



Animal Shelter Inspection Check List

How to Prepare for Your Pre-Operational or Routine Inspection

An *animal shelter* is any facility that houses or cares for stray, homeless, or unwanted pets. An animal shelter can be operated by a public, private, or nonprofit organization. These organizations house or distribute animals for adoption. This does not include livestock.

Animal shelters receive a pre-operational inspection and one annual inspection. The King County code that regulates animal shelters is [Chapter 8.03: Pet Business Regulations](#).

This checklist is intended to help owners/operators of an animal shelter in King County to prepare for permit inspections.

Indoor Facility

- If your jurisdiction requires, your building, electrical, and plumbing permits will need to be signed off and approved before operating.
- Have functional toilet and handwashing facilities, with hot and cold running water, installed
- Provide a utility sink with hot and cold running water for cleaning bowls, dishes, and cat boxes. This should not be a shared sink for employee breaks or the bathroom sink
- Have functional lighting and electrical
- Ensure floors and walls are waterproof, sealed, and easily cleanable. Floors cannot allow standing water; a drain is preferred.
 - If wood is used, it must be sealed or painted so that it is water resistant; wood surfaces are harder to clean and can harbor germs
 - Rubber mats need to be sealed so that water does not seep through the seams
 - Use a flexible sealant that will accommodate temperature changes to avoid cracking and bubbling is recommended
 - For walls: Fiber Reinforced Plastic, FRP, panels, sheet metal, or epoxy paint coating up to 4ft high are examples of durable wall surfaces.
- Cover any cracks or seams that are difficult to clean. This includes the seam between the floor and the wall, door jambs, and escutcheon plates for plumbing fixtures. Install base coving where needed.
- Furnishings such as couches, mattresses, chairs, beds, and cat trees must be non-porous or waterproof. Upholstered furnishings are discouraged as they are difficult to clean and maintain, this includes cat trees. You need to demonstrate that you can clean and disinfect furnishings.
- Designate an isolation area with good ventilation that can accommodate 10% of your capacity and maintain a sign posted on the door/entrance
- Use stainless steel, ceramic or disposable food and water bowls. Avoid plastic bowls that can be easily chewed.
- Have working thermometers in refrigerators and maintain at 41°F or below
- Ensure separate storage of pet food/medicines from food/drink for human consumption



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Outdoor Area

- Ensure installation of fences that are secure and designed to prevent escape and injury
- Provide covered shelter for dogs when they are outdoors if an indoor area is not freely accessible
- Provide adequate drainage to prevent standing water
- Ensure wastewater, from cleaning, does not drain to storm drain or run off property
- Maintain gravel, wood chips or other surfaces as approved on your plan review
 - Artificial turf should not be installed without preapproval
- Provide trash cans for disposal of pet waste and clean up waste daily

Animal Enclosures

- Provide and maintain primary enclosures of sufficient size to allow each animal to turn around, exercise normal postural movements, experience or avoid socialization with cage mates, and avoid overcrowding
- Ensure that primary animal enclosures are constructed of materials that are water resistant and can be readily cleaned and disinfected
- Provide proper food and potable water to animals, according to the need of the species, and provide cats with a litter pan.
- Do not use cedar shavings for bedding for ferrets, rodents, rabbits, reptiles, or chinchillas

Infection Control

Effective cleaning and disinfection help prevent the spread of diseases. If you need advice on cleaning and disinfection, Public Health can provide resources on procedures, how to read labels on disinfectants, choosing an effective disinfectant, and how to mix disinfectants.

- Have an [infection control plan](#) available on site, and followed by all staff, that includes:
 - the schedule for cleaning and disinfection of cages, surfaces and equipment;
 - proper methods for handling and disposal of soiled animal bedding, litter and wastes;
 - disinfectants to be used and how to use them; and
 - personal protective equipment (PPE) and measures, including gloves, protective clothing, masks, and handwashing to be used by employees
- Make PPE, as described in the infection control plan, available to all employees
- Develop, follow, and make available isolation procedures for ill and injured animals
- A person in charge must be present at all times the shelter is open to the public. Ensure areas where dogs congregate have direct supervision and acceptable staff to animal ratios. The industry standard is 1 human to 10-15 dogs depending on the disposition and size of animals.



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- Stock and store cleaning and disinfection supplies away from animals and young children

Permits and Recordkeeping

- Display your current Public Health permit in a visible area.
- Verify and keep records that each dog, cat or ferret four months of age or older is immunized against rabies
- Record keeping for medical care, including all vaccinations given, animal bites, illness, injuries, deceased animals, and adoption and/or foster placement information
 - Keep records for each animal for not less than 365 days after the animal is released from the establishment

Resources

The following resources are available for download at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/petbusiness>

- [Infection control plan template](#)
- Factsheet on disinfectants
- Factsheet on dilutions
- Permit application

King County Board of Health Code Title 8: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/zoonotic/~media/depts/health/board-of-health/documents/code/BOH-Code-Title-8.ashx>