



Dogs Victoria requirements for Breeders

Breeders who hold a current Dogs Victoria 'Breeder's Prefix' are granted some very special exemptions by the Victorian Government, so it is important that you are committed to meeting or exceeding all of the requirements expected of a prefix holder. This includes adhering to all of the Dogs Victoria Rules, Regulations, and Codes of Practice/Conduct.

Important!

*These Dogs Victoria requirements for breeder members are **in addition** to the Local Council and State Government requirements that apply to all breeders in Victoria.*

Dogs Victoria is an 'Applicable Organisation'

Dogs Victoria is the one of only a few canine bodies in Victoria approved under provisions in the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** as an 'Applicable Organisation'.

Applicable Organisation status acknowledges Dogs Victoria has Rules, Regulations and Codes of Ethics that meet or exceed the standards outlined under legislation, and that Dogs Victoria regulates its own members.

Approval as an Applicable Organisation places our breeder members in the 'Recreational Breeder' category and provides them with some important exemptions from the requirements of the **Act**.

Benefits of Applicable Organisation status include:

- » Members are exempt from mandatory council desexing orders;
- » Members are entitled to discounted council registration fees;
- » Breeder members (those with a breeder prefix) with up to 10 fertile bitches are exempt from registering with their local council as a Domestic Animal Business; and
- » Breeder members with up to 10 fertile bitches are also exempt from the **Code of Practice of Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014** and instead are governed by the Dogs Victoria Constitution, Rules and Regulations.

To qualify for these exemptions:

- » The person must be a FULL financial member of Dogs Victoria (Companion Members do not qualify)
- » The dog (or dogs) must be registered with Dogs Victoria and in the ownership of the member (either outright or in syndication/co ownership)
- » To qualify as a Recreational Breeder, the member must hold a Dogs Victoria 'Breeder Prefix' (breeder member) and all of their breeding animals must be listed on the MAIN register (Blue Pedigree Papers). All of their litters must also be registered with Dogs Victoria.

Qualifying for, and maintaining Applicable Organisation status involves assuring the Victorian Government that our members are complying with our Constitution, Rules and Regulations through several measures including regular communication, education, and field inspections.

Dogs Victoria field officer visits

As part of the self regulation expected by the Victorian Government, Dogs Victoria is required to conduct field visits. In fact, the number and type of field visits, and the total number of complaints handled by Dogs Victoria and their outcomes form two very important reporting requirements under the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** in order to maintain Applicable Organisation status.

All Dogs Victoria Breeder's Prefix holders are subject to Field Officer visits, where the emphasis is on making sure that the requirements set out in these breeder-specific sections of the regulations are being met. Although ALL members are subject to field visits, those members holding a breeder prefix and actively breeding are the primary focus for visits.



Dogs Victoria requirements for Breeders

Dogs Victoria Regulation 3.7.7

It shall be a condition of membership that a person, or persons, so authorised by Management Committee may inspect the premises of any member and examine the dogs on the premises at that time.

Failure by a member to facilitate an inspection by the Field Officer of the member's premises and to examine the dogs without reasonable cause shall result in immediate suspension of the member's privileges until that inspection has taken place.

It is important to note that Dogs Victoria Field Officers are not 'Authorised Officers' under legislation and cannot conduct a field visit to members without prior notification. However, they can attend a member's premises at any time if requested to accompany a local government, or other relevant authority Authorised Officer.

Dogs Victoria Field Officers also provide a Council Liaison service, acting as intermediaries between Dogs Victoria and local government/authorised officers should the need arise. The Field Officer role is directed and overseen by the Dogs Victoria Breeder Committee.

Rules and regulations

National rules

The breeding of purebred, pedigree dogs occurs in nearly every country around the world. Each country has a recognised pedigree register responsible for overseeing the registration of litters and the issuing of pedigree papers. In Australia, the national body is Dogs Australia (Australian National Kennel Council Ltd.).

Dogs Australia's mission statement:

To promote excellence in breeding, showing, trialling, obedience and other canine related activities and the ownership of temperamentally and physically sound purebred dogs by responsible individuals across Australia.

To promote responsible dog ownership and encourage State Member Bodies to put in place programs to that effect.

To act as spokesperson on all canine related activities on a National basis on behalf of State Member Bodies and to pledge assistance and support to the respective State Member Bodies.

Dogs Australia has [rules and regulations](#), along with codes of practice that ensure that there is consistency across the states.

These rules provide the basis for canine competition across a wide variety of disciplines, stipulate the requirements for the training of judges, and set the rules for the registration of both purebred dogs born in Australia, and those imported from overseas.

Dogs Australia is also responsible for the overseeing and publishing of all Breed Standards and Breed Standard Extensions and the maintenance of the National 'Prefix' Register.

Although some of the State Member Body Rules and Regulations may take precedence over the Dogs Australia Rules and Regulations, you need to be familiar with the Dogs Australia rules that relate to breeding. These are mostly contained in 'Part 6 – The Register and Registration', and 'Part 10 – National Prefix Register' of the Dogs Australia Regulations.



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Dogs Victoria rules and regulations

Dogs Victoria is the Dogs Australia state member body in Victoria.

As a member of Dogs Victoria, you **'agree to be bound by the full Constitution, Rules and Regulations, Code of Practice, policies and procedures of Dogs Victoria'** as part of your membership application.

Although it may seem quite daunting, you should take time to familiarise yourself with these documents and the sections that specifically relate to you. Always make sure that you are referring to the correct version of these, as updates are made a number of times each year.

Important!

You can access the most up to date versions of the Dogs Victoria Rules, Regulations and Constitution from the Dogs Victoria website at any time. Visit dogsvictoria.org.au.

Although the Dogs Victoria rules and regulations apply to all members, there are sections that relate to breeders and breeding specifically.

If you plan to become a breeder with Dogs Victoria, you will need to understand the requirements under these sections so that your breeding activities are fully compliant and you meet the standards expected.

When you are subject to a Dogs Victoria field visit, the Field Officer will be particularly interested in the making sure you are adhering to the criteria stipulated in Dogs Victoria Regulations '20.1 – Code of Practice', and '20.8 – Code of Practice For Breeding Animal Health Management'.

As mentioned earlier, the State Government provides Dogs Victoria breeder members with significant exemptions – including exemption from the mandatory *Code of Practice of Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014*, which applies to all other dog breeders in the state that have more than two relevant fertile females.

You will see that many of the requirements for breeders under the Dogs Victoria Rules, Regulations and Code of Ethics are almost identical to those in the Government Code of Practice. This is because the Dogs Victoria standards are expected to **meet or exceed** the standards outlined under legislation.

Key requirements for Dogs Victoria breeders

Core principles

Regulation 20.1.4

Members shall constantly strive to improve their knowledge of their chosen breed or breeds, and their knowledge of the requirements for the care, welfare and betterment of dogs.

Regulation 20.1.11

A member shall breed primarily for the purpose of improving the quality and/or working ability of the breed in accordance with the breed standard, and not specifically or predominantly for the pet or commercial market.

Regulation 20.1.16

*A member shall take responsible action to reduce the incidence of hereditary diseases in accordance with the Dogs Australia Code of Practice for Hereditary Diseases and shall comply with Dogs Victoria's Code of Practice for Hereditary Diseases (Code 20.3), and the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986**, particularly with respect to the Code of Practice for the Responsible Breeding of Animals with Heritable Defects that Cause Disease.*

Regulation 20.1.15

No breeding shall take place unless both the dog and bitch are on the Main Register. Dogs and bitches are not permitted to be mated to a dog or bitch of a different breed, to a cross bred dog or bitch, or to an unregistered dog or bitch of the same breed.



Dogs Victoria requirements for Breeders

There are a number of core principles that set Dogs Victoria breeders apart from other breeders.

There is a commitment to continually improving your knowledge and striving always to produce happy, healthy puppies that are true to their breed standard.

There is also a commitment to take your part in preserving your chosen breed as it has been developed, reducing the incidence of hereditary diseases, and to breed for the improvement of the breed, rather than for financial gain.

You will need a formal Veterinary Agreement

All dog owners will at some stage in their pet's life, utilise the services of a veterinarian. This may be for routine or preventative health care, illness or injury. The majority of pet owners develop a casual relationship with a local veterinarian or veterinary practice that provides these services for their pet if and when they are required.

If you plan on breeding dogs, the need for veterinary care increases – there will be health testing of breeding stock, reproductive advice and assistance, whelping assistance, post whelping care of the bitch and pups, vaccination and microchipping prior to the sale of puppies and regular health checks.

For this reason, there is a requirement that all Dogs Victoria breeders have a 'written agreement' with one or more veterinary practitioners so that this relationship is formalised.

Many Veterinarians and Veterinary Practices have their own agreements that they prefer to use for this purpose, but if not, Dogs Victoria has a '[model Veterinary Agreement](#)' template that you can use to meet this requirement.

A written veterinary agreement shows that a bona fide relationship exists between the breeder and the vet and that the breeder is aware of which services the veterinarian can and cannot provide.

It also prompts a discussion with your veterinarian in regards to your planned breeding activities, your facilities, and the health of any potential breeding stock.

Regulation 20.8.4

A breeder shall have a written agreement with one or more veterinary practitioners that describes arrangements for:

- » *the use of the veterinary practitioner's facilities for the treatment of animals;*
- » *the provision of isolation housing if the breeder does not have a separate isolation housing; and the supervision of animals in isolation who remain in the care of the breeder;*
- » *advice relating to the health management plan for the breeder if Dogs Victoria's Model Health Management Plan for Breeders is not used;*
- » *providing vaccination certificates for puppies being sold from the breeder;*
- » *providing veterinary assistance for the breeder and able to provide treatment and/or services to the breeder within 6 hours of notification that veterinary attention is required; and*
- » *24 hour contact or treatment or provision of services through an alternative 24 hour or emergency practice*

You will need a written 'Health Management Plan'

There is also the requirement to formalise your protocols for managing the health and wellbeing of your dogs.

For regular pet owners, most of the requirements for managing individual dogs' health and wellbeing are driven and prompted by their veterinarian. The owners take their new pup for its puppy vaccination appointment and are given advice about appropriate feeding, parasite control, vaccination schedules, and preventative health care for that breed and age group.



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Yearly health checks are scheduled by the clinic, and reminders sent to the owner for essential health care events. As the pet gets older, the advice changes based on the animal's age and any health issues, injuries or illnesses that may have developed over time. The pet owner's relationship with their dog will be a one on one type relationship, with the dog often included in family activities and a part of daily household events.

As you progress to being a breeder, often the dynamic with your pets will change. You are more likely to have a multi pet household, with animals of different age groups and needs. You will be undertaking activities that regular pet owners do not do – such as rearing puppies, managing sexually active dogs and bitches, and selecting breeding stock. Your time will be spread across a number of animals, and it is important that every animal on your premises receives everything they need for both their physical and mental wellbeing.

Having a documented 'Health Management Plan' also ensures that all of the people involved in the care of your animals are aware of what is required and when. Most Dogs Victoria breeders have the entire family involved in the care of their dogs, so it is an excellent way to make sure that everyone has a documented description of the tasks that need to be done daily, weekly or at set times, and what the plan is should things go wrong.

The requirement to document a Health Management Plan, review it each year, and discuss it with your veterinarian, can also prompt healthy discussions about current thinking in regards to the care of dogs and help you keep up to date.

Regulation 20.8.5

A breeder shall either:

- » *Adopt Dogs Victoria's Model Health Management Plan for Breeders, or*
- » *Alternatively develop their own written health management plan that has been formulated and is reviewed annually in consultation with a veterinary practitioner, and meets the requirements for Health Management Plans which are contained within Section 3(5) of the Victorian Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses (2014)*

Dogs Victoria has produced a model [Health Management Plan](#) document that covers all of the expected content of a Health Management Plan. It can be modified to suit your individual requirements as there is space for you to outline specific procedures, or variations to protocols if you choose.

Because it has been developed and endorsed by veterinarians, if you choose to use it and only delete sections that are not relevant to your breeding operations, you do not require any further endorsement of the document by your own veterinarian.

Your Health Management Plan needs to include protocols for:

- » *Grooming requirements*
- » *Exercise, environmental enrichment and socialisation programs*
- » *Behavioural and welfare assessment of dogs*
- » *Assessment programs for the health and welfare of dogs being reared for sale or as breeding dogs*
- » *Assessment for admission of new breeding dogs*
- » *Processes for determining the suitability of breeding dogs to continue breeding*
- » *Processes for long term management, desexing and/or assessing suitability for rehoming of retired breeding dogs*
- » *Whelping protocols*
- » *Health assessment for puppies*
- » *Vaccination and/or titre testing protocols, internal and external parasite prevention programs consistent with Dogs Victoria's position on these*
- » *Response to a general outbreak of disease*
- » *Protocols for quarantine and movement of dogs, including new animals introduced*
- » *Management of isolation facilities (where isolation facilities are constructed at the breeder's premises)*
- » *Consideration of an appropriate response to foreseeable emergencies for both humans and dogs, including evacuation procedures*
- » *Approved methods of euthanasia for emergency situations consistent with Dogs Victoria's position on euthanasia*



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If, on the other hand, you would like to develop your own plan, or make changes or variations to the Dog's Victoria model document, you will need to discuss these with your veterinarian and have them sign off on the changes.

You will need to keep comprehensive records

As a Dogs Victoria Breeder, you will be required to keep records for all of your breeding activities, and for each of your individual animals. These records are subject to inspection at any time, so they need to be kept up to date.

Regulation 20.1.22 - Record Keeping Requirements

A breeder shall create a record file for each individual puppy born, and maintain until ownership changes or the animal is deceased. A breeder shall make available all records for inspection by an authorised officer or as directed by an officer of Dogs Victoria. Copies of these records must be retained by the breeder for a minimum of 3 years from date of last entry.

*1.1 Records to be kept for puppies **UNDER 12 weeks** of age shall include the following (copies of original documents are acceptable where originals accompany the puppy to its new owner):*

- » *A copy of the litter registration form, or alternatively:*
 - *name,*
 - *microchip number (when implanted);*
 - *sex;*
 - *breed;*
 - *date of birth;*
 - *colour and markings (if applicable); and*
 - *dam and sire registered names and numbers*
- » *Health care history including vaccination records, internal and external parasite control,*
- » *Purchase/disposal record including name and address of new owner (where applicable),*
- » *Copy of breeder health declaration, and*
- » *Record of return (if applicable) with supporting documentation.*

*1.2 Records to be kept for dogs **OVER the age of 12 weeks** acquired or retained by breeders for the purpose of breeding shall include:*

- » *Either Dogs Australia pedigree registration certificate, or alternatively:*
 - *registered name and number (when registration details become available);*
 - *microchip number;*
 - *sex;*
 - *breed;*
 - *date of birth;*
 - *colour and marking (if applicable); and*
 - *dam and sire registered name and numbers*
- » *Council registration certificate;*
- » *Health care history including vaccination records or titre tests, internal and external parasite control,*
- » *Breeding status and breeding history,*
- » *Purchase/disposal records including name and address of new owner (where applicable), and*
- » *Record of return (if applicable) with supporting documentation.*

2. Records of breeding history for dams must include dates of mating or artificial insemination, dates of whelping, number of puppies born alive, number of puppies stillborn, record of any whelping complications and resultant treatment, microchip numbers for live pups at 8 weeks, and post-partum veterinary treatment.

Regulation 4.3.1

A member shall keep proper records of their breeding activities and all such records so kept shall be open for inspection by any person authorised by Management Committee. Any such person shall be at liberty to take extracts there from.



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Dogs Victoria has developed a number of helpful template documents to assist breeders and members in meeting their record keeping requirements.

These template documents include model veterinary certificates for puppies and adults, pre breeding and post whelping vet checks, litter records and individual animal record forms. You can download the most up to date template documents from the Breeder Resources page of the [Dogs Victoria website](https://www.dogsvictoria.org.au).

For puppies under 12 weeks of age, most of the required information can be collectively held in a 'Litter Record' where records for the entire litter are held together in one place. Dogs Victoria has a template litter record document that you can use or you can design your own to suit your needs. The litter record can include other information such as birth weights and times, daily weight records, dates of worming or other treatments etc.

Although it may seem daunting, once you have set up your record keeping system, it will only need updating when events such as veterinary health checks occur, results of tests are received, or when preventative treatments are given.

Although some hard copy documents need to be kept, many breeders are now choosing to use electronic record keeping where possible. You can save electronic copies of certificates or health testing results, and use spreadsheets for the day to day and breeding records of each animal.

Regardless of what you choose to use, you will need to keep your files up to date and be able to present them for inspection if required.

Important!

If you sell (or give away) a dog - whether it is a puppy or an adult - you are still required to keep copies of all of the animal's documentation.

Other Dogs Victoria regulations relating to breeding

Although the key requirements have been highlighted here, there are numerous other Dogs Victoria regulations that relate to breeding and breeders.

You should have read and understood the contents of Regulations 20.1 – Code of Practice, 20.3 – Code of Practice for Hereditary Disease, and 20.8 – Code of Practice for Breeding Animal Health Management as well as Regulations 3.7.7 and 4.3

To assist with this, Dogs Victoria has prepared an 'extract of regulations' relating specifically to breeders and breeding.

This extract can be found as a separate fact sheet on the Dogs Victoria website, however you need to remember that regulations can change over time.

You can always access an up to date version of the regulations by visiting the Dogs Victoria website.

