



Minimum Standards for Shelters Housing Domesticated Cats and Dogs in South Africa

Version 4

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Introduction

Over the course of this project, the team has visited more than 200 animal shelters across all nine provinces in South Africa. This extensive engagement ensured widespread briefing and consultation across the sector. Furthermore, more than 200 animal shelters have participated in workshops (both online and in-person) to co-create minimum standards of practice for shelters that house domesticated dogs and cats. This initiative is a first for South Africa.

The overarching goal is to be inclusive: to hear every voice, understand the real challenges shelters face, and ensure that realistic, achievable minimum standards are developed to prevent operational failure and eliminate unintended harm to animals in shelter care.

Why the Need for Minimum Standards?

Currently, there are no uniform minimum standards to guide practice in companion animal welfare in South Africa (specifically regarding shelters housing domesticated dogs and cats). This lack of baseline guidelines leads to sector fragmentation, disjointed operations, friction between shelters, and compromised donor trust.

South Africa is an upper-middle-income, developing country characterised by extreme socioeconomic inequality. It is also home to diverse cultures with varying perceptions and treatments of animals. Consequently, simply adopting or refining international standards frameworks fails to yield 'fit-for-purpose' results in our local context. Therefore, this project has focused on developing a set of 'home-grown', locally relevant **minimum** standards of practice.

Minimum Standards vs Best Practice

Given the fragmented history of the sector, there are no clearly established baseline standards that apply to all companion animal welfare organisations - in essence, a common starting point. As a vital first step, minimum standards ensure that all shelters, whether in an early start-up phase or fully established, can achieve a shared baseline. Ultimately, this safeguards and improves the care of dogs and cats by preventing failure or unintended harm.

In contrast, best practice frameworks aim for optimal, highly innovative, or ideal approaches that promote excellence and continuous improvement. As organisations evolve in capability and experience, achieving best practice becomes feasible over time. However, establishing a common 'floor' across the sector through minimum standards must come first.

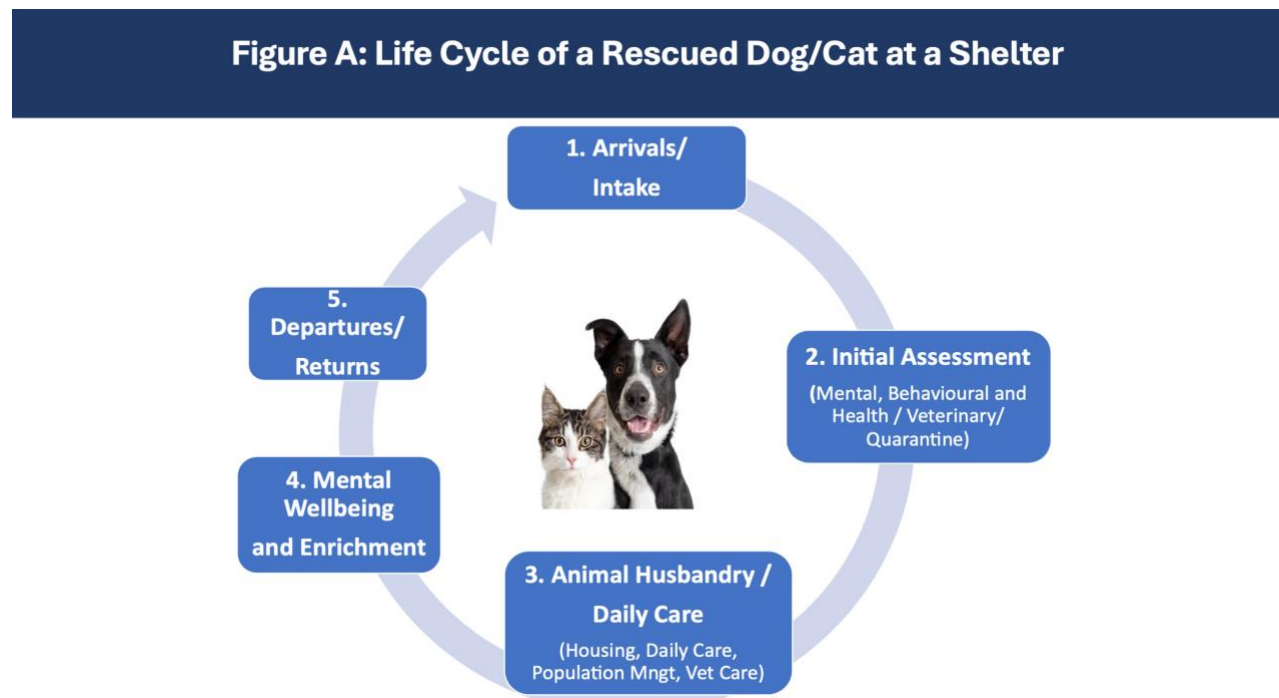
Minimum Standards vs Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

A minimum standards framework extends well beyond the operational scope of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). While SOPs outline specific daily protocols, the standards framework provides a comprehensive baseline that clearly delineates acceptable practice while providing stretch goals for organisational sustainability and growth.

Two Perspectives from Which to Build Standards

The minimum standards framework is structured around two distinct perspectives:

- **1. Animal Life Cycle, Figure A:** Standards relating to the Life Cycle of Dogs and Cats in a Shelter (from initial intake to final departure/return), **comprising 5 key operational stages.**



- **2. Shelter Management, Figure B:** Standards relating to broader Shelter Management and Leadership (core organisational components for efficiency and sustainability), comprising **9 key governance themes**.

Figure B. Shelter Leadership and Management



General Guidelines: General Requirements & Legal Compliance Guidelines:

- **Legal Compliance:** At all times, shelters must remain compliant with all local laws, municipal by-laws, and their founding documents (such as Constitutions, Memoranda of Incorporation [MOIs], or Trust Deeds).
- **Scope of Standards:** These standards apply specifically to rescued, surrendered, or confiscated domesticated dogs and cats owned by or signed over to the shelter.
- **Lost/Found, Missing/Stray & Unclaimed/Stolen Pets Animals:** Stray animals or animals with unknown owners must be handled according to the local municipal by-laws.
- **Animal Cruelty Cases:** These matters must be dealt with in accordance with the Animals Protection Act No 71 of 1962.
- **Legal Duty:** Adherence to these standards does not exempt a shelter or its personnel from general national and local legal obligations.
- **Animal Shelter Standards** are grounded in the **Five Freedoms:**
 - Freedom from hunger and thirst
 - Freedom from discomfort
 - Freedom from pain, injury and disease
 - Freedom to express normal behaviour
 - Freedom from fear and distress

Glossary of Terms

Word / Term	Definition
Three-Person Panel	A decision-making group—typically comprising a veterinarian, behaviourist, and shelter manager (or senior staff in smaller facilities)—that evaluates complex cases (e.g., severe aggression, terminal illness) to ensure objective, humane choices and shared emotional responsibility.
Animal Husbandry	The daily physical care of animals, including feeding, cleaning, grooming, and health monitoring to maintain baseline standards of health and well-being.
Biohazardous Waste	Contaminated materials (used needles, bandages, infectious bodily fluids) requiring regulated disposal to prevent disease transmission to humans and animals.
Bio-Secure Area	A protected zone with strict sanitation, protocols, and protective gear designed to isolate sick animals and prevent the spread of pathogens.
Cage / Crate	A temporary, secure enclosure (usually stainless steel or plastic) used for short-term housing or transport of cats and dogs.
Cattery or Catio	An enclosed outdoor structure that allows domestic cats to safely enjoy fresh air and enrichment without exposure to external dangers.
Companion Animal Welfare	Companion animal welfare is the state of well-being and the humane treatment of domesticated pets—such as dogs, cats, and horses—kept by humans for company, support, or pleasure.
Compassion Fatigue	A state of emotional and physical exhaustion experienced by shelter staff and volunteers due to prolonged exposure to animal suffering, trauma, and difficult welfare decisions.
Competent Person	A staff member or volunteer trained to recognise animal body language and behaviour, specifically stress, redirected aggression, and fear submissiveness.
Daily Health Check	A daily 7-point assessment monitoring an animal's eyes/nose, mouth, body/coat, mobility, output (waste), habitus (mental status/alertness), and appetite/water intake.

Word / Term	Definition
Decompression Period	A quiet adjustment period allowed for a newly rescued or surrendered animal to lower stress levels before undergoing behavioural assessments or introductions.
Habituation	A simple learning process where a dog stops reacting to a harmless sight, sound, or environment after repeated exposure.
Emergency Euthanasia	Immediate euthanasia performed by a veterinarian or authorized person under the Animals Protection Act to alleviate severe injury or acute suffering, waiving standard panel requirements.
Environment / Housing	The physical living space of an animal (kennel or cattery), including bedding, ventilation, and adequate protection against weather extremes.
Faeces	Solid animal waste; regular monitoring helps detect internal parasites, digestive issues, and systemic illness.
Humane Euthanasia	Painless, stress-free termination of life performed by a registered veterinarian or authorized SAVC para-veterinary professional, guided by clear policy and criteria.
Mental Well-Being & Enrichment	Activities and environmental elements (puzzles, toys, scent walks, social interaction) designed to stimulate an animal's mind and reduce kennel stress.
Capacity to Care	The maximum number of animals an organization can house while fully meeting their physical, medical, and behavioural needs
MOI	Memorandum of Incorporation; the legal founding document governing a Non-Profit Company (NPC) under South African law, outlining its purpose and governance rules.
Non-Judgmental Return Policy	A professional approach where staff accept returned animals without hostility to ensure animal safety and prevent abandonment elsewhere.
Quarantine Area	An isolated shelter section dedicated to housing new arrivals or sick animals to prevent the spread of infectious diseases like Parvovirus (Cat Flu) or Distemper.

Word / Term	Definition
Shelter	A facility (managed by an NPO, NPC, SPCA, or municipality) providing temporary shelter, care, and medical treatment for stray, abandoned, seized animals or animals surrendered by their owners.
Socialisation	Controlled exposure of animals to diverse people, environments, and other animals to improve confidence, behaviour, and overall domestic adoptability.
Telehealth	The remote delivery of veterinary healthcare, consultation, and monitoring using telecommunications technology.
Triage	The clinical process of rapidly sorting and prioritizing sick or injured animals based on urgency (evaluating Respiration, Alertness, and Circulation) to treat critical cases first.
Unmanned Facility	A facility or remote drop-off area operating without physically present staff, monitored remotely via security cameras.
Wendy House	A wooden shed structure used for housing animals; must be treated, ventilated, and elevated off the ground to stay dry and hygienic.
Adequate Nutrition	- For adult dogs a minimum of 18% crude protein and for puppies a minimum of 22.5% - For adult cats a minimum of 26% crude protein and for kittens a minimum of 30%

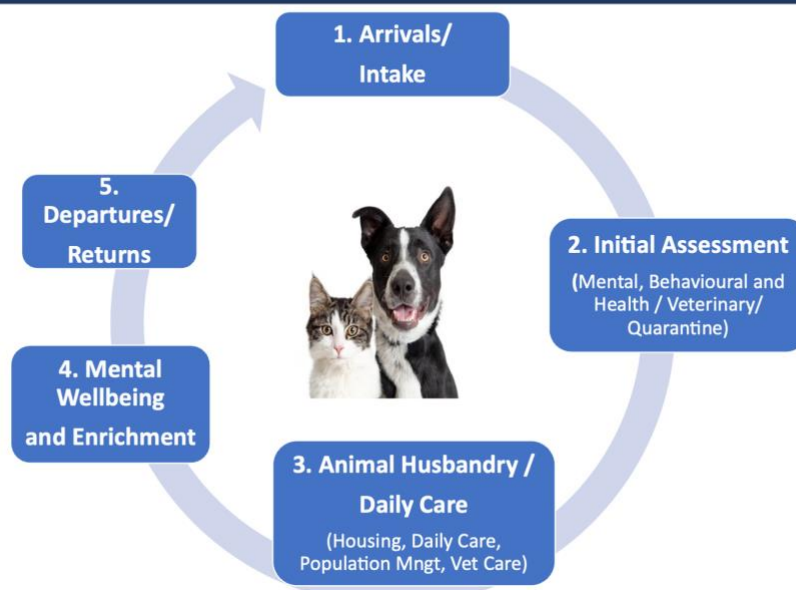
Ranking of Content in the Standards

The content within these minimum standards is ranked on a two-tier evaluation scale:

MUST (Mandatory Minimum Standard)	UNACCEPTABLE (Strict Non-Negotiable)
Essential baseline operational items required for every shelter to maintain animal welfare and operational integrity.	Practices that are strictly prohibited, representing severe risks to animal welfare, legal compliance, or organisational governance.

Minimum Standards — Part 1: Life Cycle of Dogs and Cats in Shelters

Figure A: Life Cycle of a Rescued Dog/Cat at a Shelter



Stage 1: Arrivals & Intake for Dogs and Cats

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Identification Scanning: Scan every incoming animal for a microchip, tattoo, collar, tag, or identifying mark immediately upon intake, or within 24 hours of arrival. Shelters without a scanner must establish a protocol to have the animal scanned by a partner vet or inspectorate within 48 hours. • Database Cross-Checking: Check microchip details across all platforms even if an animal is surrendered. Check against lost animal reports if the animal arrives as a stray. • Intake Documentation: Document a comprehensive intake record for each animal, including physical condition, estimated age, temperament, and medical/behavioural history where available. Where an animal is surrendered, the owner must sign a Surrender Form. A digital or physical record of each animal must be kept permanently. • Capacity to Care Assessment: Assess the shelter's current 'Capacity to Care' ratio prior to formal admission to ensure adequate space, nutrition, and medical attention. • Basic Health Screening: Conduct an immediate basic health screening upon arrival to prevent disease spread. If capacity is constrained, use dedicated quarantine kennels until health assessments occur. • Quarantine Protocol: If vaccination history is unknown, quarantine the animal in a dedicated isolation facility for 10–14 days without mixing with the general shelter population.	• Admitting Without SOPs: Admitting an animal without following established shelter standard operating procedures or policies. • Ignoring Veterinary Advice: Failing to adhere strictly to professional advice provided by a registered veterinarian.

Stage 2: Initial Assessment of Dogs and Cats

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Full Health Check: Perform and document a full physical health check within 72 hours of admission using a standardised checklist. This must be conducted by a veterinarian, Animal Health Technician (AHT), Animal Welfare Assistant (AWA), or trained competent person. • Weight Record: Weigh the animal upon admission and record details in its permanent record. • Vaccination & Parasite Control: Vaccinate against core diseases and administer broad-spectrum internal/external parasite control according to SAVC-approved veterinary protocols, unless medically contraindicated in writing by a vet. • Continuous Monitoring: Continuously monitor animals entering general population for clinical signs of infectious disease. Isolate symptomatic animals in designated quarantine immediately. • Disinfection Protocols: Implement rigorous disinfection protocols immediately upon identifying symptoms to avoid cross-contamination. • Pain Management & Injury: Seek professional veterinary intervention immediately for any animal identified as injured or in acute pain, ensuring all steps and outcomes are documented. • Decompression Period: Implement a mandatory 3 to 5-day decompression period for all new arrivals, keeping handling to a minimum to allow habituation. • Temperament Observation: Observe the animal to identify baseline temperament, social dynamics, and immediate behavioural needs.	• Unscreened General Housing: Placing an animal into the general shelter population without allocating a quarantine period, completing a health check, providing parasite control/vaccinations, or conducting a behaviour assessment. • Mixing Litters: Mixing puppies or kittens from different litters together before 10 days have elapsed following their first vaccination.

Stage 3: Animal Husbandry & Daily Care

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)

- **Canine Housing & Space:** Provide a minimum of 4 m² of total space per dog (or 8 m² minimum for open enclosure models). Ensure enclosures consist of separate sleeping/resting and play/exercise areas.
- **Visual Retreats & Co-Housing:** Provide adequate places to hide and retreat within the enclosures. Pair or group housing is encouraged for compatible dogs to promote social enrichment.
- **Weather Protection & Raising:** Construct roofed or shaded areas covering at least one-third of outdoor enclosures. Ensure sleeping areas are enclosed and sleeping platforms elevated off the ground to prevent dampness and cold.
- **Feline Housing & Catio:** Provide fully enclosed, escape-proof cattery runs with overhead netting/mesh. Single cat units must measure at least 1.7 m², increasing by 1.7 m² per additional cat. Include weatherproof indoor 'Wendy House' or building structures and vertical perches.
- **Inspection & Safety:** Verify the presence and well-being of every animal at least once every 12 hours. Inspect daily for changes in appetite, stool, or energy. Daily inspect and remove structural hazards, sharp objects, or damaged toys.
- **Feeding & Hydration:** Provide continuous clean drinking water in shaded, non-tip containers. Feed adult animals 1–2 times daily and puppies/kittens 3–4 times daily with balanced nutrition. Adult cats must have continuous access to dry pellets.
- **Food Competition & Monitoring:** Provide individual food bowls to prevent competition. Isolate food-guarding animals during feeding. Refer any animal refusing food/water for 24 hours for veterinary assessment.
- **Hygiene & Sanitation:** Wash food bowls after every meal. Sanitize water bowls every 12 hours. Remove solid waste (faeces) at least once daily. Scoop communal cat litter trays twice daily and perform deep weekly sanitisation.
- **Bedding & Grooming:** Check bedding daily for soiling/damage; wash weekly or immediately if soiled. Groom and brush animals regularly, monitor nail length, and check dental health.
- **Veterinary Partnership:** Maintain a formal agreement with a registered veterinary practice for clinical oversight, emergency care, and 24-hour response.

UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)

- **Neglecting Daily Observation:** Failing to regularly monitor and observe animals to identify early signs of illness, physical distress, or behavioural deterioration.

Stage 4: Mental Well-Being & Enrichment

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Daily Exercise & Interaction: Provide daily time out of primary enclosures for dogs (walking, yard play) and daily gentle human interaction or positive enrichment (e.g., snuffle mats). • Feline Scratching & Play: Equip all cat enclosures with dedicated vertical/horizontal scratching surfaces and appropriate enrichment toys. • Positive Reinforcement: Exclusively use positive reinforcement training and handling methods. Punitive equipment (e.g. choke chains, prong collars) or physical force is strictly prohibited. • Have access to a suitably trained, experienced person capable of evaluating dog behaviour and developing individual behaviour modification programmes. • Socialisation & Autonomy: Implement daily socialisation routines for puppies/kittens. Allow every animal autonomy to retreat by providing physical hiding spaces (e.g. igloos, high perches). Match animals for co-housing or group living based on a compatibility assessment conducted by a competent person (someone with demonstrated experience in body language and behaviour), ensuring neither animal shows signs of fear, resource-guarding, or aggression. • Maternal & Neonatal Care: House pregnant, whelping, or nursing females and litters in quiet, secluded bio-secure areas. Include a 'mother's retreat' space out of reach of offspring. Keep litters with mothers until at least 8 weeks of age unless medically contraindicated.	• Prolonged Distress: Allowing an animal to be in a state of prolonged severe mental or emotional stress to the point where an animal 'shuts down', inflicts self-harm or exhibits stereotypic self-mutilation.

Stage 5: Departures & Returns

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)

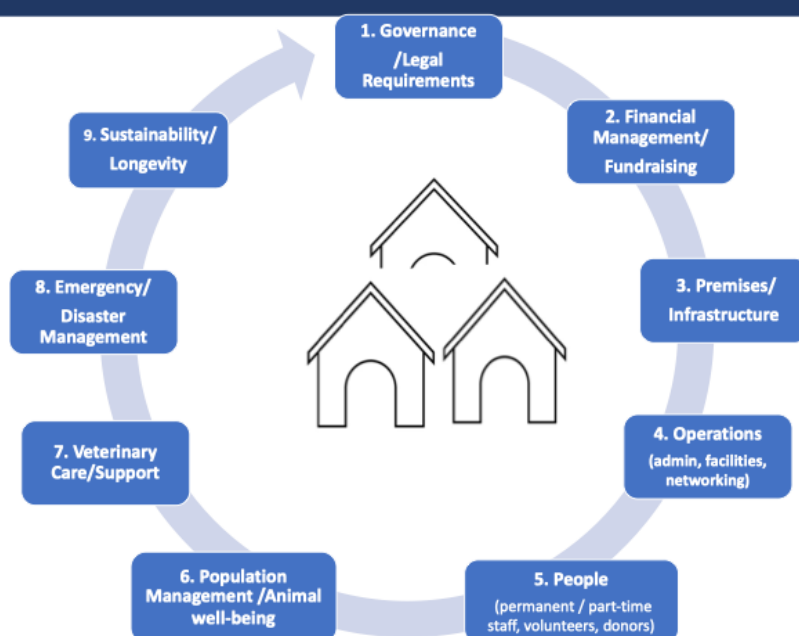
- **Sterilisation & Microchipping:** Complete sterilisation, core vaccinations, and microchipping prior to adoption. If adopted underage (under 6 months), enforce a legally binding sterilisation contract with strict follow-up procedures.
- **Sterilisation Policy:** Do not adopt unsterilised young animals into homes where existing pets are unsterilised.
- **Medical & Behavioural Disclosure:** Disclose all known medical and behavioural history fully to prospective adopters prior to finalising adoption.
- **Adoption Screening & Contracts:** Identify the most suitable type of home considering temperament, age, interactions, location and adopter experience. This requires additional care before placing a dog with young children. Execute a legally binding adoption contract. Conduct supervised meet-and-greet sessions and mandatory physical home inspections. For remote areas, an initial timestamped video can be considered, however, this does not override the requirement for a physical home inspection before the animal is placed.
- **Non-Judgemental Return Policy:** Maintain a clear Return Policy guaranteeing that the shelter will re-admit any previously adopted animal at any point in its life without judgment.
- **Humane Euthanasia Governance:** Require a consensus decision from a minimum two-person/three-person panel for non-emergency euthanasia. Perform euthanasia strictly in accordance with SAVC guidelines via a registered veterinarian or authorised AHT/AWA.
- **Euthanasia Decision Criteria:** Prevent physical or mental suffering, risk to humans or other animals and/or low quality of life.
- **Euthanasia Records:** Maintain a secure, permanent Euthanasia Register recording ID, reason, and signatures.
- **Re-Admission Protocols:** Execute standard intake protocols for returned animals. If vaccinations are current, no quarantine is required; otherwise, isolate for 10–14 days. Re-scan microchips and update permanent records within 24 hours.

UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)

- **Unvetted Adoptions:** Rehoming any animal without conducting a thorough home inspection and compatibility evaluation.
- **Unmonitored Sterilisation Contracts:** Failing to follow up on and enforce sterilisation contracts for juvenile adoptions.
- **Third-Party Adoptions:** Permitting or allowing an intermediary to adopt an animal on behalf of another individual.
- **Inhumane Euthanasia:** Euthanasing an animal through inhumane, painful, or distressing methods, or using non-approved agents.

Minimum Standards — Part 2: Shelter Management & Leadership

Figure B. Shelter Leadership and Management



1. Governance, Legal Requirements

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Legal Registration: Register formally as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) or Non-Profit Company (NPC). Maintain valid registration certificates and founding documents (Constitution / MOI). • Governing Board / Committee: Appoint an active governing board/committee with diverse skill sets (legal, financial, veterinary) to provide strategic oversight, meeting at frequencies defined in the constitution. • Compliance & Accountability: Comply with national legislation, municipal by-laws (noise, waste, zoning), and tax laws. . POPIA/PAIA compliance.	• Statutory Non-Compliance: Failing to comply with the NPO Act, Income Tax Act, or local municipal operational by-laws. • Unauthorized Objective Deviation: Deviating from the stated objectives in the Constitution/MOI without formal amendments registered with the Department of Social Development or CIPC.

2. Financial Management/Fundraising

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Financial Management: Maintain financial transparency with up-to-date tax clearance and POPIA/PAIA compliance. • Banking & Controls: Maintain a dedicated business bank account requiring at least two authorised signatories. Maintain auditable income/expenditure records and produce annual financial statements. • Fundraising Governance: Issue Section 18A tax receipts if registered as a PBO. Deposit all donations directly into the official bank account and safeguard donor personal data.	Misappropriation of shelter funds: Using shelter funds for personal use and/or engaging in unethical fundraising practices.

3. Premises and Infrastructure

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Zoning & Property Tenure: Ensure property municipal zoning permits 'Animal Care' or 'Kennel' usage. Maintain copies of zoning certificates, title deeds, or rental agreements on file. • Perimeter & Security: Maintain a secure perimeter fence (minimum 1.8 m height) with dig-proof foundations. Maintain separate canine and feline housing areas. • Maintenance & Safety: Perform daily physical inspections of enclosures and gates. Repair structural defects immediately. Conduct bi-annual facility-wide maintenance checks and keep grass mowed. • Third Party Facilities: External kennels must also abide by these standards. • Biohazardous Waste Plan: Implement a compliant Waste Disposal Plan for hygienic removal of biological and medical waste in line with municipal health bylaws.	• Damaged and hazardous materials • Escapable housing • Poor ventilation

4. Operations

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)
• Standard Operating Procedures: Maintain a comprehensive SOP manual distributed to all personnel during induction. Review and update SOPs at least every 24 months. Conduct monthly operational audits. • Shelters must have a clearly defined organisational structure that outlines accountability, responsibility and authority for management decisions. • Ensure there is a competent, contactable person within reasonable distance with knowledge of operational procedures. This person must be available 24/7. • Unattended animals in temporary containment: The time animals spend in overflow crates or cages must be limited to the bare minimum. • Insurance Coverage: Obtain and maintain adequate public liability and property/building insurance coverage.

UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)

- **Uninsured Operations:** Operating without public liability insurance, creating severe legal liability risks.

5. People & Human Resources Governance

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)

- **Legislative Compliance:** Comply with Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), Labour Relations Act (LRA), and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) legislation.
- **HR Governance & Vetting:** Review HR policies every 24 months. Conduct thorough reference and criminal record checks (criminal records or Sex Offender Register entries are immediate disqualifiers).
- **Health & Vaccinations:** Ensure all personnel are medically fit and maintain up-to-date Tetanus and Rabies vaccinations.
- **Staff** must demonstrate competence across animal welfare, handling, behaviour, and hygiene.
- **Training & First Aid:** Conduct formal induction training. Ensure team members are trained in basic disease recognition, First Aid, and Fire Marshall protocols.
- **Volunteer Management:** Require signed waiver/indemnity forms for 100% of active volunteers. Enforce constant adult supervision for minors under 16 and written parental consent for volunteers under 18 years old.
- **Foster Programme Vetting:** Approve foster homes via formal physical home checks, signed foster contracts, and mandatory monthly progress/photo updates.

UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)

- **Disqualified Personnel:** Appointing or employing individuals with criminal records or history of animal abuse.
- **Uncertified Clinical Tasks:** Allowing staff or volunteers to perform medical or veterinary tasks without appropriate legal qualification and certification.

6. Population Management / Animal Wellbeing

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Capacity to Care Limits: Establish and enforce maximum animal capacity based on facility size, available resources and carer ratio (a maximum of 15–25 animals per carer is recommended). • Capacity Contingency Plan: Activate a formal Capacity Contingency Plan (e.g. ceasing intakes, increasing fostering, NPO partnerships) when shelter reaches 95% capacity. • Enrichment Programming: Implement and evaluate species-appropriate enrichment programs monthly to prevent kennel stress.	• Severe Overcrowding: Overburdening shelter facilities beyond established Capacity to Care limits. • Prolonged Animal Suffering: Allowing prolonged suffering, neglect, or illness due to lack of trained staff or funds.

7. Veterinary Care

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Veterinary Governance: Ensure all clinical procedures comply with the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act (Act 19 of 1982). Maintain central physical/digital medical files. • Emergency Medical Care: Provide immediate emergency veterinary care for acute distress/injury. Display 24-hour emergency vet contact protocols at all staff stations.	Withholding Veterinary care

8. Emergency / Disaster Management

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Disaster & Evacuation Plan: Maintain a Business Continuity & Evacuation Plan covering natural disasters (e.g. fires, floods) civil unrest and water or electricity outages. Update protocols every 24 months. • Fire Safety & Compliance: Inspect and service fire equipment annually via accredited providers. Maintain a valid Electrical Certificate of Compliance (CoC). • Emergency Kits & Supplies: Maintain fully stocked First Aid and Disaster Kits (e.g. crates, leashes, carriers). Develop water/power outage contingency plans.	Failure to have a disaster and evacuation plan.

9. Sustainability

MUST (Mandatory Requirements)	UNACCEPTABLE (Prohibited Practices)
• Succession & Funding: Maintain a formal Succession Plan for essential board/management roles. • Diversify fundraising across multiple revenue streams.	• Founder Indefinite Tenure: Allowing a Founder, Director, or Chairperson to overstay tenure to the detriment of organisational governance and continuity.

Minimum Standards: The Start of the Journey for Shelters in South Africa

The development of minimum standards for shelters housing dogs and cats constitutes the beginning of a sector-wide journey to uplift companion animal welfare across South Africa. Minimum standards establish the essential common 'floor' or baseline for operational practice, regardless of a shelter's individual operating model or philosophy.

Across South Africa, shelter facilities exist at varying stages of organisational maturity — from newly formed start-up rescue groups to long-established welfare institutions. Regardless of the stage of evolution, clear standards create a unified professional language, driving improved operational planning, accountability, and ongoing capability development.

Over time, the strategic goal is to support and accelerate shelter progression along the Welfare Maturity Model: advancing from foundational minimum compliance (Level 1) through operational evolution, toward advanced best practice and active community engagement.



We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions of over 200 shelter representatives across all nine provinces, alongside regulatory authorities, international grant funders, research agencies, and practicing welfare veterinarians.

Minimum Standards Project Team
September 2026

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