

JERSEY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE WELFARE OF BREEDING CATS

THE CODE

The Code of recommendations for the welfare of cats kept for breeding is intended to encourage those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. These recommendations are additional to recommendations for boarding catteries which are likely to be relevant in large breeding establishments. It takes account of five basic needs, known as the “Five Freedoms”.

The Five Freedoms are:

1. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST

- by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;

2. FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT

- by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;

3. FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE

- by prevention or by rapid diagnosis and treatment;

4. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

- by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals’ own kind;

5. FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS

- by ensuring conditions and treatment to avoid mental suffering.

HOUSING

1. A kitting pen should be provided for each individual queen from the time of kitting until time of weaning. This pen should be at least 91 cm long, 76 cm wide and 76 cm high. It should be of adequate size and contain a litter tray, water and food bowls and a box that is either disposable or capable of being disinfected, for containment of kittens.

Walls

2. The walls with which cats may come into contact should be of smooth impervious materials, capable of being easily cleansed. Where concrete or other building blocks or bricks are used, they should be sealed to be smooth and impervious, and resealed as necessary.

3. There must be no projections or rough edges liable to cause injury.

4. Junctions between vertical and horizontal sections should be covered. If impractical in existing premises, joints should be sealed.

5. Full length and height sneeze barriers should be provided where the gap between units is less than 625 mm (2ft).

Floors and Concrete Bases

6. The concrete base and floors of all building and units should be of smooth, impervious materials, capable of being easily cleansed. In new constructions, this should incorporate a damp proof membrane.
7. Floors of all units and individual exercise areas should be constructed and maintained to prevent pooling of liquids.

Ceilings and Roofing

8. Ceilings should be capable of being easily cleansed and disinfected.
9. All exercise areas and the external safety passages should be covered with mesh or equivalent.

Doors

10. Doors must be strong enough to resist impact and scratching and must be fitted to be capable of being effectively secured.
11. Where metal edging is used, this must not present a risk of injury to the cat.
12. Construction should prevent and control the spread of infectious disease particularly by droplet infection.

Windows

13. All windows which pose a security risk must be escape proof at all times.

Drainage

14. Kitchens should be connected to mains drainage or an approved, local sewage disposal system.

Lighting

15. During daylight hours light must be provided to exercise and sleeping areas. Where practical this should be natural light.
16. Adequate supplementary lighting must be provided throughout the establishment.

Ventilation

17. Ventilation must be provided to all interior areas without the creation of excessive localised draughts in the sleeping area.

Maintenance

18. Maintenance and repair of the whole establishment must be carried out regularly and recorded.

SLEEPING AND EXERCISE FACILITIES

19. In new constructions, each unit should have a sleeping area and an adjoining exercise area, which is exclusive to that unit.
20. Suitable clean bedding must be provided and must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected, if it is to be reused. Bedding material should be checked daily and maintained in a clean, parasite-free and dry condition.
21. Units should open into secure areas so that cats are not able to escape from the premises.

22. Exercise areas to which there should be direct and voluntary access, must not be used as sleeping areas.

KITCHEN FACILITES

23. Hygienically constructed and maintained facilities should be provided for the storage and preparation of food for the cats.

24. Where fresh and cooked meats are stored, refrigeration facilities must be provided. Food contamination must be avoided.

25. A sink with hot and cold water must be provided for washing food equipment and eating and drinking bowls. A separate wash-hand basin with hot and cold water should be provided for staff use.

26. Containers must be provided for storage of foods. These should be vermin proof and capable of cleaning and disinfection.

ISOLATION FACILITIES

27. Isolation facilities should be provided where there is more than 1 cat.

28. When any cat is showing signs of or has been diagnosed with an infectious disease, it must be isolated.

29. These isolation facilities must comply with the other requirements but must be physically isolated from the main units. The separation should be a minimum 3m (10ft).

30. Adequate facilities and practices to prevent spread of infectious disease between the isolation unit and other units must be in place. A disposable overall or boiler suit for use solely in the isolation unit is recommended. Hands must be washed after leaving the isolation facilities.

MANAGEMENT

31. Cats must be adequately supplied with suitable food, drink and bedding material and inspected at appropriate intervals.

Supervision

32. Cats must be inspected at intervals not exceeding 4 hours, throughout the day and more frequently when kitting.

Temperature

33. Heating facilities must be available and used if required.

34. Extremes of temperature should be avoided.

35. There must be some part of the sleeping area accessible to the queen, where the minimum temperature is 15° C and the maximum temperature is 26° C

36. The environmental temperature for kittens from birth to 24 hours of age should be 30°-33° C. When the kittens reach 2-4 days of age the temperature should be reduced to 26°-30° C. The queen should have access to a cooler area.

Food and water

37. Cats must be adequately supplied with suitable food. Clean water must be available at all times and changed daily.

38. Eating and drinking bowls must be capable of being easily cleansed and disinfected to prevent cross-contamination. They must be maintained in a clean condition and cleaned or disposed of after each meal.

Disease Control, Vaccination and Worming

39. All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious or contagious diseases and parasites. Your veterinary surgeon's advice should be sought and followed.

40. All cats should be vaccinated against feline infectious diseases. Your veterinary surgeon's advice should be sought and followed.

41. Veterinary advice must be sought when a cat shows signs of disease, injury or illness. Any advice given by a veterinary surgeon must be strictly followed

STAFF TRAINING

42. A written training policy should be provided. Staff training records should be kept.

EMERGENCIES / FIRE PREVENTION

43. Appropriate steps must be taken for the protection of the cats in case of fire or other emergencies. Use of a smoke detector is recommended.

44. A proper emergency evacuation plan and fire warning procedure must be drawn up in consultation with the Fire Safety Officer and posted on the premises.

45. Fire Safety equipment must be provided in accordance with advice given by the Fire Safety Officer

46. All electrical installations and appliances must be maintained in a safe condition. There should be a residual current circuit breaker system on each block of units.

47. Heating appliances must not be sited in a location or manner where they may present a risk of fire, or risk to cats.

48. Precautions must be taken to prevent any accumulation of materials which may present a risk of fire.

49. There must be adequate means of raising the alarm in the event of fire or other emergency.

TRANSPORT

50. All vehicles used by the establishment for the transportation of cats must be regularly serviced and clean. They must be capable of being fitted with or contain secure units for the safe transportation of cats and be provided with adequate ventilation. All vehicles must be secure and should not be left unattended when transporting cats, except for loading and unloading.

51. All appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the cats are provided with suitable food, drink and bedding material when being transported to or from the breeding establishment.

HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THE BREEDING QUEEN

Mating

52. A maiden queen should be allowed to have at least 3-4 calls before her first mating i.e. she should be mature.

53. A maiden queen should preferably be at least 12 months of age at the time of birth of her first litter.

Maximum Number of Litters

54. Queens should not give birth to more than six litters of kittens in their life time and should not be mated after the age of 7-8 years.

Time between Litters

55. There should be at least 9 months between the queen giving birth to a litter of kittens.

RECORDS

56. Accurate records should be kept for each breeding queen providing the identification of the queen, date of birth, address where she is kept, breed, date of mating and details of sire. Licensed cat breeders must also keep a record of any litters, including the sex of the kittens, date of birth, weight, description and total number in the litter. The record must also show the details of sale and name and address of purchaser and should be managed in accordance with the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018:

57. It is recommended that all cats and kittens are microchipped by a veterinary surgeon.

LEGISLATION

58. The following legislation is of relevance:

- Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 2004
- Animal Health (Jersey) Law 2016
- Veterinary Surgeons (Jersey) Law 1999
- Community Provisions (Welfare of Animals during Transport) (Jersey) Regulations 2013

06-02 AWC (31/01/07) (legislation amended 19/10/17)