WHAT EVERY DOG NEEDS: A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE

As a pet, dogs need their own space to rest and run. A bed that is large enough to allow them to lie flat on their side is usually sufficient for sleeping. Comfortable and appropriate spaces can be set aside in rooms like a kitchen, laundry room or large hallway. Even large dogs, such as collies or retrievers, can live in smaller homes as long as they are looked after properly. In the same way, even small dogs can cause problems in large homes if they are not cared for.

Exercise is important for three main reasons.

• First, it allows the dog to keep physically fit.
• Second, it provides the dog with stimulation and enrichment — walks in the neighbourhood can also help socialize a dog.
• Third, it provides the dog with opportunities to toilet on a consistent basis.

Dogs also love to sleep. Most of them can sleep for about 14 hours a day.

Like people, dogs need to sleep where they feel safe and comfortable. Some dog owners allow their dogs to sleep on the bed with them. Many dog trainers recommend not letting dogs sleep with people. If you want your dog to sleep in a specific place, plan to train the dog to sleep there right from the start.

Dogs don’t need to have expensive doggie beds, but they do need to have a place to sleep that is clean and comfortable. Puppies can sleep on folded up towels or even old clothes.

A dog house or kennel should have enough room to allow the dog to sit up and turn around in it. A dog who sleeps outside in a doghouse will need enough clean, dry straw and blankets to keep warm at night.

A dog needs its own space and lots of sleep — and lots of exercise, so that it has a reason to sleep.
What does the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association’s Code of Practice for Kennels say about housing for dogs?

- The facility needs to be suitable to the needs of the kennel operation, and the kennel operation suited to the needs of the breed or of the dogs to be kenneled.

- The facility should provide ease of kennel maintenance whether the kennel is one room or floor of the family home, or a completely separate building. In either case, maintenance, repair, and individual care and attention for all kennel dogs are essential.

- A separate kennel facility will require sufficient land to accommodate the building and outside exercise runs. For this, proximity to neighbours must be considered, as dogs can be vocal and cause unwelcome disturbances, especially at feeding times.

- Housing with wire floors is an unacceptable method of containing dogs. Their feet are subjected to constant trauma from wire cuts, and calluses and bone deformities may develop from inadequate footing. As well, wire flooring results in a lack of definition between eating, drinking, sleeping, and elimination areas, and can result in the breakdown of the dog’s natural instinct not to soil its “den”. This can result in future house training problems.

- Housing should facilitate social group formation, human interaction, comfort and sanitation. Exercise for dogs is of prime consideration. If no exercise areas are provided, pen sizes should be adjusted to provide exercise space, and a daily exercise program should be instituted, outdoors wherever weather permits.

- Outdoor housing can be provided for selected breeds that are suitable to the out-of-doors, and that are properly acclimatized to seasonal and regional temperatures.

- Aged, young or infirm animals should not be housed outdoors.

- Shelter and protection from cold and heat must be provided, including protection from direct sunlight, rain, sleet, and snow. A rain break must be provided at the end of each area where clean, dry bedding is located.

- Enclosures should consist of four sides, a roof and flooring, with easy access from the inside and out. A separate exercise area should extend from the housing area and must also provide protection from direct sunlight and inclement weather.

- Tethering of dogs (i.e., chains or ropes used to tie the animal to an immovable object such as a stake or building) as a primary method of confinement is not acceptable.

- Outdoor exercise runs should be large enough for dogs to break into a trot and should provide protection from adverse weather. The exercise running surface must be safe and not slippery, and free from debris that could cause injury or damage to the dog.
A CHECKLIST FOR DOG HOUSING

The following list of general guidelines provides one view of what a “good” living space or housing structure should consider.

Housing and living spaces should incorporate the following desirable characteristics:

- Enough space for activity, rest or sleep, defecation and stimulation of a wide range of normal behaviours
- Sufficient space so the dog can have privacy and quiet
- Good visibility around the dog’s living space, while still allowing for privacy and semi-enclosed areas
- A location that provides interest and choices for the dog

- Objects to chew
- Toys for activities and play
- Choices of varied light, temperatures and noise levels
- A warm, dry and draft-free area for resting or sleeping.

Dogs’ living spaces and the needs that their natural and instinctual behaviours create are very closely linked. Need to Know: Safely Handling, Transporting & Breeding Dogs provides additional insights into the requirements of a good living space for dogs.
What does the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association’s Code of Practice for Kennels say about space requirements?

**Recommended Minimum Space Requirements for a Dog**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Floor Area (m²)</th>
<th>Minimum Height (m)</th>
<th>Puppies up to 7 weeks old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Add 10% per puppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–30</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Add 10% per puppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Add 10% per puppy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Minimal Space Requirements for Puppies 7—16 weeks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Floor Area per puppy (m²)</th>
<th>Minimum Height (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–11</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;11</td>
<td>.6</td>
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</tbody>
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Dogs confined in cages should be exercised a minimum of twice daily for at least 20 minutes, either in runs or by walking on a leash.

If dogs are pair- or group-housed, the minimum space provided should be 1.4 m² per dog. Dogs that share kennels should be evaluated for compatibility and monitored closely.

All the above space requirements are suggested minimums; more space should be provided wherever possible. Cages should be large enough to allow each dog to stand up, lie down, turn around and sit normally. Each dog should be provided with a minimum floor space equal to the length of the dog plus 15 cm.

Excerpts from the *Code of Practice for Kennel Operations* (2nd Edition, 2007) have been used with permission, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. [www.canadianveterinarians.net/publications-resources-order.aspx](http://www.canadianveterinarians.net/publications-resources-order.aspx)