

Dog Seller & Dog Facility Operators Licensing Program

Performance of Daily Body, Mobility, and Behavior Checks Guidance Document



Background

2009 Wisconsin Act 90 requires that persons in the State of Wisconsin that operate as a 'dog breeder' or operate as a 'dog breeding facility' are required to be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (the Department). The requirements for licensees are in Wisconsin Admin. Code ATCP ch. 16 and Wis. Stat. § 173.41. These requirements are intended to protect the health and welfare of dogs in licensed facilities, as well as to protect consumers who purchase dogs from these facilities.

Under this licensing program the Department regulates diverse types of dog breeding facilities that make up Wisconsin's dog breeding industry. This diversity includes:

- A variety of dog breeds
- Various dog housing configurations (indoor/outdoor, enclosure construction)
- Commercial, hobby, or show breeding purpose of dogs (show, pet, bio-medical research, police, hunting, therapy, herding/livestock protection)
- Size of facility, number of dogs sold, and number of dogs in the breeding population

Regardless of the type of licensed facility, dog breeders are required to 'perform daily body, mobility, and behavior checks on each dog' pursuant to ATCP 16.20(2)(b).

Wisconsin Administrative Rules

ATCP 16.20 Dog care; general. *The following standards of care apply to all dogs kept pursuant to a license under s. ATCP 16.02(1), including any dogs that the license holder consigns to a home custody provider:*

(2) Animal health and veterinary care.

(b) The responsible caretaker on the premises, or an individual implementing a caretaker's oral or written instructions, shall perform daily body, mobility, and behavior checks on each dog.

What are daily body, mobility, and behavior checks?

- This requirement applies to all age classes of dogs within each facility where regulated activity occurs from puppies to adults of all ages. The expectation under this requirement is that each dog is 'checked' (inspected) at least once daily (including weekends and holidays), regardless of the number of dogs in a facility and what type of primary enclosures are being used to hold the dogs.
- The inspection should be thorough enough that a responsible caretaker would notice apparent abnormalities in the dog's body, mobility, and behavior that may be sign of injury or illness.

BODY – Inspection of dog's physical appearance. Evaluating for wounds, abnormal discharge, grooming needs (hair, nails), body condition, and pregnancy. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Blood on a dog's hair may be a sign of an open wound.
- Abnormal hair loss may be a sign of an underlying condition requiring veterinary attention.
- Accumulation of discharge around the dog's ears or eyes may be a sign of an infection.
- A sudden decline in the dog's body condition may be a sign of a condition requiring veterinary attention.

MOBILITY – Inspection of the dog’s movement. Evaluating the dog’s movement, posture, and gait for signs of possible injury or illness. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Limping may be a sign of an injury or wound to a leg or paw.
- An inability to stand or move may be a sign of an urgent condition requiring veterinary attention.

BEHAVIOR – Observation of the dog’s behavior. Evaluating for abnormal activity or movements that may indicate injury, illness, or behavior that requires intervention or additional monitoring. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Head shaking may be a sign of an injury to or medical issue with the dog’s ear.
 - Excessive urination or defecation may be signs of an illness.
 - Changes in a dog’s eating or drinking may be a sign of change in the dog’s health condition.
 - A sudden change in the dog’s behavior or activity may be a sign of a veterinary need.
- A caretaker inspecting a dog’s body, mobility, and behavior is the minimum standard the Department accepts for this requirement. Without a sufficient inspection of each dog every day, the licensee may fail to identify signs of injury or illness in a dog, delaying necessary veterinary care or housing changes that could cause greater distress or harm to the dog.
 - A caretaker may perform a daily body, mobility, and behavior check while also simultaneously providing a form of positive human contact for dogs required under ATCP 16.20(6)(b). See the Department’s guidance document on ‘Providing Daily Positive Human Contact and Socialization’ for more information.

More Information

For more information, or assistance regarding daily body, mobility, and behavior checks, contact:

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