

Re-homing Procedures for Rabbits, Rodents, Birds, Reptiles, etc.

A. Introduction:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) encourages the public to adopt abandoned or surrendered dogs and cats through approved non-profit making voluntary animal welfare organisations so that abandoned animals may have a second chance at being a favourable pet after they were abandoned or given up by their owners..

In general, AFCD will not arrange adoption of animals directly with the public. Animal re-homing MUST normally be arranged through approved animal welfare organisations (organisation). The organisations involved in the re-homing programme should be approved by AFCD's Senior Veterinary Officer / Animal Management (SVO/AM) in advance.

This document only refers to animals obtained from the AFCD Animal Management Centre (AMC) for re-homing. It does not cover animals obtained from other sources which might be made available for the public to adopt by the organisation.

B. Applicability

1. These procedures do not cover dogs and cats, for which a separate set of procedures is available; those procedures for rehoming dogs and cats can be read at the following website :

http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/quarantine/qua_awc/qua_awc_aw/files/Rehoming_Procedures_for_dogs_and_cats_Nov_2010.pdf

2. The word "animal" is used in the sense of Cap 169 to cover all forms of animal life, vertebrate and invertebrate. The word "creature" is also used in a similar meaning.
3. These procedures do not supersede legislation/rules/guidelines: for dealing with endangered species, protected wild animals, (CITES-listed species); or public safety considerations (eg. poisonous animals); or environmental considerations (eg. potentially problematical exotics); etc.

C. Non Profit Making Voluntary Organisations:

"Organisation" means approved animal welfare organisations in collaboration with AFCD to rehome animals.

For the list of approved animal welfare organisations, please see the following website.

http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/quarantine/qua_awc/qua_awc_aw/qua_am_aw_owo/qua_am_aw_owo.html

Charitable status of the organisation:

(a) The organisation must be a charity registered under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap 112), or a registered society under Societies Ordinance (Cap 151) or a registered co-operation under Co-operative Societies Ordinance (Cap 33)

(b) The organisation is required to sign an undertaking to AFCD to confirm: -

- ⌘ That the organisation will not profit from animals they obtain from AFCD, nor impose surcharges or administrative fees on such animals, nor sell or trade in such animals, nor pressure adopters to donate money or pay fees other than normal membership dues in relation to such animals and recovery of expenses as provided by these rules. At any other times, organisations are free to fund-raise in other ways at other times as per any non-profit organisation or charity, and can accept fully voluntary donations;
;
- ⌘ Such other provisions as AFCD might need.

(c) The organisation should not charge any fee for keeping and feeding of the adopted animal in this re-homing programme except for cover of reasonable expenses.

(d) The organisation may recover from the adopter the reasonable expenses, including the appropriate veterinary fees, reasonable transport costs, the costs of vaccination, licensing and microchipping. The organisation must not add profits, surcharges and administrative charge. In recovering these expenses, the organisation must support the amounts by giving originals or true-copies of the relevant expense receipts obtained from the veterinary clinic, government, or other proper parties. The organisation should keep the original or true-copies in their file for checking by AFCD if so required. Fees paid directly by the adopter to veterinary clinics, Government, or other proper parties should be covered by receipts from those parties to the adopter direct.

(e) The organisation must (i) issue official receipts for all monies received, and (ii) keep accurate accounts.

D. Adopters

“Adopter” means the final recipient of the adopted animal rehomed via the organisation.

The organisation has a responsibility to assess adopters and animals for suitability. The organisation should not re-home animals which they assess as unsuitable to the adopter’s family, and should not release animals to unsuitable adopters. The organisation should also have a system in place for following-up adopted animals and adopters.

- (a) Adopter must normally be over 18 years of age.
- (b) Adopter must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter of the approved organisation concerned.
- (c) Adopter must provide documentary proof of residential address and contact details to the organisation,
- (d) Adopter must not adopt an excessive number of animals through this re-homing programme.
- (e) Adopter is not allowed to transfer the re-homed animal to others within six months from the date of adoption, except back to the organisation through which they adopted the animal. If and when appropriate, the organisation may re-home the animal to a new adopter in accordance with these procedures.

E. Policy for re-homing rabbits, rodents, pet birds, reptiles etc.

A pre-approved list of representatives who can visit the AMC to select the animals must be submitted to AFCD by each organisation. Only two representatives would be allowed to visit the AMC at a time.

I. Assessment criteria:

- (a) Only animals which have meet the following criteria will be released for rehome:
- (i) They are healthy without any obvious signs of disease and the temperament must be acceptable.
 - (ii) Ownership status of the animal had been clarified prior to rehome.

II. Animal Collection arrangement:

(a) The organisation wishing to collect animal for rehoming must submit an application as laid down in **Annex I Rehome Animal Application Form**.

(b)The organisation should take reasonable steps to collect animals for re-homing from the AM Centers in 5 days from notice, as space in the AMCs is very limited.

(c) If specified by the organisation or by AFCD for a particular case or species, the animals for adoption or fostering should be or sterilized if they are of an appropriate species for this to be practicable [see notes at end of these pages], and should be appropriately examined and treated and/or vaccinated by a registered veterinary surgeon at the expense of the adopter or the organisation, normally before release to the adopter. All these must be confirmed in certificate(s) to be issued by the veterinary surgeon at the time.

(d) At the time of collecting the animal from the AMCs, representatives of the organisation or an authorized individual must fill out **Annex II Acknowledgement of Rehome Animals**.

III. Record keeping:

(a) The organisation must keep accurate records of every animal acquired by them from AFCD,. Rehome record of such animals (subject to the removal of any information that may relate to privacy concerns) shall be submitted to the AFCD within 1 month from the date of rehome (**Annex III**).

(b) All adopters must be clearly registered or recorded with relevant details in a register or other record system kept up to date by the organisation.

(c) The organisation should keep records of and should inform the adopter of the animals medical history and any treatment received, including but not limited to vaccination and sterilization..

(d) These procedures apply in general. Special cases may be processed on an “as-needed” basis (refer to Part F) and these must be fully recorded by the AFCD officer concerned and by the organisation. SVO/AM must also be fully notified in advance and agree with such alteration.

(e) All relevant legislation must be complied with. In cases when adopted animals are subject to

permits or licences (eg. Cap 586 licence to possess), then the adopter and/or organisation must pay the necessary fees and fulfill all the normal requirements.

F. Special Arrangements

Animals to be removed immediately by the organisation:

- (a) There will be cases where animals need to be removed immediately by the organisation for care or treatment or other sound reason. In such cases, the animal may be removed without delay after being approved by a Veterinary Officer (VO), and the organisation must then ensure the necessary prompt and adequate care and treatment for the animal.

Such early removal cases include: -

- (i) young animals,
 - (ii) animals needing treatment beyond the facilities or capacities of the AMC at the time; and
 - (iii) other special cases.
- (b) The organisation removing the animal from the AMC or arranging for the animal to be adopted must normally ensure prompt examination by a registered veterinary surgeon as soon as possible preferably on the same day and definitely within 24 hours when the animal leaves the AMC . **Annex V Undertaking of Rehome Animal for Medical Treatment** should be filled out.

G. Alteration to the re-homing programme

AFCD may review and revise these requirements and procedures from time to time. AFCD will undertake in a timely manner to consult and subsequently inform the organisation with regard to any proposed amendments. Any updated/revised requirements and procedures when finalised, will be issued by SVO/AM only, and will take effect immediately unless otherwise stated.

NOTE Species which should normally be sterilized, in addition to dogs and cats, include: Rabbits

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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