

Get ready for the launch

Regulation respecting the welfare and safety of domestic companion animals and equidae

(Chapter B-3.1, r. 0.1)

This [rule](#) applies to **everyone who keeps or owns a pet!**

It will replace the *Règlement sur la sécurité et le bien-être des chats et des chiens* (chapter P-42, r. 10.1) **as of February 10, 2024**. It will establish standards for the care and keeping of domestic companion animals and equidae, with the aim of ensuring their well-being and safety. Here are the main **changes** you need to prepare for.

In this document :



[Provisions for cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and pet pigs](#)



[Cat and dog care](#)



[Care of rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and pet pigs](#)



[Custody and care of cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and pet pigs in pet shops or commercial breeding operations](#)



[Provisions relating to e q u i d a e](#)



[Permits](#)



PROVISIONS RELATING TO CATS, DOGS, RABBITS AND FERRETS, GUINEA PIGS AND PET PIGS

GUARD AND CARE

It will be necessary to provide the essential elements for their well-being such as :

- a daily source of environmental enrichment to keep them busy and entertained;
- a shelter to keep them warm when they are kept outdoors, or when they are kept in a building where the temperature is below 10°C;
- cages or pens to separate incompatible animals;
- an effective means of cooling animals if they are kept in an enclosed area where the temperature is 27°C or higher for cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs and pet pigs, or 29°C or higher for ferrets.

Certain practices will be prohibited or restricted:

- It will be **forbidden to perform or have performed surgeries** such as caudectomy (tail trimming), devocalization (removal of vocal cords), essorillement (ear trimming) and onysectomy (declawing), or any other declawing surgical practice.
- **Euthanasia must be performed by** or under the supervision of **a veterinarian** when the animal's owner or keeper holds a permit issued by the Minister under *the Animal Welfare and Safety Act* ([chapter B-3.1](#)).
- **Euthanasia by inhalation will be prohibited.**

CONTAINMENT OR RESTRAINT EQUIPMENT

The equipment used to house the animals must be large enough to offer the animal a certain level of comfort. Minimum standards will apply, such as :

- be large enough to enable the animal to stand and sit in a normal position, turn around easily and lie on its side with its limbs fully extended, without any part of its body touching the sides or ceiling of the equipment;
- for a rabbit, measure at least three times its length;
- prevent the equipment used to attach the animal to its place of care, such as chain or rope, from becoming jammed or shortened, notably by installing pivots.

Certain types of devices used to tie up an animal will be prohibited, such as :

- a spiked collar (or similar device);
- a rope, chain or leash wrapped around the neck without a collar;
- a choke collar or muzzle **when the animal is unattended or tethered**;
- a chain or rope used to tether an animal that is less than three meters long **and** less than five times the animal's length.



CARE OF CATS AND DOGS

To meet the needs of cats and dogs, certain items must be provided. For example:

- They must have **direct, active and positive daily contact** with humans (duration varies according to age; refer to the Regulations for more details).
- A cat kept mainly indoors should have access to a litter tray containing sufficient substrate.

In addition, when they are kept in a space that restricts their movements (e.g.: kept in a cage, pen or tethered), requirements will apply. For example:

- They must be given a period of exercise adapted to their needs, outside their cage, for **at least one hour a day**;
- A cat must have access at all times to a **surface for scratching or clawing**, and a **hiding place** (with some exceptions, see article 27 of the Regulations).

Certain breeding requirements will apply to **all** cats and dogs:

- **Mating between parent and offspring, or between brother and sister, is forbidden**;
- Mating between two incompatible animals is prohibited;
- For bitches, the **minimum age at first mating** will be 18 months or after they have had their first two heats. The maximum number of litters is three every two years. However, a bitch may not have more than two consecutive litters;
- For female cats, the minimum age at first mating is nine months. The maximum number of litters is two per year.



CARE OF RABBITS, FERRETS, GUINEA PIGS AND PET PIGS

To accommodate the natural behaviors of rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and pet pigs, certain items must be provided. For example:

- A rabbit or guinea pig must have **permanent access to forage and at least one object to gnaw on**;
- The main holding area for guinea pigs, rabbits and ferrets must **contain enough hiding places** for all animals to hide simultaneously;
- A rabbit, ferret or guinea pig kept confined in a cage must be taken out at least five times a week, on different days of the week, for a minimum of 30 minutes, so that it can **move freely**.

A pregnant or farrowing female rabbit, ferret, guinea pig or pet pig must have permanent access to a **suitable nesting substrate** and, in the case of a rabbit or ferret, to a **nesting box**.

Pregnant female rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and pet pigs must be **separated from non-castrated males** no later than the day before the expected birth date, and at least until the young are weaned. The pups must then remain with their mother, but she must be able to isolate herself from her litter if necessary. The determined weaning age is :

- four weeks for a rabbit;
- six weeks for a ferret;
- two weeks for a guinea pig;
- eight weeks for a pet pig.



CARE OF CATS, DOGS, RABBITS, FERRETS, GUINEA PIGS AND PET PIGS IN PET SHOPS AND COMMERCIAL BREEDING OPERATIONS

REPRODUCTION

All cats and dogs must undergo a **veterinary examination before their first mating**. Once it has reached **the age of seven, an annual veterinary examination will be required** if it continues to be bred. We **strongly recommend that you check the availability of veterinary care in your area as soon as possible, and schedule veterinary consultations accordingly.**

SALES

It will be **forbidden to sell a pet** with no or insufficient imprinting or socialization, which is not capable of feeding or watering itself, or which shows obvious signs of disease, injury or limiting congenital malformations, unless the buyer is notified in advance in writing and signifies acceptance in writing.

It will be forbidden to give, sell or allow to be given or sold a pet to a **person under the age of 16**, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.



PROVISIONS RELATING TO EQUIDAE

Equids include various subspecies, such as the domestic donkey, miniature donkey, domestic horse, mule, pony or miniature horse. The owner or keeper of an equine animal must comply with the requirements set out in the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines](#) published by the National Farm Animal Care Council.

These requirements will include:

- the obligation for horses to have access to a shelter (built or natural) that protects them;
- the obligation to trim and/or shoe horses' hooves as often as necessary;
- a ban on tail alterations such as Englishing, blocking and couard trimming;

- the obligation for horses to be exercised or set free, unless they are confined to the stall for medical reasons or because outdoor conditions are very bad and temporarily prevent outings;
- where an equine is confined, the obligation to provide sufficient bedding substrate to absorb urine and encourage the animal to lie down.



PERMIT

In addition to the permits already required, a permit will now be required to operate an equine collection site. The three categories of compulsory permits in force will therefore be :

- 15 to 49 cats or dogs;
- 50 or more cats or dogs;
- operating a cat, dog or equine rescue center.

It should be noted that, since August 25, 2022, the **maximum number of cats or dogs over 6 months of age that** can be kept on the same premises or by the same owner or keeper is 50 animals. Therefore, even if the owner holds several premises or a license for 50 or more cats or dogs, the total number of animals **cannot exceed 50**, unless the activities carried out are not related to breeding or rearing.

For more details, consult the [Regulation](#) and the [Guide d'application du Règlement sur le bien-être et la sécurité des animaux domestiques de compagnie et des équidés \(quebec.ca\)](#).



Any questions?

Telephone (toll-free): 1 800 463-5023

E-mail: smsaia@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca



See also:

[Animal Welfare and Safety Act](#)