

DRAFT

Code of Practice for the Care of Dogs in New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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(Note: The New Brunswick SPCA invites comments from the public on this draft document. Direct comments to spca@netnet.nb.ca)

The New Brunswick *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* specifies in section 19 that “a person who has ownership, possession or care and control of an animal shall provide the animal with food, water, shelter and care in accordance with the regulations.” The *General Regulation* then further elaborates on standards for animal care.

This Code of Practice has been developed by the NBSPCA in consultation with other stakeholder groups to provide additional education and assistance to those responsible for the care of dogs in New Brunswick. It outlines a set of *Recommended Standards*, as well as a set of *Best Practices* which provide a superior standard of care for dogs. This Code of Practice will be considered by NB SPCA Animal Protection Officers in determining whether a dog is being provided proper food, water, shelter and care.

1. Outdoor Protection and Safety

Recommended Standards:

- 1.1 A dog that is kept outside for a period of time in weather conditions that might reasonably be expected to threaten the animal’s health or well-being, given its physical characteristics and apparent breed or breed mix, should be provided with:
 - (a) a structurally sound shelter for its use at all times, that
 - (1) is constructed with non-toxic materials; is weather-proofed, water-proofed, insulated, equipped with adequate dry and clean bedding; and is sufficiently elevated off the ground to ensure that the floor is kept dry;

- (2) is, large enough to allow the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down, but small enough to retain the animal's body heat;
 - (3) has an entrance that must be just large enough for the dog to enter easily, and is covered by an appropriate flap during cold weather, or is constructed with an entrance and hallway that are separated from the sleeping area;
 - (4) has the entrance kept clear of the accumulation of snow and ice;
- (b) an adequate amount of clean, fresh, drinking water as required given weather conditions, and not less than once a day; water and food bowls are to be secured or designed so as to prevent spillage or tipping;
 - (c) shade, when required, in order to protect from injurious heat;
 - (d) a shelter area that:
 - (1) is kept in a clean and sanitary state with regular removal of excreta;
 - (2) is in a place which does not pose a high risk of injury to the dog; and
 - (3) is not more than 35 meters from a dwelling house and in visual range.

1.2 If a pen is provided for the dog while outdoors, the pen should

- (a) provide at least nine square meters of floor space for one dog and one additional square meter of floor space for each additional dog; for multiple dogs the average space per dog should be at least 4 square meters per dog.
- (b) not have a floor which consists of wire mesh, metal, or wood, unless the wood is covered with an impervious non-toxic coat or cover; and
- (c) be placed in a properly drained area and be cleaned regularly.

Best Practices:

1.3 The size of a doghouse and its construction should conform to the Shelter Guidelines included in Appendix A. Also see the Ontario SPCA Ideal Doghouse for an example of a recommended outdoor shelter. http://www.ontariospca.ca/resource/publication/Brochures/Ideal_Doghouse.pdf. (Note: The dimensions of the Ontario SPCA Ideal Doghouse may need to be adjusted as appropriate in order to allow large breed dogs to lie down in a fully extended position.)

- 1.4 For cleaning and sanitizing purposes, dogs and puppies should be removed from the area while it is being cleaned and returned only after the area is dry. Also, dogs and puppies should be protected from contact with injurious cleaning substances.
- 1.5 Clean, fresh, unfrozen drinking water should be available at all times.
- 1.6 Females in heat should not be housed in primary enclosures with males.
- 1.7 Penning of a dog is not recommended as a permanent method of confinement.
- 1.8 Pens should have a minimum height one meter greater than the height of the tallest dog in a standing position.
- 1.9 Pens should be in a good state of repair and made of materials not toxic to the dog.

2. Tethering – Physical Requirements

Recommended Standards:

- 2.1 A dog that is tethered should be tethered in a way
 - (a) that does not endanger its health, safety, or well-being;
 - (b) that its tethering area is cleaned regularly to prevent the accumulation of excreta;
 - (c) that the tether used
 - (1) is at least five times the length of the dog;
 - (2) allows the dog to move safely and unrestricted (except by its length);
 - (3) is equipped with a swivel at the collar end;
 - (4) allows the dog access to food, water, and shelter.
- 2.2 No dog should be tethered using a device that
 - (a) is a choke collar, prong type collar, head halter or no-pull harness, or which does not allow two adult fingers to be inserted between the collar and the dog's throat;
 - (b) has weights attached or contains links that are more than one-quarter inch thick;

- (c) is long enough to allow the animal to move outside of its owner's property.

3. Restrictions on tethering

Recommended Standards:

3.1 No dog should be tethered:

- (a) between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. for more than 30 minutes (*Note: this is a regulatory prohibition in the Province of New Brunswick*);
- (b) unattended, if in heat, or nursing, except to relieve herself;
- (c) for an extended period of time if the dog is under six months of age;
- (d) in a place that is more than 35 meters from a dwelling house of an individual responsible for the care of the dog; or
- (e) in a place that is within 150 meters of a school.

Best Practices:

3.2 Restrictions on tethering.

- (a) Tethering should not be used as a primary method of confinement for any dog, and any occasional tethering should take place only between dawn and dusk.
- (b) Because of their innate social instincts and needs, dogs kept mainly as companion animals should be housed primarily in a dwelling house.
- (c) Any dog not primarily housed in a dwelling house should be housed in an outdoor pen or fenced area that is provided with a suitable shelter or dog house and conforms to the required standards of care. Areas equipped with invisible fences or electronic constraint devices should not be regarded as pens for this purpose.

4. Social Enrichment and Exercise

Recommended Standards:

- 4.1 Dogs should be provided with access to exercise that is adequate and appropriate to that dog as well as daily interaction with people or other dogs or both.

Best Practices:

- 4.2 Dogs should be
- (a) exercised by a human twice daily for a period of at least twenty minutes;
 - (b) provided with toys, balls, objects to chew so that a dog has enough to do so that it does not become distressed or bored; and
 - (c) properly socialized for the well-being of the dog and the people around it, using training methods based on positive reinforcement and the avoidance of methods involving fear, distress, pain, or anxiety.

5. Extreme temperature protection*Recommended Standards:*

- 5.1 Dogs should be kept in temperatures as close as possible to the comfort zone of the breed, considering age and health status. Older, infirm dogs and puppies require a warmer and more comfortable environment. Consideration should be given to the individual dog, taking into account factors such as age and overall health.
- 5.2 All dogs kept outdoors in winter for any period longer than thirty minutes should be provided with access to a weather-proof shelter with bedding and insulation, as recommended in section 1.1.
- 5.3 When the outside temperature reaches minus five degrees centigrade, small and medium-sized dogs should be brought into a heated environment. A heated environment means inside a house, a heated shed, or a cattle barn warmed by the body-heat of livestock.
- 5.4 When the outside temperature reaches minus ten degrees centigrade, large dogs should be brought into a heated environment (inside a house, a heated shed, or a cattle barn warmed by the body-heat of livestock).
- 5.5 Large dogs of northern or heavy-coated breeds or breed-mixes may be housed outside at temperatures lower than -10 degrees centigrade, if they are provided with access to good shelter with bedding and insulation, have been acclimated to the cold, are in general good health and body-condition, and are neither elderly in terms of its breed nor younger than six months of age.

- 5.6 Regardless of size or breed or acclimatization, all dogs should be brought into a heated environment or provided with additional protection against cold on every occasion in which Environment Canada has issued an Extreme Cold Alert for the area.

Best Practices:

- 5.7 When the outside temperature reaches minus five degrees centigrade, all dogs should be given access to a heated environment (meaning: inside a house, a heated shed, or a cattle barn warmed by the body-heat of livestock).

6. Standards of Care – Miscellaneous

Recommended Standards:

- 6.1 Dogs should be fed a balanced diet suitable for their individual needs and so as to maintain a stable weight that is neither over nor underweight for its age, level of activity, sex, breed or breed-mix and state of health.
- 6.2 If a dog is housed primarily in a dwelling house or other building, and that dog is confined in a cage, indoor pen, or other enclosure inside that building, then the cage, pen, or enclosure should be sufficient in size and height:
- (a) to permit each animal to stand normally to its full height;
 - (b) to permit each animal to turn around easily;
 - (b) to permit each animal to move about easily for the purpose of posture adjustments;
 - (c) to permit each animal to lie down in a fully extended position; and
 - (d) to allow an additional 10% space for each nursing puppy.
- 6.3 If a dog is housed primarily in a dwelling house or other building, and is confined in a cage or pen in that house or building, then the time allowed for the animal to be out of the cage or pen for the purpose of exercise and socialization should conform to the recommendations of the latest version of *A Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations*, published by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

Best Practices:

- 6.4 Cages or pens in dwelling houses or other buildings should not be used as permanent confinement for dogs.
- 6.5 Cosmetic procedures such as tail-docking, ear-cropping, or vocal cordectomy should not be carried out on dogs.

- 6.6 In an effort to control over-population, spay and neutering of all dogs is encouraged. Spaying and neutering may affect the health and behaviour of a dog, however, and dog owners should consult with a veterinarian in making the decision.
- 6.7 Euthanasia of dogs, except under emergency circumstances, should be performed by a licensed veterinarian. (*Note: humane euthanasia is a statutory requirement in New Brunswick.*)
- 6.8 Dogs should receive regular veterinary examination and care, including recommended inoculations, especially against rabies. (*Note: vaccination against rabies is a regulatory requirement in New Brunswick.*)
- 6.9 Breeding and whelping, as well as the care of puppies and nursing females, should conform to the recommendations of the latest version of *A Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations*, published by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. [Note: The CVMA *Code of Practice* will be referenced by citation and website.]
- 6.10 All dogs should be microchipped to ensure they are permanently identified, and owner contact details need to be kept up to date with the microchip registry.
- 6.11 Prospective owners should choose a breed/type most suitable to their lifestyle and circumstances.
- 6.12 A daily health check should be conducted that includes the dog's physical condition, signs of ill health, and that the dog is eating, drinking, toileting and behaving normally.
- 6.13 Dogs should be groomed regularly, especially breeds with a long or thick coat. Severe matting of the coat is not acceptable and may require a veterinarian or experienced groomer to deal with this.
- 6.14 Dogs should not be allowed access to poisons or chemicals used in the house, garden, or workplace. These substances should be stored away from areas to which a dog may have access as these can be attractive to dogs.
- 6.15 Dogs should be adequately restrained when travelling inside a vehicle. Unrestrained dogs can cause accidents and should never be allowed in the vicinity of the driver. In the case of an accident, an unrestrained dog may become a projectile and can damage itself and/or the occupants of the vehicle. (*Note: It is prohibited by statute to transport a dog unrestrained in the back of an open truck in New Brunswick.*)

- 6.16 Dog collars should be examined daily for any sign of rubbing or injury. A collar needs to be tight enough that it cannot easily slip off but not so tight that it rubs or chokes the dog.
- 6.17 There should be active supervision when around young children – both for the safety of children and dogs. Family, friends, and children should be taught how to interact with the family dog. This includes teaching children to leave dogs in peace when the animal is eating, sleeping, or sick or injured.

Appendix A

SHELTER GUIDELINE

Definitions

“height” measurement from top of the head to ground in sitting position.

“shoulder height” measurement from top of the shoulder to ground in standing position.

“length” measurement from chest to back of hindquarters in standing position.

“full length” measurement from the end of the nose to the back of hindquarters when the nose, the head and the back are align or dog is in sleeping side position.



