

# Dog Seller & Dog Facility Operators Licensing Program

## Providing Daily Positive Human Contact and Socialization 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, 'all dogs shall have daily positive human contact and socialization, not limited to feeding time' pursuant to ATCP 16.20(6)(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:*

**(6) Behavior and socialization.**

**(b) All dogs shall have daily positive human contact and socialization, not limited to feeding time.**

### What is daily positive human contact and socialization?

- ATCP 16.20(6)(b) requires that each dog receives positive human contact 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. Acceptable forms of 'positive human contact' include but are not limited to physical contact between the caretaker and the dog that is deliberate, positive, and effective to promote the socialization of dogs. Pursuant to ATCP 16.20(6)(b), the act of feeding each day is not sufficient to be the only form of contact and socialization a dog receives in a day.

Examples of positive contact by caretakers include, but are not limited to:

- Holding / petting / playing with the dogs
- Leash walking / moving dogs into exercise areas
- Behavior training
- Providing edible treats (during non-feeding time)
- One-on-one interaction or interaction within small groups of dogs

- ATCP 16.20(6)(b) applies to all age classes of dogs within each facility where regulated activity occurs from puppies to adults of all ages. Providing effective positive human contact and socialization on a daily basis can reduce a dog's fear and stress, as well as allow for easier handling when grooming, providing treatments, moving between enclosures, and providing daily inspection.
- A caretaker may provide a dog with daily positive human contact while also simultaneously performing a daily body, mobility, and behavior check required under ATCP 16.20(2)(b). See the Department's guidance document on 'Performance of Daily Body, Mobility, and Behavior Checks' for more information.

## More Information

For more information, or assistance regarding providing daily positive human contact & socialization to dogs, contact:

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