

**CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF
PET REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS**

**DUTY OF CARE TO A PET REPTILE AND AMPHIBIANS UNDER THE
ANIMAL WELFARE (GUERNSEY) ORDINANCE, 2012**

Section 8 of the Animal Welfare (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2012 provides that the owner or keeper of an animal owes a duty to take such care as, in all circumstances, is reasonable to see that the animal is free –

- from thirst, hunger and malnutrition,
- from discomfort,
- from pain, injury and disease,
- from fear and distress, and
- to express normal behaviour patterns.

In determining what care is reasonable in all the circumstances described above, the owner or keeper of an animal shall have particular regard to -

- (a) good practice for the care of the animal in question,
- (b) any lawful purpose for which the animal is kept,
- (c) any lawful activity carried on in relation to the animal,
- (d) the physical activity undertaken by the animal,
- (e) daily and seasonal climatic conditions,
- (f) the longevity and life-stage of the animal, and
- (g) any special or additional dietary and nutritional requirements that may arise -
 - (i) where the animal is pregnant, brooding or rearing young, and

- (ii) from the general state of health of the animal.

"**normal behaviour patterns**" means normal behaviour patterns for a domestic animal or a captive animal, as the case may be, of the kind concerned.

The duty of care includes providing the animal with -

- (a) a supply of fresh drinking water and food of sufficient quantity and quality to keep the animal in good health,
- (b) where appropriate, suitable shelter which is sufficient to maintain the animal in good health and such shelter must include -
 - (i) access from the shelter to water and food,
 - (ii) sufficient space for the animal to lie down or otherwise rest in comfort, and
 - (iii) where appropriate, adequate light, heat and ventilation,
- (c) protection from injury, disease or unnecessary suffering including, where appropriate, providing timely and appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment where necessary by a recognised veterinary surgeon, and
- (d) the opportunity to express normal behaviour patterns and living conditions that are conducive to maintaining those normal behaviour patterns.

The Welfare Recommendations below provide practical guidance on meeting this duty of care when caring for a pet reptile or amphibian.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE UNDER SECTION 13(1) OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE (GUERNSEY) ORDINANCE, 2012 FOR THE WELFARE OF PET REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

A FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE WELFARE RECOMMENDATIONS MAY BE RELIED UPON IN COURT AS TENDING TO ESTABLISH LIABILITY FOR FAILING TO MEET THE DUTY OF CARE

RECOMMENDATIONS – FOOD AND WATER

1. A pet reptile or amphibian should be provided with food that contains the correct balance of essential nutrients and minerals, in sufficient quantity to keep it, in all circumstances, in good health and vigour.
2. A pet reptile or amphibian should be provided with fresh, clean water in sufficient quantity to keep it, in all circumstances, hydrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS - LIVING ENVIRONMENT

3. As a minimum a pet reptile or amphibian should be provided with living accommodation that –
 - a. is large enough horizontally and vertically to allow it to stretch at full length,
 - b. provides an environment with the correct range of temperature, humidity and light for the species concerned,
 - c. provides a physical environment that as far as is practicable represents the wild environment of the species concerned,
 - d. is predator and vermin proof, ventilated, but protected from draughts,
 - e. provides daylight or light equivalent to daylight during normal daylight hours,

- f. allows continuous access to water and appropriate access to food (to ensure it receives a sufficient quantity of food as required to meet the duty of care), and
 - g. is constructed from materials that are not hazardous to reptiles or amphibians.
4. Where a substrate is required for the accommodation of a particular species of reptile or amphibian, it should be dust free and cover the floor of the accommodation.
 5. Where nesting and bedding material is required for the accommodation of a particular species of reptile or amphibian, such material should not have been treated with substances which are hazardous to the health of the reptile or amphibian in question.

RECOMMENDATIONS - HEALTH

6. A pet reptile or amphibian that is injured or ill should be provided with timely and appropriate treatment for the injury or illness or in the case of a serious injury or illness, medical diagnosis and treatment by a veterinary surgeon. In the case of doubt, advice should be obtained from a veterinary surgeon.
7. Veterinary medicines or treatments should only be administered in accordance with the directions of a veterinary surgeon or a person authorised to supply such products, or in the case of products that can be purchased by the general public, in accordance with the directions of the manufacturer of the product.
8. Hazardous substances should be kept out of the areas in which a pet reptile or amphibian is kept and any other area where it exercises.
9. A pet reptile or amphibian should be protected from hazardous household appliances by keeping such appliances out of the areas to which it normally has access or by using measures to ensure it does not suffer harm from the appliances.
10. A pet reptile or amphibian should be handled so as to avoid distress or injury.

11. Food and water containers that are provided for a pet reptile or amphibian should be kept clean of waste food, droppings and other contamination.

RECOMMENDATIONS - BEHAVIOUR

12. Pet reptiles or amphibians should only be housed together if they would normally live in groups in the wild or for the purpose of breeding.
13. The environment in which a pet reptile or amphibian is kept should, as far as is practicable, enable the animal to express the behaviours that it would normally be able to express in the wild.
14. Only a pet reptile or amphibian that is adult, well developed and in good health and condition should be used for breeding.

RECOMMENDATIONS - TRANSPORTATION

15. A pet reptile or amphibian should be transported in a secure container that provides ventilation.
16. A pet reptile should not be fed during transport.
17. A pet reptile or amphibian should not be left unattended in a vehicle unless the environment within the vehicle is maintained at a temperature between 16°C and 28°C which is appropriate for the species concerned.

Further, more detailed guidance for the welfare of pet reptiles/amphibians is set out in "Guidance for the Welfare of Pet Reptiles and Amphibians" issued by the Commerce and Employment Department and available on the States of Guernsey website. That guidance does not form part of this Code.