

Greyhound Fact Sheet

Frequently Asked Questions

Greyhound Husbandry (Part 1): Facility Design

1. Why should I be concerned with specific facility design?

Designing a housing facility that supports good physical and mental health of greyhounds is often difficult. Poorly designed and constructed facilities will increase the risk of:

- i. poor physical health such as signs of stress, underweight, diarrhea;
- ii. traumatic, non-healing injuries such as cuts or abrasions to skin and muscle bruising from sharp fence material or protruding broken pieces of wood;
- iii. behavior problems such as pacing, constant barking, cage-biting;
- iv. difficulty preventing or controlling the spread of infectious diseases such as kennel cough;
- v. increased costs of running the facility such as increased treatment costs, increased utilities costs;
- vi. increased costs of maintaining the facility such as the need to replace worn parts, increase resources required (manpower);
- vii. poor return on investments; and
- viii. non-compliance to the Code of Practice and Rules of Racing.

2. What are some important considerations before designing a greyhound facility?

In designing a housing facility for the long-term care of greyhounds, you should first consider:

- i. the maximum number of greyhounds you want to manage at any one time;
- ii. the status of greyhounds you want to manage (i.e. portion that is racing, retired, puppies, breeding, etc);
- iii. any shared onsite services such as a circular training facility, slipping track, trial track;
- iv. the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds;
- v. the resources you have available in running the facility;
- vi. the land space you have available; and
- vii. your available budget.

3. How should I design my facility?

You should consult the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds (CoP) for the minimum size requirements, and your obligation as a participant of greyhound racing in Victoria.

After considering factors in **Question 2**, you should divide your facility with the following requirements in mind:

- i. Main housing area, with dedicated individual kennels, sleeping area +/- outdoor yard;
- ii. Group or exercise yards;
- iii. Separate area for puppies/whelping/lactation greyhounds;
- iv. Separate isolation area;
- v. Separate quarantine area;
- vi. Storage area – some facilities combine with food preparation section;
- vii. Food preparation section – require separate section for isolation area;
- viii. Medical or Assessment section – some facilities use the quarantine area for this purpose; and
- ix. Cleaning section – require separate section for quarantine & isolation area.

You should also consider factors that influence the daily management and internal environment of the facility, such as:

- i. Materials used for constructing the facilities – this will influence risk of a disease outbreak and ability to adequately clean the facility;
- ii. Air quality including use of positive or passive ventilation, humidity and temperature control;
- iii. Light including amount of natural light;
- iv. Sound control including enrichment and control of excessive noise from greyhounds, equipment and the facility; and
- v. Pathway for human and dog movement.

4. Why is it important to have separate quarantine and isolation areas?

There are several factors that contribute to the spread of infectious diseases including the number of newly introduced greyhounds into the facility, the general health & immunity of the existing greyhound population, the design of the facility, hygiene practices and the staff knowledge of infectious diseases.

Dedicated quarantine and isolation areas will help limit or prevent the spread of infectious diseases by physically separating greyhounds into groups of likelihood of either developing an infectious disease or transmitting it and allows the separation of greyhounds by susceptibility to contracting an infectious disease.

Quarantine areas are for those greyhounds that may or have been exposed to an infectious disease and therefore may become infectious themselves. These include newly introduced greyhounds and those greyhounds in kennels adjacent to ill greyhounds.

Isolation areas are for those greyhounds that have positive symptoms to an infectious disease. This includes mild to severe symptoms. It is important to separate greyhounds with mild symptoms or those recovering from disease as they can spread the disease.

5. What materials should I consider using in my facility?

The general rule for materials used should include, but not limited to:

- i. Highly durable – capable to withstand continuous exposure to hot water, detergent and disinfectant;

- ii. Easy to clean – capable of physically removing all dirt and debris, and being cleaned thoroughly with detergent and disinfectant;
- iii. Smooth surface – allows thorough cleaning;
- iv. Scratch-resistant – resistant in the formation of small gaps that prevent thorough cleaning and acting as a source of infection (e.g. faeces from a parvovirus positive dog); and
- v. Slip-resistant – prevents injury from slipping for both staff and greyhounds.

Some common materials used for floors include:

- i. Concrete: it is relatively inexpensive, durable, easy to clean if it is finished professionally such as polished and sealed;
- ii. Epoxy coating: it is relatively inexpensive, easy to install (over concrete), easy to clean, durable to wear, heat & water resistant, does not crack, lasts a long time if installed properly. However, certain coatings are not slip-resistant; and
- iii. Porcelain tiles: they are easy to clean, impermeable and can come in slip-resistant versions. However, it is important to note that the grout joint is the weak link, so it is recommended to use large tiles in order to minimize the number of joints.

Fence wire as walls is common in the greyhound facilities, however most animal shelters have solid walls. Solid walls provide a physical barrier to prevent the direct transmission of infectious diseases, and they allow thorough cleaning.

Some common materials used for walls include:

- i. Concrete: it is durable, easy to maintain and easy to clean if finished professionally such as polished and sealed;
- ii. Hard-troweled cement plaster: it is very durable, easy to maintain, and relatively inexpensive. It is recommended to opt for non-porous and non-textured plaster that is sealed with water-based sealers; and
- iii. Porcelain wall tiles: they're easy to clean, impermeable, can come in slip-resistant versions. However, it is important to note that the grout joint is the weak link, so it is recommended to use large tiles in order to minimize the number of joints.

6. How much space should I provide for each greyhound?

You should consult the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds for all minimum requirements.

It is recommended that the space allocated should allow each greyhound to make normal postural adjustments such as turning around freely, standing, sitting, stretching, moving his/her head without touching the top of the enclosure, wagging his/her tail without touching the sides of the enclosure, lie comfortably with limbs extended, move and assume comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating.

The enclosure should allow the greyhound to sleep and eat away from areas of their enclosure where they defecate and urinate. The enclosure should allow the greyhound to see out to other greyhounds, but also provided with the opportunity to avoid visual contact.

7. How do I control air quality in my facility?

Air quality is an important factor in maintaining good population health. Minimal odour, optimal temperature and humidity, and good air exchange rates contribute to good air quality. It decreases the risk of spreading air-borne diseases, minimizes physical stress from extremes in temperature, helps prevent odour build-up and provides a comfortable environment.

Animals require higher air exchange levels than humans, so the use of mechanical ventilation is often required. The use of mechanical ventilation often increases the cost of running a facility so a good way to think about reducing the cost without compromising air quality is to minimize the space required by dividing the areas into smaller zones, such as dividing the main housing area into smaller rooms. Unoccupied zones can be ‘closed’, thereby eliminating the need to maintain good air quality.

Zoning the facility also helps limit or slow-down the spread of infectious diseases, allow for more efficient use of human resources and control excessively adverse noise.

8. Do I need to consider how humans and greyhounds move around the facility?

It is important to consider how greyhounds, humans and cleaning practices flow around the facility because it will significantly limit or prevent the spread of infectious diseases by either direct (physical contact between dogs) or indirect transmission (spread of disease by humans).

In addition to placing all new greyhounds into a quarantine area before they are introduced to the main population, also consider how greyhounds move around in shared spaces such as hallways and walking paths and during periods of outbreaks. Specific considerations include:

- i. Ensure healthy greyhounds and sick greyhounds do not walk through the same areas or share the same space (e.g. yards).
- ii. If one greyhound starts to show symptoms of an infectious disease, it may be better to prevent all greyhounds in that shared zone from coming into contact with other greyhounds. Some diseases are contagious even before symptoms become apparent or even when greyhounds have started to improve.
- iii. Those greyhounds that are young, old or have other concurrent diseases are more likely to be affected by infectious diseases for longer and be a source of infection. It is ideal to provide more intense care such as at a veterinary practice, where they are separate from those adult greyhounds with similar symptoms.

Humans are usually an unexpected but common reason for the spread of infectious disease. Diseases can spread from coming into direct contact with sick greyhounds (patting, handling) or indirectly (e.g. walking through isolation area, touching food bowls belonging to sick greyhounds), before coming into contact with healthy animals. To control this issue:

- i. Consider rostering staff to work at a specific area/zone for the day, so they do not accidentally cross-contaminate.

- ii. If human resources are limited, then consider separate clothing (including shoes), disposable protective equipment (e.g. gloves and boot covers) and more thorough human-hygiene practices (e.g. meticulously washing hands between greyhounds or areas).
- iii. Humans should only move from the healthy greyhound population to the sick population. This applies to both staff and visitors.
- iv. You should limit or entirely prevent visitors from going to quarantine or isolation areas, unless there are compelling reasons and where stricter hygiene practices are adhered to on entry (e.g. veterinary staff, compliance officers).