

**Re-homing procedures
for Rabbits, Rodents, Birds, Reptiles, etc.**

A. Objective :

Many “pet” animals need a second chance at being a favourable pet after they were abandoned or given up by their owners. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) encourages the public to adopt suitable abandoned or surrendered animals through approved non-profit making voluntary animal welfare organizations.

B. Applicability

1. These procedures do not cover dogs and cats, for which a separate set of procedures is available; those procedures for rehoming dogs and cats can be read at the following websites :

http://www.afcd.gov.hk/quarantine/ani_index.htm
<http://www.afcd.gov.hk/quarantine/am/dog/re-home.htm>
<http://www.afcd.gov.hk/quarantine/am/download/rehome.pdf>

For a list of animal welfare organizations, please see the following website.

<http://www.afcd.gov.hk/quarantine/am/dog/welfareorg.htm>

2. The word “animal” is used in the sense of Cap 169 to cover all forms of animal life, vertebrate and invertebrate.

The word “creature” is also used in a similar meaning.

3. These procedures do not supersede legislation/rules/guidelines: for dealing with endangered species, protected wild animals, (CITES-listed species); or public safety considerations (eg. poisonous animals); or environmental considerations (eg. potentially problematical exotics); etc.

C. Policy for re-homing rabbits, rodents, pet birds, reptiles etc.

1. In general, no member of the public is allowed to adopt animals from AFCD directly. Animal re-homing MUST normally be arranged through approved non-profit making voluntary organizations (“organization”). The organizations involved in the re-homing programme should be approved by AFCD’s Senior Veterinary Officer/Animal Management (SVO/AM) in advance.

2. Animals which are ready for re-homing must meet the following criteria :

- (a) They should be healthy or treatable in case of having sickness.
- (b) Their temperament should be acceptable.

3. There will be cases where animals need to be removed immediately by the organization for care or treatment or other sound reason. In such cases, the animal may be removed without delay after being approved by a Veterinary Officer (VO), and the organization must then ensure the necessary prompt and adequate care and treatment for the animal. The organization has also to agree to return the animal to the AMCentre if the true owner/keeper reclaims the animal, or if so required by the SVO/AM.

Such early removal cases include : -

- (a) young animals/birds etc,
 - (b) animals/birds needing treatment beyond the facilities or capacities of the AMCentre at the time; and
 - (c) other special cases.
4. The organization removing the creature from the AMCentre or arranging for the animal to be adopted, must normally ensure prompt examination by a registered veterinary surgeon able to provide veterinary services for the species concerned, as soon as possible on the same day on which the animal leaves the AMCentre.
5. The organization must keep records of the creatures, to be made available for inspection and checking by AFCD on request.
6. The organization must (a) issue official receipts for all monies received, and (b) keep accurate accounts.
7. These procedures apply in general. Special cases may be processed on an “as-needed” basis and these must be fully recorded by the AFCD officer concerned and by the organization. If in doubt, SVO/AM may be consulted, but this is not essential except when disputes cannot be otherwise resolved, and it should not be allowed to delay urgent cases.
8. The organization should take reasonable steps to remove animals for re-homing from the AMCentres as soon as they can, as space in the AMCentres is very limited.
9. The organization must keep accurate records of every animal acquired by them from or pertaining to AFCD, and of every animal re-homed by them. All adopters must be clearly registered or recorded with relevant details in a register or other record system kept up to date by the organization. All members and affiliates including affiliated shelters and fosterers involved in adoption must be properly registered with the organization, and with proper records kept by the organization. The organization should keep and should provide to the adopter an accurate record of treatment, including (but not limited to) vaccination and sterilization. Where there is veterinary treatment, it should be supported by relevant veterinary certification. The AFCD AMCentre may require reports to update its records.
10. The organization has a responsibility to assess adopters and animals for suitability. The organization should not re-home animals which they assess as unsuitable, and should not release animals to unsuitable adopters. The organization also has a responsibility to follow-up adopted animals and adopters to monitor for proper care and keeping of the animals.

D. Animal adoption arrangement :

- (a) Adopter or fosterer must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter/fosterer of the approved organization concerned.
- (b) Representatives of the organization can visit AMCentre, with prior agreement of the AMCentre, to select the potential animals.
- (c) Transportation of the selected animals to the organization concerned is normally carried out by the organization.
- (d) If an animal is selected, the transfer of the animal must normally be conducted within 5 days. After 5 days, AFCD may consider disposing of the animal or re-homing of the animal by another organization.
- (e) If specified by the organization or by AFCD for a particular case or species, the animals for adoption or fostering should be or sterilized if they are of an appropriate species for

this to be practicable [see notes at end of these pages], and should be appropriately examined and treated and/or vaccinated by a registered veterinary surgeon at the expense of the adopter or the organization, normally before release to the adopter. All these must be confirmed in certificate(s) to be issued by the veterinary surgeon at the time.

- (f) The organization should not charge any fee for feeding and care of the adopted animal in this re-homing programme.
- (g) The organization may recover from the adopter the reasonable expenses, including the appropriate veterinary fees for examination and treatment etc, reasonable transport costs; and the costs of vaccination, microchipping, permit/licence fees [see item (j) below] if these are applicable. The organization must not add profits, surcharges, administrative charges. In recovering these expenses, the organization must support the amounts by giving originals or true-copies of the relevant expense receipts obtained from the veterinary clinic, government, or other proper party. The organization should keep the original or true-copies in their file for checking by AFCD if so required. Fees paid directly by the adopter to veterinary clinics, Government, or other proper parties should be covered by receipts from those parties to the adopter direct.
- (h) If an organization for good reason needs a general variation from any of the above requirements, the organization should submit the proposed variation details and its justification to the SVO/AM, who will respond in writing to confirm or refuse the variation concerned. For individual one-off special cases, please see paragraph C7.
- (i) The organization may be required to sign an undertaking to AFCD to confirm : -
 - That the organization is a non-profit organization, and/or a charity as defined in the law, and to provide supportive documents as evidence;
 - That the organization will not profit from animals they obtain from AFCD, nor impose surcharges or administrative fees on such animals, nor sell or trade in such animals, nor pressure adopters or other persons to donate money other than normal membership dues in relation to such animal and recovery of expenses as provided by these procedures. At any other times, organizations are free to fund-raise in other ways at other times as per any non-profit organization or charity, and can accept fully voluntary donations.;
 - Such other provisions as AFCD might need.
- (j) All relevant legislation must be complied with. In cases when adopted animals are subject to permits or licences (eg. Cap 187 licence to possess), then the adopter and/or organization must pay the necessary fees and fulfill all the normal requirements.

E. Special condition for the animal adopter :

- (a) Adopter must normally be over 18 years of age.
- (b) Adopter must be a member or office-bearer or affiliate or registered adopter of the approved organization concerned.
- (c) Adopter must provide documentary proof of residential address and contact details to the organization, and to AFCD if so required, for inspection.
- (d) Adopter must not adopt an excessive number of animals through this re-homing programme.
- (e) Adopter is not allowed to transfer the re-homed animal to others within six months from the date of adoption, except back to the organization through which they adopted the

animal.

F. Privilege for the animal finder (if any) :

The finder will be given the priority to adopt the animal normally. The finder has to inform his/her intention to the VO in charge of the AMCentre concerned, in writing. He/she has to become a member or affiliate or registered adopter of an approved organization and to settle the payment required. He/she could then bring the concerned receipt/papers to the AMCentre to collect the animal, or adopt through normal adoption processes as above. In such case, the adopter has to collect the animal within 5 days, otherwise AFCD would consider to dispose of the animal or to re-home the animal through a recognized organization.

G. Alteration to the re-homing programme :

AFCD may review and revise these requirements and procedures from time to time. Updated/revised requirements and procedures, if any, will normally be issued by SVO/AM, and will take effect immediately unless otherwise stated.

NOTE Species which should normally be sterilized, in addition to dogs and cats, include: Rabbits