

**BALTIMORE CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**OFFICE OF ANIMAL CONTROL  
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**REGULATIONS  
OF  
ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS FOR PROPER ANIMAL CARE**

**February 2012**

## **REGULATIONS OF ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS FOR PROPER ANIMAL CARE**

### **1. AUTHORITY**

§ 2-106; § 10-104; § 10-303; § 10-308; § 10-402; § 10-404; § 10-409 of the Baltimore City Health Code

### **2. GENERAL PROPER ANIMAL CARE**

Every owner or custodian of an animal must provide the animal with humane care and treatment. No person may neglect to provide humane care and treatment for any animal that the person owns, keeps, restrains, or confines, whether as a pet or for any other purpose. No person may act cruelly to or abuse animals, which includes subjecting an animal to conditions detrimental to its health and general welfare or inflicting unnecessary suffering or pain on an animal or causing unnecessary injury, suffering, or death of an animal under the individual's charge or custody.

### **3. PROPER FOOD**

- a. Food should be wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination. Food shall be provided in sufficient quantity and be of adequate nutritive value to maintain all animals in good health.
- b. The diet shall be prepared with due consideration for the age, species, condition, size and breed type of the animals.
- c. Animals should be fed at least once a day, except as dictated by veterinary advice or other professionally accepted practices, for the safety and well-being of the animals.
- d. All food receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary. Receptacles used to store food shall be kept covered.
- e. If more than one animal is fed at one time or in one place, it shall be the responsibility of the owner/custodian to ensure that each animal receives enough food.

### **4. PROPER DRINK**

- a. Proper drink shall mean clean, drinkable water available at all times to all animals. Animals that are being worked or are in transport shall be provided water as often as necessary for the health and comfort of the animal. Age, species, condition, size, and breed type of animal shall be considered when determining frequency of watering. Activity levels and climatic conditions must also be considered.

- b. Exceptions shall be determined by veterinary consultation or professionally accepted practices for the safety and well-being of the animal.
- c. All water receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary, be of appropriate design and size for the animal, and be positioned or affixed to prevent spills.

**5. PROPER AIR**

Holding areas shall be constructed to allow a free flow of fresh air.

**6. PROPER SPACE**

**a. In General**

- i. All animals shall be able to stand to their full heights, stretch out, turn around, lie down, and make normal postural adjustments comfortably.
- ii. Animals shall be allowed to exercise and have freedom of movement as necessary to reduce stress and maintain good physical condition. Space and provisions for exercise must be appropriate for the species and sufficient to meet the needs of the animal.
- iii. Space available to the animal must be useable, i.e., maintained in a safe and healthful manner, and free of standing water, accumulated waste, and debris.
- iv. The space standards below may not be sufficient for certain animals and should be increased if necessary. Indicators of improper space and confinement include poor physical condition, abnormal behavior patterns such as pacing or circling within the area of confinement, or other signs of stress.

**b. Caging of Dogs and Cats**

- i. Cage confinement of dogs and cats is abnormally restrictive and stressful and is only acceptable for temporary confinement. Dogs and cats should not be caged except upon veterinary advice, or for transport or other professionally accepted practices.
- ii. Dogs kept in cages shall be removed from them and exercised at least twice daily – once in the morning and once in the afternoon – for a minimum of half an hour each time, or once a day for a minimum of two hours. More frequent exercise periods (three – four daily) are recommended to allow an animal to regularly eliminate out of the cage.

- iii. Dogs in cages shall be monitored as necessary to keep the cage free of urine and fecal matter.
- iv. Cats confined in cages must be provided with litter pans and litter material. Litter pans shall be cleaned and litter material changed as necessary to prevent odor and accumulation of urine and fecal matter.

**c. Small Mammals in Cages:**

Caging for small mammals such as guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters, shall be of a size sufficient to permit foraging activities and exercise and contain a place to burrow or nest.

**d. Dogs in Pens:**

The size of a pen is determined by the size and number of dogs housed therein. Dogs housed together must be socially compatible. It is recommended that no more than two compatible dogs be housed in a single pen.

Minimum space for dogs in pen (not including shelter space) shall be as follows:

<b>NUMBER OF DOGS</b>	<b>SMALL (to 25 lbs)</b>	<b>MEDIUM (25 – 50 lbs)</b>	<b>LARGE (over 50 lbs)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>3 x 7 (21 sq ft)</b>	<b>6 x 10 (60 sq ft)</b>	<b>8 x 10 (80 sq ft)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>4 x 8 (32 sq ft)</b>	<b>8 x 10 (80 sq ft)</b>	<b>8 x 12 (100 sq ft)</b>

**e. Dogs on Tethers: Improper Confinement**

The continuous maintenance of a dog on a chain, rope or other kind of tether is abnormally restrictive and stressful and often results in health and temperament problems. In some cases such confinement will cause the dog to suffer unnecessarily.

- i. No person may tether a dog:
  - a. Under unsafe conditions, including harsh or extreme weather conditions that endanger its health, safety, or welfare;
  - b. By any means other than a fitted collar or harness;
  - c. With a choke collar, training collar, collar with metal spikes, or chain;
 or

- d. With a tether that:
  - i. does not have swivels at both ends to prevent kinking and knotting;
  - ii. weighs more than 1/8th of the dog's body weight;
  - iii. is not properly positioned to prevent the tether from becoming entangled in or around objects;
  - iv. unreasonably limits a dog's movement;
  - v. restricts the dog's access to suitable and sufficient food, clean water, and appropriate shelter;
  - vi. is not properly positioned to prevent the dog from reaching or climbing a fence to avoid strangulation;
  - vii. does not permit the dog to defecate or urinate in an area separate from the area where it must eat, drink, or lie down;
  - viii. in unsafe or unsanitary conditions; or
  - ix. confines the dog causes injury, stress, or demonstrable socialization problems.

## **7. PROPER LIGHT**

- a. Animals shall have at least ten hours of light a day, except as directed by hibernation, veterinarian advice or professionally accepted practices for the safety and well-being of the animal.
- b. Lighting of primary enclosures shall be designed to protect animals from excessive illumination. The duration of illumination shall be appropriate for the species involved.

## **8. PROPER SHELTER/PROTECTION FROM THE WEATHER**

### **a. Indoor Shelter:**

- i. Facilities shall be sufficiently heated and cooled, if necessary, to protect animals from extremes of temperature and to provide for their health and well-being.
- ii. The ambient temperature shall not be allowed to fall below or rise above temperatures compatible with the health and well-being of the animal.
- iii. Facilities shall be adequately ventilated by natural or mechanical means to provide for the health and well-being of the animal at all times. Such facilities shall be provided with fresh air either by means of windows, doors, vents, fans or air conditioning, and shall be ventilated so as to minimize drafts, odors, and moisture condensation.

**b. Outdoor Shelter:**

- i. All animals kept outdoors shall have access to shelter that provides protection from the weather, i.e., wind, precipitation, or other inclement weather conditions. All domestic animals shall be brought into a heated enclosure at 10 degrees Fahrenheit, real and effective temperature. All domesticated animals shall be brought into appropriate shelter for extreme weather conditions, i.e. tornadoes, hurricanes, ice storms, etc.
- ii. Shelter shall be well constructed and appropriate for the species. Consideration shall be given to the animal's age, physical condition, and hair coat when determining whether available shelter is proper.
- iii. All animals shall have access to shade from the sun during hot weather. A dog house itself is not considered shade. Shade can be provided by any structure as long as adequate air flow.

**c. Dog House As Primary Shelter:**

- i. The house for a dog shall have a roof, enclosed sides, a doorway, and a solid, level floor raised at least two (2) inches from the ground. The dog house shall be shaded during months when the weather is hot.
- ii. Between November 1 and March 31 and whenever the real or effective temperature (i.e., accounting for wind chill and rain) is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, the following shall be provided.
  - a. The entryway shall be protected by a self-closing door, an offset outer door, or a flexible flap made of windproof material.
  - b. Bedding such as cedar shavings, straw, or other non-absorbent material shall be provided in sufficient quantity for insulation against cold and damp. Bedding shall be kept dry, clean and parasite free.
- iii. If there is no artificial heat source, structures shall be small enough to allow the animal to warm the interior of the structure and maintain his or her body heat, but large enough to permit normal postural adjustments.

**d. Transporting Animal:**

- i. No person may place, confine, or allow an animal to be placed or confined inside a vehicle under conditions or for a period of time that endanger the health or well-being of the animals due to

- temperature, lack of food or drink, or other conditions that might reasonably be expected to cause death, disability, or suffering.
- ii. No person may allow an animal to ride in the unenclosed area of a vehicle unless the animal is confined by a secure tether or a securely affixed and ventilated crate.

## **9. NECESSARY VETERINARY CARE**

### **a. Emergency Treatment:**

- i. Animals shall be afforded immediate veterinary care if they are known or suspected to have suffered an accidental or deliberate injury and they exhibit such signs as shock, temperature fluctuation, tremors, swelling, broken bones, open wounds, inability to eat or drink, blistering, irregular or abnormal breathing, partial or total paralysis, irrational behavior, orificial discharge or bleeding, or other such sign.
- ii. Animals shall be afforded immediate veterinary care if they are debilitated and weakened, or exhibit symptoms of bloat or other life-threatening illness such as persistent vomiting or diarrhea.

### **b. Treatment within 48 hours:**

An animal who has exhibited signs of disease or severe parasitic infection such as infection, orificial discharge, loss of appetite, weight loss, abnormal skin condition or hair loss, tremors, temperature fluctuation, inability to bear weight on a limb or lameness, or any other such sign over a period of forty-eight hours or more shall be afforded veterinary care within the next forty-eight (48) hours.

### **c. Incidental:**

- i. If an animal has an abnormal growth of a size or weight or in such a position as to impede the animal in any way, such condition shall be brought to the attention of a veterinarian.
- ii. Internal and external parasites shall be controlled.

## **10. OTHER CARE**

### **a. Socialization for Dogs:**

Dogs shall not be maintained in isolation or deprived of daily social interaction. Hyperactivity, aggression towards humans, or withdrawal and depression may be evidence of inadequate socialization.

**b. Sanitation:**

Both indoor and outdoor enclosures shall receive cleaning as necessary to remove excreta, dirt, and debris so as to minimize disease hazards, odor, and danger to the animal.

**c. Grooming, hoof care, etc.:**

Animals shall be groomed in accordance with normal and recognized grooming practices for their species or breed type. Animals shall be provided with hoof, claw, nail, tooth, and beak care as appropriate and necessary to maintain health and comfort.

**d. Collars, etc.:**

Collars, harnesses, halters, and the like shall be monitored so as to assure proper fit and prevent discomfort or injury. Chains of appropriate weight and length shall be attached to a proper fitting collar and cannot be attached directly around dog's neck. Dogs cannot be locked to a chain. Also refer to the regulations entitled, Acceptable Standards for Proper Restraint of Animals.

**11. NEGLECT AND CRUELTY OR ABUSE OF ANIMALS**

**a. In General:**

- i. No animal shall be subjected to neglect or cruelty.
- ii. Neglect or cruelty may be caused by deficiencies in the categories of acceptable standards for proper animal care listed above. Neglect or cruelty may be caused by situations which expose an animal to prolonged fear, injury and pain, physical abuse, or lack of proper sanitation and care. The absence of interaction with humans or other animals also may cause an animal unnecessary suffering if it results in health and/or temperament problems.
- iii. Excessively timid behavior, or cowering or flinching when approached may be indications of physical abuse or unreasonable intimidation.



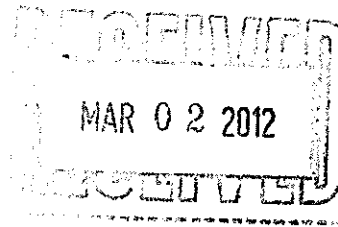
The above Regulations of Acceptable Standards for Proper Animal Care are hereby adopted:

Approved:

*Oxiris Barbot*  
Oxiris Barbot, M.D.  
Health Commissioner

2/21/12  
Date

Effective date when filed with the Department of Legislative Reference: 3/2/12



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