

Category 4: Facilities

OPTIONAL

4.11 To reduce stress for animals in a ward setting, practice has implemented at least two (2) options from the following list.

Note: Not all options to meet this standard are featured here.

2-Non-reflective surfaces in housing

VCA Animal Wellness Center - Maple Grove, MN



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4-If bars are present on the doors of cat housing, they are horizontal

- Horizontal bars are easier to use for hanging towels, etc., for hiding, but also provide unobstructed views when the cats want to look out.
- Horizontal bars should not be used for dogs as they can bite the bars and injure themselves.



Cat housing with non-reflective interiors, horizontal bars, and resting benches.

Credit: Foto Imagery / Tim Murphy



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6-Housing has views to pleasant or neutral spaces

- Views to the outdoors are preferred, but not required
- Common areas of the practice, such as the treatment area, are **not** considered pleasant or neutral

North Shore Veterinary Hospital - Duluth, MN



7-Enrichments used in housing

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Scratching surfaces for healthy cats
- Safe toys or treats for healthy animals
- Food puzzles
- Music, TV
- Blowing bubbles

8-Litter boxes designed for ill or compromised cats

- Provide wide, shallow litter pans so that ill or compromised cats can use them easily



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9-Fear Free dimensions for patient housing

FELINE

- Many cats have traditionally been housed in small enclosures that do not allow them to express normal behaviors and assume normal postures.
- Fear Free housing prioritizes a cat's ability to move normally in a horizontal direction and may also incorporate movement in the vertical direction.
- Enlarging caging to 3' in width and at least 30" in height can suffice for healthy, short-term housing.
- Healthy cats held overnight, or cats housed with litter pans need at least a four-foot-long housing unit.¹
- Additional information about modifying existing structures can be found here:
 - <http://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/cat-portals-order-information-and-instruction-for-installation>
 - <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/sites/indoorpet/files/assets/documents/CageSetUpPoster.pdf>

CANINE

- Because dogs vary in size, a variety of housing units can be provided.
- Healthy adult dogs must be able to move freely within their enclosures.
- If a dog cannot turn around without touching the sides of an enclosure, the enclosure is too small for the dog².
- Runs in medical settings should be wide and shallow rather than deep and narrow. Wide and shallow runs give dogs more room to maneuver and allow technicians to sit inside the run with a dog.

¹ If an animal needs restraint, such as in post-surgical situations, it is acceptable to provide smaller housing as is medically appropriate for the patients. Kittens may also be housed in smaller units.

² The hospital may intentionally restrict movement when medically required, such as in post-surgical situations.