

# **ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SLED DOG SPORTS**

**KENNEL STANDARDS**

**&**

**SLED DOG HEALTH CARE**

Voted on and passed by majority on  
May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document was prepared at the request of the membership of the Ontario Federation of Sled Dog Sports at the spring meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The request was for a combination of any applicable sled dog care guidelines be put together for the comparison of the membership when reviewing present guidelines (1997) for the preparation of new guidelines and the repeal of the 1997 by-law by the membership.

The following document is put forth as requested for the discussion of the membership. The document is a combination of the following:

Ontario Federation of Sled Dogs Sports By-law to Control Kennel Standards and Sled Dog Health Care (1997)

Mush with P.R.I.D.E. Sled Dog Care Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2009)

United Kennel Club of Michigan (Puppy Protection Act, 2012)

Public Workshop for Proposed Animal Care Standards (Alaska, U.S.A., 2012)

Provincial Animal Welfare Act, (Province on Ontario, Canada, 2008)

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (R.S.O 1990, Chapter 36) revised on May 27, 2015

Sled Dog Code of Practice (Ministry of Agriculture, British Columbia, Canada, 2012)

Other documents consulted but not contained within this document are as follows:

Animal Health Protection Act, RSQ, c P-42 (Province of Quebec)

Bill 51 Quebec National Assembly – Amendments to RSQ, P-42

Animal Pedigree Act of Canada

Ontario Animal Standards of Care (O' Reg. 60/09)

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THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE PUT FORTH UNDER THE CONSCIENCE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SLEDDOG SPORTS FOR THE PREVENTION OF INHUMANE AND CRUEL TREATMENT OF SLED DOGS.

NOW THEREFORE THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SLED DOG SPORTS enacts as follows:

## **Section 1**

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. In this by-law:

- (a) "OFSS" means the Ontario Federation of Sled Dog Sports and its governing body;
- (b) "sled dog" means an animal of the canine species that can be identified by a recognized identification method that is used for the purpose of recreational sledding, sled dog racing or working conditions;
- (c) "recreational sledding" means the use of sled dogs for the purpose of transporting people, equipment or other usable items from point to point;
- (d) "sled dog racing" means the use of sled dogs for the purpose of competition between sled dog teams;
- (e) "working conditions" means the use of sled dogs for the purpose of carrying or moving essential items used in the survival of humans and sled dogs;
- (f) "recognized identification" means a method of identification approved by the OFSS or other governing bodies;
- (g) "kennel" means any four or more dogs that are not of the same litter and that are found in the same location;
- (h) "dog house" means a suitable enclosure, raised a few inches off the ground, with a large enough area for the dog to turn around and relax, but small enough to conserve the dog's body heat in cold weather;
- (i) "dog chains" means a chain of no less than 6 feet in length containing at less one swivel snap used for the purpose of securing a dog in one location within a kennel;
- (j) "tie out chain" means a chain of no less than 12 inches containing at less one swivel

and used to secure a dog to a vehicle used in the transportation of dogs;

- (k) "dog vehicle" means a vehicle used to move dogs from location to location and that provides suitable space for the dogs to rest and relax in comfort;
- (l) "breeding premises" means any premises where more than all or part of two litters of dogs are raised in any year.
- (m) "dog owner" includes a person, having the possession or control of a dog that is occupying its premises immediately prior to the seizure of the dog.
- (n) "insulation" means a substances used to help conserve the dog's body heat within the dog house. (ie. straw, hay, wood shavings )
- (o) "off tether" means the subject animal is removed from tether.
- (p) "free run" means the subject animal has been removed and allowed to run free. This means no containment (fences).
- (q) "confinement" means any said building, pen, dwelling used for containment of a dog.
- (r) "tethering" means the attachment of a cord, cable, chain or rope from an unmovable object (post, pole, cement block, etc.) to a dogs collar or harness for the purpose of containment a dog.
- (s) "Independent musher" means a person within the mushing community that is not associated or familiar with another musher's kennel.

## **Section 2**

### **THE DOG YARD:**

The dog yard must provide adequate drainage, sun, shade and protection from other dangers in the area. Each dog in the yard should be provided a food bowl, water bowl, and adequate housing. Fecal matter produced by the dogs should be removed from the dog yard daily.

### **BEST PRACTISES:**

Beginner mushers are sometimes surprised by the amount of space needed for a kennel. A dog yard for 10 dogs will require at least 1,000 square feet of pens, or 1,450 square feet for tethers. These figures do not include space needed for walkways, out buildings or other facilities. A dry, well-drained area makes life pleasant for both dogs and musher. These conditions are also best for the dogs' feet and for disease control. A location both visible and audible from a house window allows you to enjoy the company of your animals and alerts you to problems or emergencies.

Locating the kennel on a slight slope or on a high spot will greatly improve springtime drainage. A low-lying flat area may seem perfectly dry in the summer or winter but a few weeks of standing water during spring thaw will make life miserable for both you and your dogs.

In summer, shade helps keep the dogs cool, and a breezy location helps keep bugs away. During winter, a sunny area that is protected from wind helps conserve the dogs' energy. It is best to lay out the dog yard so the ground is exposed to full sunlight for at least part of the day. Direct sun (ultraviolet light) is one of the best natural means of controlling disease organisms. However, you should try to provide at least one shady spot for each dog to retreat from the sun's heat. Ideally, your kennel should be located on a southern aspect adjacent to hardwood (deciduous) trees. The trees will provide summer shade, and after leaf fall the winter sun will improve the microclimate of the kennel.

Planning your dog yard in a way that allows you to do your chores efficiently also allows for more time to care for and interact with your dogs. If you are able to run dogs directly from the yard, it's well-worth planning a safe takeoff area for runs. Some kennels are set up to allow the musher to leave from the middle of the dog yard to facilitate harnessing. Other considerations include access by vehicles for loading up dogs and for maintenance.

### **Surface**

The ideal dog yard surface depends upon its location and the method of confinement. Soil is fine in areas with good drainage. However, keep in mind that soil can harbor disease organisms and therefore requires more diligent feces pick-up. Soil is relatively easy to work with and is easily manipulated to meet your needs. Excessive silts and clays in the surface will produce a rock-hard surface when dry but will slow drainage and become slick and sticky when wet. Adding sand to soil improves its ability to absorb water and also reduces dust.

For wetter locations, sand, wood chips, coarse wood shavings, wooden platforms, or fine, smooth gravel less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter are good surfacing alternatives. Excessive amounts of decaying bedding material increases water retention and can increase the amount of fungi, mites and other organisms that may be harmful to your dogs. Beware of large gravel and stones in the dog yard. If your dogs are rock-eaters, remove rocks larger than 1 inch from the soil. Although many dogs swallow rocks without incident, there have been cases of dogs that have died from rock ingestion.

Typical sled dogs love to dig in dirt. Because digging is an instinctive "species typical" behavior many mushers accept the extra work of filling in holes rather than trying to thwart the action. Other mushers prefer to prevent digging; there are several methods of doing so. One popular method to prevent digging is to cover the ground with sturdy fencing or concrete reinforcing mesh before adding the surface material. Another method is to house dogs on a concrete or plywood surface. This not only precludes digging, it also (and most importantly) prevents your dogs from eating rocks. Plywood floors work well in dry climates and are softer to stand on than concrete. They are also easy to clean and repair, but eventually breakdown and need replacement.

## **Section 3**

### **DOG HOUSES:**

A dog house must provide adequate area within the house for the dog to turn around, relax and stretch out without being confined. It must be constructed of a material that can contain a type of insulation and prevent the elements of weather from effecting the insulation.

#### **BEST PRACTISES:**

- Provide sled dogs with a sleeping surface that is raised off the ground.
- Construct dog houses of solid, non-toxic, non permeable material and make sure they are free from hazards such as nails, screw heads, etc.
- Ensure floors are solid with no gaps capable of injuring the feet.
- Provide bedding that is clean and dry and sufficient for comfort and insulation.
- Monitor bedding for mould, excessive dust, feces and urine, insect infestation, parasites and seed heads that become embedded in the dog's coat.
- The sled dogs needs must be considered when constructing a dog house. Dogs of different ages have different requirements and they must be met as the dog progresses throughout its life. (eg. Older or injured dogs recuperating may need a bigger house for a certain time in their life.)

## **Section 4**

### **DOG CHAINS:**

A dog chain should be at least 6 feet in length and contain at less one swivel device to prevent the dog from becoming tangled and/or choked. The dog chains should be spaced so that adjacent chains don't overlap and so that dogs can't tangle or strangle each other.

#### **BEST PRACTISES:**

Tethering is a common, traditional and economical means of confining multiple sled dogs. The only controlled scientific study comparing sled dogs confined by tethers to those confined in pens found no evidence that tethering is either unsafe or inhumane (Haupt K). The most common tethering systems used by mushers allow dogs to interact more directly with their surroundings, musher and handlers, and with teammates.

The tethering method preferred by most mushers involves attaching a chain to a rotation device at the top of a post or pipe, thus allowing the chain to travel in a full circle around the post. One simple rotation device uses a piece of rebar with a 90-degree angle bend and an eye for the chain welded on the end. A hollow iron or steel pipe is driven into the ground to serve as the post. In use, the long arm of the rebar slips inside the pipe allowing the rebar to swing in a complete circle. With this system the post can be easily lengthened in deep snow by slipping a taller pipe of larger diameter over the shorter summer post. Another method to allow for rotation is to bolt the end ring of a chain to the top of a beveled solid wooden post.

Using a top-mounted post and swivel chain system, each dog needs a strong chain of 6ft. in length rotating 360 degrees on a post of a minimum 5 ft. in height, with at least another 3 ft, preferably more, buried in the ground. A pole of this height will hold the chain above most snow accumulations. If snow is deeper, provide taller poles and longer chains. Never use cable to tether dogs to their posts. Cable is much too likely to tangle around legs (in an armpit or hock) and can cinch up like a snare. Cables also have a tendency to fray and break.

The optimal length of the chain is somewhat longer than the height of the pole or post. If the chain is too short the dog will not have enough space to lie down or move around comfortably. If the chain is too long it will drag on the ground too much, increasing the chances for a tangle and spreading and breaking up feces before they can be cleaned up. For soil-based kennels that use tethers, it is best to use elevated tethers to minimize the amount of time that the chain drags on the ground.

The simplest method of tethering sled dogs is the post and loop, or post and chain method. This involves looping a chain around a solidly buried post or pole. The chain should have a large loop, or preferably a large welded steel ring securely built into one end with an S-hook or quick link. The loop or ring should be at least twice the diameter of the post to minimize binding. The post may be either wood or steel, but it must be smooth to allow the chain to rotate freely. The post must also be tall enough so that the chain loop or ring cannot fly up and over the top, especially when the dog jumps up on top of its house. A 5 ft. post is generally adequate. Where posts cannot be reliably buried, a 100-lb (45.5 kg) concrete block with an eyebolt cast in the center and a swivel attached will adequately secure a 6 foot chain.

Although the post and chain method is easy to set up, it has a few major drawbacks. The chain drags entirely on the ground, stirring up a dust cloud, spreading feces around, and making cleanup much more difficult. Also, the chain often freezes to the ice and snow when the dog urinates on its post. The chain is also more prone to binding around the post than in other methods, so it must be checked several times each day.

Whichever tethering method you use, space the posts so that adjacent chains can't overlap and so that dogs can't tangle or strangle each other. Strong hardware is also essential. Look for snaps that are durable, easy to open with a gloved hand yet difficult for dogs to activate. A bull snap is reliable because it requires the gate to be rotated outward. Snaps and chains do wear out, so replace them before they cause problems. We recommend using a snap with a swivel on each chain to avoid tangles and possible choking, as well as to save wear and tear on the chain and snap. It is preferable to use two swivels on each chain to provide a backup in case one fails (ices up, for example). A snap at both ends of the tether also gives you an instant "leash" when moving dogs from place to place. This is important in the unlikely event that you need to evacuate the dogs from your kennel. Having each dog with its own tie-out makes emergency kenneling in a safe location easier. The drawback is that snaps have a shorter life-span than solid links but the added convenience is well worth the extra cost.

Ensure that the tether is made of chain rather than rope or cable to avoid cutting into skin,



tangling around the legs and to prevent the sled dog from chewing through the tether.

Note: Sled dogs must not be tethered using choke collars.

## **Section 5**

### **PENS:**

A dog pen is an area used to contain a dog or dogs for what ever purpose, but must still contain a dog house, drinking water and adequate housing.

### **BEST PRACTISES:**

Runs or pens must be large enough to allow dogs to perform most behaviors that are typical of their species. It is recommended that pens provide at least 100 square feet of space for each dog housed within them. Many certified behaviorists have observed that dogs spend more time exercising in rectangular pens rather than in square, so a pen measuring 10' X 20' would be very effective for two dogs housed together. (Rollet J)

Chain link or sturdy woven wire fencing with walls buried 6 to 12 inches into the ground provide a sturdy barrier that discourages digging. A fence height of 5 ft or higher is recommended to discourage climbing. Place doghouses so the roof cannot be used as a platform from which a dog can climb or jump over a fence.

Runs and pens should be equipped with gates that are wide enough to permit easy entry and exit, but which can be closed quickly if necessary to prevent a dog from “rushing” the gate and escaping. Gates should be installed with thresholds that allow for snow to accumulate without interfering with the gate opening and closing. These thresholds should also be removable to allow for access with equipment like wheelbarrows and carts. Gates should be equipped with latching devices that are easy for the musher to manipulate while wearing gloves, but difficult for dogs to manipulate. During winter it is important to shovel snow well away from gates in order for them to swing fully open when necessary, especially if thresholds are not incorporated in the design. Thresholds of 1 ft high that are removable for maintenance will almost completely eliminate the need for snow shoveling.

Some mushers have used “hot wire” electrical fencing successfully to prevent burrowing under and climbing over fences. The goal of electric fencing is to modify the behavior of the dog and provide a visual cue to restrict the animal. “Invisible” underground fencing has seen only limited success in sled dog kennels where no other fence or physical barrier is used.

### **Recommended Practices:**

- Provide a sturdy barrier to discourage digging by using chain link or heavy gage wire fencing.
- Construct fences to discourage climbing.
- Place dog houses so the roof cannot be used as a platform from which a sled dog can climb or jump over a fence.

- Equip pens with gates that are wide enough to permit easy entry and exit, but which can be closed quickly if necessary to prevent a sled dog from “rushing” the gate and escaping.
- Install gates with thresholds that allow for snow to accumulate without interfering with the gate opening and closing (the thresholds should be removable to allow for access with equipment like wheelbarrows and carts).
- Equip gates with latching devices that are easy for the musher to manipulate while wearing gloves, but difficult for sled dogs to manipulate.
- Shovel and accumulated snow away from gates during winter in order for them to swing fully open when necessary, especially if thresholds are not incorporated in the design.

## **Section 6**

### **ON-THE-ROAD HOUSING:**

Dogs should travel in safety and comfort. Dog boxes should be large enough for the dog to stretch out in and should have dry bedding and adequate ventilation. Dog boxes should be solid, have operable latches and locking devices and be securely attached to the vehicle. The dog's compartment should be a minimum of 34 inches deep, 19 inches wide and 22 inches high. The door should be a minimum of 15 inches square with a vent of no less than 9 inches square.

### **BEST PRACTISES:**

Dogs should travel in safety and comfort in dog boxes or airline crates. Dogs need to be restrained during travel to prevent injury to themselves and to other occupants of the vehicle. Dogs left in the back of pickup trucks and in the back seat in the cab are risks to themselves, the occupants of the vehicle and to other vehicles on the road.

Dog boxes or crates should be large enough for the animal to stretch and turn around in. They should have dry bedding and adequate ventilation. Dog boxes should be well-constructed, have user-friendly latches and locking devices and should be securely attached to the vehicle. Boxes should not be open or vented in the back of the truck because the vacuum created behind the truck can suck in exhaust fumes. Many mushers modify the exhaust systems of their vehicles so they discharge above the dog box to reduce the exposure to toxic fumes. Mushers in regions noted for extremely hot or humid conditions may equip their dog trucks with ventilation systems for cooling. These ventilation systems should be designed so they draw clean air from the front of the box and exhaust air towards the back to prevent back-drafting of vehicle exhaust.

Some mushers believe that dogs are more comfortable when doubled-up in larger boxes. If you wish to do this, be sure to match compatible companions. When traveling, dogs should be taken out (“dropped”) several times a day. The dogs can be safely left for eight hours at night as long as the vehicle is not moving. Some dogs require their bedding to be changed every day; others, not until the straw has broken down. Drop chains should be kept short to avoid entanglement. Leaving the drop chains or plastic-coated cables in the boxes or on the dogs while traveling keeps the snaps thawed.

While on the road, as at home, keep water buckets clean. Avoid parking where other dogs have been in order to avoid exposure to diseases and parasites. It is best not to store smelly food and equipment in motel rooms, for the sake of your hosts. It is also important that mushers rake up straw and other waste from wherever they have dropped their dogs and dispose of it properly.

Recommended Practices:

- Provide ventilation systems for cooling during extremely hot or humid conditions.
- Consider space, temperature and ventilation when transporting more than one sled dog in a box or crate.
- Keep drop chains short and avoid dog entanglement
- Use swivel attached to neck line for drop use.
- Take necessary precautions to avoid having snow entering transport boxes.
- Change bedding as often as necessary to prevent wet bedding and the soiling of sled dogs.
- Consider restricting the 9 inch vent when travelling in cold weather as exposure to high winds can cause dehydration while travelling.

## **Section 7**

### **ON-THE ROAD RELIEF:**

Dogs should be removed from their traveling compartment at least every 6 hours to allow them to stretch and relieve themselves. The exception is if the vehicle is stationary for a given amount of time to allow the driver to sleep. Sled dogs should not be housed more than eight (8) hours at any one time during a rest period. Sled dogs must be dropped within 3 hours of consuming any food or water to relieve themselves.

## **Section 8**

### **KENNEL UPKEEP:**

Cleaning up dog waste at least once every day makes the dogs' environment pleasant and helps control diseases such as parvovirus and intestinal parasites. Waste management or "scooping poop" is one of the daily chores all mushers must undertake.

Locate permanent waste disposal or temporary waste storage sites away from water drainages and from any location that may cause ground water contamination, such as wellheads and areas uphill from natural springs. Methods of disposing of dog feces include composting, burial, or removal to a landfill.

Landscaping around your kennel can be both attractive and practical. Begin by removing brush that is an attractant to moose, which have little fear and often have animosity toward dogs.

Remove foxtails and other grasses with barbed or brush-shaped heads that are prone to getting lodged in the soft flesh of dogs' ears, eyes, throat and respiratory system. Identify other noxious plants found in your area and remove them from your dog yard.

## **Section 9**

### **DOG YARD CONTAINMENT:**

Even mushers who primarily house their dogs in their own homes need some sort of outdoor confinement system. Mushers with larger teams usually confine some or all of their sled dogs in an outdoor “dog yard”. Whether confining members of a two-dog skijoring team or a 100+ dog racing kennel, the general considerations and methods of confining the dogs remain the same. The confinement system you choose must provide a reliable and safe means of preventing the dog from escaping. Materials and hardware used in your confinement system should be durable, reliable and maintained in good condition.

It is recommended that dog yards include a sturdy fence around the perimeter to contain any dogs that may get loose from their primary confinement and to keep unwanted people, wildlife and stray domestic animals away from your dogs.

#### Recommended Practices:

All dog yards should include fenced pens or runs to confine females in heat, dogs that display dog-directed aggressiveness, sick dogs, or puppies too small to collar and tether. Many mushers incorporate a fenced “play yard” into their kennels where compatible dogs can run and play together.

When planning a dog yard, consider including one or two “extra” spaces that can be used to house dogs while making repairs or modifications to the dog’s normal housing area.

- Dog Yards must allow for adequate shelter, shade, sanitation, ventilation and exercise.
- Dog Yard surface must be well drained to prevent the accumulation of standing water and kept clean from feces and urine.
- Sled dogs must be contained in such a way that they are not causing injury or distress.

It is a recommendation that during non-sledding season, that all dogs have off containment opportunities.

## **Section 10**

### **FEEDING:**

Dogs will be fed a food adequate enough to maintain the required dietary needs of an animal of its size.

#### BEST PRACTISES:

Sled dog sports today include a wide variety of dog breeds and sizes doing different activities in almost every kind of climate. There is no single perfect diet that will meet the requirements of every sled dog under every condition. The ideal diet for a dog depends on the dog’s genetic

makeup, age, physical state, training regimen, environment and the food sources that are available.

Sled dog diets usually consist of commercial dry food, meat-based food, or a combination of the two. Dry foods are convenient to feed and store, requiring only a cool, clean, dry location. Fresh meat products require refrigeration or freezing. Feeds marked with an expiration date should be consumed prior to that date to provide maximal nutritional value.

Meat feeds are extremely palatable to dogs. They may help maintain hydration because they contain up to 75% water by weight. High-quality meat-based feeds are readily available in all but the most remote locations.

Commercial dry food provides vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates. Some mushers prefer to mix their own meat ration and add some commercial dry food to it as a source of vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates. If you choose this route, be sure to enlist the help of an experienced musher or nutritionist, as it is not always easy to balance a ration this way. Recently a few commercial dry products designed to be fed as supplements with meat have become available. These products are enriched with vitamins and minerals and help take some—but not all—of the guesswork out of feeding a non-commercial meat-based diet.

When choosing a product or combination of products to feed your dogs, remember that a sled dog's nutrient requirements change significantly depending on age, environment, and physiological state. You may wish to choose different products that will meet your dogs' requirements for each of these situations, or you may choose a feed that will act as a base that can be supplemented as necessary. In either case, choose a product that is relatively high in fat (15% minimum), relatively high in protein (25% minimum), fresh, and of the highest quality available. Poor quality commercial pet foods do not provide adequate nutrition to meet the needs of working sled dogs.

### **Determining a Working Dog's Dietary Needs**

The best way to monitor your dog's body condition status is to run your hands over him or her. Perform this examination at least every two or three days. (In extreme conditions, it is important to keep an even closer eye on a sled dog's weight.) The ribs, spine, and hip bones should not be buried under an inch of fat, nor should they protrude. Rather, they should be easy to feel. A well-conditioned sled dog should be lean and muscular—neither skinny nor obese. (See Appendix). If you are unsure of what the ideal appearance and feel of your individual dogs should be, solicit advice from an experienced musher or veterinarian. Take every opportunity to feel and look at dogs from other kennels that are doing well in your particular mushing discipline.

Formulas and tables on dog food labels will give you a place to start, but they should not be relied upon for long-term feeding guidelines. There is too much variation in metabolism among dogs, their working environments and their various levels of performance to rely on "average" requirement guidelines. Most mushers agree that it is crucial to monitor your dogs' weight and body condition with your hands.

### **Meeting the Changing Demands of Training**

Maintaining a dog's optimal weight requires frequent adjustments to the amount of food he or she is given. When you begin training and each time you increase the workload, your dogs will require more food. During cold or wet weather they will need more food just to maintain their normal body temperature. One of the most difficult times of year to maintain a dog's body weight is during the fall when the weather is often cold and wet and training miles are increasing. During such periods, anticipate your dogs' increasing nutritional needs and begin feeding them more before they start to lose weight. During the most demanding times, a sprint dog may require two to three times more food than during the offseason; a long-distance racing dog may require three to six times its off season requirement.

### **Feeding During the Off Season**

Recent research indicates that dogs that continue to receive high-quality rations through the off-season are better prepared to resume training because their bodies are more able to mobilize and burn fat during exercise. It also takes several weeks for a dog's metabolism to adapt to a high fat diet. The drawback of feeding premium dog food year-round is that it can be easy for dogs to become overweight in the offseason; watch your dogs closely and adjust their portions as necessary.

### **Life Stages**

Dogs also have different nutrient requirements during pregnancy, lactation, growth, and old age and their diet and food intake must be adjusted accordingly during these times.

**Pregnancy and Lactation:** A female should be maintained on a performance type ration throughout pregnancy and lactation. She can be fed at maintenance levels for the first four weeks; however, from the fifth to the ninth week, her intake should be increased by 10 percent each week so that when she whelps, she is getting about 1 1/2 times what she was eating in the maintenance state. As a rule of thumb, her food intake should be increased by 30 percent of maintenance for each puppy she is nursing. Thus, if she only has one puppy, she should be fed 130 percent of maintenance. These suggestions are just guidelines-; remember to run your hands over her regularly and adjust her food intake as needed. A lactating dog should be neither skinny nor obese.

**Puppies:** Puppies usually weigh between 10 and 14 ounces at birth and should gain weight every day after their third day of life. Weight gain is an excellent way to monitor the nutritional and overall health status of a litter of pups. Slow or negative puppy weight gain can be the first noticeable sign of a health problem with the mother or pups, and supplemental feedings may be required. Enlist the help of a veterinarian or an experienced musher the first time you attempt to raise orphan pups or even supplement nursing ones.

Puppies can begin to eat solid food at three weeks of age. Puppy food or a high-quality performance food with a small kibble size is recommended for at least the first four months of their lives. A flat pie pan with soaked dry food or a meat ration is a good way to entice them to start eating. As they walk through the food, they will get bits of food on their paws, lick them, and realize it is something good to eat. Over the next three to four weeks, they will consume

more food, so they can usually be weaned between six and seven weeks of age. Before, during, and after weaning, be sure that less assertive pups are maintaining a normal rate of growth. Since there is no standard rate, compare the growth rate of the less assertive pups and their littermates. After four months of age, pups should be fed a premium food at a rate that keeps them in optimal body condition but not so much that they become fat or grow too fast. (Maximum growth rate of 2 1/2 pounds per week for huskies, 3 to 3 1/2 pounds per week for larger Northern breeds).

**Older dogs:** The aged dog may have a slightly decreased ability to digest and absorb nutrients. It may also take an older dog longer to move a meal through its gastrointestinal tract. Most older dogs will do well on the same ration as younger dogs in the offseason. Occasionally, a dog will have trouble digesting all the fat in this ration or may become constipated. If so, try feeding a diet lower in fat or higher in fiber. When in doubt, ask your veterinarian about specific diet regimes and supplements for your geriatric dogs.

#### Recommended Practices:

- Feed sled dogs more than one time per day.
- Feed non-nursing puppies a minimum of three times per day until the age of six months.
- Ensure necessary steps are taken to mitigate the risk of pathogen exposure when handling raw food and when managing sled dogs consuming raw food.
- Manage feeding so all sled dogs have adequate opportunity to consume their own food without competition from other sled dogs.
- Choose a product that is formulated for working dogs, is fresh, and is of the highest quality.
- Ensure diets are nutritionally complete and balance.
- Ensure that foods are properly stored in a cool, dry place to avoid food spoiling and contamination by rodents and insects.
- Design and construct all surfaces in the feeding area of a material that allows for regular cleaning and disinfection.
- Follow good hygiene practices during feed to prevent exposure to parasites and bacteria.

## **Section 11**

### **WATERING:**

An adequate supply of fresh water will be obtainable by the dog at all possible times. Sled dogs must be provided with water containers that are kept clean of contamination to decrease the health and welfare threats.

### **BEST PRACTISES:**

(1) An operator must ensure that each sled dog has access to clean and palatable drinking water, in adequate quantities to meet its needs and prevent dehydration.

(2) Water is the most essential part of a feeding regime. While deficiencies in protein, fat, vitamins, or minerals will affect a dog's health, it may take days or months before such problems

are noticeable. In contrast, dehydration affects an animal's health immediately and in extreme cases can even lead to death within hours if left untreated.

A dog gains water by drinking it directly, by eating foods that contain water, and by generating water through metabolism. Water is lost each day through urine, feces, and water vapor in the breath. Anything that increases a dog's daily water loss will increase its daily requirement. Dogs also lose a significant amount of water through panting when the weather is warm. Exercise leads to increased water loss not only through the breath, but also through the stool and urine. A dog's water requirement may double if it participates in open-class sprint racing and increase three to five-fold if it participates in long-distance racing. Medical problems such as diarrhea and vomiting also increase water loss.

It is difficult to know exactly how much water each dog requires. Understanding how environment, training, and illness may affect the dog's hydration needs allows you to anticipate these changes and offer your dogs more water when they need it. During warm weather it is best to have clean, fresh water available at all times. When the temperature drops below freezing, water consumption can be encouraged by offering warm, baited water. The bait can come from any source that will increase palatability such as dry food, meat or cooked fish. The bait should mix well in water and must not be spoiled or soured.

About 1 1/2 quarts of water should be offered two to three hours before training. Some dogs will not drink this amount all at once but will readily consume several smaller portions offered within a short period of time. Small amounts (about a pint) can be offered immediately after exercise to help cool the dogs down followed by more water (about a quart) after they have completely cooled down. Offering 1 to 1 1/2 quarts of baited water before feeding or mixed in with a dog's food can further encourage water intake.

These recommendations are a starting point and should be adjusted according to the needs of your dogs. Monitor your dogs' hydration status by observing their hunger for snow and by examining their skin and gums. In a well-hydrated dog, the tent made by lifting up the skin on the shoulder blades should disappear within one to two seconds and the white spot made by pressing on a pink area of the gums should disappear in one second or less. If either of these processes takes longer, the dog is probably dehydrated and in need of fluids.

#### Recommended Practices:

- Encourage water consumption when temperatures drop below freezing by offering warm baited water.
- Monitor your sled dogs' hydration status by observing the hunger for snow and by examining their skin and gums and the colour of their urine.
- Ensure adequate supplies of water are carried on board when traveling.
- Test non-municipal water quality to ensure is not compromised.



## **Section 12**

### **EXERCISE:**

A dog should be supplied or allotted sufficient exercise as to keep the dog physically, mentally and socially fit and conditioned.

- This must include the ability for the dog to exert body movement for the sake of development and maintenance of the body's good physical condition.
- Ensure that sled dog's exercise routine is under control.
- Ensure that the level of exercise is appropriate for the age, level of fitness and physical condition of the sled dog.
- Allow dogs to see, smell and safely play with other dogs.
- Provide sled dogs with a stimulating non-barren environment weekly.
- Keep isolation duration to a minimum when sled dogs are isolated from teammates because of health issues, aggression or when isolating a bitch in season.
- Provide isolated sled dogs with extra human interaction and house them within sight of other dogs.
- Ensure interactions are positive and rewarding for sled dogs at all times.
- Human and playful interaction with each sled dog during the daily routine, in training and when working.
- Sled dogs must be directly supervised at all times when exercising with equipment such as trend mills, dog wheels or swimming pools to limit the risk of injury.

### **Release from exercise/living area:**

A dog must be released from its exercise/living area if the

The above condition does not apply in any of the following circumstances:

- a) if the sled dog should not be moved or released due to illness or injury;
- b) if the sled dog is a female that is:
  - i) within one week of her anticipated whelping date or;
  - ii) has whelped within 2 weeks previously;
- c) if the sled dog is younger than 6 weeks old;
- d) if extreme weather conditions would make it unsafe for the sled dog to be released;
- e) if the sled dog:
  - iii) has within the previous 24 hour period participated in a racing activity or other activity involving significant physical exertion, and
  - iv) requires rest as a result of participating in the activity;
- f) if a practicing veterinarian has given direction that the sled dog not be released.

## **Section 13**

### **TRAINING:**

Training for different individual needs and abilities should be considered when training dogs. A dog should never be pushed farther or faster than it is happily capable of going. Dogs can only

run at their own natural pace and must never be pulled, whether by mechanical or other means.

## **Section 14**

### **BASIC HEALTH CARE:**

#### **Veterinary Care**

Develop a good working relationship with your veterinarian. He or she will be a valuable source of information on current dog care practices as well as providing other services as needed. As the dog's owner, you can often perform routine procedures yourself but will also have to obtain professional care on occasion. The science of veterinary medicine is evolving; frequent contact with your veterinarian will help you stay informed about the latest changes in veterinary sciences. Many veterinarians also benefit from contact with mushers. Mushers bring a new dimension to animal health care professionals. Having regular contact with a vet also serves to present a positive image of dog sledding to the public.

- Establish a Veterinary-Client Relationship with a practicing veterinarian.
- Sled dogs must be provided with veterinary care to meet their health and welfare needs.
- Sled dogs must receive prompt attention by a practicing veterinarian, either directly or by way of consultation, if they are experiencing severe pain, suffering, deteriorating health or serious injury.
- Sled dogs known to be infected with an infectious disease must be carefully supervised and securely isolated to prevent infecting other sled dogs.

#### **Record Keeping**

Record keeping is an essential part of any kennel operation. Often, your veterinary clinic keeps records of office visits and professional vaccinations, but most care and medical treatments are given by the musher. Keeping track of medications, vaccinations, illnesses and general health will allow you to identify health trends. Records can include breeding cycles, on and off season weight fluctuations and training and performance distances and times.

The owner of the kennel must maintain current, accurate and detailed information on every sled dog within his/her care the following information including but not limited to:

- Date of Birth
- Date of Death
- Feeding and Nutrition
- Incidental and behavioral concerns
- Injuries, illness, parasite control and treatment
- Pedigree
- Sterilization and reproduction
- Vaccinations

Records must be kept to maintain current, accurate and detailed information on every sled dog

that includes:

- Acquisition
- Disposition
- Identification (micro-chip, tattoo, photo)

### **Adult Dogs**

**Daily care:** Monitor each dog's appetite and water intake as well as its fecal and urine output. These changes, as well as changes in behavior, are frequently the first signs of a health problem. Running your hands over the dogs daily will allow you to recognize abnormal conditions.

**Monthly care:** Trim nails and groom each dog. If a dog is shedding, grooming keeps its skin and coat healthy. Administer heartworm preventives and external parasite control medications (for fleas, lice, ticks, etc) if needed.

**Three to six month care:** Work out a deworming program for your dogs with your veterinarian. The type of dewormer and frequency of administration will depend on the type and species of intestinal parasites in your area.

**Yearly:** Consult with your team's veterinarian to develop an appropriate vaccination schedule for your dogs based on the health problems common to your region and the demands of your race schedule or mushing goals. If you live in an area where professional veterinary care is not available, contact your state, provincial or national veterinary medical association for information to help you develop your own vaccination schedule. Also, consult the rules of races you may wish to run with your team. Many race-giving organizations (RGOs) specify vaccinations that dogs in their events must have received.

During the late summer of each year you should perform a thorough physical exam on each dog in the kennel. If you find any problems, you will have time to treat them before fall.

### **Basic Health Examination**

The following guidelines are basic elements of a physical health examination for dogs. They can also be used when considering the acquisition of a new dog for your kennel or for a pre-season health assessment. Some of these elements should be performed daily or even both before and after running. (Elements marked with an asterisk (\*) should be performed daily.)

General attitude\*: A dog should be alert and interested in its surroundings.

Weight and coat\*: A dog should be lean but not thin. It should have a healthy, shiny coat and skin that is a light pink with no raw areas or excessive flaking. Run your hand over the dog's whole body, checking for lumps, bumps and sores. A dog that is underweight/overweight or with an unhealthy coat may be showing signs of conditions such as hypothyroidism, parasitism (internal parasites such as worms or coccidia, or external parasites such as lice, fleas, or mange mites), malabsorption syndrome (an inability to absorb nutrients), or another ailment. However, keep in mind that all dogs do not always look their best. Even a beautiful coat looks rough during shedding, and a female will shed after she has pups.

Eyes\*: The eyes should be clear, without excessive tearing, redness, or a gray or blue haziness on the cornea. The pupils should be symmetrical.

Ears\*: The ears should be clean inside without a waxy or pussy discharge and without a foul odor.

Nose\*: There should be no nasal discharge, raw areas, or dry, crusty buildup around the nostrils.

Mouth: The mouth and teeth should be clean without any strong odors or excessive tartar buildup. The gums should be pink without infection along the teeth gum border. Check for broken teeth or an uneven bite. Dental disorders may contribute to poor appetite, poor attitude, or chronic infection.

Respiration: A dog's normal heart rate is 100 to 130 beats per minute, and its respiratory rate should be about 22 breaths per minute. These may both be elevated in an excited dog, and both will be hard to evaluate in a panting dog. Listen for coughing, wheezing or other abnormal respiratory sounds.

Chest: The chest should expand and contract symmetrically. There should be no pain or tenderness when the dog's ribs are gently pressed. Use a stethoscope to listen over the lungs. Lung sounds should be equal from side to side with no abnormal noises. Because chest injuries can result in massive internal bleeding and respiratory system compromise, a veterinarian should evaluate any significant chest injury.

Abdomen: The abdomen should be symmetrical and not distended. The abdominal wall should be pliable when gently pressed toward the spine. A painful, tender, distended abdomen may be a sign of a potentially fatal problem that requires the intervention of a veterinarian.

Muscles and bones\*: Check the dog for symmetry. Compare the muscles and joints of the two hind legs and of the two front legs. Swelling on the foot may be an indication of an old metacarpal fracture. Swollen wrists may be a sign of arthritis. Asymmetrical muscle masses may indicate lameness or an unequal use of limbs.

Feet\*: Check the feet for signs of injury or excessive licking between the pads (mahogany, discolored hair). Examine the nails and dewclaws and trim when necessary.

Rectum: Check the rectum for open sores, growths or excessive swelling.

## **Breeding**

- Avoid breeding a bitch before 18 months of age, or before the second estrous cycle.
- Consider the BCS (Body Conditioning Score) of the bitch and the presence of any chronic disease before breeding.
- Ensure the female is adequately vaccinated and dewormed before breeding
- Consult with practicing veterinarian as soon as possible if an unwanted breeding is suspected.
- Females in heat must be separated from intact males except in the case of a planned breeding.
- Females in heat must not have contact with more than one intact male at the same time.

## **Spay and Neutering**

- Spay or neuter all sled dogs that are not intended for breeding
- Spay or neuter as early as practical all sled dogs that have or are likely to develop known inherited faults once the condition has been identified.

## **Section 15**

### **IDENTIFICATION:**

The OFSS accepts the following methods of identification:

- (i) Micro-chip - this device must be registered with a veterinarian or company capable to tracing and identify the dog.
- (ii) Tattoo - this method must be registered with a veterinarian or company capable of tracing and identify the dog.

Non excepted methods of identification:

- (i) Nose Printing
- (ii) Vaccination Tag

## **Section 16**

### **INFLICTION OF SUFFERING PROHIBITED**

No person shall inflict upon a dog suffering, serious injury or harm, or extreme anxiety or distress that significantly impairs its health or well being.

## **Section 17**

### **ACCEPTED ACTIVITY RESUFFERING**

Section (16) does not apply where the suffering, injury, harm, anxiety or distress is caused by a treatment, process, or condition that occurs in the course of an accepted activity.

## **Section 18**

### **ACCEPTED ACTIVITIES**

Subject to Section (17), for the purposes of this by-law, an accepted activity includes the following activities:

- (a) exhibitions and fairs;
- (b) medical care;
- (c) animal discipline and training;
- (d) protection of people and property;
- (e) sporting events;
- (f) euthanasia of dogs;
- (g) any other activity designated by these by-laws as an accepted activity.

## **Section 19**

### **INTERVENTION**

Subject to Section (16), for the purposes of this by-law, a dog is in distress if it is

- (a) subject to conditions that, unless immediately alleviated, will cause the dog's death or injurious harm;
- (b) subject to conditions that cause the dog to suffer acute pain;
- (c) not provided food and water sufficient to maintain the dog in a state of good health;
- (d) not provided appropriate medical attention when the dog is wounded or ill;
- (e) unduly exposed to unreasonable cold or heat;
- (f) subject to conditions that will, overtime, significantly impair the dog's health or well being, including
  - (i) confinement in an area of insufficient space,
  - (ii) confinement in unsanitary conditions,
  - (iii) confinement without adequate ventilation,
  - (iv) not being allowed an opportunity for adequate exercise.

## **Section 20**

### **ACCEPTED ACTIVITY RE: DISTRESS**

For the purpose of this by-law, a dog shall not be considered to be in distress as a result of any treatment, process, or condition that occurs in the course of an acceptable activity.

## **Section 21**

### **KENNEL LICENSE:**

All registered members of the OFSS will have a current kennel license that is registered with the area municipality where applicable. If a license is unattainable because of by-law conflicts, then all dogs must be identified under SECTION 15 of this guidelines.

## **Section 22**

### **KENNEL INSPECTION:**

Kennel Inspections must be held on annual bases. Inspection maybe performed by an independent musher, by-law officer, SPCA officer or veterinarian. The inspector must use the Kennel Inspection Form as provided in Attachment 1 of this document.

The completed “Kennel Inspection Form” must be retained by the kennel owner for at least five years and copy of the form kept by the inspector for at least 2 years.

## **Section 23**

### **POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOG:**

Means a dog that chases or approaches any person or domestic animal, anywhere, other than on the property of the owners, in a menacing fashion or apparent attitude of attack, or on 2 separate occasions within a twelve month period. Is a dog which has been trained to fight or which is owned or harbored for this purpose.

## **Section 24**

### **DESIGNATION OF A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOG:**

Upon receipt of a written complaint from a victim or its representative an investigation will be carried out by an independent investigator. A hearing will be held by the OFSS executive at which time evidence will be given by the investigator and the accused dog's owner (s).

During and until a written finding is issued the alleged dangerous dog shall be confined on the premises of the owner or appropriate authority and may not partake in any public activities. The OFSS shall issue their written findings within 5 days of the completion of the hearing.

## **Section 25**

### **EMERGENCY PLANS:**

All kennels should a plan to cover the following emergencies.

- Illness – short term and long term.
- Death of kennel owner
- Evacuation (floods, fire, locus, other hazardous weather conditions)

# ATTACHMENT

#1

ANNUAL KENNEL INSPECTION PROGRAM



# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SLEDDOG SPORTS

## **Annual Kennel Inspection Program** For Basic Standards of Sled Dog Care and Inspection.

1. WATER: All dogs are provided with adequate amounts of clean water every day.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
2. SHELTER: Every dog has full access to adequate shelter, to protect from the elements of wind/rain/snow/direct sunlight.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
3. DIET: Dogs are offered a diet which is complete and wholesome and provided in amounts adequate to maintain normal body condition for the environmental conditions and amount of exercise. All dogs should be adequately fed and watered at least once a day, except as directed by a veterinary treatment, normal fasts, or professionally accepted practices.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
4. CONTAINMENT: Dogs are confined in a manner that is safe and free of hazards. (i.e. no sharp metal, protruding nails, debris)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) If tethered, the tethers or chains are according to Section 4 of the OFSS Kennel Guidelines.
  - b) If kept in runs, they are constructed of chain-link or wire fencing that is secure and all openings are small enough to prevent entrapment injury to limbs or head.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
5. FECES: Stools are removed daily from the kennel area and are disposed of in a sanitary and legal manner.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
6. ESTRUS: If intact bitches are kept on premises, a confinement method is available which can safely house them under conditions within the OFSS Kennel Standard Guidelines (Section 14) and prevent unplanned breeding.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
7. SOCIALIZATION: Most dogs should be adequately socialized to the point of allowing contact without aggressive behaviors such as barring of teeth, growling, signs of fear biter posturing or attempting to bite (without provocation). Dogs exhibiting maladaptive or pathological behavior which could result in self-injury, injury to others or undesirable consequences, are being managed with an acceptable program for accommodation or remediation.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
8. QUALITY OF LIFE: all dogs are provided with a basic quality of life. Each dog is given adequate and appropriate opportunities to engage in beneficial species-typical behaviors and activities. No dog is forced to live under pain or distress without veterinary intervention for relief from pain/ suffering.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
9. ROUTINE TRANSPORTATION: Adequate containers are used for transportation and confinement of dogs during travelling, as specified in Section 6 of the OFSS Kennel Guidelines. Where appropriate, the dogs may be restricted when freedom of movement would constitute a danger to the dog, handler, or other animals or persons.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_

10. KENNEL: Kennel area/dog yard is located for best possible drainage from annual precipitation.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
11. FENCING: in places where young children might visit, the kennel area/dog yard is surrounded by a fence of an adequate height and strength to contain loose dogs and keep children out of the yard.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
12. RECORD KEEPING: Up to date individual records are kept for each dog including vaccinations, deworming and medical history. All dogs have a current rabies certificate. There exists a prior valid veterinarian client relationship and or an emergency contact phone number for veterinary care is available.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
13. BREEDING: Records of breeding are kept on all sexually intact dogs. Dogs with genetic defects/diseases are prevented from breeding.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
14. WHELPING: If breeding takes place on site, a suitable whelping pen and house is available.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
15. EMERGENCY EVACUATION: A means of safe transport and an emergency evacuation plan is in place to move dogs to safety in a timely manner in an emergency.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_
16. FOOD: Food ingredients are stored in such a manner as to prevent contamination.  
       \_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_ No                    owner's initials \_\_\_\_\_

KENNEL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 KENNEL LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE INSPECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have inspected the named kennel above, which is owned by \_\_\_\_\_ at their request. This kennel (circle) does / does not meet each of the basic standards for the housing and care of sled dogs as given in the OFSS Guidelines to Control Kennel Standards and Dog Health Care.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, owner (or agent designated in writing by the owner) of the kennel listed above, have requested the inspection and accompanied the inspector signing above during the inspection and I have initialed each statement indicated above in a truthful manner to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ did attend the inspection of this kennel as an independent observer and agree with all conditions stated within this document.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_