

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RETAILERS

PET CARE CHARTER

THE AIMS

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to:-

- promote responsible pet ownership and welfare
- develop staff training programmes
- improve trading standards
- promote a better understanding between customer and retailer
- simplify complaints procedures
- provide a conciliation service when complaints cannot be easily resolved

THE CODE

Each member will display his membership sticker at the entrance to the premises.
Each member will honour the code in both letter and spirit.
Appropriate action will be taken by the Pet Care Trust's Board of Directors against any member who breaches the Code.

THE LIVESTOCK CODE

All members selling livestock must be in possession of a current Pet Shop Licence.
The licence or a copy of the licence, should be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position.

N.B. For security reasons the licence should not display the licence holder's home address.

ACCOMMODATION

Animals shall at all times, whether displayed indoors or outdoors, be kept in accommodation suitable with respect to construction, size, temperature, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness.
Animals shall not be exposed to draughts of extreme temperature.
Housing shall be constructed of non-porous materials or be appropriately treated.

Animals shall not be kept in housing in such a way that they can be interfered with by other animals or the public.

All livestock, for sale, must be readily accessible and easy to inspect.

Accommodation shall be cleaned as often as necessary to maintain good hygiene standards, consistent with the rate of stock turnover.

Where accommodation is on a tiered system, water, food or other droppings shall not be allowed to enter the lower housing.

All accessories provided in the accommodation shall be suitable for the species.

EXERCISE FACILITIES

Suitable and sufficient facilities must be available where appropriate. For example, in the case of puppies, an exercise pen should be provided.

REGISTER OF ANIMALS

A livestock purchase register must be maintained for all species.

A livestock sales register must be maintained for:-

- i) puppies
- ii) kittens
- iii) psittacines
- iv) species contained in the Schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (as modified)

*N.B. This can be by cross reference to an invoice file
The purpose of the register is to ascertain the source of livestock and for emergency contact of purchaser.
The name and telephone number of the purchaser is, therefore, sufficient.
Other animals need not be listed in the sales register.*

STOCKING NUMBERS AND DENSITIES

The maximum numbers of animals to be stocked on the premises will be determined by the accommodation available. As a guide to good practice please refer to the following tables.

Table 1 Cage Birds

Table 2 Small Mammals

Table 3 Ornamental Fish

Table 4 Other Species

HEALTH, DISEASE AND ACCLIMATISATION

All stock must be in good health as far as can be reasonably determined without veterinary inspection.

Any sick or injured animal must receive appropriate care and treatment without delay.

N.B. This may include euthanasia.

Inexperienced staff must not treat sick animals unless under appropriately experienced supervision.

Veterinary advice should be sought whenever necessary.

Any animal with an obvious, significant abnormality which would materially affect its quality of life must not be offered for sale. When in doubt veterinary advice should be sought.

All animals must be allowed a suitable acclimatisation period before sale.

The facility to isolate sick animals must be provided.

All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease.

Each litter of puppies and kittens must be housed separately from every other litter.

All necessary precautions must be taken to prevent the introduction to the premises, or harbourage of rodents, insects and other pests.

N.B. 'Rodent' and 'insect' excludes livestock for sale or for feeding.

No animal which is suffering from or could reasonably be suspected of having come into contact with any other animal suffering from any infectious or contagious disease, or which is infested with parasites shall be brought into or kept on the premises unless effectively isolated.

FOOD AND DRINK

Animals must be supplied with adequate amounts of food and drink, appropriate to their needs, and at suitable intervals.

All foods must be suitable for the species concerned.

Food and drink receptacles must be constructed and positioned to minimise faecal contamination.

A sufficient number of receptacles must be provided and cleaned at regular intervals.

FOOD STORAGE

All food, excluding livefoods intended for feeding to livestock on the premises, must be stored in impervious closed containers.

The containers and equipment used for feeding must be kept in a clean condition.

OBSERVATION

All livestock must be attended to at regular intervals, appropriate to the species, in no circumstances less than once in 24 hours.

EXCRETA AND SOILED BEDDING

All excreta and soiled bedding must be stored in impervious containers with close fitting lids.

Excreta and soiled bedding should be removed from the premises on a regular basis, at least weekly, and disposed of to the satisfaction of the appropriate local authority.

All containers must be kept in clean condition.

TRANSPORTATION

When receiving stock, the licensee must make every effort to ensure that it is transported in a suitable manner.

Any livestock received or consigned shall be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation.

For air transportation the IATA guidelines must be followed.

TRANSPORTATION CONTAINERS

Livestock must be transported or handed to purchasers in suitable containers.

SALE OF LIVESTOCK

All livestock sold must be in good health and free from obvious parasitic infection as far as can be reasonably determined without veterinary inspection.

No mammal shall be sold unweaned or, if weaned, at an age at which it should not have been weaned.

In the case of non-mammals they must be capable of feeding themselves.

No animal should be sold to any person under the age of 16 years who is unknown to the licensee unless that person is accompanied by a parent or legal guardian or provides appropriate written consent.

Subsequent sales to a juvenile less than 16 years (but over 12 years) of age who is known to the licensee can be carried out in the absence of a parent or legal guardian or appropriate written consent, provided that the licensee is satisfied as far as possible that:-

- i) the parent/guardian would not object to the acquisition.
- ii) the juvenile is sufficiently knowledgeable as to the needs, care and nature of the species acquired.
- iii) the juvenile's intention towards the acquisition is consistent with the well being of the animal concerned.

DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS

When dangerous animals are kept, the cages must be of a secure construction. A fine wire mesh, glass or plastic safety barrier must be incorporated into the cage system.

Licensees selling animals on the Schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act should: (a) inspect the purchaser's licence or the local authority's written permission to keep such an animal; (b) inform the issuing authority of the details of the purchase.

PET CARE ADVICE

Pet Care Trust pet care leaflets or other similar written instructions should be made available to customers where appropriate at the time of purchase.

Purchasers of accessories should, where necessary, be given proper advice as to their maintenance and use.

The Pet Care Trust Pet Care Manual or other appropriate reference books must always be available for use by staff.

STAFF TRAINING AND LIVESTOCK KNOWLEDGE

No animal should be stocked or sold unless at least one member of staff is familiar with the welfare of, and competent in the care of the animal.

In respect of new applications (not renewals) at least one member of staff working at the licensed premises must hold the City and Guilds Pet Store Management Certificate, or some other appropriate qualification, or must be in the course of training and obtain the qualification within two years of the licence being granted.

The licensee must formulate a written training policy for all permanent staff, and will be required to demonstrate that systematic training is carried out.

CITY AND GUILDS

A home study course, developed and operated by Pet Care Trust, is available for all staff to study for the City and Guilds Pet Store Management Certificate (776). Staff should be given every encouragement to take this examination.

BOARDING OF ANIMALS

Members may only board those species of animals for which they are licensed to sell.

N.B. Boarding of dogs and cats require an additional licence under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act.

FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS

Suitable emergency precautions and written procedures shall exist and be made known to all staff, including the arrangements for the evacuation of livestock.

N.B. The general maxim of 'people first' is good advice.

Entrances and exits must be clear of obstructions at all times.

Fire extinguishers must be provided and sited as approved by the local Fire Protection/Prevention Officer.

The fire-fighting equipment must be maintained in good working order.

The licensee or a designated keyholder must at all times be within reasonable distance of the premises and available to visit the premises in case of emergency.

A list of keyholders must be lodged with the local police and fire brigade.

In the interest of animal welfare the following notice must be displayed at the front of the premises. "In case of emergency telephone 999".

When pet shops are sited within other premises, the licensee or keyholders must have access at all times to the premises containing the livestock.

SALE OF GOODS ACT AND SUPPLY OF GOODS AND SERVICES ACT 1982 AND OTHER RELATED LEGISLATION

All transactions should be conducted within the terms of these Acts.

The goods must be:
- correspond with their description
- be of satisfactory quality
- be fit for the purpose

If a customer insists on making a purchase against the member's advice he should be warned at the time of purchase that his rights under the Act might be limited.

Full and clear information must be given upon request regarding goods, services and livestock.

All services provided must be undertaken with reasonable care and skill and, unless a specific time has been agreed beforehand, within a reasonable time.

The customer must be prepared to pay a reasonable charge.

A customer cannot query a price which has been agreed beforehand.

The Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 does not apply in Scotland, but similar provisions exist under common law.

PRICING

Misleading price offers must not be used.

Discounts offered should be based on fair comparisons.

Any credit facilities offered must be clearly stated in writing, and members must abide by the terms of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. Members are reminded that a licence may be required.

COMPLAINTS

The member will make every effort to resolve any dispute between himself and the customer. All staff must be suitably trained to deal with complaints, but should difficulties arise the matter should be referred to a senior member of staff.

At all times the person dealing with the complaint should adopt a courteous manner, act with tact and handle the problem sympathetically. The problem should be settled speedily if at all possible.

If the complaint cannot be resolved the following procedures are available:-

Local Advice

Both the member and the customer have the right to contact the Trading Standards Department or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Conciliation Service

If there is still no agreement Pet Care Trust can be asked to offer a conciliation service. Details of the complaint should be sent to the Pet Care Trust's office for consideration by the Pet Care Trust Conciliation Panel. There is no charge for this service.

Arbitration

Should the problem still remain unresolved an independent arbitrator can be appointed. The arbitration procedure relies on documentary evidence and none of the parties or their representatives may attend in person.

Pet Care Trust will pass all documents to the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, who will in turn advise the parties concerned of the material evidence in their possession. Both parties will then be asked for any further relevant written information to be sent to them.

The Institute will select an arbitrator from an approved list and will arrange for the arbitration to be carried out in a speedy manner.

Parties to arbitration will be required to pay a registration fee. Customers who are successful with their claims will have the fee refunded.

Alternatively the customer may seek redress in County Court, or Sheriff Court in Scotland.

MEMBER SERVICES

The Trust shall provide such services as may be deemed appropriate to its members upon payment of the annual membership fees.