



# What is a Health Management Plan ....and why do I need one?

All Dogs Victoria members who hold a Breeder's Prefix are required to have a Health Management Plan for their animals.

## **Dogs Victoria Regulation 20.8.5**

*A breeder shall either:*

- » *20.8.5.1 adopt Dogs Victoria's Model Health Management Plan for Breeders, or*
- » *20.8.5.2 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)*

## **Why do I need a documented Health Management Plan?**

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.

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.

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.

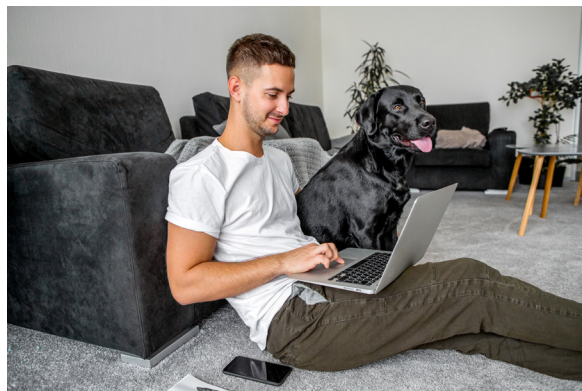
You will also be undertaking activities that regular pet owners do not do – such as rearing puppies, managing sexually active dogs and bitches, and selecting breeding stock.

The community has a higher expectation of breeders, and as a State Government legislation relating to breeding activities reflects this.

Having a documented 'Health Management Plan' 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.



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## How can I meet this requirement?

The easiest way to meet the documented Health Management Plan requirement is to use the template document that Dogs Victoria has developed.

This is a document that has been developed to meet or exceed the minimum standards expected by the Victorian Government, and to ensure that you meet the requirements of the Dogs Victoria Regulations.

It is a fairly simple way to document all of the things that you already do to make sure that your breeding animals are in tip-top shape, and that you are prepared to undertake the activities required to ensure good welfare for your animals.

The alternative is for you to draw up your own Health Management Plan in conjunction with your veterinarian.

If you choose to develop a Plan yourself, it will need to cover off on [all of the expected content](#) for a Health Management Plan, and you will need to have your veterinarian sign off on it every year.

Completing the Model Health Management Plan may take an hour or so, but it is a great way to prompt you to consider all of the day-to-day things that you do, and to make sure that you are keeping up with all of the required standards and community expectations.

It can also be a huge help if something unexpected were to happen to you (maybe a sudden illness or family crisis that took you away from home for a period of time) and another person stepped in to look after your animals.

In fact, if you can think of it as a bit of an 'instruction manual' for a person who is not familiar with your way of managing your dogs you will be on the right track!



## How to complete your Health Management Plan

Dogs Victoria's [Health Management Plan Template](#) outlines the things you should have considered and documented to meet your requirements under the Dogs Victoria regulations.

To make it easier for Dogs Victoria breeders to complete, it has been divided into three sections:

- » Management of my Property
- » Routine Care of my Animals
- » My Breeding Activities

You need to complete ALL of the sections and provide details where indicated.

In many cases you simply need to 'tick the box' indicating that you undertake the activities, but in other areas you will need to describe what you do (or do not do).

Because Dogs Victoria breeders are located all across the state, in a variety of property types, and with a hugely diverse range of breeds, we understand that you may have things that you do that are different to other breeders.

The Dogs Victoria Health Management Plan template allows for that variation and personal preferences, as long as the minimum standards of care have been met.

Once it is completed, you need to keep a copy of the document in your Breeder records, and review the content every year.

The entire document should be renewed every five (5) years, or if you move to a new property. This way, everything will properly reflect what it is that you do as a breeder.