

# TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DIVISION

## COMMERCIAL KENNEL MINIMUM STANDARDS

### I. INTRODUCTION

Part IV, Chapter 7, Article IV section 4-07-4000 et seq., of the Tulare County Animal Ordinance Code, provides that the Animal Services Division may approve an application for a Commercial Kennel Permit, or a renewal of said Permit upon demonstration that certain conditions have been met by the applicant/permit holder. Commercial Kennels engaged in breeding activities must also obtain a Breeding Permit for each female animal being used to breed; a maximum of five (5) breeding permits will be issued during any kennel permit period. Among those conditions are the following minimum standards:

### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Adult Dogs – A domestic canine nine (9) months and older.
- B. Breeding Operation – Any business or establishment which keeps dogs for the purpose of their reproductive pairing and/or production of offspring.
- C. Caretaker – Any person responsible for or tasked with any or all part(s) of a Kennel operation relating to dog care or meeting these minimum standards.
- D. Compatible animals - Animals which are of like species, size, age, physical condition, reproductive status, and whose temperaments do not promote or contribute to competition, aggression, or other adverse interactions.
- E. Dog – a domestic canine.
- F. Exercise area – Any indoor or outdoor enclosure in which animals are confined for the purpose of exercise, play, socialization, training, or other similar function provided that animals are not kept in this enclosure during nighttime hours.
- G. Facility - The total physical area occupied by a commercial kennel or breeding operation. Includes, but is not limited to, all open spaces, storage areas, structures, fencing, and transport vehicles utilized by the operation. Operations occupying multiple, non-consecutive addresses constitute separate facilities.
- H. Indoor Housing Area – Any building used as a housing area with four walls and a roof.
- I. Housing Area - Any enclosure, structure, or area of confinement in which dogs are kept more than 4 hours per 24-hour period.
- J. Outdoor Housing Area – Any housing area lacking four solid walls and a roof.
- K. Puppy – a domestic canine under the age of nine (9) months.

### III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Construction and maintenance**
  - 1. Facilities must be designed to be structurally sound and stable, and must be constructed in a manner consistent with commercial industrial standards.
  - 2. Facilities must be kept in good repair.
  - 3. Animal enclosures must be constructed and maintained so that they:
    - a) Are not stacked above or below any other animal enclosure.
    - b) Are structurally sound and stable.
    - c) Securely confine the dogs and prevent contact with other roaming or stray animals and wildlife.
    - d) Have no exposed sharp points or edges.
    - e) Allow the dogs to remain clean and dry.
    - f) Are kept clear of standing water.
  - f) Animal housing areas must be kept neat and free of excessive feces, clutter, trash, junk, overgrown vegetation, and other discarded materials.
- B. **Housing Area Surfaces**
  - 1. Floors in housing areas must be at ground level and not suspended, constructed of solid, non-porous materials which may be easily cleaned and sanitized.
  - 2. Walls in housing areas must be constructed of non-porous materials which may be easily cleaned and sanitized.
  - 3. Surfaces must be free of rust, jagged edges, and sharp points or protrusions.
  - 4. Wire flooring, including, but not limited to, wire mesh (coated or uncoated), gridded or welded wire, is not permitted

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**C. Cleaning and Housekeeping of Premises**

1. Housing areas must be cleaned daily with additional spot cleaning performed as needed.
  - a) All housing areas must have a minimum of sixty (60) vertical inches of space to allow easy entry and access for cleaning, care, and animal inspection.
  - b) All animal and food waste must be removed from housing areas at least once daily.
  - c) Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized daily so as to remove all debris and organic material or waste, using cleaning products that provide disinfectant, viricidal, and antibacterial properties in order to minimize the spread of common canine diseases
  - d) Dogs must be removed from enclosures before cleaning. Dogs and nearby enclosures must be protected from being contaminated with water and other wastes during cleaning.
  - e) Animal housing areas must be kept free from accumulations of dirt, dust, hair/fur, trash, and similar debris.
2. Facility must be kept clean and in good repair to protect the dogs from injury, promote health, and control rodent and pest populations.
  - a) Facility must be kept free of excessive trash, junk, waste products, and other discarded materials.
  - b) Weeds, grass and bushes must be controlled in a manner which facilitates cleaning of premises, controls pests and rodents, and protects the health and well-being of the animals.

**D. Water and electric**

1. Adequate running potable water must be available for cleaning, drinking, washing, and other requirements.
2. All electrical devices must be placed and utilized in a safe and secure manner. Electrical wires, cords and devices will be placed in such a way that they are not accessible to the animals.

**E. Storage**

1. Food and bedding must be kept in a manner which prevents spoilage, contamination, and vermin infestation.
2. Food that will spoil without refrigeration must be kept refrigerated at 41°F or less.
3. Toxic or poisonous substances may not be kept in the same area as food storage or preparation.
4. Unused equipment, trash, junk, waste products, and similar materials must be stored in a manner and location which prevents animal access.

**F. Drainage and waste disposal**

1. Animal and food wastes, fluid wastes, soiled bedding, debris, garbage, and other waste must be collected a minimum of once daily, removed, and disposed of in a manner which minimizes contamination and disease risks.
2. Housing areas must be equipped with waste collection, drainage and disposal mechanisms to quickly remove animal waste and other fluids to ensure dogs remain dry and clean.
3. Trash containers must have tightly fitting lids which are kept closed when not in use.
4. Dead animals, animal waste, or animal parts may not be kept in animal housing or food preparation and storage areas.

**G. Laundry areas and sinks**

1. General hygiene and anti-bacterial disinfecting washing facilities with hot and cold running water must be available and readily accessible for dog caretakers.

**H. Nuisance operations prohibited**

1. Facilities must be operated in accordance with all applicable zoning and business licensing codes.
2. Facilities must be operated in a manner which does not unduly impact, disrupt, pollute or interfere with other nearby businesses.
3. Facilities must be operated in a manner which does not unduly impact, disrupt, pollute or interfere with the free and full use of nearby residential properties.

**I. Emergency information**

1. Emergency Information must be clearly and conspicuously posted at the main entry and access points throughout the kennel area. This information must contain the primary point of contact in the event of an emergency, including the Permit Holder's contact information, the Permit Holder's Veterinarian's contact, and the Emergency Veterinary Services contact information.

**IV. INDOOR HOUSING AREAS**

**A. Heating, cooling, and temperature**

1. Housing areas must be climate controlled to protect dogs from temperature and humidity extremes.
2. Ambient temperature may not be below 50°F or rise above 90°F.
3. All heating devices must be located in such a manner as to ensure that no animal may come in direct contact with the device or its cords or wires.

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4. All heating devices must be located in such a manner as to ensure that they are not in direct contact or proximity to flammable or combustible materials.
  5. Auxiliary cooling and/or ventilation must be provided if ambient temperatures exceed 80°F.
- B. Ventilation**
1. Housing areas must be sufficiently ventilated at all times to provide for health and well-being of dogs, minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels, humidity and condensation and prevent the spread of airborne viruses.
  2. Isolation areas must be separately ventilated from other housing areas.
- C. Lighting**
1. Housing area must be adequately lighted to permit routine inspection and cleaning of facility and for observation of the dogs. Lighting must be uniformly diffused and adequate.
  2. Housing areas must be provided with normal day/night light cycles, with a minimum of eight hours of light equivalent to daylight each day.
- D. Quarantine/Isolation area**
1. Kennel must have an appropriate quarantine area that has separate ventilation and drainage from other kennels to house dogs with infectious disease during treatment and recovery.
- E. Safety**
1. All indoor areas housing animals must be equipped with carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. All indoor areas housing animals will meet the minimum safety requirements pertaining to fire extinguishers and fire suppression equipment as set forth by the local fire departments, and/or County building codes.

## V. OUTDOOR HOUSING AREAS

- A. Protection from the elements**
1. Outdoor housing areas must provide sufficient shelter to protect dogs from extreme temperatures and weather conditions which may be uncomfortable or hazardous to their health.
  2. Within the outdoor housing area as described in one (1) above, one or more, smaller shelters, or doghouses, must also be available and accessible to each adult dog.
    - a) Doghouses must provide enough area to allow each adult dog in the housing area to sit, stand, lie in a normal manner, and turn-about freely.
    - b) The doghouse must be constructed of a solid roof and three or more solid sides, which adequately protects animals from cold, heat, wind, and rain.
    - c) The doghouse must contain clean, dry, bedding material at all times.
  3. In addition to the above, outdoor housing areas must provide areas of shade large enough to encompass and shield all animals from direct sunlight
  4. Outdoor housing areas containing puppies less than nine (9) months of age must have the top completely covered, so as to offer complete coverage to the entire kennel from the elements, in addition to side covers, as needed, to provide shelter from the sun, rain, and strong wind at all times of the day.

## VI. CONFINEMENT

**A. Space**

Each dog housed in a housing area must each be provided a minimum amount of floor space and headroom, according to the following formulas (see Figure 1):

1. Each dog must have floor space equal to at least the product of the following formula: Dog length (nose to base of tail) plus ten (10) inches, squared  $[(\text{Dog length} + 10'')^2]$ , multiplied by three (3). Divide by 144 to convert to square feet. If multiple dogs are housed in one enclosure, that enclosure must have at least as much floor space as the sum of square footages for each dog in the enclosure. Square footage must be allocated to width and depth of the enclosure so that Dogs may turn around comfortably in the enclosure, and pass one another if housed together.
2. Enclosures must have a minimum interior height of sixty (60) inches.
3. Each female with nursing puppies over three weeks of age must be provided with a minimum of an additional 5% of floor space for each puppy. More may be required based on the breed and behavioral characteristics of the female or based on the age/size of the puppies.
4. Dogs will be housed with other compatible dogs to fulfill their social and behavioral needs, unless a health or

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temperament issue requires the dog to be housed in isolation. In the latter case, a letter from a California-licensed veterinarian should be kept on file documenting condition and specifying the amount of time that the animal must be isolated from other dogs.

**Figure 1. Minimum space requirements for  
Adult Dogs (nine months or older)**

	Individual Dog	Multiple Dogs in Shared Enclosure
Floor Space	$3 (\text{Dog length in inches} + 10)^2 = \text{minimum square inches.}$ Divide by 144 to convert to square feet.	Dog 1 minimum square feet + Dog 2 minimum square feet + Dog 3, etc.
Vertical Space	Minimum height of enclosure = 60 inches.	
Floor Space – Nursing Dam	Dam’s min. space + Litter space = Nursing Enclosure Min.  (Dam’s min. space x 0.05= space per puppy; Space per puppy x # of puppies = Litter space)	

- B. **Tethering of dogs as a means of confinement is prohibited.**
- C. **Exercise and socialization**
  - 1. An exercise program must be established to promote positive physical contact with people or other dogs through play groups, “fetch” activities, or other similar activities such as walking.
  - 2. Dogs kept in indoor housing areas must be provided a minimum of four hours each week of time outside, either in a designated exercise yard or in an exercise activity, which must be documented for each dog at the time it occurs.
- D. Environmental enrichment measures such as the provision of chew toys, calming music, furniture, etc. are encouraged, provided that such items are adequately maintained, cleaned and disinfected.

**VII. EXERCISE AREA**

- A. **Protection from the elements**
  - 1. Exercise yards must meet the following provisions
    - a) Allow the dogs to remain clean and dry
    - b) Enclosure must be kept clear of all standing water. If the flooring is composed of compacted earth, decomposed granite, or similar material, adequate measures must be taken to ensure that it does not become muddy during cleaning or at times of precipitation
- B. **Construction**
  - 1. Floors of exercise areas may be composed of porous or particulate substrates such as compacted earth, decomposed granite, grass, concrete, tile, or other similar material
    - a) Where loose particulates such as sand, gravel, composting bark and other similar materials are used, any substrate contaminated or soiled by animal waste must be removed.
    - b) Outdoor housing areas with a compacted earth, grass or similar substrate must be kept mowed and free of overgrown vegetation.
  - 2. Materials must be repaired or replaced if odors, insects, pest, vermin or health and safety hazards are present.
  - 3. Surfaces which cannot be readily cleaned and sanitized, including, but not limited to, wood, plywood, or carpet, must be replaced when worn or soiled.
  - 4. Water features may be included, provided that the enclosure also include dry areas adequate to accommodate the dog’s activity and exercise should they choose to avoid the water.

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**VIII. GENERAL CARE**

1. All dogs must be examined on a daily basis with a level of attention sufficient to evaluate their general condition, demeanor, and activity, and each examination must be documented daily
2. Dogs must be kept appropriately groomed and in good hygiene.
3. Dogs in need of medical attention must be afforded with timely veterinary care.
4. A record must be kept of any dog with special needs requirements, of those dogs receiving medications and of the administration of those medications.

**B. Feeding**

1. Dogs must be fed at least twice daily, except as otherwise directed in writing by a California-licensed veterinarian.
2. Food must be uncontaminated, wholesome, palatable, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain the healthy condition and weight of the animal. The diet must be appropriate to the dog's species, age and condition.
3. Food dishes must be readily accessible to all dogs and must be located so as to minimize competition between dogs, contamination by animal waste, pests, and precipitation.
4. Feeding dishes must be made of durable material that can be easily cleaned and sanitized or must otherwise be discarded after each feeding.
5. Self-feeders must be kept clean, sanitized, and free of mold, deterioration, or caking of food.

**C. Watering**

1. Unfrozen water shall be continually available to all dogs and shall be generally free of debris, feces, algae, and other contaminants.
2. Water dishes must be kept clean and sanitized on a daily basis.

**IX. BREEDING**

**A. General**

A female dog will be bred based on the advice of their California licensed veterinarian ensuring that she is managed with excellent husbandry and has good reproductive health. A record of this advice and an annual veterinary examination supporting it shall be provided annually. A female dog will not be bred more than once per permit year, with at least twelve (12) months in between breedings; that no female Dog shall be bred before her second heat cycle nor after ten (10) years of age; that each female Dog requires a certificate of health and fitness for breeding each year from a California licensed veterinarian before a permit will be issued.

**X. TRANSPORTING**

**A. Transportation enclosures**

1. All transportation enclosures must be constructed of materials which may be easily cleaned and sanitized or removed and replaced when worn or soiled
2. Surfaces must be free of rust, jagged edges, and sharp points or protrusions
3. Each enclosure must provide adequate ventilation and air exchange.
  - a) Enclosures must be constructed and positioned in such a manner to prevent the ingress of vehicle exhaust
4. The opening of each enclosure must be accessible at all times
5. Transportation enclosures will be afforded protection from the elements
6. The areas of the vehicle in which dogs are transported must be heated or cooled as necessary to prevent exposure of the dogs to excessive heat, cold, or humidity.
7. Transport enclosures must be large enough to allow each dog sufficient space to turn around, stand, and lie down in a normal manner.
8. Enclosures of one dog may not be placed on top of another unless it is fitted with a floor which prevents solid and liquid excreta from entering the lower enclosure
9. Transportation enclosures must be cleaned and sanitized between trips or more frequently if needed.

**B. Dogs which are not conditioned to one another may not be transported in the same enclosure.**

**C. Food and water do not have to be continually available during transportation but must be provided at intervals adequate to prevent dogs from becoming dehydrated or excessively thirsty or hungry. If not continually provided, water must be offered at least once every six hours and food at least once every 12 hours for adult dogs, and more frequently for puppies. A record shall be kept of each time each dog or puppy was offered food and water during transport.**

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- D. All vehicles in which dogs are transported must have a current California registration and must be driven by an individual licensed to operate that class of vehicle in the State of California. Vehicles must be operated in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

**XI. INSPECTIONS**

- A. **All permitted commercial operations are subject to inspection by Animal Services personnel without prior notification.**
  - 1. Inspections may be initiated by Animal Services upon application for a new or renewed permit, in response to a complaint filed against the permit holder, as part of the Division's routine monitoring and evaluation of permitted operations, or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Division to ensure animal welfare and compliance with permitting standards.
  - 2. Routine inspections will be conducted during Animal Services' normal operating hours.
  - 3. Upon reasonable notification to the permit holder, permitted operations must be made available for inspection outside of Animal Services' normal operating hours.
- B. **Access**
  - 1. All areas and structures of a permitted operation are subject to inspection.
  - 2. Failure to allow inspection of a permitted operation or to make a permitted operation available for unannounced inspection may result in permit denial or revocation.
- C. Permit holders will comply with all federal, state, county and municipal codes related to the care, handling, keeping, and management of animals and animal use operations.

**XII. RECORDS**

- A. **Purchase records**

A record of all dogs purchased or otherwise obtained by the permitted operation must be kept at the address specified in the permit application for a period of three years. Such records shall specify the date of acquisition, breed of animal, description of the animal including date of birth and sex, specific identification markers such as tattoos or microchip numbers, and the name, address, and phone number of the seller or dealer from which the animal was obtained.
- B. **Outcome records**

A record of all puppy and dog sales, other transfers, and deaths must kept at the address specified in the permit application for a minimum of three years from the date of the transaction or death. Such records shall specify the date of transaction or death, breed of dog, description of the dog including date of birth and sex, specific identification markers such as tattoos or microchip numbers, and the name, address, and phone number of the purchaser or transferee, or, if applicable, the cause of death.
- C. **Medical Records**

Written medical records for each dog, including the veterinarian's exam notes from yearly veterinary examinations, evaluations and treatment, routine medical care (such as vaccinations or deworming), euthanasia, or treatment for a medical condition must be maintained by the permit holder for a period of three (3) years after the death or transfer of the animal and must be available for inspection upon request.
- D. **Breeding Records**

Records of breeding for all dogs must be maintained and retained for a period of three (3) years after the death or transfer of the animal. Records must include the dog's microchip number; description of the dog; specific identification markers such as tattoos or markings; breeding permit number; dates of breeding; and outcome of breeding, indicating live birth or otherwise, number of puppies, and date of birth or other outcome.
- E. **Availability**
  - 1. All such written records must be made available for immediate inspection upon request.

**XIII. EMPLOYEES**

- A. Facility must maintain a level of staffing and/or volunteers to adequately provide for the basic humane care of the

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dogs kept there.

- B. The staff handling dogs or providing care must be supervised by an individual who has the knowledge, background, and experience in proper dog care to monitor and direct their activities.
- C. Permit holders are jointly and equally responsible for the actions of any dog caretakers employed or otherwise utilized at the kennel operation.

**XIV. VETERINARY CARE**

- A. All permit holders must have an established relationship with a local, California-licensed veterinarian who shall serve as the primary medical provider for the operation.
- B. All dogs must have a hands-on examination by a California-licensed veterinarian at least once a year.
- C. Euthanasia shall only be performed by a California-licensed veterinarian.
- D. Surgical births and other surgical procedures shall only be performed by a California-licensed veterinarian.
- E. Each dog shall be properly identified. Dogs 4 months and older shall be microchipped and those dogs less than four (4) months of age and more than 6 weeks shall be identified by a cage card so that it can be matched with the appropriate individualized veterinary records.
- F. Core vaccinations to prevent common canine diseases such as Parvovirus and canine distemper shall be administered by a California-licensed veterinarian or by the kennel owner to dogs and puppies in accordance with AVMA recommendations. Rabies vaccinations shall be administered by a California-licensed veterinarian for all dogs and puppies in accordance with Tulare County Animal Ordinance section 4-07-3100. Parasite control must be provided.

**XV. EXCEPTIONS**

- A. Requests for exemptions to any of the provisions of these requirements shall be submitted to Animal Services in writing at the time of application. Written exemptions must include an explanation and justification of the reason for the request.
- B. No exemption to any of the provisions of these requirements shall be assumed to have been granted unless indicated in writing by Animal Services.
- C. Issuance of a waiver or exemption does not guarantee or indicate approval of future waivers for the same condition.

**XVI. PENALTIES**

- A. Violation of any provision of these requirements will result in penalties as set forth in Tulare County Animal Ordinance, and/or state, and/or federal law.