

**NOVA SCOTIA SPCA  
STANDARDS OF CARE  
PUBLICATION DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2010  
UPDATED: N/A**

**BACKGROUND**

**The Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (Nova Scotia SPCA):** Protecting animals from cruelty since 1877, the Nova Scotia SPCA is a registered charity, comprised of 11 Branches, which relies primarily on volunteers and donations to fund animal protection; care and rehabilitation; advocacy; and humane education. The Animal Cruelty Prevention Act mandates the Society to enforce animal cruelty laws, making the Nova Scotia SPCA unique among animal welfare organizations in the province. For more information, visit [www.spcans.ca](http://www.spcans.ca).

This document outlines the Nova Scotia SPCA minimum standards of care for companion animals for the province of Nova Scotia and serves as the basis for education and enforcement. These standards are based on Codes of Practice for the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and other regulations currently in force throughout Canada.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

***THE FIVE FREEDOMS***

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
3. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
4. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
5. Freedom to express normal behaviour – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and companionship.

***PREFACE***

There are a great variation of physical and behaviour patterns for dogs and cats, which can be met by a variety of management practices. The SPCA shares the CVMA's assertion that an animal's welfare can be safeguarded in more than one way.

"Humane Care is an all-inclusive term and does not simply embody the principle that one does not cause pain to an animal deliberately. Instead, one must strive to ensure that all avoidable pain, distress, discomfort and factors causing anxiety and suffering are eliminated from the conditions under which dogs [and cats] are housed, bred and raised." *Canadian Veterinary Medical Association*

## ***PROVISION OF FOOD AND WATER***

All animals should be provided with high quality (certified and regulated), nutritious, contaminant-free food and free access to adequate potable water, which is checked at least twice daily.

Considerations include:

1. Close proximity of food, water and elimination areas may inhibit eating and drinking.
2. In communal areas, confident animals may restrict access to food and water for other less confident animals.
3. Stress can inhibit feeding and drinking.
4. Diet must be appropriate for the condition and lifestyle of the animal (including activity and health considerations).
5. Animals should be fed a minimum of once per day and some breeds or certain conditions may require smaller multiple meals per day.
6. Change in diet should be introduced over 4 to 5 days.
7. Stainless steel food and water dishes allow for the most thorough removal of all food and water film. Bowls should be washed between uses and disinfected before use by another animal. Bowls should be of a type (or secured) so as not to tip over.

## ***HOUSING, ACCOMMODATION and ENVIRONMENT***

The site needs to be suitable to the needs of the species, breed, age and disposition. An environment or housing should neither harm nor cause any undue strain or stress and should promote and not restrict normal patterns or behaviour. It should also offer comfort, shelter and security and should provide for the means to control environmental conditions, such as pollution, noise, temperature, wind, precipitation and humidity.

Considerations include:

1. Temperature
  - a. Temperatures should be as close as possible to the comfort zone for the breed, age and health status. For indoor animals the optimal temperature range is 15 degrees Celsius to 27 degrees Celsius with humidity not exceeding 55%. Temperatures should not be permitted to drop below 10 degrees Celsius and humidity should not be permitted to exceed 70%.
  - b. Aged, young or infirmed animals should not be housed outdoors.
  - c. Outdoor shelters must be provided for dogs that spend in excess of 20 minutes outside at a time without supervision. An exercise area must be provided that also affords protection from direct sunlight and inclement weather. Or if a dog is confined, exercise by access to a run or by walking on a leash for at least 20 minutes, twice per day is required.
  - d. Ventilation must be provided for enclosures where temperatures reach over 27 degrees Celsius – drafts, chilling, and excessively high humidity promote respiratory disease.
  - e. All reasonable means should be taken to protect an animal from exposure to harsh and hazardous weather.
2. Environmental Enrichment
  - a. Provision of species appropriate social interaction.

- b. Access to toys, companions, daily exercise.
- c. Opportunities to engage in a wide range of natural behaviours.
- 3. Structure, Enclosures and Containment
  - a. Construction must be safe, fire resistant and free from injury causing materials.
  - b. Lighting must be adequate and space must be lit for a minimum of 8 hours daily.
  - c. Materials must be easy to clean, durable, impervious to moisture and rodent resistant.
  - d. Tethering is not an acceptable means to contain. It may be permitted for limited periods during certain conditions (i.e. temporary and supervised).
  - e. A shelter must provide protection from heat and cold, direct sunlight, rain, wind, sleet and snow. Clean, dry bedding must be provided. Enclosures must consist of four sides, a roof and floor – wire flooring is unacceptable. A flap is required on the door. Animals must be properly acclimatized to seasonal and regional temperatures.
- 4. Space
  - a. An animal must be permitted to stand normally to full height, turn around easily, and move about easily for the purpose of adjustment or grooming and to lie down in a fully extended position.
  - b. Outdoor space must be safe, free of debris, not slippery and excrement should be removed daily from enclosures.
- 5. Sanitation
  - a. An environment or housing should be clean, dry and sanitary.
- 6. Transportation
  - a. No person shall transport a dog on a public road outside the passenger compartment of a vehicle in any space intended to carry a load unless:
    - i. The space is enclosed or has a side and tail rack to a height of 1.17 metres or 46 inches extending vertically from the floor or;
    - ii. The dog is protected by a secured cage, or a prescribed animal restraint device.
- 7. Supervision and Interaction
  - a. No dog will be left unattended for longer than 16 hours at one time. Dogs and cats will not be left unattended in a boarding facility for longer than 16 hours.
  - b. Caregivers should provide training and humane care by providing regular exercise.
  - c. Animals with access to outdoors must be provided with a method of identification such as tags with contact information.

## **HEALTH CARE**

If an animal is sick, injured, in pain or suffering, prompt and adequate veterinary care must be provided.

Considerations include:

1. Animal records should be kept handy and current, inclusive of medical records and vaccinations records.
2. Regular grooming, appropriate to the breed must be carried out.
3. Parasite control must be instituted inclusive of appropriate deworming. External parasites require immediate treatment.
4. Daily socialization must be a regular component of health care to ensure against behaviour that develops from unsocialized animals such as fear of people, fear biting, difficulty in handling and aggression (dogs).
5. No animal should be sold, adopted or purchased prior to 8 weeks of age.

6. The method for euthanasia must be humane. It must be rapid, painless and minimize fear and anxiety.

## ***ANIMAL WELLNESS***

### *Animal Fighting*

No person shall conduct, promote or participate in any contest involving fighting between animals. No person shall train an animal to fight or have possession of equipment or structures that are used in animal fights or in training animals to fight.

### *Euthanasia*

When euthanasia is performed, it should be carried out by a licensed veterinarian, a veterinary technician, or certified individual, preferably under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. The method employed should produce a rapid and painless death and be appropriate for the species and its condition.

### *Breeding Mills*

No person shall operate a high or low-volume, sub-standard breeding operation. A Mill is characterized as having sub-standard health and environmental conditions; sub-standard animal care, treatment and socialization; practices which lead to genetic defects and hereditary disorders; erroneous or falsified certificates of registration, pedigrees and or genetic background.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***CODE OF PRACTICE FOR Canadian Kennel Operations***

[http://canadianveterinarians.net/Documents/Resources/Files/93\\_Kennel%20Code%20\(ENTIRE\)%20July%202007.pdf](http://canadianveterinarians.net/Documents/Resources/Files/93_Kennel%20Code%20(ENTIRE)%20July%202007.pdf)

### ***CODE OF PRACTICE FOR Canadian Cattery Operations***

[http://canadianveterinarians.net/Documents/Resources/Files/1315\\_CatteryCodeEnglishFINAL%20June8'09.pdf](http://canadianveterinarians.net/Documents/Resources/Files/1315_CatteryCodeEnglishFINAL%20June8'09.pdf)

### ***PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION Animal Protection Act***

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/PDFs/annual%20statutes/2008%20Fall/c033.pdf>FEDERAL

### ***LEGISLATION Criminal Code of Canada***

[http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/C-46/page-7.html#anchorbo-ga:l XI-gb:s 445\\_1](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/C-46/page-7.html#anchorbo-ga:l XI-gb:s 445_1)