

Dacorum Borough Council

Standard conditions applying to Cat boarding establishment licences

(derived from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's model conditions published November 2013)

General conditions

Condition	Explanatory notes
1. Licence Display	
1.1. The licence or a copy of the licence must be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position at the premises.	<i>For security reasons, the licence will not show the licence holder's home address.</i>
2. Accommodation	
<p>2.1. The cattery must be built in compliance with good building practice, structurally sound with a damp proof membrane, and constructed of robust, safe, durable and chemical free materials, and maintained in good decorative order and repair.</p> <p>2.2. There must be no sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards which present risk of injury to a cat, and any timber, if used, must be of good quality, well maintained and any scratched areas sealed or over clad.</p> <p>2.3. Windows must be escape proof at all times, and doors must have secure latches or other closing devices. All wire mesh/fencing must be strong and rigid and kept in good repair to provide an escape proof structure.</p> <p>2.4. Storage areas must be dry and free from vermin.</p> <p>2.5. Electrical equipment must be installed in line with current legislation and maintained to a safe condition.</p>	<i>The cattery must be safe, secure and free from hazards, to minimise any chance of injury to a cat or escape of a cat.</i>
2.6. There should be effective drainage to ensure there is no standing water in the cattery; there should be no pooling of liquids, and waste water must not run off into adjacent pens. Any drain covers must be so designed and located to prevent toes/claws being caught.	<i>Drainage must be effective to ensure there is no standing water in the cattery, as this can be a reservoir for infectious agents.</i>
2.7. There must be an enclosed safety corridor/entrance lobby at the exit of each cat unit with an escape proof, lockable scratch and impact resistant door to minimise risk of escape. The area must be sufficiently lit, and provide solid doors or sneeze barriers between facing units.. The safety corridor must not be used as an exercise area.	<i>An enclosed area (safety corridor/entrance lobby) is essential to ensure that if cats manage to slip out from their individual cat unit, they are still kept safely inside the cattery.</i>
2.8. There must be a safe, secure, waterproof roof over all of the cat units (sleeping accommodation and run) and the safety corridor. For the run, materials used must be capable of filtering UV light and providing adequate shade.	<i>Roofing provides protection from the weather and prevents escape of cats. In a timber construction it is strongly recommended that the run should also be roofed with wire mesh, as an added precaution against escape. The mesh should extend over the top of the run under the roof and be attached firmly to the framework.</i>
2.9. Cats from different households must not share cat units.	

Condition	Explanatory notes
2.10. There must be adequate lighting in the cat unit.	<i>Lighting enables adequate observation of the animals and for cleaning and working in the cattery.</i>
2.11. Ventilation and humidity: Ventilation must be appropriate all year round (avoiding cold draughts in winter and cool in hot weather), and localised draughts in the sleeping accommodation must be avoided.	<i>Fresh air is essential for the maintenance of good health and well-being as well as limiting the spread of infectious disease. Proper ventilation removes heat, dampness, odour, airborne microbes and pollutant gases such as ammonia.</i>
2.12. All interior surfaces to which cats have access must be durable, smooth and impervious, non-slip, easy to clean and disinfect, and maintained in good decorative order and repair.	<i>For disease prevention units must be easy to clean and disinfect.</i>
2.13. Each unit must clearly display relevant information about the cat within that unit, and have a securable, full height door for easy access, and be designed to enable safe and easy cleaning of all parts.	<i>Each unit needs to be easily accessible and provide a means of identification for each cat.</i>
2.14. Litter trays that are impermeable and easy to clean and disinfect, or disposable litter trays, and safe and absorbent litter material, must be provided at all times. Trays must be regularly and appropriately cleaned. 2.15. There must be 60cm separation between the litter tray, resting place and feeding area, to enable cats to sit rest and eat away from areas where they urinate and defecate.	<i>Cats are meticulous animals and a dirty litter tray may deter use. Natural behaviour is to scratch in loose material (litter), to dig a hole or cover waste. The tray should be large enough (average size is 30 x 42 cm (12" x 16")) to let the cat turn around and the litter deep enough (a minimum of 3 cm is recommended) to allow digging activity. Loose sawdust, shredded or sheet newspaper, or soil, are not considered acceptable as litter material.</i>
2.16. For full height walk in sleeping accommodation, the following minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved: One cat: minimum area of 0.85 m ² and height of 1.8m Up to two cats: minimum area of 1.5 m ² and height of 1.8m Up to four cats: minimum area of 1.9 m ² and height of 1.8m 2.17. For penthouse sleeping accommodation, the following minimum areas and dimensions must be achieved: One cat: minimum area of 0.85 m ² and height of 1m Up to two cats: minimum area of 1.1 m ² and height of 1m Up to four cats: minimum area of 1.7 m ² and height of 1m	<i>Cats need separate sleeping accommodation which in most cases (except some indoor catteries) must be separate from the run and provide somewhere for the cat to hide away. The sleeping accommodation must be large enough to allow cats to move and lie comfortably and provide enough space to spread resources.</i>
2.18. The ambient temperature in the cat sleeping accommodation must be monitored, and kept above an absolute minimum of 10°C, with the provision of removable heat pads or bedding to provide a temperature of 15° 2.19. Heaters must be installed and maintained in a safe condition, and sited so as not to present a risk of burning or electrocution to cats or humans, or a risk of fire, and open flame appliances must not be used. 2.20. There must be a policy in place for dealing with high temperatures and keeping cats cool.	<i>Cats like warmth and some indoor cats are used to high ambient temperatures. In a cattery the cat needs an adequate ambient temperature and additional heating facilities if this cannot be guaranteed at times of excessively cold weather. Breed, body condition, medical condition, coat and age can affect an individual's ability to maintain its body temperature.</i>

Condition	Explanatory notes
<p>2.21. The sleeping accommodation must be clean, draught free and contain bedding materials which are easy to clean and disinfect, or are disposable.</p>	<p><i>Bedding is important to help animals regulate their body temperature, to give traction and to keep animals comfortable. Old or infirm cats can have difficulty rising if surfaces are slippery, and old, very young or infirm animals may have difficulty regulating their body temperature.</i></p>
<p>2.22. A cat must have access between the sleeping accommodation and run (eg a cat flap).</p>	<p><i>A cat flap allows free access to the run while maintaining indoor temperature. It can be locked if necessary.</i></p>
<p>2.23. In case of Fire or other emergencies, the proprietor must hold a written emergency plan (agreed by the local authority) which must be on display and known to staff, and a contingency plan should the premises be destroyed or uninhabitable.</p> <p>2.24. Premises and activities must be risk assessed (including fire). Risk assessments must be recorded and relayed to and understood by all staff.</p> <p>2.25. Fire fighting equipment must be provided, correctly maintained in good working order (with evidence of maintenance checking), and easily accessible. Fire exits must be clearly marked and access left unrestricted. The premises must comply with current legislation with regards to electricity and gas (if connected).</p>	<p><i>Appropriate steps need to be taken for the protection of the animals in case of fire and other emergencies. This should include instructions on where staff and cats are to be evacuated to in the event of emergencies such as fire or flooding. An emergency telephone list should include fire, police and vets. Fire and electrical safety certificates should be available for inspection.</i></p>
<p>3. Exercise Facilities</p>	
<p>3.1. The exercise run must be roofed, large enough to allow cats to play and exercise with a raised shelf area large enough for a cat to lie on. The run must have a smooth, impervious and easily cleanable floor and scratchproof surfaces.</p> <p>3.2. Communal exercise areas must not be used.</p>	<p><i>The exercise run must be large enough to allow cats to play/exercise. Shelves or raised areas are important to allow cats to rest high up. Shelving must be able to be kept clean, be large enough for cats to lie on (usually between 0.75 and 1.5 m above the ground) and accessible.</i></p>
<p>4. Register requirements</p>	
<p>4.1. A register must be kept of all cats boarded and available to key members of staff and to local authority inspectors if requested. The following information should be recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of arrival and departure. • Name, sex, description of cat and microchip number. • Number of cats sharing from same household. • Name, address, phone number and email of owner (including emergency contact details). • Name, address, email and phone number of emergency local contact (who is able to take the cat if necessary) • Cat's veterinary surgeon and relevant medical history. (Any medical treatment must be recorded and visible to prevent mis-dosing) • Cat's diet and relevant requirements. • Consent forms eg veterinary treatment, consent to share or separate cats if needed, record of baskets/toys etc left at the cattery (Check vet consent forms i.e. own vet or designated vet if not in area). 	<p><i>A register must be kept of all cats boarded and available to key members of staff and to local authority inspectors if requested. Records should be backed up and records kept for a minimum of 24 months.</i></p> <p><i>It is also useful to know if cats are insured, should problems occur.</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of vaccination. Record of weight of cats boarded for longer than 2 weeks (to be weighed on a fortnightly basis). Older cats and kittens to be weighed weekly. 	
5. Food and Drink	
<p>5.1. Clean fresh food and water should be available at all times, and must be provided in clean, non-porous or disposable containers</p> <p>5.2. Water must be changed daily or more regularly if it is visibly soiled.</p> <p>5.3. Food and water must be offered in separate bowls and both must be positioned well away from the litter tray.</p> <p>5.4. One feeding bowl must be provided per cat, and adequate water bowls must be provided for multi-cat units.</p> <p>5.5. Food intake must be monitored daily and any problems recorded.</p>	<p><i>Fresh clean water and a suitable diet are basic nutritional requirements for physical health.</i></p> <p><i>Water is essential for all cats. It is especially important for those fed on dry food. Cow's milk should not be fed to cats because many cats have lactose intolerance.</i></p> <p><i>Wide water bowls allow cats to drink without bending their whiskers.</i></p> <p><i>Cats have very specific dietary needs which can vary, dependent on a number of factors (i.e. age, health status, activity, weight). However, all cats require a well-balanced, meat-based diet to stay fit and healthy. Ideally cats should be fed several small meals per day. Kittens, or cats with additional needs, will need more frequent feeding.</i></p> <p><i>The feeding of raw food diets is not recommended due to the risk of bacterial and parasite contamination and the public health risk. Cats should not remain inappetent (not eating) for longer than 2 days without seeking veterinary advice.</i></p>
6. Health	
<p>6.1. All cats must be weighed upon entry and exit from the cattery, observed regularly throughout the day for signs of illness/injury, and visited by the proprietor or responsible person at regular intervals (of no more than 4 hours apart during the working day) or as necessary.</p> <p>6.2. Any signs of ill health or unusual behaviour must be recorded and advice promptly sought if required.</p> <p>6.3. Presence or absence of faeces and urine in trays must be noted daily. Any signs of abnormalities in excreta must also be noted or acted upon as appropriate.</p> <p>6.4. Drinking and eating habits must be monitored and any problem investigated</p>	<p><i>In order to keep cats healthy the proprietor needs to have an organised system for registering and monitoring all cats at the cattery.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended that a late-night round be carried out to check on all cats, heating etc.</i></p> <p><i>The well-being of the boarded cat is paramount. It is recommended that all cats are weighed on entry and exit from the cattery. This allows the proprietor to monitor any changes and provides information should clients challenge the cat's condition on their return. This is especially important for older cats and kittens. Geriatric, ill or debilitated cats should also be monitored more closely for appropriate management.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended that cats that are boarded for longer than 2 weeks are weighed every 2 weeks, and older cats and kittens weighed weekly, and records kept.</i></p>
<p>6.5. An up-to-date veterinary health record showing current vaccinations against feline parvovirus, (feline infectious enteritis)</p>	<p><i>There must be a policy for cats being boarded to have vaccinations against</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
<p>(FIE) and against feline respiratory viruses (feline herpes virus and feline calicivirus) must be inspected upon entry to the boarding establishment.</p> <p>6.6. Vaccination (including boosters) must have been completed, at the very least, 2 weeks before the cat's arrival in order to ensure maximum protection, and records of dates of flea and worm treatment undertaken by the owner prior to entry should be kept.</p> <p>6.7. Homoeopathic vaccination shall not be acceptable.</p>	<p><i>appropriate diseases (Occasionally there will be veterinary advice on a specific cat regarding vaccination and its health status and this should be taken into account).</i></p> <p><i>If owners have treated their cats for worms and fleas before entry to the cattery, the proprietor should note when this occurred and what products were used.</i></p>
<p>6.8. A veterinary practice must be appointed for the establishment. The name, address and telephone number of the establishment's veterinary service must be displayed in a prominent position for staff.</p> <p>6.9. When a cat is suspected of being ill or injured a veterinary surgeon must be contacted for advice immediately. Any instructions for treatment given by a veterinary surgeon must be strictly followed with further advice sought if there is ongoing concern.</p> <p>6.10. Medicines must be stored safely, securely, at the correct temperature and labelled correctly according to manufacturer's instructions. Any unused medications must be returned to the owner or prescribing vet.</p>	<p><i>Access to veterinary care is vital for the cat, should it be required.</i></p> <p><i>If medication is necessary, it should only be used for the cat for which it is prescribed and following a veterinary surgeon's instructions.</i></p>
<p>7. Hygiene and Disease Control</p>	
<p>7.1. Suitable non-toxic cleaning products must be used in line with the manufacturers recommended guidelines for use, which are effective against the pathogens, (especially feline parvovirus (FIE) and ringworm) for which the cats are at risk and under the conditions present in the environment in which they are used.</p> <p>7.2. There must be cleaning and disinfecting routines in place for day-to-day management of the cats and for ensuring a cat unit and all equipment specifically used within that unit is cleaned and disinfected effectively before a new cat comes in.</p> <p>7.3. Litter trays must be emptied and cleaned and disinfected at least once a day, or more frequently as necessary.</p> <p>7.4. Beds and bedding material must be checked daily and be maintained in a clean, dry and parasite-free condition.</p> <p>7.5. Drinking vessels must be changed/cleaned and disinfected at least once a day.</p> <p>7.6. Grooming equipment, toys and scratch posts must either be cleaned and disinfected between use on different cats, or be disposable. If provided by the owner, it must only be used on that cat and must be sent home with the cat.</p> <p>7.7. Hygiene protocols must be observed between handling cats. Hands must be washed/ disinfected or hand sprays or alcohol gel used between handling of each cat.</p>	<p><i>Proper cleaning and disinfection helps to reduce the spread of infectious disease to both animals and people. Cats are particularly susceptible to poisoning from phenolic compounds (those that turn cloudy when added to water), therefore these must not be used.</i></p>
<p>7.8. Standard operating procedures must be in place and followed to prevent spread of disease, and staff trained in these procedures.</p> <p>7.9. Protective garments must be changed and laundered with an appropriate disinfectant/disposed of immediately after handling a cat with a suspected infectious disease.</p>	<p><i>Cats are vulnerable to a range of serious infectious diseases, therefore disease control and rapid response to any signs of illness is critical.</i></p> <p><i>The potential for infectious disease problems escalates where many cats are</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
<p>7.10. Where work with rescue cats or breeding cats is also undertaken, this must be kept completely separate, and extra precautions taken to prevent the spread of disease.</p> <p>7.11. When there is any cause for concern regarding the health status of a cat, that cat must be handled last and the unit must be cleaned after all the others.</p> <p>7.12. Cats must remain in their assigned unit and not be moved to other units or to a holding unit for cleaning purposes, except for moving to an isolation facility.</p>	<p><i>kept together and a cat's immune system can also be affected by stress.</i></p> <p><i>As outlined elsewhere, construction materials and equipment need to be easy to clean and disinfect</i></p> <p><i>No cats should be allowed in the safety corridor or to share an exercise area (unless they come from the same household).</i></p> <p><i>Infectious agents are spread in various ways –</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>– Feline leukaemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) need direct contact between cats, which should be impossible in the boarding situation.</i> <i>– Cat flu viruses such as feline herpesvirus [FHV], feline calicivirus [FCV], and other respiratory pathogens such as Bordetella bronchiseptica, are spread in sneeze droplets, on hands, clothes, shoes, equipment and environment.</i> <p><i>Feline parvovirus (aka feline infectious enteritis (FIE)) can be spread on hands, clothing and shoes, litter trays and environment, and can remain in the environment for a long time.</i></p> <p><i>The source of feline parvovirus (FIE) is faeces from an infected cat and several other agents are spread via contact with other cats' faeces/litter trays and include Coronavirus, Salmonella and Campylobacter etc.</i></p> <p><i>Ringworm spores can remain infectious in the environment for prolonged periods of time.</i></p> <p><i>Preventing cat-to-cat contact, ensuring excellent hygiene protocols and management protocols to minimise stress can reduce the risk of disease spread.</i></p> <p><i>The movement of people through the cattery should be minimised and supervised.</i></p> <p><i>Rescue cats should be handled last.</i></p>
<p>8. Isolation Facilities</p>	
<p>8.1. The isolation area must be self contained with appropriate separate cleaning supplies, clothing feeding and water bowls, litter trays, litter and a dedicated cat basket, to deal with the isolation of suspected infected cats.</p> <p>8.2. Sanitation protocols must be adhered to, including the washing/disinfection of hands between handling cats, to avoid the transmission of disease.</p> <p>8.3. Any isolated cats must be checked regularly and unless a separate person is caring for them, they should be visited after the other cats.</p> <p>8.4. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for barrier nursing and information must be provided for staff.</p> <p>8.5. In emergency cases, such as admission of unvaccinated cats because of owner hospitalisation, there must be provision to be</p>	<p><i>All establishments must have a means of providing isolation that will allow for the care of sick cats which develop signs of infectious diseases, to minimise the risk to other cats.</i></p> <p><i>In many establishments the cat is taken straight to the vet (boarding establishments are advised to check with the vet whether this service is available). If not, isolation protocols must be observed.</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
able to place these animals in isolation.	
9. Behaviour	
<p>9.1. The behaviour of individual cats must be monitored on a daily basis and abnormalities or changes noted and acted upon if necessary. Cats must be able to access different levels within the unit and be given the opportunity for play and exercise.</p>	<p><i>Good welfare depends on meeting both the mental and behavioural needs of cats, as well as their physical needs. How a cat behaves can indicate how successfully an individual is coping in its environment.</i></p> <p><i>Physical and mental health can affect cat behaviour. Cats are intelligent active creatures but changes can upset them, as can being off their own territory. Some cats can become stressed or bored in a boarding situation. This can lead to poor appetite, shedding viruses or greater susceptibility to disease. Staff should be appropriately trained to recognise common behaviours and behaviour changes. A cat should never be punished as this is likely to make it more nervous or scared. A regular routine will help cats to predict what is going to happen.</i></p>
<p>9.2. A hiding place must be provided for cats in the sleeping accommodation</p>	<p><i>Hiding is a behaviour that cats use to help them cope with changes in their environment. Cats hide to avoid interactions with other cats or people, or stressful situations. Providing cats with places to hide can reduce stress and can be as simple as providing a cardboard box, an igloo-type bed or other structure within the unit)</i></p>
<p>9.3. Any toys provided must be safe and be disinfected between use in the establishment, or disposed of. If provided by the owner toys must be kept within that cat's unit and used solely for that cat and returned to the owner and the end of the cat's stay.</p>	<p><i>Encouraging cats to play can be a good way of keeping them active. Cats are playful animals (but individuals vary in their desire to play) and enjoy playing with toys (especially those which mimic prey), and with people. Cats have a need to express the innate predatory behaviour which is natural for them and therefore show most interest in toys that mimic prey. Environmental enrichment such as changing toys regularly, can reduce boredom.</i></p>
<p>9.4. Cats must be provided with suitable facilities for scratching that are able to be disinfected between use for different cats, or disposable. If provided by the owner it must be kept within that cat's unit and used solely for that cat and returned to the owner and the end of the cat's stay.</p>	<p><i>Cats are highly motivated to show scratching behaviour and naturally use objects to scratch to mark their territory, strengthen their muscles and sharpen their claws. Cats often prefer scratch posts tall enough for the cat to use fully stretched.</i></p>
<p>9.5. Cats must not be exposed to excessive noise of barking boarded dogs or other excessive/continuous noise.</p>	<p><i>Cat hearing is more sensitive than human hearing and thus noise levels uncomfortable for humans are likely to be very uncomfortable for cats. Excessive noise contributes to adverse</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
	<p><i>behavioural and physiological responses. Cats are adversely affected by the sound of barking dogs. The cattery environment should be as calm and quiet as possible with noise producing equipment located as far away from animals as possible.</i></p>
<p>9.6. A Standard Operating Procedure must be in place explaining how to ensure the health and welfare of long-term stay cats.</p>	<p><i>Occasionally cats stay in a boarding establishment for periods over 3 weeks and these cats require special consideration such as environmental enrichment, regular health checks and extra attention from staff)</i></p>
<p>10. Company</p>	
<p>10.1. Cats from different households must not share a unit, nor exercise runs or an exercise area either at the same time or sequentially.</p>	<p><i>(Note: Most adult cats will only be friendly to siblings or certain other cats they live with. Strange cats are usually avoided and the presence of other cats can be very stressful especially if cats with whom they are not familiar or do not like cannot be avoided. Housing cats at high densities increases the potential for them to be stressed.. Where possible cats must be able to avoid seeing other cats by being provided with hiding places and translucent barriers between units).</i></p>
<p>10.2. Cats must be always be handled humanely and appropriately to suit the requirements of the individual cat.</p>	<p><i>Most cats enjoy and benefit from human company, but prefer to interact with people on their own terms. Cats socialised to humans can find human company stimulating and may show signs of stress when this interaction is decreased. However, other cats will prefer minimum contact. Cattery staff should find out from the owner and monitor each cat to ascertain how much human contact it wants and adapt to provide this. A cat should never be forced to interact with a person/people, and a facility should be provided for a cat to avoid people should they wish. Scruffing of cats (picking up a cat by the scruff of its neck) should not be done except as an absolute last resort.</i></p>
<p>10.3. For any multi-cat unit (cats from the same home) cats must be monitored and consent obtained from the owner for separating cats, should problems arise (e.g. cats fighting or 'stressed').</p> <p>10.4. There must be multiples of all resources (food and water bowls, litter trays, sleeping areas (warmed if required), beds and hiding places depending on the number of cats, to ensure that some cats cannot monopolise resources and prevent the others from accessing them.</p> <p>10.5. Separate feeding bowls (not double feeders) and several sources of water must be provided for each cat if multiple cats are housed.</p>	<p><i>Proprietors have a responsibility to monitor units where more than 1 cat is housed. Even though these cats originate from the same household, cats sharing a home may not necessarily get on well, especially when confined. Therefore proprietors must monitor cats to ensure that they are not experiencing stress/distress/aggression from another cat. Only cats from the same household can share a unit.</i></p>

Condition	Explanatory notes
11. Transportation of animals	
<p>11.1. Any transport legislation must be complied with.</p> <p>11.2. Cats must be secured in durable carrying baskets any time they are transported/carried outside the cat unit</p> <p>11.3. All vehicles and equipment must be kept clean and disinfected after each collection or delivery. Cats must not be left in vehicles except for transportation.</p>	<p><i>Transportation can increase risk for cats, both of disease (from unclean vehicles or carriers) or of escape. A vehicle can be viewed as an extension of the premises and therefore the same principles of hygiene, care and disease control apply. If the journey is long, appropriate resources must be provided.</i></p>
12. New Build	
<p>12.1. For new builds, or replacing or adding to parts of an existing establishment, new build guidelines provided by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health should be followed.</p>	