



CAT HANDLERS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS (CHRO)

*For Exhibitors, Sponsors & Feature Participants
(as at July 2024)*

Pet Projects International Pty Ltd (PPI), the organiser of the Cat Lovers Festival (CLF) places animal welfare and the safe interaction of cats and people as its highest priority.

The **Animal Management Plan (AMP) and Cat Handlers Responsibilities and Obligations (CHRO)** have been prepared to ensure the highest level of welfare is provided for all cats that are presented and cared for on-site during the event, and in what is a unique environment. The conditions outlined in this AMP & CHRO apply to any persons bringing cats to the event including but not limited to all Exhibitors, Sponsors, Presenters, and Feature participants.

All persons and cats are required to comply with the relevant legislation which includes, but may not be limited to: the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019, The Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Domestic Animals Regulations 2015, and the Victorian Codes of Practice for Animal Welfare made under those Acts and any subsequent amendments..

The local government council is the City of Melbourne and the relevant legislation they administer is the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** and the **Regulations 2015**. The council publishes their requirements on their website and they can be found here <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/governance-transparency/acts-local-laws/Pages/acts-local-laws.aspx>

All owners/handlers bringing a cat into the Festival have an obligation to familiarise themselves and comply with all of the above legislations and advisories.

The owner/handler who has registered to bring any Cat into the Festival is considered the “competent person in effective control” of the animal, and this person holds the relevant duty of care for their Cat(s) and to the community. This includes, but is not limited to the control, comfort, safety and welfare of their animal and the interaction of any animal under their control, and with any other person or animal, at any time, whilst on-site at the Cat Lovers Festival.

For the purpose of the AMP & CHRO, all Cats are treated equally regardless of size or breed. Consequently, the burden of care is placed upon the competent person in effective control for the control, comfort, safety and welfare of their animal and CLF has prepared this Animal Management Plan to assist owners/handlers in contributing to an enjoyable environment where both exhibitors and the public can celebrate their love of Cats in a safe and positive environment.

Making the right decision about bringing your Cat to the Festival. Will it cope?

Just because your Cat is happy within its normal ‘comfort zone’ environment at home, smaller events etc., that does not mean they will react the same way at the event. The Cat Lovers Festival can be a busy, noisy, and stressful environment for animals. With large crowds and repetitive stranger interactions, sudden loud noises, constant audio-visual and live presentations and PA announcements along with hundreds of other Cats. It should also be noted that Assistance dogs may also be present. It’s crucial that you are confident your particular Cat will cope.

It is a mandatory requirement that any Cat brought into the Cat Lovers Festival is in peak condition (physical and mental) and in good health.

If your cat does not cope in stressful situations or you do not know if the cat you are bringing to the event is capable of coping, it must not attend.

1. GENERAL CONTROL OF CATS AT THE FESTIVAL

CLF will have Welfare Observers patrolling the festival at all times to monitor the condition of all cats on-site and to ensure that all conditions of the AMP & CHRO are always being adhered to.

CLF reserves the right and full authority to demand the immediate removal of any Cat from the festival if it considers that the Cat is showing any ongoing signs of stress or is believed to be suffering any negative effects from its presence at the festival.

All owners/handlers must immediately comply with any warning or direction given by AMP Observers, CLF management, security personnel or other authorised CLF representatives. Documented warnings or directions may be issued if deemed necessary and non-compliance with any written warning or direction will result in a demand to remove the cat from the festival.

All owners/handlers bringing cats to the festival should have contingency plans in place to allow for the removal of their Cat. This means not having to leave your stand unattended during the removal, having a second person to take the Cat home or having someone on call to collect your Cat.

Removal from the festival does not include taking your Cat outside and leaving the cat locked in your vehicle – it means taking your Cat home. Any Cat found unattended in a vehicle will be immediately reported to the relevant local council, Venue Security, the RSPCA Inspectorate and the Victoria Police.

CLF has set the following rules as the minimum conditions that must be maintained at all times when controlling cats at the festival. Please note that these rules apply for cats that are out of their cages and on display or for cats that are within arm's reach of the public.

- a. It is mandatory that a minimum of two people are present on your stand at all times and that one person is designated as the competent person in effective control. Stands must not have any more than 2 cats per person in effective control. (For example: a stand with one cat must have a minimum of 2 people but a stand with 2 people can have up to 4 cats total and an additional 2 cats per additional person in effective control.)
- b. If a cat is out of their cage, it must not be left with only one person on the stand. This is to ensure that at no time a cat is left unsupervised because you are busy with a visitor and that there is always someone available to closely monitor your cat.
- c. All cats on stands are to remain under direct supervision at all times and be restrained in a cage with a covered top. and when they are taken out of their cage must be restrained by a harness and lead at all times. CLF actively discourage the use of collars as Cats can easily slip out of them if not appropriately fitted.
- d. At no time may a cat be left unattended on any stand even if the cat is in their cage.
- e. When bringing a Cat/s to and from the festival, including the movement of a Cat to another section of the festival, the Cat must be confined in a secure, escape-proof and well-ventilated container. Containers must enable Cats to comfortably stand, turn around, lie down and act normally. At no time is a Cat to be carried from one location to another outside of an exhibitor's stand no matter how small the distance.

2. KEEPING CATS AND VISITORS SAFE AT THE FESTIVAL

During the Cat Lovers Festival, the competent person in effective control holds absolute responsibility for the control of their animal and must take all possible actions to minimise any risks associated with having a cat at the festival.

- a. CLF will provide a sign to all stands where Cats are present advising visitors of protocol. It is a mandatory requirement that this sign be displayed on your stand at all times and it will state that "You must ask for permission and supervision by the person in effective control prior to approaching any cat on this stand". Additional signs will be located at each entry as well as at other prominent positions around the festival to repeat the key safety messages.
- b. No Cat should be accommodated on a bare table Cat beds, rugs or similar items must be used when cats are on display.
- c. It is your responsibility to schedule regular breaks for your Cat to be physically removed from the public for rest, relief and downtime.
- d. It is essential that you visually monitor your cat and "listen" to what they are telling you. Refer to our [Feline Body Language Document](#) for common behaviors and what they look like, but remember your cat is a unique individual and may not display all of these traits. You can use this information to get an idea of what to look for in your cat and what feelings they are displaying to you.

- e. CLF Management will have signs visible around the festival informing the general public in the event of a Cat scratch or bite to visit the onsite First Aid Attendant IMMEDIATELY for sanitisation and appropriate treatment, no matter how mild it may seem.
- f. For anyone that has been bitten by a Cat - wash immediately with betadine (alcoholic) or chlorhexidine (alcoholic) and then present immediately to the emergency department for appropriate management. For anyone that has been scratched by a Cat - wash immediately with betadine (alcoholic) or chlorhexidine (alcoholic). Scratches at high risk of an infection should be examined by a medical practitioner including: wounds on the hands or face, wounds overlying prosthetic joints, and in people who are immunocompromised (including the young, the elderly and people with conditions such as diabetes). If there's any concern about the nature of the wound, always recommend presentation to the emergency department.

It has been documented that 28 - 80% of cat bites may become infected. In 75% of these cases, a bacteria called *Pasteurella multocida* is isolated. Another bacteria, *Bartonella henselae*, is the causative organism of "cat scratch disease" and can be transmitted via a scratch or a bite from an infected cat or cat flea. Approximately 30% of Australian cats are bacteraemic with this organism, meaning the bacteria is present circulating in the blood stream.

In healthy individuals, infection with this bacteria is usually asymptomatic or a self-limiting lymphadenitis (inflammation of the lymph nodes in the affected area) but can be a life threatening disseminated infection in an immunocompromised host. If there is any doubt regarding a scratch or bite seek further information from your local GP.

3. INCIDENT REPORTING

Any observed, uncharacteristic aggression, severe biting and/ or scratching where skin is punctured, will be treated as an incident and you may be directed to immediately remove your Cat from the venue. Notwithstanding this removal, if a third party (public or staff member) has been affected, in any way by the incident, they may exercise their rights and report the incident to the City of Melbourne via phone on (03) 9658 9658. You will be required to assist any third parties in the exercise of their rights.

The competent person in effective control will be required to provide the following information to the City of Melbourne:

- time and date of the incident
- where it happened
- name of the cat owner
- cat registration number
- a description of the Cat
- a detailed description of the incident

Any incident that results in an injury requiring medical treatment as defined under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Part 5, Duties Relating to Incidents, may be treated as a reportable injury and advised to WorkSafe (Victoria). This will be done immediately via telephone and then in writing within 48 hours of the incident and you will be required to assist in the completion of an Incident/Injury Report available from the organiser. You may also have a duty under to preserve the incident site. This would be confirmed as a requirement, or not, as a result of immediate phone consultation with the local authority. Any third party will be advised of their rights immediately.

In the case of a reportable injury the City of Melbourne will also be notified and you may be considered guilty of an offence under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

4. INTERACTION BETWEEN YOUR CAT AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OR OTHER CATS

We appreciate that an important part of the visitor experience is interaction with cats.

The competent person in effective control is required to fully supervise any interactions between any persons or other Cats, and their Cat. This primary rule is set to avoid injury or distress to cats or people. It is important to remember that members of the public may have been touching other Cats throughout the venue and may carry the scent of other cats on them and this may cause distress to some Cats, exhibitors should be wary that Cats can change their mood very quickly when confronted with another Cat's scent.

CLF Management recommends that members of the public wash their hands or use sanitiser between patting different Cats. Exhibitors not wishing for their Cat to be handled by members of the public should provide a physical barrier such as a rope line, fencing or keep their Cat in an appropriate cages.

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of all people at the Festival, all exhibitors must ensure their Cat is suitably controlled when approaching, or being approached, by any person. With the large number of Cats at the festival and an extensive range of breeds present, Cat-to-Cat aggression is a possibility.

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of all animals participating at the Festival, all exhibitors must ensure their Cat is suitably controlled when approaching or being approached, by any other Cat. Always ask for permission from other cat handlers before allowing your Cat to approach any other Cat. The use of visual barriers and Feliway spray may help keep Cats calm.

5. TOILETING AND KITTY TIME OUT

All Cats must have access to clean kitty litter and it is your responsibility to remove waste immediately. There are dedicated kitty litter bins available at the Festival. You must provide your own litter, trays, scoops and waste bags. Litter tray(s) should be kept in a private location on the stand. Contaminated litter must not be placed in regular bins or left in bathroom bins.

If an animal relieves itself within the building, the owner/handler is required to secure the immediate area for slip or biohazard and contact the event organiser, info desk, security or cleaning staff immediately.

6. FEEDING AND HYDRATION - DEALING WITH HEAT

All Cats must be provided with easy access to fresh drinking water and it is your responsibility to ensure this is regularly replenished so Cats are kept well hydrated and help avoid the possibility of heat stress by providing cooling aids such as ice packs or cooling pods. Exhibitors are required to provide their own water and water bowl on their stand for the cats. Water bowls cannot always be filled at the venue and to guarantee quick and easy access to water we recommend that you bring your own.

With Cats on-site for the duration of the festival, exhibitors are required to provide all the food required for their Cats at the event and make suitable preparations for storage. As per normal Cat etiquette, food and water should be kept away, as much as possible, from litter trays.

7. VETERINARY SUPPORT

CLF has arranged for a vet to be on duty during festival open hours. The scope of duties of the vet will include emergency assistance and cat first aid, in addition to providing oversight and direction relating to animal welfare, including directing exhibitors to remove cats if deemed necessary

8. ANIMAL EVACUATION

In the event of an incident that requires emergency evacuation from either building, all exhibitors, contractors, event staff, members of the public and other persons shall follow the directives of the appointed emergency evacuation wardens and proceed to the nominated emergency evacuation point and await further instruction.

Owners/handlers should consider the welfare and safety of their animal during an emergency evacuation event.

All animals shall be under the direct supervision and restraint of the competent person in effective control, at all times. Consideration should be made to whether animal carriers or crates are required for animal evacuation. Storage and use of such items must be kept within your stand's footprint, not block emergency aisle ways or pose obstruction to persons exiting the building for the purposes of emergency evacuation.

9. CAT REGISTRATION AND YELLOW ID TAGS

Upon completion of the Cat Registration and acknowledgement of the AMP and CHRO, you will be emailed a yellow registration tag. This tag must be fixed to your cat's collar or cage prior to arrival at the Festival and must remain on at all times and on all days of the Festival. If wearing the yellow tag on a collar is not possible, the tag must remain in a position where it is easily identifiable in relation to the cat it belongs to. This yellow tag identifies to security and event staff that you have acknowledged the AMP & CHRO and will ensure a smooth entry into the Festival. If you do not have access to a coloured printer or your tag breaks, there are secure plastic tags available from the Cat Registration Booth at the entrance to the Festival or from the Information Booth inside the Festival. Simply produce your Confirmation email to obtain a replacement tag.