

**SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 439.15**

**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR OPERATING A  
BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT FOR  
CATS AND DOGS REGULATIONS**

2nd April, 2014\*

*LEGAL NOTICE 243 of 2013.*

**1.** (1) The title of these regulations is the Minimum Standards for Operating a Boarding Establishment for Cats and Dogs Regulations. Title and scope.

(2) These regulations lay down the minimum standards for boarding establishments in Malta.

**2.** For the purpose of these regulations: Interpretation.

"the Act" means the Animal Welfare Act; Cap. 439.

"animal" means pet cats and dogs unless otherwise stated;

"the Director" means the Director responsible for the Veterinary Service and includes, to the extent of the authority given, any officer authorised by him, in writing, to act in that behalf for any of the purposes of the Act;

"establishment" means any premises, including a private dwelling, where accommodation for animals is provided on a commercial basis;

"enclosure" means any confined space within which animals are kept.

**3.** (1) No person may operate an animal boarding establishment without a licence. Licensing of establishments.

(2) Any person operating a boarding establishment for animals or intending to operate a boarding establishment for animals shall apply for a licence with the Director at least two months before the activity takes place.

(3) Licence applications are to be submitted using the form in Schedule A. This application has to be endorsed by the nominated veterinary surgeon responsible for the boarding establishment who has to place his signature and rubber stamp in section 4 of the application at Schedule A.

(4) (a) The Director shall conduct an inspection of the establishment to determine whether or not the conditions of these regulations are being complied with.

(b) If these conditions are met, the Director shall issue a licence for the activity, but otherwise the Director

\*see regulation 1(3) of these Regulations, as originally promulgated.

shall stipulate corrective measures as necessary. The Director shall suspend or prohibit the commencement or continuation of the use of the establishment and thereby retrieve the licence.

(5) The licence, or a copy of the licence, shall be displayed in a prominent position on the premises.

(6) Licences are renewed annually following an inspection by the Director.

(7) Any alterations to the structure of the establishment shall be declared to the Director before these alterations take place. The Director shall then determine whether these alterations are acceptable or not. If accepted, the establishment shall be provided with modifications to its existing licence.

(8) The species of animals authorised to be kept in the establishment shall be specified in the licence.

Licensing of  
personnel.

4. (1) The persons taking care of the animals must have relevant qualifications acceptable to the Director.

(2) Licences shall only be issued to persons of good conduct and persons who have never been convicted of cruelty to animals under the Act or any other crime involving public order where the minimum term of imprisonment exceeds six months.

(3) The Director shall not accept any licence applications from any persons under the age of eighteen and no such licence may be issued or given to such person.

(4) The licence holder is to ensure that all staff employed working in the establishment have sufficient knowledge and experience of the species of animals in the establishment to ensure the animals' health and welfare.

Animal records.

5. (1) Records of all animals boarded shall be kept. The information kept shall include the following:

- (a) date of arrival;
- (b) name of animal, any identification system, such as microchip number or tattoo;
- (c) pet licence number;
- (d) description, breed, age and gender of animal;
- (e) name, address, telephone number and identity card number of the owner or keeper;
- (f) name, address, telephone number and ID number of contact person while boarded;
- (g) name, address, telephone number and ID number of animals' veterinary surgeon;
- (h) expected and actual date of departure;
- (i) health, welfare and nutrition requirements;
- (j) permissions for animals sharing enclosures;
- (k) authorisation for veterinary treatment;

- (l) details of vaccination and veterinarian's endorsement;
- (m) written permission from owner for a visitor in substitute of owner;
- (n) visitors' book.

(2) Records shall be kept for a minimum period of three years and made available to the Director during inspections or on demand.

6. (1) Boarding establishments may only board animals, which have received the necessary vaccinations laid down in regulation 9(2). Boarding conditions.

(2) No animals, other than those specified in the licence, are to be boarded in the establishment.

(3) No other unauthorised animals shall be allowed in the establishment.

7. (1) Animals shall at all times be kept in an accommodation suitable to their species with respect to construction, size, temperature, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness. All accommodation shall be kept in good repair. Accommodation and equipment.

(2) The detailed obligatory specification of animal enclosures for main and isolation accommodation are attached in Schedule B for cats and in Schedule C for dogs.

(3) Enclosures shall be constructed in a way as to prevent the escape of animals. Suitable equipment for the capture of escaped animals shall be present in the establishment.

(4) Enclosures shall be designed so that animals cannot be harmed, injured or poisoned. They shall be constructed of non-porous material or be appropriately treated, in particular:

- (a) all exterior wood shall be smooth and treated against wood rot and only non-toxic products shall be used;
- (b) all internal surfaces used in the construction of walls, floors, partitions, doors and doorframes shall be durable, smooth and impervious. There shall be no projections or rough edges which are likely to cause injury to the animal;
- (c) fencing material shall be secure and safe.

(5) Animal enclosures shall allow for easy inspection. In the case of housing cats in cages on top of each other, the top cages shall be placed in such manner that the floor of the top cage is easily visible.

(6) Enclosures must open on to secure areas to prevent the escape of animals. In the case of housing cats, access to the secure areas has to be through a double door lock.

(7) Accessories which are placed inside the animal enclosure shall be suitable for the species.

(8) During daylight hours, light shall be provided to all exercise and sleeping areas so that all parts are clearly visible.

Where practicable this should be natural light.

(9) Ventilation shall be provided to all interior areas without the formation of excessive, localised draughts in the sleeping area.

(10) Electrical circuits and electrical devices shall be kept in a manner to prevent animals from being harmed or injured.

(11) Facilities for isolating ill or injured animals shall be made available in the establishment.

(12) A sink with a constant supply of hot water shall be provided in addition to any wash hand basin.

Boarding density.

8. (1) The maximum number of animals to be boarded in any establishment shall be determined by the accommodation available and in accordance with the standards laid down in:

- (a) Schedule B for housing cats; and
- (b) Schedule C for housing dogs.

(2) Each animal shall be provided with a separate enclosure. Animals from the same household may share an enclosure of adequate size with the written consent of the animals' owner. In case of animals sharing an enclosure separate beds for each animal shall be provided.

Health.

9. (1) All reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent the outbreak and spread of diseases. 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 the establishment.

(2) (a) Animals boarded in the establishment shall have received vaccinations laid down in these regulations at least ten days before the first date of boarding but less than one year from date of departure from the establishment, or in accordance with manufacturers' instruction.

(b) Dogs shall be vaccinated against canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, canine parvovirus and other relevant diseases on the advice of a veterinarian.

(c) Cats shall be vaccinated against infectious feline enteritis, feline respiratory diseases and other relevant diseases on the advice of a veterinarian.

(3) Animals shall have received proper treatment against ticks and fleas or where animals did not receive treatment they shall be treated against ticks and fleas on the day of their arrival in the establishment.

(4) Ill or injured animals shall receive appropriate care and treatment without delay. The responsible person of the animals shall contact a veterinary surgeon when any animal in the establishment falls ill or is injured.

(5) Facilities for isolating ill or injured animals shall be made available.

(6) A first aid kit for use on animals shall be kept and stocked at all times. Advice from a veterinarian shall be sought about the content of such kit.

(7) Equipment provided for human use must be stored and cleaned separately from the animals' equipment.

(8) Food and water vessels shall be provided and cleaned and disinfected after each meal. Any food residue discarded has to be disposed of.

(9) Excreta and soiled bedding shall be collected and stored in impervious containers with close-fitting lids away from direct sunlight unless another means of approved disposal is present.

(10) Excreta and soiled bedding shall be removed from the establishment at least twice a week. Such material shall be disposed of in a manner compliant with relevant laws.

(11) Suitable bedding shall be provided which allows the animal to be comfortable and which is capable of being easily and adequately cleaned and disinfected. Bedding material shall be checked daily and must be maintained in a clean, parasite-free and dry condition.

(12) Records of the substances used for the prevention of pests including the dates of application shall be kept. Such applications must be carried out in a manner that shall not harm or injure animals kept within the establishment.

**10.** (1) Facilities for the preparation and storage of food are to be provided, in a separate space from the enclosures. Animal food is to be stored in labelled closed containers of impervious material.

Food and water.

(2) All animals shall receive adequate amounts of food appropriate to individual needs. Clean water shall be available at all times and changed daily.

(3) Food shall not be kept for excessive periods in the enclosure in order to prevent odour and vermin.

**11.** (1) Animals shall be inspected at regular intervals by the staff and at least twice a day.

Inspection.

(2) A fit and proper person shall always be present to supervise the animals and deal with emergencies whenever animals are boarded at the establishment:

Provided that if twenty-four hours supervision cannot be guaranteed, alternative procedures shall be in place to the satisfaction of the Director.

(3) Each enclosure shall be clearly marked and a system shall be in place which ensures that the following relevant information about the animal is available:

- (a) name, breed and age of animal, microchip number;
- (b) owner's name and contact person;

- (c) date of arrival / date of departure;
- (d) diet requirements;
- (e) preferred veterinarian;
- (f) if relevant, the health condition and medication requirements;
- (g) if relevant, grooming requirements.

Emergency  
precautions.

**12.** (1) There shall be suitable emergency precautions and written procedures and they shall be made known to all the staff, including arrangements for the evacuation of animals.

(2) Entrances and exits shall be left clear of obstructions at all times.

(3) Suitable fire fighting equipment shall be made available, maintained and regularly serviced by a competent person and sited as directed by specific regulations on this matter.

(4) Emergency numbers for civil protection agencies and veterinarians are to be displayed at the entrance to the establishment and in the reception area.

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Schedule A  
Regulation 3(3)

Application for Licence to keep a Boarding Establishment for Cats and Dogs  
Application form should be completed in a legible and clear manner.  
An original copy of the lay-out of the boarding establishment shall be attached.  
The data in this application will be in the public domain.  
The application and the required documents are to be sent to:

The Director,  
Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries Conservation and Control Division,  
Abattoir Square,  
Alberttown  
Marsa, MRS 1123.

1. Boarding establishment details

Name of boarding establishment: .....  
Address: .....  
.....  
.....  
Phone Number: .....  
MEPA Ref No: .....

2. Boarding establishment's Manager details - Licence holder

Surname: .....  
Name: .....  
Address: .....  
.....  
.....  
Phone / Mobile Number: .....  
ID Number: .....  
Date of Birth: .....  
Qualifications / Experience: .....

Staff (i) Responsible person for day to day care of the animals

Surname: .....  
Name: .....  
Address: .....  
.....  
.....  
Phone / Mobile Number: .....  
ID Number: .....  
Date of Birth: .....  
Qualifications / Experience: .....

(ii) Other Staff  
(to be completed for each member of staff)

Surname: .....  
Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone / Mobile Number: .....

ID Number: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Qualifications / Experience: .....

Surname: .....  
Name: .....  
Address: .....

Phone / Mobile Number: .....

ID Number: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Qualifications / Experience: .....

3. Veterinary surgeon responsible for the boarding establishment

Surname: .....  
 Name .....  
 Address: .....

Phone / Mobile Number: .....

Warrant Number: .....

Signature, and Rubber stamp of  
Warranted Veterinarian: .....

## 5. Animals

Species and number of animals which are intended to be accommodated on the premises

[illegible]



6. Emergency facilities / procedures

Fire Equipment Available: .....

Description of Emergency Procedures .....

I / we do hereby certify that to the best of my / our knowledge and belief, the above particulars are true.

Dated this ..... day of .....,20.....

(Signed) .....

The completion and return of an application form shall be followed by a visit from the Director or an authorised representative to inspect the premises prior to a licence being granted.

Schedule B  
Regulations 7(2) and 8(1)(a)  
Cat Enclosure Specifications

Enclosure general

(1) Each enclosure in the main accommodation and isolation area shall have a sleeping area and an adjoining exercise area, which is exclusive to that enclosure.

(2) There shall be a gap of at least 0.65 m or a full height sneeze barrier between individual enclosures.

(3) Enclosures shall have a minimum internal height of 2m to allow access by staff for cleaning.

(4) The enclosure shall contain a litter tray, which must be cleaned daily. The number of trays and the cleaning frequency should be determined by the number of cats in that area.

(5) Enclosure floors shall allow for a fall of 0.5 to 1 in 80 to a shallow drainage or a covered deep drainage channel. The floors are to be constructed in such manner to be easily cleaned while providing sufficient grip for the cats to walk and run without sustaining injury.

(6) Enclosures shall open on to secure corridors or other secure areas so that cats are not able to escape from the premises.

(7) Where galvanized mesh is used for the construction of enclosures the wire diameter shall not be less than 1.60 mm, excluding any covering, and the mesh size must not exceed 2.5 cm per side.

(8) All areas to which cats have free access shall be solid roofed.

(9) Enclosures are to be provided with scratching poles.

(10) All entrance doors shall be lockable.

#### Sleeping area

(11) The sleeping area is to be at least 0.85 sq m per cat plus 0.2 sq m per additional cat.

(12) The height of the sleeping area shall be at least 0.91m in existing and 1.22m in newly built establishments.

(13) The sleeping area shall contain a cat flap to permit easy access to the exercise area and to prevent heat loss in cold weather. In catteries with stacked sleeping areas, a ramp has to be provided to allow easy access to the exercise area.

(14) The temperature of sleeping areas shall not fall below 10°C or exceed 30°C. A device to read the temperature at any time shall be provided in each enclosure. When temperatures are likely to drop below or rise above the indicated levels, some means of heating and/or cooling respectively is to be provided.

#### Exercise area

(15) The exercise area has to have a floor area of at least 1.7 sq m for a single cat together with 0.5 sq m per additional cat.

(16) Exercise areas shall not be used as sleeping areas.

(17) Communal exercise areas other than exercise areas in group housing are not permitted. Where they do exist, they are to be phased out as an immediate priority by the entry into force of these regulations.

### Schedule C

#### Regulations 7(2) and 8(1)(b)

#### Dog Enclosure Specifications

##### Enclosure general

(1) Each enclosure in the main accommodation and isolation area shall be provided with a sleeping area of at least 1.9 sq m and an exercise area of at least:

(a) 2.46 sq m for dogs up to 61 cm high at shoulder, or

(b) 3.34 sq m for larger dogs.

(2) When dogs are sharing the enclosure, the minimum surface area should be calculated as follows:

Withers height dog	Minimum floor surface	Minimum length of shortest side	Minimum height of enclosure
< 30 cm	$(1+N) \times 1,0 \text{ m}^2$	1.0 m	2 m
30 - 50 cm	$(1+N) \times 1,2 \text{ m}^2$	1.2 m	2 m
> 50 cm	$(1+N) \times 1,5 \text{ m}^2$	1.2 m	2 m

(3) Enclosures shall have a minimum height of 2m to facilitate adequate access by kennel staff for cleaning. Enclosures must open onto secure corridors or other

secure areas so that dogs are not able to escape from the premises.

(4) Partition walls between enclosures shall be of solid construction to a minimum height of 1.2 m.

(5) Enclosure floors shall allow for a fall of 0.5 to 1 in 80 to a shallow drainage or a covered deep drainage channel. The floors shall be constructed in such a manner as to be easily cleaned while providing sufficient grip for the dogs to walk and run without sustaining injury.

*Sleeping area*

(6) The temperature of sleeping areas shall not fall below 10°C or exceed 30°C. A device to read the temperature at any time shall be provided in each enclosure. When temperatures are likely to drop below or rise above the indicated levels, some means of heating and/or cooling respectively is to be provided.

*Exercise area*

(7) The exercise area shall be separate from the sleeping area and exclusive to that kennel for free use by the dog/s at all times except at night. It shall not be used as a sleeping area.

(8) The exercise area should be solid roofed to a minimum of half the area, sufficient to give the dog protection against the weather.

(9) In adverse weather condition the person responsible for the establishment shall decide whether dogs are to be given free access to their exercise area.

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