

Animal Welfare (Cats) Code of Welfare 2005

A code of welfare issued under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

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Preface

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 came into force on 1 January 2000. It establishes the fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals. These obligations are written in general terms, however. The detail is found in codes of welfare. Codes set out minimum standards and recommendations relating to all aspects of the care of animals. They are developed following an extensive process of public consultation and reviewed every 10 years, or sooner if necessary.

I recommend that all those who care for animals become familiar with the relevant codes. This is important because failure to meet a minimum standard in a code could lead to legal action being taken.

I issue codes on the recommendation of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. The members of this committee collectively possess knowledge and experience in veterinary science; agricultural science; animal science; the commercial use of animals; the care, breeding, and management of companion animals; ethical standards and conduct in respect of animals; animal welfare advocacy; the public interest in respect of animals; and environmental and conservation management.

The Animal Welfare (Cats) Code of Welfare 2005 is issued by me, by a notice published in the *Gazette* on X X 2005, under section 75 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999. This code comes into force on X X 2005.

This code is deemed to be a regulation for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989 and is subject to the scrutiny of Parliament's Regulations Review Committee.

Hon Jim Sutton
Minister of Agriculture

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1. Introduction, Purpose and Interpretation of Code

1.1 History

The original codes of recommendations and minimum standards for the welfare of animals were prepared by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC), which was established in 1989 by the Minister of Agriculture to advise him on matters concerning animal welfare. The codes were of a voluntary nature and had no legal standing under the Animals Protection Act 1960.

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) established the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), which replaced AWAC, and provided for the issue of codes of welfare with legal effect. One of the responsibilities of NAWAC is to advise the Minister on the content of codes of welfare following a process of public consultation.

1.2 Legal Status of Codes of Welfare

Codes of welfare are deemed to be regulations for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989. As such they are subject to the scrutiny of the Regulations Review Committee of Parliament.

Codes of welfare contain minimum standards and may also contain recommended practice and recommended best practice. Only minimum standards have legal effect and in two possible ways:

- evidence of a failure to meet a relevant minimum standard may be used to support a prosecution for an offence under the Act (see Appendix II)
- a person who is charged with an offence against the Act can defend himself/herself by showing that he/she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards (see Appendix II).

Recommendations for best practice under New Zealand conditions set out standards of care and conduct over and above the minimum required to meet the obligations in the Act. They are included for educational and information purposes.

Any person or organisation aggrieved at the operation of a code of welfare has a right to make a complaint to the Regulations Review Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

This is a parliamentary select committee charged with examining regulations against a set of criteria and drawing to the attention of the House of Representatives any regulation that does not meet the criteria. Grounds for reporting to the House include:

- the regulation trespasses unduly on personal rights and freedoms

- the regulation is not made in accordance with the general objects and intentions of the statutes under which it is made, or
- it was not made in compliance with the particular notice and consultation procedures prescribed by statute.

Any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint should refer to the publication *Making a Complaint to the Regulations Review Committee* which can be obtained from the website:

<http://www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz/Publications/Other/>

or by writing to:

Clerk of the Committee
Regulations Review Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

1.3 Process for Code Development

A draft code may be developed by anyone, including NAWAC or the Minister. It is then submitted to NAWAC. Provided the draft meets criteria in the Act for clarity, compliance with the purposes of the Act, and representatives of persons likely to be affected by the code have been adequately consulted, NAWAC publicly notifies the code and calls for submissions. NAWAC is then responsible for recommending the form and content of the code to the Minister after having regard to the submissions received, good practice and scientific knowledge, available technology and any other relevant matters.

NAWAC may recommend draft standards that do not fully meet the obligations in the Act if certain criteria specified in the Act are met.

The Minister issues the code by notice in the *Gazette*.

1.4 Scope

This code is intended for all persons responsible for the welfare of domestic cats, including breeders of cats, and carers of stray-cat colonies. The code provides for the general principles of the care and management of cats.

Under the Act, the “owner” of an animal or the “person in charge” is responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. This code complements the Act by outlining minimum standards, and by providing advice and recommended best practice, for the well-being of cats.

By definition, a “stray/unowned” cat does not have a current owner; a feral cat has not been, and will not be, owned (see 1.7, Interpretation and Definitions). Unless otherwise stated, the minimum standards and recommended best practices in this code are applicable to the owned cat category. Stray/unowned cats (including managed colonies) and feral cat categories will be specifically referred to in this code as appropriate.

It is recognised that a responsible attitude to the care and handling of animals is essential to providing for their welfare. This code is intended to encourage all those responsible for its implementation to adopt the highest standard of care and to meet, or preferably exceed, the minimum standards.

Other codes that are relevant, and that are either being produced for the first time, or are in the process of being reviewed, include codes concerned with animals in boarding catteries, the sale of companion animals, and animals transported within New Zealand. Where relevant, these other codes should be consulted (see Appendix III).

This draft was developed by a group designated through the New Zealand Companion Animal Council and has been reviewed by representatives of animal welfare organisations, cat colony management groups, breeders, local councils and veterinarians. As required by the Act, NAWAC publicly notified the draft code of welfare on X X 2005.

1.5 Contents of this Code

Section 69 of the Act provides that a code of welfare may relate to one or more of the following:

- a species of animal
- animals used for purposes specified in the code
- animal establishments of a kind specified in the code
- types of entertainment specified in the code (being types of entertainment in which animals are used)
- the transport of animals
- the procedures and equipment used in the management, care, or killing of animals or in the carrying out of surgical procedures on animals.

In deciding to issue a code of welfare, the Minister must be satisfied as to the following matters set out in section 73(1) of the Act:

- that the proposed standards are the minimum necessary to ensure that the purposes of the Act will be met; and
- that the recommendations for best practice (if any) are appropriate.

Despite the provisions of section 73(1), section 73(3) of the Act allows NAWAC, in exceptional circumstances, to recommend minimum standards and recommendations for best practice that do not fully meet the obligations of:

- sections 10 and 11 – obligations in relation to physical, health and behavioural needs of animals
- section 12(c) – killing an animal

- section 21(1)(b) – restriction on performance of surgical procedures
- section 22(2) – providing comfortable and secure accommodation for the transport of animals
- section 23(1) and (2) – transport of animals
- section 29(a) – ill-treating an animal.

In making a recommendation under section 73(3), section 73(4) requires NAWAC to have regard to:

- the feasibility and practicality of effecting a transition from current practices to new practices and any adverse effects that may result from such a transition
- the requirements of religious practices or cultural practices or both
- the economic effects of any transition from current practices to new practices.

This code provides for the physical, health and behavioural needs of cats, as defined in section 4 of the Act. These needs include:

- proper and sufficient food and water
- adequate shelter
- opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour
- physical handling in a manner which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease,

being a need which, in each case, is appropriate to the species, environment, and circumstances of the animal.

This code also takes account of:

- good practice
- scientific knowledge
- available technology.

1.6 Revision of the Code

This code is based on the knowledge and technology available at the time of publication, and may be varied in the light of future advances and knowledge. Consequently, NAWAC will review this code when deemed necessary. In any event, this code will be reviewed no later than X X 20XX (being 10 years from the date on which this code was issued by the Minister).

Comments on this code are always welcome and should be addressed to:
The Secretary

National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
PO Box 2526
Wellington

Further information can be obtained from the MAF website:
<http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/animal-welfare/index.htm>

1.7 Interpretation and Definitions

1.7.1 Interpretation

Minimum Standards

Minimum standards are identified in the text by a heading, and use the word “must” or similar. They are highlighted in boxes within the text.

Recommended Best Practice

The Act provides that codes of welfare may contain recommendations for best practice.

“Recommended best practice” is taken to mean:

The best practice agreed at a particular time, following consideration of scientific information, accumulated experience and public submissions on the code. It is usually a higher standard of practice than the minimum standard, except where the minimum standard is best practice. It is a practice that can be varied as new information comes to light.

Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for animals than is provided as a minimum standard.

Recommended best practices are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “should”.

Good Practice

The Act does not define “good practice”. NAWAC takes “good practice” to mean a standard of care that has a general level of acceptance among knowledgeable practitioners and experts in the field; is based on good sense and sound judgement; is practical and thorough; has robust experiential or scientific foundations; and prevents unreasonable or unnecessary harm to, or promotes the interests of, the animals to which it is applied. Good practice also takes account of the evolution of attitudes about animals and their care.

Scientific Knowledge

The Act does not define “scientific knowledge”. NAWAC takes “scientific knowledge”, relevant to its areas of responsibility, to mean knowledge within animal-based scientific disciplines, especially those that deal with nutritional,

environmental, health, behavioural and cognitive/neural functions, which are relevant to understanding the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals. Such knowledge is not haphazard or anecdotal; it is generated by rigorous and systematic application of the scientific method, and the results are objectively and critically reviewed before acceptance.

Available Technology

The Act does not define “available technology”. NAWAC takes “available technology” to represent, for example, existing chemicals, drugs, instruments, devices and facilities which are used practically to care for and manage animals.

Cat Categories

The domestic cat is a single species, but for the purposes of this code cats are grouped into one of three categories according to their ecology, as follows:

- **Owned cats** live entirely with humans as “companion” cats; they are dependent on humans to provide their food, water and shelter; their social structure, disease control and opportunity to breed are largely controlled by humans
- **Stray/unowned cats** have many of their needs indirectly supplied by humans; they usually live in shelter provided by human habitation (i.e. industrial or residential sites, farm sheds, etc); they acquire food either through hunting, scavenging or having it provided by carers who attend them or their colony; they are likely to interbreed with the unneutered domestic cat population
- **Feral cats** have none of their needs provided by humans, and their population size fluctuates independently of humans; they do not live near centres of human habitation; the population is self-sustaining and requires no input from the owned cat population.

1.7.2 Definitions

Act

“Act” means the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Animal

This code applies to animals as defined in section 2 of the Act:

“Animal” –

- (a) Means any live member of the animal kingdom that is –
- (i) A mammal; or
 - (ii) A bird; or
 - (iii) A reptile; or
 - (iv) An amphibian; or

- (v) A fish (bony or cartilaginous); or
 - (vi) Any octopus, squid, crab, lobster, or crayfish (including freshwater crayfish); or
 - (vii) Any other member of the animal kingdom which is declared from time to time by the Governor-General, by Order in Council, to be an animal for the purposes of this Act; and
- (b) Includes any mammalian foetus, or any avian or reptilian pre-hatched young, that is in the last half of its period of gestation or development; and
 - (c) Includes any marsupial pouch young; but
 - (d) Does not include –
 - (i) A human being; or
 - (ii) Except as provided in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c) of this definition, any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage.

Ill-treat

As defined in section 2 of the Act, “ill-treat”, in relation to an animal, means causing the animal to suffer, by any act or omission, pain or distress that in its kind or degree, or in its object, or in the circumstances in which it is inflicted, is unreasonable or unnecessary.

Owner

As defined in section 2 of the Act, “owner”, in relation to an animal, includes the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who –

- (a) Owns the animal; and
- (b) Is a member of the parent’s or guardian’s household living with and dependent on the parent or guardian.

Person in Charge

As defined in section 2 of the Act, “person in charge”, in relation to an animal, includes a person who has the animal in that person’s possession or custody, or under that person’s care, control, or supervision.

1.8 Glossary

See also 1.7, Interpretation and Definitions.

Cat	Common domestic cat (<i>felis catus</i>). Includes a kitten unless otherwise stated. See the detailed definitions in 1.7.1 for the following cat categories: (a) Owned cats (b) Stray/unowned cats (c) Feral cats.
Colony	A group of six or more stray/unowned cats, living together. Any group of fewer than six stray/unowned cats to be classified as individual cats.
Colony carer	Someone who, with the agreement of the landowner, undertakes the provision of food and access to shelter, ensures the trapping and desexing of all cats in the colony and undertakes to identify such cats.
Kitten	A cat less than 6 months of age.
Managed colony	A colony that has colony carer/s.
Queen	An entire female cat.
Registered breeder	Registered as a breeder holding a current registered prefix with any of the recognised national cat organisations.
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
Stud	An entire male cat intended for breeding (sometimes referred to as a “tom” cat).
Unmanaged colony	A colony that has no known or approved colony carer/s or person in charge.

2. Obligations of Owners and Persons in Charge of Animals

The owner or person in charge of an animal has overall responsibility for the welfare of the animal in his or her care. The legal obligations set out below are not an exhaustive list of the obligations in the Act.

- (1) The owner or person in charge of animal must:
 - (a) ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of the animals are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge
 - (b) ensure that an animal that is ill or injured receives treatment that will alleviate any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal or that it is killed humanely.

- (2) The owner or person in charge of an animal must not without reasonable excuse:
 - (a) keep an animal alive when it is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
 - (b) sell, attempt to sell, or offer for sale, otherwise than for the express purpose of it being killed, an animal, when it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
 - (c) desert an animal in circumstances in which no provision is made to meet its physical, health and behavioural needs.

- (3) No person may:
 - (a) ill-treat an animal
 - (b) release an animal that has been kept in captivity, in circumstances which the animal is likely to suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
 - (c) perform any significant surgical procedure on an animal unless that person is a veterinarian
 - (d) perform on an animal a surgical procedure that is not significant in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Defences are set out in Appendix II. The Act contains specific procedural requirements before these defences can be relied on, and these requirements are described in Appendix II.

3. Adopting/Purchasing a Cat

Introduction

When adopting a cat from an animal welfare shelter, or purchasing a cat from a breeder or pet shop, the new owner should be provided with printed information detailing recommended procedures for settling the cat into its new environment and for its ongoing care. Details of vaccinations and flea and worming treatments performed on the cat should also be provided.

When introducing a cat into a home environment, the new owner should be familiar with the responsibilities of ownership and be prepared to undertake those responsibilities for the life of the cat. Young children, in particular, should be taught how to appropriately hold and handle the cat.

Care should be taken to slowly introduce a new cat into a household which already includes a cat or dog, as “territorial” rights will exist. If early problems of confrontation occur, it is best to keep the new cat separated from the existing animal or animals for a period of time until they become more compatible.

The new cat’s previous diet should be continued initially, as a change of diet can result in stomach upsets. Any change in the diet should be introduced gradually.

Recommended Best Practice

Kittens should be kept indoors after adoption/purchase until approximately 4 months of age.

Cats should be kept indoors for a minimum of 2 weeks after adoption/purchase, until it is clear that they are comfortable with their surroundings.

Parents/guardians should teach young children in their care proper handling of a cat, so that both cat and child are secure and not harmed.

4. Food and Water

4.1 Food and Feeding

Introduction

Cats should receive a daily diet in adequate quantities, and containing adequate nutrients, to meet their requirements for good health and welfare. Ideally, the food provided should be a high-quality commercially prepared product. Home-made diets rarely contain all the nutrients a cat needs.

When considering the amount of food and nutrients cats require, a number of factors need to be taken into account:

- physiological state
- nutritional composition of food
- age
- sex
- size
- state of health
- quality of diet
- growth rate
- previous feeding levels
- feeding frequency
- genetic effects of breed
- level of activity and exercise
- maximum periods of food deprivation (e.g. during transportation)
- introduction of new food.

Given the above factors and the considerable variation that occurs between individual cats, food and nutrient requirements vary from one individual to another. Therefore, it is not appropriate to specify as minimum standards a complete range of the quantities of food and nutrients required.

Kittens up to the age of 6 months will benefit from frequent feeds through the day rather than 2 daily feeds. Most commercially prepared foods will recommend feeding quantity and frequency for the age of the kitten on its packaging.

Good-quality, complete and balanced commercial cat foods are readily available in the form of dry and/or canned foods. Such foods provide all the nutrients required for a healthy cat. It is not necessary to provide, for example, calcium through feeding milk. Neither is supplementation with individual nutrients recommended nor, in general, required if a cat is on such a diet.

Cats are obligate carnivores, which means that they need a meat-based diet. A cat's food requirements are not met either by a vegetarian diet or by fresh lean meat alone. In addition, pet rolls and pottled foods are generally unsuitable as a sole maintenance diet for cats, as most are not complete and balanced. Dog food must not be fed to cats as a sole maintenance diet, as it does not contain all the essential requirements to fulfil a cat's nutritional needs.

Minimum Standard No. 1 – Food and Feeding

- (a) Kittens from the age of 6 weeks to 6 months must be fed a minimum of twice daily.**
- (b) Cats over the age of 6 months must be fed at least once a day.**
- (c) Cats must receive adequate quantities of food and nutrients to:**
 - (i) enable the cat to maintain good health;**
 - (ii) enable the cat to meet its physiological demands, including those resulting from pregnancy, lactation, growth, exercise and exposure to cold; and**
 - (iii) enable the cat to avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.**

Recommended Best Practice

Kittens from the age of 6 weeks to 6 months should be fed small quantities at regular intervals throughout the day.

Cats over the age of 6 months should be fed twice a day.

Cats should be fed a complete meat-based cat food diet.

A diet appropriate to the particular life stage should be fed.

Prescription diets for certain medical conditions should be fed as instructed by a veterinarian.

General Information

Most adult cats will regulate their food intake to meet their energy needs. Uneaten moist food will quickly spoil and attract flies, vermin and other animals, and should be disposed of as soon as the cat has eaten what it requires. Dry food made available for the cat to nibble throughout the day will not spoil, but owners should be aware that left-over food is likely to attract other animals. Food should be stored appropriately, with dry food in a rodent-proof container and moist food (i.e. meat and opened cans) in a refrigerator.

Where major disease is present in a cat, special attention to diet may be required. The cat's appetite may be suppressed, leading to a possibly inadequate supply of essential nutrients, even over a short period of time.

If there is any doubt concerning an appropriate feeding regime for cats, advice should be sought from a person experienced in the management and feeding of cats, such as a veterinarian.

4.2 Body Condition

Introduction

An adult cat should be well-proportioned and have an observable waist behind the ribs when viewed from above and from the side. Ribs should be palpable (able to be touched or felt), but with a light fat covering. The abdominal fat pad should be minimal; excessive fat here indicates obesity, which can contribute to disease.

A body condition score chart is provided in Appendix I.

Minimum Standard No. 2 – Body Condition

- (a) When a cat's body condition score is "thin" as defined in Appendix I, remedial action through veterinary attention or improved nutrition and care must be taken.**
- (b) A cat's body condition score must not be allowed to fall below "thin" as defined in Appendix I.**

Recommended Best Practice

A cat's body condition score should be maintained at "ideal" as defined in Appendix I.

General Information

Energy (caloric) density of a food may be estimated, although some labels will indicate this. Canned foods have approximately 1.1 kcal/g and dry foods have approximately 3.5 kcal/g.

The energy requirements for growth reduce as a kitten ages, but during the period of rapid growth (its first 3 months) a kitten will have 1.5 – 2.5 times the energy needs of a normally active adult cat.

A lactating queen will have 2 – 3 times the energy needs of a normally active adult cat.

4.3 Water and Milk

Introduction

Water is an essential daily requirement for the proper functioning of the whole body, and accordingly a bowl of water should be available at all times, being changed at least once a day.

Minimum Standard No. 3 – Water

Cats must have continuous access to water that is palatable and not harmful to health.

General Information

Milk is not essential, or recommended, for adult cats. After weaning, many cats lose the ability to digest milk and are likely to develop diarrhoea when fed milk.

5. Housing and Sanitation

5.1 Housing

5.1.1 House Cats

Introduction

Cats will usually prefer to have unrestricted access to the house. Cat doors are a recommended and safe method of entry and egress. Cats will often find their own special place to rest and sleep within the house, but owners may assist the cat by providing a form of bedding such as a basket or rug. When the owner is absent from the house, the comfort and security of the cat needs to be taken into account.

In all situations, the cat needs to have access to adequate shelter to meet its physical needs. The shelter will therefore need to provide security, warmth, a dry bed and enough space for the cat to stand up normally, stretch comfortably and turn around.

Recommended Best Practice

Cats should be kept indoors between dusk and dawn.

Cats should be kept indoors when fireworks are in use.

Stray/unowned cats should be provided with access to shelter by those persons attending to managed colonies.

General Information

Cats, in general, enjoy as much freedom as possible in their surroundings. A cat door to allow ready entry to and exit from the house is recommended.

It is strongly recommended that cats be kept indoors, or provided with limited access to confined areas outdoors, during night hours. This is a time when cats are likely to be at an increased risk of injury or death from cars, dog attacks, trapping, infectious disease, poisons, toxins, poisoned vermin, etc; and of being stolen. It also reduces predation on wildlife.

Cats (especially kittens) are curious about their surroundings, and tend to seek out warmth. Owners should protect their cat from potentially dangerous household appliances (such as clothes dryers and microwave ovens), toilets, loose power cords, and heaters. Access to potentially poisonous substances (such as rodent bait and dead rodents) should be controlled as far as possible.

Consideration should be given to meeting cats' preference for elevated areas through the provision of suitable places at height on which they can sit or lie.

Provision of a scratching post or pad will also help to meet cats' need to maintain their claws, while possibly limiting this activity to a suitable area.

Draughts and excessive heat or cold are detrimental to a cat's welfare.

5.1.2 Caged Cats

Introduction

In situations of confinement, such as breeding establishments, boarding catteries, animal welfare shelters and pet shops, attention needs to be paid to the spacing of cages and congestion within cages, as these factors can influence the potential for disease and for the welfare of the cats. Cats not of the same household or family group should ideally be housed separately. Cages should be constructed of solid, non-absorbable materials and be secure.

Cats need sleeping quarters that are comfortable and have suitable washable bedding.

Housing for queens with unweaned litters should be in a quiet location.

Information on appropriate design of cages may be obtained from the New Zealand Cat Fancy, Catz Incorporated, a veterinarian, or an animal welfare organisation specialising in the care of companion animals.

Minimum Standard No. 4 – Caged Cats

Cats confined in cages must have sufficient room to enable them to stretch, move around freely and have the opportunity to engage in play and exercise, with appropriate areas for feeding and toileting.

Recommended Best Practice

Caged cats should have access to climbing ramps, platforms, sleeping shelves and scratching posts or pads.

Caged cats should have daily access to sunlight (when available).

General Information

Ventilation of caging areas needs to be considered in regard to the control of dampness and noxious odours and to minimise the airborne spread of infectious diseases such as viral respiratory diseases.

Provision for the isolation of sick or potentially vulnerable cats and unvaccinated cats should be made.

Those cats which are healthy but are confined to cages need to be provided with toys and the opportunity to run, climb and jump. While it may appear that a cat

spends a large amount of time sleeping, exercise is important for the health of the cat. The condition feline lower urinary tract disease, sometimes associated in the male cat with a blocked urethra, has been associated with, among other things, reduced exercising in particular individuals.

Additional and specific information is to be found in the Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments and in the Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Sale of Companion Animals.

5.2 Sanitation

Introduction

Food and water bowls should be washed daily. They should be rinsed and dried in a manner that will not spread infectious diseases, e.g. air-drying or with a disposable paper towel.

In situations of limited or restricted access to the outdoors, a litter tray is required. Litter trays should be checked daily, and litter cleared of wastes and replenished or changed as required.

Once a week, food and water bowls and litter trays should be washed in hot, soapy water; disinfected, ideally using dilute bleach, for 5 – 10 minutes; and thoroughly rinsed and dried, particularly where cross-infection is an issue. This is an inexpensive and effective means of disinfection. Cats are sensitive to many chemicals, and great care needs to be exercised in achieving disinfection without introducing toxic substances to the cat's environment.

Minimum Standard No. 5 – Sanitation

- (a) Food and water bowls must be washed regularly to prevent contamination that may pose a threat to the health and welfare of the cat.**
- (b) Cats kept indoors, and caged cats, must have access to a litter tray containing absorbent litter material.**
- (c) Litter trays must be attended to regularly, with faeces and moisture-laden litter removed, to prevent contamination that may pose a threat to the health and welfare of the cat.**

Recommended Best Practice

Food and water bowls should be washed daily.

One deep litter tray for each indoor cat should be provided.

The litter substance should be discarded every few days from a litter tray, and the tray cleaned and disinfected.

Housing and bedding should be washed at least once a week.

General Information

The environment of cats kept caged or in runs needs careful attention. The incidence of disease can be kept to a lower level if cleanliness and disinfection are complete and thorough. Bowls and litter trays should be cleaned as above. Care should be taken to clean around food bowls daily to remove small pieces of discarded food that may harbour saliva and infectious agents. All surfaces with which cats come into contact should be scrubbed with hot, soapy water once a week and rinsed. Soap is required to remove organic matter that adheres to surfaces; heavily used areas can then be disinfected using dilute bleach and allowed to become thoroughly dry before cats re-enter. Bedding should be removed and washed weekly. Soft furnishings and carpets should be avoided or kept to a minimum, as they may harbour infectious agents.

Litter trays should be of adequate size and depth to allow a cat to dig and to squat comfortably. This will be governed by the number of cats using the tray. Suitable material for litter includes commercial cat litter, waste soda lime crystals, sand, shredded paper and untreated sawdust.

Used litter should be buried deeply, or bagged and sealed for rubbish disposal, in accordance with local by-laws.

As toxoplasmosis can be contracted through contact with cats' faeces, protective care, such as gloves, should be exercised in attending to litter.

6. Breeding

6.1 Need for Desexing

Introduction

Unplanned breeding of cats is not recommended. To prevent unplanned breeding, owned cats – and, where possible, stray/unowned cats in managed colonies – should be desexed.

The reproductive potential of a single female cat is estimated at 300 kittens in her reproductive lifetime. The potential for a male cat is far beyond that. Responsible cat ownership includes having cats desexed at or before puberty.

Recommended Best Practice

Owned cats not kept by a registered breeder for breeding should be desexed at or before puberty.

Healthy stray/unowned cats in managed colonies should be trapped in accordance with the standards as prescribed in the Act, desexed and returned to the colony.

General Information

A cat may reach puberty any time after 4 months of age, and usually between 5 and 7 months of age. Desexing can be safely carried out before the onset of puberty. Early desexing does not adversely affect skeletal maturation, urethral diameter or behaviour in cats. It should be noted that desexing, especially at an earlier age, will reduce the likelihood of some cat behaviours to which humans may object (such as spraying, straying and vocalising).

Veterinarians, pet shops, cat breeders, local councils and animal welfare organisations should continually encourage the cat-owning public to have their cats desexed.

6.2 Pregnancy, Birthing and Lactation

Introduction

For breeders of cats, consideration needs to be given to the frequency at which individual cats are used for breeding and the age at which breeding commences. Age of maturity varies with the breed and the individual cat, and breeders should ensure that the cat is adult and well grown before it is bred.

The availability of new homes for kittens which result from breeding should also be taken into account before breeding.

Recommended Best Practice

Only cats in good health and physical condition and with favourable temperament should be used for breeding. At all times, the health and welfare of the cat should be paramount.

Queens should be a minimum of 9 months of age before breeding.

Studs should be confined at all times.

Breeding should only take place after it has been ascertained that there are suitable homes available for the kittens.

Prior to the queen giving birth, a suitable box for the birthing should be provided in a safe and quiet environment.

General Information

The length of gestation in the cat is 61 – 65 days.

A nesting box should be provided for the queen before birthing, and the bedding material should be replaced after the birth has taken place. Given the opportunity, queens will frequently move their kittens to a new place at about 10 days of age. It should be ensured that the chosen place is warm, dry and safe.

In the later stages of pregnancy, and during lactation, the queen should be fed a complete and balanced diet that meets the nutritional demands of pregnancy/lactation.

While she is feeding the kittens, the queen needs to have access to clean, fresh water at all times. (Also see Minimum Standard No. 3.)

Where birthing is occurring within the house, kittens should be restricted, for their safety, by keeping them within a pen enclosure for the first several weeks of their life.

Studs should be excluded from access to the kittens.

6.3 Removal of Kittens from the Queen

Introduction

Weaning of the kittens from the queen should not be initiated by the breeder earlier than 8 weeks of age, but the kittens can begin to have ready access to moist kitten food from the age of 3 – 4 weeks.

Sufficient, but not excessive, handling of young kittens from the age of 3 weeks will help to socialise the kitten in terms of it later adjusting to a new home. The

essential age for socialisation of kittens is between 6 and 8 weeks, and handling during this period is vital for good sociability in the adult cat.

Minimum Standard No. 6 – Removal of Kittens from the Queen

Kittens made available for sale or rehoming requiring removal from the queen must be in good health and must be more than 8 weeks of age, except where they have been orphaned and cannot be fostered to another queen or where early removal from the queen is deemed necessary by a veterinarian for the purpose of infectious disease control.

6.4 Moving Kittens to a New Home

Rehoming is a stressful time for young kittens. Owners of kittens to be rehomed need to be sure that the kittens are capable of independent life before moving them to new homes. A vaccination/worming programme should be implemented before rehoming (see sections 7.3.1 and 7.4).

When kittens are relocated, it is most desirable that new owners are provided with education concerning care, welfare and the consequences of not desexing the kittens.

7. Health

7.1 Signs of Ill Health

Introduction

Health and welfare are closely associated, and owners have a responsibility to, as far as possible, prevent ill health in their cats and to treat it where it occurs. The health and welfare of the cat should be checked regularly, including observing whether the cat is eating, cleaning and behaving normally.

The signs of ill health may include (but are not limited to):

- Abnormal dullness, lethargy or abnormal agitation/excitement, fitting (seizures)
- An increase or a decrease in thirst and/or appetite
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Persistent bleeding from an orifice (e.g. mouth, nose or anus)
- Bleeding that continues for more than two minutes from a skin wound
- Straining to pass urine or faeces
- Persistent sneezing, coughing or abnormal breathing
- Lameness, unsteady gait, or inability to stand or walk
- Significant weight loss or weight gain, or change in girth of the cat
- Swellings
- Pallor of gums
- Failure to groom
- Persistent scratching or biting of skin, or shaking of head
- Unusual smell from ears or mouth
- Weeping and/or inflamed eyes
- Runny nose.

Minimum Standard No. 7 – Signs of Ill Health

Owned cats, and stray/unowned cats being cared for by a colony carer, which are observed to be showing:

- (i) signs of significant pain, suffering and distress**
- (ii) signs of repeated straining over a continuous period of 30 minutes, as if to pass urine or faeces**
- (iii) signs of continuing significant ill health**
- (iv) signs of rapidly deteriorating health**

must receive urgent veterinary attention or be brought to the attention of an inspector under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector).

Recommended Best Practice

Cats should have an annual health check conducted by a veterinarian.

General Information

Stray/unowned cats are of unknown health status and may pose a disease risk to owned cats. Stray/unowned cats may be carriers of Feline Aids (FIV) or Feline Leukaemia (FLV). Owners of cats which are known to be in contact with stray/unowned cats should obtain advice from their veterinarian on protecting their cat's welfare.

7.2 Diseases Related to Diet

Introduction

A number of specific diseases in cats are caused through inappropriate diet. Even when an owner is feeding a nutritionally balanced diet, food sensitivity diseases can occur that result in skin disease (especially scratching or dermatitis) or in vomiting and diarrhoea. Veterinary advice and investigation may be needed to diagnose and treat the cat.

Cats are particularly susceptible to a lack of Vitamin B1 (thiamine) in their diet. This may be caused through the feeding of dog food or of a cat food that is not complete and balanced or of an all-fish diet, or may be secondary to loss of appetite for several days as a result of some other condition.

The feeding of a diet very high in liver can result, over time, in Vitamin A toxicity and abnormal bone deposition. This may cause severe mobility problems through fusion of the vertebrae.

Cats which do not drink very much may be more susceptible to developing feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) or inflammation of the bladder and urethra. In male cats, this may progress to urethral blockage, which will rapidly lead to death if not treated. Other factors associated with this disease include lack of exercise, obesity and stress.

FLUTD represents a group of diseases, and veterinary investigation is required to ascertain the cause in an individual cat. Around 33% of cats with FLUTD may benefit from dietary management of their condition. Diets are available that have been specially formulated to help these cats. In addition, all cats with recurrent FLUTD should have their dietary fluid intake increased. Such cats should have a plentiful supply of clean, fresh water and may benefit from eating a moist diet.

Recommended Best Practice

Veterinary attention should be sought for any cat which is showing signs of disorientation, a wobbly gait, lethargy, etc which may be caused by dietary deficiencies.

Cats' teeth should be checked at least once a year by a veterinarian for signs of dental decay.

7.3 Prevention of Contagious Disease

7.3.1 Vaccination

Introduction

Cats are most commonly vaccinated against feline infectious enteritis (feline panleukopaenia) and feline respiratory disease (feline rhinotracheitis and feline calicivirus). Vaccines are also available against feline leukaemia and chlamydia, and their use should be discussed with a veterinarian.

Vaccination is an important means of controlling infectious diseases, such as those referred to above, in cats. A particularly susceptible age is before 6 months of age. Maximum protection is achieved by vaccinating the queen prior to mating, and by vaccinating kittens at 8 and 12 weeks of age, followed by a confinement period of a further 2 weeks to allow maximum stimulation of the immune system. Thereafter, an annual veterinary health check is recommended, including an assessment for a vaccination booster. The decision to vaccinate should be based on the assessed risk of an individual cat contracting a particular disease. High-risk situations include boarding catteries, cat shows, multi-cat households and neighbourhoods with a dense cat population.

Recommended Best Practice

Kittens should receive a course of vaccinations from the age of 8 weeks.

All cats should be vaccinated according to veterinary recommendations.

7.4 Parasitic Disease

Introduction

Feline parasites depend on the cat for part of their life cycle. In small numbers they may cause minimal disturbance to the cat, but, if their numbers increase (such as with conditions that reduce the cat's normal grooming behaviour or alter its immune status, and environmental conditions that favour parasite breeding), they may cause significant discomfort. A high parasite load may compromise the welfare of the cat. Individual cats may also develop hypersensitivity to parasites and show extreme irritation even with a very low parasite burden.

Minimum Standard No. 8 – Parasitic Disease

Cats must be treated to prevent internal and external parasite burdens that have the potential to pose a threat to the health and welfare of the cat.

Recommended Best Practice

Kittens should be wormed every 2 weeks, starting at 3 – 4 weeks of age and continuing to 3 months of age.

Cats over 3 months of age should be wormed every 3 months.

Colony carers should regularly worm and control for fleas in managed colonies, at least once a year if possible.

General Information

External parasites that live on the skin of cats include fleas, mites and lice. Their presence may be indicated by excessive grooming, scratching, fur loss, scabs or scale. Fleas or flea dirt (black coils that turn red when moistened with water) may also be seen in the coat.

Fleas are common, especially in warmer areas. Cats are avid groomers, and will remove some fleas from their coat through this activity. Specific treatment is recommended, however, if fleas or signs of irritation from fleas are detected. Very effective and safe treatments, in the form of liquid applications to the skin, are available through veterinary surgeons. Note that fleas infest the cat's environment also, so carpets and bedding should be cleaned and/or treated. Effective treatments in the form of aerosol bombs or spraying with a long-lasting insecticide control both adult and earlier life stages of fleas in the carpet. It should be noted that routine cleaning such as vacuuming does not kill fleas or egg or larval stages.

Long-haired cats may have more difficulty than short-haired cats in effective grooming for reducing flea infestation. Where fur becomes knotted through lack of grooming (by the cat and/or the owner), dense knots and matted areas provide a haven for fleas, and may cause severe discomfort for the cat (see section 7.7).

The ears of cats, especially young cats, should be checked regularly for evidence of ear mites. An infestation may cause excessive scratching of the ears and a dark-brown discharge inside the ears.

Internal parasites, such as intestinal worms, are common and require regular monitoring and treatment. Since queens can transmit roundworm via the milk, kittens should be wormed with an effective roundworm treatment (see Recommended Best Practice 7.4).

7.5 Diseases of the Skin

Introduction

Diseases of the skin may cause considerable stress and distress to the cat. Dermatitis and eczema are common problems in the cat, and there are many

causes including allergies, parasitic diseases, infections, nutritional imbalances and hormonal disorders. As few of these conditions are resolved without appropriate treatment, veterinary advice should be sought so that stress to the cat may be minimised. Delays in seeking help may lead to complications (such as secondary bacterial infections from excessive scratching at a flea bite) and may incur more expense, with additional treatment required to resolve the condition.

Abscesses are a frequent result of wounds caused by fighting that become infected. Such abscesses are very painful and may also result in the spread of potentially life-threatening infection through the body. Therapy usually involves a combination of surgical drainage and antibiotics. Home treatments of abscesses are not recommended, and veterinary assistance should be sought.

Minimum Standard No. 9 – Diseases of the Skin

A cat with obvious swellings, discharges or painful scabs on the skin must receive treatment by a veterinarian or be brought to the attention of an inspector under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector).

Recommended Best Practice

Light-coloured cats should be protected from the threat of skin cancer with the regular application on nose and ears of appropriate animal sunscreen.

7.6 Diseases Transmissible to Humans

Some diseases of cats may present a risk to humans. A full discussion with a veterinarian is recommended to enable the owner of a cat with a zoonotic disease (i.e. a disease transmissible to humans) to make the best informed decision for both the cat and the owner. A misunderstanding about the nature of a disease may cause an owner to seek to have a cat euthanased unnecessarily. It may also be the case, however, that owners are unaware of potential public health risks in owning a cat. Veterinarians, pet shop employees, SPCAs and other animal welfare agencies should take every opportunity to help clients understand any risk in cat ownership and direct them to where appropriate advice can be obtained.

At the same time, the social benefits of cat ownership should not be underestimated. A cat's role in providing companionship, psychological security and tactile stimulus is an important benefit, especially for children and the elderly.

7.7 Care of Claws and Coat

Introduction

Cats are fastidious groomers and, in general, will take good care of their claws and coat. Failure to groom is often a sign of ill health.

The claws of older cats, especially, may become overgrown. Such claws should be trimmed carefully, while avoiding damage to the quick which will result in pain and bleeding.

The declawing of cats to alleviate social or behavioural problems should be contemplated only when retraining has proved ineffective and euthanasia is the only alternative. Declawing of cats is a restricted surgical procedure under the Act, and therefore can only be carried out by a veterinarian.

Short-haired cats usually keep their coats in good condition through self-grooming. Long-haired cats should be regularly groomed to remove excess fur. Persian-type cats should be groomed daily, or mats may form in the coat. Severe matting of the coat results in discomfort for the cat, as the skin beneath the mats may become irritated and inflamed. Mats may provide hiding places for fleas, causing even greater irritation as the cat is not able to groom the parasite out. It is difficult for owners to remove mats, as they may form very close to the skin, so attempts to cut them out may result in accidental cutting of the cat's skin. For this reason, it is generally recommended that a veterinarian perform dematting under general anaesthesia or sedation.

Minimum Standard No. 10 – Care of Claws and Coat

- (a) Cats must not be declawed unless the surgery is recommended by a veterinarian as being in the best interests of the cat's ongoing welfare.**
- (b) The fur of long-haired cats must not be allowed to become so matted as to have the potential to pose a threat to the health and welfare of the cat.**

Recommended Best Practice

Claws should be trimmed if overgrown.

7.8 Care of Older Cats

Introduction

Older cats (over the age of 8 years) may benefit from specially formulated diets.

Some diseases occurring in older cats may be interpreted by the owner as part of the natural ageing process. Owners are not always aware that some changes they associate with age are related to specific diseases that may be managed by treatment and/or nutrition.

Kidney disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, heart disease, cancer and arthritis are some of the serious diseases that can occur in older cats. Weight loss, excessive drinking or urination, increased or decreased appetite and increased

or decreased activity may be seen with these conditions. In such cases, veterinary advice should be sought to determine specific treatment that may be required.

Recommended Best Practice

Cats over the age of 8 years should receive a veterinary check 6-monthly.

Special attention should be given to providing an appropriate diet for the age and health of the older cat.

General Information

A 6-month veterinary check may sound frequent, but is equivalent to a person going to the doctor approximately once every 3 – 4 years.

7.9 Injured Cats

Introduction

Owners and those in charge of cats have a responsibility to, as far as possible, protect their cat from injury and, where injury has occurred, seek veterinary treatment.

Minimum Standard No. 11 – Injured Cats

Owned cats, and stray/unowned cats being cared for by a colony carer, which are observed by their owners/carers to be significantly injured must receive urgent veterinary attention or be brought to the attention of an inspector under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector).

Recommended Best Practice

Cats of unknown ownership which are observed to be significantly injured should receive urgent veterinary attention or be brought to the attention of an inspector under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector).

Cats Injured by Motor Vehicles

Accidental injury to cats while they are crossing roads is not infrequent and there is a recognised moral obligation on the driver of a vehicle who injures a cat to stop and render assistance.

An injured cat may be in severe pain and may bite and scratch at attempts to handle it. The cat should be moved off the road using a blanket or similar, and an attempt made to locate the owner. If the owner cannot be found within a short period of time, the injured cat should be brought to the attention of a veterinarian or an inspector under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector). A severely injured cat in pain should not be left at the roadside.

7.10 Use of Collars

Introduction

The use of collars on cats can serve a number of functions. Good-quality flea collars reduce the flea population, but will not provide sufficient flea control for cats with an allergy to fleas. Collars are a useful way to identify cats, if a disc showing the owner's name and contact details is attached to the collar. The wearing of collars with bells may help prevent predation of wildlife. Magnetic collars, in combination with electromagnetic cat doors, are helpful to restrict access of individual cats to a premises.

It is important that the collar is sufficiently snug around the cat's neck to reduce the possibility of it catching on objects such as vegetation. Only collars that are elasticised or provide a quick-release mechanism are recommended. Collars that are too loose around the neck can be a hazard, as the cat may get a front leg or its lower jaw caught through the collar, with possibly severe consequences. As a guide, two fingers should be able to fit snugly between the collar and the cat's neck.

Minimum Standard No. 12 – Use of Collars

Collars, where used, must be carefully fitted to the cat so that they are neither too tight nor too loose, in order to avoid the risk of injury to the cat.

8. Behaviour Problems

Introduction

Some behaviours that were natural and life-preserving in the cat as a wild species may be seen as “problems” by humans, when performed inappropriately by the cat on the owner’s property. Examples are those behaviours associated with the marking or identifying of the cat’s own territory, such as the clawing of furniture and urine spraying. Since these are instinctual to the species, it is not always possible to eliminate such behaviours once they are established. Animal behaviourists and veterinarians may be able to suggest procedures for retraining. Sometimes, drug treatment may modify a behaviour. Inappropriate urination and defecation may also indicate a medical problem, or may be associated with a cat in a multi-cat household, insufficient changing of the cat litter or difficulty of access to the outdoors.

Aggressive and/or irritable behaviour may also have a medical basis, be age-related or be due to inappropriate handling. Physical punishment of kittens (e.g. for the alleged purpose of toilet training) may result in the development of either excessive timidity or aggression in the cat, and the tendency to bite and scratch the owner.

Recommended Best Practice

Advice should be sought at the early stages of a behaviour problem.

Cats should not be punished by physical means for toileting in inappropriate places.

Cats kept indoors should be provided with a scratching post or pad.

9. Methods of Identification

Introduction

Owned cats are likely to spend some of their time outside of their owner's legal property boundary. For the purposes of control, it is necessary to be able to identify a cat as owned or unowned. Methods of identification include the wearing of a collar and tag, tattooing, ear tipping (for colonies) and microchipping.

Recommended Best Practice

Owned cats should be microchipped.

General Information

Collars that are not fitted properly can result in injury to cats (see section 7.10)

10. Transportation

Introduction

At times, cats may need to be transported by owners in their vehicles. Adult cats may show varying degrees of anxiety when confined in a cat-carry container and transported in a vehicle. To ensure the safety of both the cat and the occupants of the vehicle, and perhaps occupants of other vehicles, cats must be securely contained while being transported in a vehicle.

Minimum Standard No. 13 – Transportation

- (a) While being transported in a vehicle, cats (including stray/unowned) must be carried in a secure container.**
- (b) Cats being transported must have sufficient space within the container to stand, turn around and rest normally.**
- (c) There must be adequate provision for ventilation in the form of multiple holes on at least three sides of the container.**
- (d) The interior of the container must be smooth, with no projections that could cause injury to the cat.**
- (e) Cats must not be left unattended in a vehicle when heat is likely to cause distress to the cat.**

Recommended Best Practice

Cat-carry containers, a blanket or similar, and food and water supply should be on hand to enable evacuation of cats during an emergency.

General Information

Cat-carry containers are most suitably constructed from fibreglass, metal, rigid plastics, weld metal mesh, solid wood or plywood. A cloth covering the container (provided it does not impede ventilation) may help some cats to travel with less stress.

Cats must not be left alone inside a locked vehicle when the weather or length of time in the vehicle could lead to the cat overheating. The temperatures in a closed vehicle in full sun can reach 50 degrees Centigrade in less than half an hour. In a closed container, the temperature of the enclosed cat will rise rapidly, and this will be rapidly fatal.

Kittens which are carried by car, and continue to be transported at regular intervals, will, in general, develop a higher tolerance for travel than cats not introduced to cars at an early age.

Cats being transported over long distances, either by road or by air, have additional requirements. Each cat in a container must have enough space to turn around normally while standing. They must also be able to stand and sit erect, and to lie in a natural position. Ventilation holes should be nose- and paw-proof. A source of water should be provided within the cage.

Cats awaiting loading should be kept in a secure, tranquil and quiet environment and should be sheltered from the elements.

Sedation of cats for transportation is not recommended. Where cats are to be transported over long distances, it is recommended that advice is sought from a veterinarian.

Further information, especially in regard to long-distance travel, may be found in the IATA Live Animals Regulations.

A person wishing to export a cat from New Zealand to any country, including New Zealand dependencies, may do so only under the authority, and in accordance with the conditions, of an Animal Welfare Export Certificate. (This can be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.)

11. Cats and Wildlife

The cat is, by nature, a predator. With the increased awareness of and concern for the diminishing indigenous wildlife of New Zealand, consideration must be given to the potential for the cat to impact on the wildlife of this country. Failure to do this may result, over time, in a backlash against cats. Wildlife warning devices, such as electronic warners and bells, are not as effective as might be hoped in reducing predation.

11.1 Owned and Stray/unowned Cats

Generally, owned and stray/unowned cats within the urban environment do not have a significant impact on wildlife. If cats are well fed, most will kill only small numbers of wild animals.

Responsible ownership of cats will include keeping them indoors between dusk and dawn, a period when predation is at its highest (see Recommended Best Practice 5.1.1).

11.2 Feral Cats

Feral cats may have a significant impact on wildlife, both indigenous and introduced. Predation of pests such as rodents, rabbits and mustelids is seen to be beneficial. However, significant numbers of native birds, reptiles and insects may also be caught and killed.

It is recognised that feral cats, by their very existence in remote and uninhabited areas, make trapping and euthanasia more difficult to undertake. If feral cats in recognised ecologically sensitive areas are required to be culled, this should be done using recognised humane methods.

12. Relinquishing Ownership

While ownership of a cat should be undertaken as a commitment for the entire life of that animal, some situations can occur where it may become necessary to relinquish ownership. Such situations could include relocation, including to rented accommodation where animals are not permitted, and changes in financial or family circumstances, including the death of the owner.

Care should be taken to ensure that the cat is either safely rehomed to a known family member or friend who is prepared to undertake the commitment of ownership, or relinquished to an animal shelter (such as the SPCA) for adoption to a new owner.

It is an offence under the Act to abandon a cat, and an obligation exists for the owner or person in charge to pass the cat into the care of a responsible person or animal welfare shelter (see section 2(2)(c) of this code).

13. Euthanasia

Introduction

Euthanasia is the induction of a painless and rapid death. Where euthanasia has been decided upon, in consultation with a veterinarian, the task will be performed in the most humane method possible.

Owned cats should be euthanased by a veterinarian, preferably by intravenous injection, using a registered drug for the purpose. Cats which are difficult to handle may need to be tranquillised first.

A severely injured or sick cat may be euthanased by a veterinarian, without the permission of the owner, where delay in finding the owner would cause unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress to the cat. A warranted inspector or auxiliary officer under the Act (e.g. an SPCA inspector or auxiliary officer) may also do this; however, it is preferable that euthanasia be performed by a veterinarian if immediately available.

Cats in animal welfare shelters can be euthanased using a standard lethal injection (and, if required, a crush cage to restrain the cat), or carbon dioxide gas (70 – 100%) in a metal cage that has been surrounded by plastic sheeting.

It is inhumane to kill a cat by drowning. Kittens, in particular, have a “diving reflex” that prolongs their distress while drowning.

Minimum Standard No. 14 – Drowning

Cats of any age must not be killed by drowning.

Recommended Best Practice

Cats should be euthanased by a veterinarian or, where they are clearly suffering extreme and unacceptable pain and a veterinarian is not immediately available, by a warranted inspector under the Act.

Cats from unmanaged colonies which cannot be rehomed should be euthanased by a veterinarian.

Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Cats



1. EMACIATED

Ribs visible on short-haired cats; no palpable fat; severe abdominal tuck; lumbar vertebrae and wing of ilia easily palpated.



2. THIN

Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering; lumbar vertebrae obvious; obvious waist behind ribs; minimal abdominal fat.



3. IDEAL

Well proportioned; observable waist behind ribs; ribs palpable, with slight fat covering; abdominal fat pad minimal.



4. HEAVY

Ribs not easily palpated, with moderate fat covering; waist poorly discernible; obvious rounding of abdomen; moderate abdominal fat pad.



5. GROSSLY OBESE

Ribs not palpable, under heavy fat cover; heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, face and limbs; distension of abdomen, with no waist; extensive abdominal fat deposits.



(Source: Purina Pet Care Centre)

Appendix II: Defences

Strict Liability

In the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 committed after 19 December 2002, evidence that a relevant code of welfare was in existence at the time of the alleged offence and that a relevant minimum standard established by that code was not complied with is rebuttable evidence that the person charged with the offence failed to comply with, or contravened, the provision of the Animal Welfare Act to which the offence relates. (See sections 13(1A), 24(1) and 30(1A) of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, as amended by the Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2002)

Defences

It is a defence in the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 if the defendant proves that there was in existence at the time of the alleged offence a relevant code of welfare and that the minimum standards established by the code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. (See sections 13(2)(c), 24(2)(b) and 30(2)(c))

If a defendant in a prosecution intends to rely on the defence under section 13(2)(c) or 30(2)(c), the defendant must, within seven days after the service of the summons, or within such further time as the Court may allow, deliver to the prosecutor a written notice. The notice must state that the defendant intends to rely on section 13(2) or 30(2) as the case may be, and must specify the relevant code of welfare that was in existence at the time of the alleged offence, and the facts that show that the minimum standards established by that code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. This notice may be dispensed with if the Court gives leave. (See sections 13(3) and 30(3)).

The strict liability provisions and the defence of equalling or exceeding the minimum standards established by a code of welfare apply to the following offences –

Failing to provide

Section 12(a) A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails to comply, in relation to the animal, with section 10 (which provides that the owner of an animal, and every person in charge of an animal, must ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of the animal are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge).

Suffering animals

Section 12(b) A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails, in the case of an animal that is ill or injured, to comply, in relation to the animal, with section 11 (which provides that the owner of an animal that is ill or injured, and every person in charge of such an animal, must, where practicable, ensure that the animal receives treatment that alleviates any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal).

Section 12(c) A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, kills the animal in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Surgical procedures

Section 21(1)(b): A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, acts in contravention of or fails to comply with section 15(4) (which provides that no person may, in performing on an animal a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure, perform that surgical procedure in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.).

Transport

Section 22(2) A person commits an offence who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any provision of subsection (1) (which provides that every person in charge of a vehicle or an aircraft, and the master of or, if there is no master, the person in charge of, a ship, being a vehicle, aircraft, or ship in or on which an animal is being transported, must ensure that the welfare of the animal is properly attended to, and that, in particular, the animal is provided with reasonably comfortable and secure accommodation and is supplied with proper and sufficient food and water.)

Section 23(1) A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, confines or transports an animal in a manner or position that causes the animal unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Section 23(2) A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or the person in charge of, an animal, permits that animal, without reasonable excuse, to be driven or led on a road, or to be ridden, or to be transported in or on a vehicle, an aircraft, or a ship while the condition or health of the animal is such as to render it unfit to be so driven, led, ridden or transported.

Ill-treatment

Section 29(a) A person commits an offence who ill-treats an animal.

Inspection of premises

Inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 have the power to enter any land or premises (with the exceptions of dwellings and marae), or any vehicle, aircraft or vessel, at any reasonable time, for the purpose of inspecting any animal—*Section 127(1)*.

Inspectors include officers of MAF Special Investigation Group, inspectors from approved organisations (e.g. Royal New Zealand SPCA, AWINZ) appointed by the Minister, and the Police.

Appendix III: Codes of Welfare

[Note: This section to be updated at time of publication.]

Codes of Welfare

- Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens: Fully Housed) Code of Welfare No. 1. 2003
- Animal Welfare (Rodeos) Code of Welfare No. 2. 2003
- Animal Welfare (Pigs) Code of Welfare No. 3. 2005
- Animal Welfare (Layer Hens) Code of Welfare No. 4. 2005
- Animal Welfare (Zoos) Code of Welfare No. 5. 2005
- Animal Welfare (Circuses) Code of Welfare No. 6. 2005

List of Regulations and Circular Deemed to be the Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2002

- Clauses 1(a) and 2, and the heading preceding clause 2, of Part 7 of the Schedule 1 of the Fish Export Processing Regulations 1995 (SR 1995/54)
- Regulation 80(1) of the Game Regulations 1975 (SR 1975/174)
- Regulation 76 of the Meat Regulations 1969 (SR 1969/192)
- The Slaughter of Stock, Game, and Poultry Regulations 1969 (SR 1969/194)
- New Zealand Fishing Industry Agreed Implementation Standards 003.4 Live Eels and Rock Lobsters Circular 1995

Published Codes of Recommendations and Minimum Standards

- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Sea Transport of Sheep from New Zealand, September 1991 Code No. 2
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Sheep, July 1996 Code No. 3
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Dairy Cattle, June 1992 Code No. 4
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Deer During the Removal of Antlers, July 1992 Code No. 5, Amendments August 1994, August 1997
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Horses, February 1993 Code No. 7
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Bobby Calves, July 1997 Code No. 8
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments, August 1993 Code No. 9
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Slaughter at Licensed and Approved Premises, July 1996 Code No. 10

- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Sale of Companion Animals, September 1994 Code No. 11
- The Animals Protection Act and Its Implications for Those Responsible for Farm Animals, February 1994 Code No. 12
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals Transported within New Zealand, November 1994 Code No. 15, Amendments June 1996, August 1998
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals at Saleyards, May 1995 Code No. 16
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Emergency Slaughter of Farm Stock, December 1996 Code No. 19
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Dogs, May 1998 Code No. 20
- Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Ostrich and Emu, September 1999 Code No. 21

Published Guidelines

- Guidelines for the Welfare of Stock from which Blood is Harvested for Commercial and Research Purposes, April 1996
- Guidelines for the Welfare of Yearling Fallow Deer During the Use of Rubber Rings to Prevent Antler/Pedicle Growth, September 1997
- Guidelines for the Welfare of Red and Wapiti Yearling Stags During the Use of Rubber Rings to Induce Analgesia for the Removal of Spiker Velvet, September 1998

<p>Codes and Guidelines may be obtained from:</p> <p>Executive Co-ordinator Animal Welfare MAF Biosecurity Authority Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry P O Box 2526 WELLINGTON</p> <p>Tel: 04 474 4129</p> <p>Email: animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz</p>	<p>or can be inspected at:</p> <p>ASB House Reception Level 3 101 – 103 The Terrace WELLINGTON</p>
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Codes and Guidelines are available on MAF's website. The web page address is:
<http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/animal-welfare>