

Caring for Animals in Your Store

Housing Animals

- House animals in a manner that minimizes stress. Avoid placing animals in areas where they will be exposed to temperature fluctuations or drafts, loud or shrill noises, or noxious or harmful odors.
- House animals in a manner that is appropriate to their size and type.
- Place only compatible animals together in the same primary enclosure. Consider species, age, condition, size, gender, and behavioral tendencies when evaluating compatibility.
- Use enclosures and equipment designed and maintained to minimize the risk of illness or injury to both animals and employees.

- Protect animals from distress or injury that can be caused by other animals or from excessive handling.
- Provide animals, relevant to their type and age, with toys and other items (e.g., wheels, ladders, balls, hammocks, plastic plants) that will provide for movement, enrichment, and shelter.
- Make plans and provisions to provide adequate housing for all animals in the case of natural disasters or other emergencies.

Feeding Animals

- Provide food that is wholesome, nutritious, palatable and uncontaminated in sufficient quantities to maintain the animal in good health.
- Feed animals with consideration for the species, age, condition, size, and gender of the individual animal. Feeding frequencies and amounts vary according to the species.
- Feed all animals—other than certain amphibians and reptiles—at least once a day, including Sundays and holidays, except as necessitated by dormancy (e.g., hibernation) requirements, veterinary treatment, normal fasts or other professionally accepted practices.
- Store food in a manner that protects it from deterioration, mold or contamination by rodents, insects, or disease-causing organisms.
- Refrigerate perishable foods at appropriate temperatures.
- Where appropriate, serve food in sanitized feeding pans, dishes or self-feeders, or in disposable food dishes.
- Sanitize feeding pans and dishes once a day or as appropriate for the species. Clean self-feeders regularly to prevent molding, caking, or contamination of food.

- Discard disposable food dishes immediately after use.
- Remove spoiled food from animal enclosures and adjust feeding practices so as to prevent future food spoilage.

Watering Animals

- Provide all animals, other than aquatic organisms, with potable drinking water at least once during each 12-hour period, except as dictated by dormancy (e.g., hibernation) requirements, veterinary treatment, or other professionally accepted practices.
- Use sanitized water vessels that are designed to provide and dispense appropriate quantities of water for the particular species.
- Position water vessels so that they are readily accessible to the animals and so as to prevent spillage, overheating, contamination, and use by animals visiting the store.
- When cleaning water vessels, use effective cleaners and disinfectants that comply with Federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- Clean and sanitize water vessels at least once daily. Clean sipper-tube water bottles regularly to prevent the accumulation of dirt, debris and algae.
- Sanitize sipper-tube water bottles before placing new animals in a primary enclosure.

Conducting Health Checks

- Train employees to conduct visual health checks of animals (see below), and monitor employee competency.
- Require trained employees to conduct visual health checks of animals at least twice a day.
- Observe animals to determine whether they are:

- ▶ Behaving normally (evaluate by species, age, and gender).
- ▶ Able to move normally and assume normal postural positions.
- ▶ Showing any obvious signs of distress or illness.
- ▶ Eating.
- ▶ Drinking.
- ▶ Defecating and urinating.

- Evaluate for general signs of illness, disease or injury, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Abnormal condition or behavior (by species, age, and gender).
- ▶ Listlessness.
- ▶ Failure to eat or decreased appetite.
- ▶ Weight loss.
- ▶ Diarrhea.
- ▶ Eye or nasal discharge.
- ▶ Conjunctivitis.
- ▶ Labored breathing.
- ▶ Elevated respiration rate.
- ▶ Cough.
- ▶ Prostration.
- ▶ Skin lesions.
- ▶ Abnormal hair or feather loss.
- ▶ Evidence of fleas, ticks or other parasites.

Handling Sick or Injured Animals

- Seek advice and care from veterinary experts as appropriate to care for the animal(s).
- Provide immediate medical care for any sick or injured animal to ensure its well-being and to prevent the spread of disease.
- Take appropriate measures to safeguard staff and customers when an animal in the store is suspected to be sick due to illness, injury, or stress.
- Report any animal showing a health-related change or injury to the

staff person responsible for taking appropriate action.

- If the animal is deemed to be sick or injured, remove it from the sales floor and maintain it in as stress-free a location as possible until it is fully recovered.
- Record your observations in appropriate animal health records, such as for dogs and cats.
- Isolate any animal suspected of having a contagious disease and provide it with appropriate treatment. Keep the animal isolated until it is completely recovered or transferred to a veterinarian for treatment.
- Monitor the condition of the animal or group of animals until fully recovered and document the observations as noted elsewhere in these Guidelines.
- Be informed about Federal, state and local laws and/or regulations concerning reportable diseases.

Euthanizing Animals

- If an animal seems to be suffering from a crippling disability or an incurable condition have it examined immediately by a veterinarian.
- If the animal is diagnosed as being permanently disabled, in pain or incurably ill, humanely euthanize it according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Panel on Education Guidelines.

Maintaining Animal Care Records

- Maintain a readable individual history and health record for each dog and cat, in compliance with state or local record-keeping requirements. In these records include:
 - The name of the animal, if any.

- A description of the animal, including breed. If mixed-breed, so indicate.
- The animal's date of birth, if known.
- The name and address of the person/dealer from whom the animal was obtained, and the dealer's Federal identification number, if available.
- Information from any identification system, such as microchips, bands, tags or retinal scans, used to distinguish the animal.
- The date of acquisition.
- Notes about all vaccines administered to the animal, including the date of administration, the manufacturer and the lot number.
- Notes about any health problems the animal experienced prior to arriving in your pet store, if known. Notes about any health problems observed while the animal is in your pet store, including but not limited to:
 - ▶ Signs of illness.
 - ▶ Diagnosis of illness.
 - ▶ Treatment and/or medications administered.
 - ▶ Prognosis, if known.
- The date of sale, transfer or other disposition of the animal.
- The name and address of the animal's purchaser or acquirer.
- Maintain readable lot records for all other animal types (other than aquatic organisms, including corals) in compliance with Federal, state or local record-keeping requirements. Records should include:
 - A full description of the lot, including species, breed and scientific name, as appropriate.
 - The name and address of the person/dealer from whom the lot was obtained, and the dealer's Federal identification number, if available.

- The date of the lot's acquisition.
- Notes about any health problems observed while the lot was in your pet store, as well as any treatment and/or medication administered.
- Other information as required for animals subject to Federal, state or local regulatory control.
- Maintain all records for a period of two (2) years unless otherwise required by Federal, state or local laws.
- Ensure that any required permits, licenses or other documents are readily available during normal business hours for inspection by appropriate governmental officials.

Keeping Your Store Clean

Sanitizing Your Facility

- Keep the premises (building and grounds) clean and in good repair to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all animals, as well as the staff who interact with the animals.
- Place trash in low traffic, non-public areas and clear it as necessary to ensure the health of all animals.
- Remove excreta from primary enclosures as often as practicable to minimize disease hazards (e.g., *Salmonella* transmission) and reduce odor.
- When hosing down or flushing out enclosures, ensure that the animals are protected from direct or indirect water spray. This can be achieved by providing shelter for the animals or moving them into alternate enclosures or runs while their primary enclosures are being cleaned.
- Clean and disinfect all confinement, display, storage and sales areas regularly to minimize rodent, insect,

pathogen, and parasite infestations and to ensure sanitary conditions, as appropriate for the species.

- When cleaning the primary enclosures, clean and disinfect all toys and other items (e.g., wheels, ladders, balls, hammocks, plastic plants, tubes) maintained in the animal enclosures to provide enrichment, shelter, and the semblance of habitat.
- Use effective cleaners and disinfectants that comply with Federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Removing Waste

- Remove and dispose of animal and food wastes, used bedding, deceased animals, trash and debris.
- Maintain disposal facilities to minimize rodent and insect infestation, odors and disease hazards.
- Use disposal methods and facilities that comply with applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations relating to pollution control and environmental protection.

Controlling Pests

Maintain a safe, effective program to control insects, ectoparasites, and rodents.

- Seek the advice of pest control experts when evaluating pest control operations in order to protect the health and safety of both animals and employees.
- Use chemicals or other pest control materials in compliance with Federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- Use chemicals or other pest control materials in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- Store chemicals in appropriate (per regulations and product standards),

clearly labeled containers away from food and public areas.

Safeguarding Public Health

- Animals may harbor disease-causing organisms that can be transmitted to employees, as well as other people visiting your store. Employees and visitors may also transmit diseases to animals. To safeguard human and animal health, educate each employee about the importance of adhering to safe-handling and personal hygiene practices and require them to adhere to your store policies for animal care and handling.
- Post notices advising employees of the importance of following your store's health and safety protocols.
- Provide adequate hand-washing facilities, and post notices reminding employees to wash their hands before and after handling animals.
- Advise pregnant and immune-compromised employees that they should consult their personal physicians regarding any extra risks they may face while working in your store, as well as special precautions they can take.
- Alert all employees who work with reptiles and small mammals about the risks of *Salmonella* and other potential zoonotic diseases, and provide them with safe-handling information.
- Alert all employees who work with birds about the risks of *Psittacosis* and other potential zoonotic diseases, and provide them with safe-handling information.
- Make every effort to educate consumers on care and safe-handling of their pets. Provide, for example: animal care sheets, relevant books for sale or other reference materials.

Maintaining Facilities

Water and Power

- Make sure the facility/store has an adequate water supply, including potable water for drinking and hot water for washing, as well as sufficient drainage.
- Ensure the facility/store has an adequate and reliable supply of electrical power.
- Make plans and provisions to ensure the availability of adequate water and power supplies in the case of natural disasters or other emergencies.

Heating and Cooling

- Make sure the facility/store has a safe heating/cooling system capable of maintaining ambient temperatures that are consistent with the generally accepted requirements for animals housed in your store.
- In general, maintain ambient temperatures in the facility at a minimum of 60° F and a maximum of 85° F. Maintain temperatures that do not fall below 60° F nor rise above 85° F for more than four consecutive hours.
- House individual animals at temperatures that are species-appropriate (e.g., provide heaters, hot pads, etc., as needed).
- Operate HVAC (heating and air conditioning) systems continuously in areas housing animals, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Provide effective shelter for animals that may be exposed to direct sunlight through windows or in outdoor environments.

Ventilating Systems

- Ensure the facility/store is ventilated to: 1) enable venting of noxious odors,

- 2) minimize moisture condensation, and
- 3) minimize animals' exposure to drafts.

- Provide auxiliary ventilation via exhaust fans, vents or air conditioning as necessary. Screen fresh-air vents to prevent insects or rodents from entering the facility.

- Make sure that the exhaust system is constructed, located and maintained to prevent its discharge from creating a nuisance or danger.

- Make sure animal enclosures are adequately ventilated to provide for the health and comfort of the animals at all times.

Lighting

- Make sure every room has sufficient natural and artificial lighting to allow employees to observe all animals and to clean the facility thoroughly.

- Use full spectrum, energy-efficient lighting in order to support animal needs and minimize costs and environmental impacts.

- Maintain lighting at sufficient levels to allow for normal health, behavior and stimulation of all animals. Add supplemental lighting to individual terrariums and aquariums if necessary to support the lighting requirements of specific species. Provide shelter for those species that have low lighting requirements.

- Minimize lighting at night. Either dim or turn off lights in the facility.

Walls and Flooring

- Make sure floor and wall surfaces are smooth, washable, water-resistant and easy to clean.

- Keep floors safe, clean and sanitary. When hosing or steaming methods are used to clean walls and floors, provide

for removal of waste water.

- Remove all standing water. In particular, ensure that water does not accumulate under equipment, partitions, or animal enclosures.

Washrooms and Sinks

- Make sure washrooms or sinks are readily accessible so employees can wash and sanitize their hands as well as equipment and utensils.

- Provide effective, non-toxic soaps for employees to use when washing their hands.

- Make sure sinks provide both hot and cold running water.

- Use appropriate signage to remind employees to wash their hands.

Animal Enclosures (see also section on Housing) General Construction

- Ensure that enclosures (cages, aquariums, containers or other housing units) provide sufficient space for the animals to rest, sit and stand comfortably, turn around freely, or swim, as appropriate for the species (consider type, age, gender).

- Make sure that enclosures enable animals, except aquatic or semi-aquatic organisms, to remain clean and dry (as appropriate for the species).

- Construct enclosure walls and floors of nonabsorbent, nonporous materials that are impervious to urine and other moisture.

- Design enclosures to enable employees to easily feed, water and inspect the animals.

- Maintain enclosures in good repair to prevent animals from injuring themselves or escaping.

Cage Floors and Walls

- Construct the floors of primary enclosures to prevent animals from injuring their feet and legs.
- When appropriate for the species, construct suspended floors in the primary enclosures made of metal strands with a diameter of at least 1/8 inch (9 gauge), or of wire coated material such as plastic or fiberglass.
- Ensure that these floors are strong enough so as not to sag or bend between structural supports in a manner that may injure the animal.
- Ensure that mesh openings of walls and/or floors are small enough to prevent the animal's feet from passing through the openings.
- Make sure that primary enclosures for cats have solid floors, and are equipped with litter boxes.

Security and Fire Alarm Systems

- Secure the premises to minimize the risk of animals escaping or being stolen.
- Properly maintain any required fire alarm systems.
- Make sure your facility complies with state and local safety regulations.

Developing Procedure

- Utilize checklists and/or an operating manual to ensure that all animals are provided with:
 - ▶ Appropriate care necessary for their health and well-being.
 - ▶ Facilities, including enclosures, which allow safe, humane and efficient handling.

- ▶ Appropriate space to enable them to assume normal postural positions, and hiding or climbing areas appropriate for the species of animal.
- ▶ Appropriate quantities of wholesome, palatable food.
- ▶ Appropriate quantities of fresh, potable water.
- ▶ Sanitary conditions throughout the premises as well as in individual animal enclosures. Aquariums should be provided routine maintenance.
- ▶ Appropriate lighting, temperature and ventilation.
- ▶ Effective health care and disease prevention programs.
- ▶ Socialization and enrichment activities appropriate for the species of animal.
- ▶ (see other sections for further details)
- Implement a written animal husbandry program (in consultation with a veterinarian) covering:
 - ▶ Animal care and safe-handling procedures.
 - ▶ Disease prevention and control.
 - ▶ Veterinary care.
 - ▶ Humane euthanasia according to the American Veterinary Medical Association's guidelines.
 - ▶ Appropriate handling and removal of deceased animals.
- Develop an emergency plan applicable to your area for securing and handling animals in the event of a disaster, such as an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, flood or fire.
- Implement a record-keeping mechanism to document the acquisition, sale or transfer of dogs and cats and other species as required by state or local laws.

Training and Scheduling Employees

- Develop employee training programs that cover fundamental procedures for caring for animals in your store, maintaining animal care records and keeping your store clean (i.e. the standards outlined in these Guidelines).
- Assign only appropriately trained employees to care for animals.
- Require each employee to comply with checklists and operating procedures.
- Acknowledge those employees that show exceptional attention to animal care and handling.
- Schedule a sufficient number of employees to perform all tasks outlined in the checklists and operating procedures.

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We welcome your comments and recommendations.
They should be sent to:

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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion.

There are many reasons for this. One is that the population of the world is growing so fast that the number of children who are illiterate is increasing. Another reason is that the number of people who are illiterate is increasing in many countries, especially in the developing world. This is because many of these countries do not have enough schools or teachers to teach all the children who are of school age.

There are also many people who are illiterate because they do not have enough money to go to school. In many countries, the cost of education is very high, and many families cannot afford it. This is especially true in the developing world, where the cost of education is often a large part of the family's income.

There are also many people who are illiterate because they do not have enough time to go to school. In many countries, the school year is very short, and many children have to work or help with household chores during the school year. This means that they do not have enough time to learn.

There are also many people who are illiterate because they do not have enough interest in learning. In many countries, the education system is not very good, and many children do not like to go to school. This is especially true in the developing world, where the education system is often outdated and does not provide a good quality of education.

There are many ways to help people who are illiterate. One way is to build more schools and hire more teachers. Another way is to provide financial aid to families who cannot afford to send their children to school. A third way is to provide more interesting and relevant education. This can be done by teaching practical skills that are useful in the workplace or in daily life.

It is important to help people who are illiterate because it is one of the most basic human rights to be able to read and write. Without this skill, people are often unable to find work, get a better education, or improve their lives.

There are many organizations that are working to help people who are illiterate. One of the most well-known is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO has a program called the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) that is working to improve the quality of education in all countries.

There are also many other organizations that are working to help people who are illiterate. These include the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Each of these organizations has its own programs and initiatives to help people who are illiterate.

It is important to continue to work to help people who are illiterate. This is because the number of people who are illiterate is still very high, and it is one of the most basic human rights to be able to read and write. We need to find ways to help more people who are illiterate so that they can improve their lives and contribute to their communities.

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