**The Companion Animal Risk and Strategies Guide**

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| **Risk** |
| **Low** |
| **Medium** |
| **High** |

**Overarching risks and strategies for pets in residential aged care facilities (RACF)**

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| **Identified Risk** | **Risk**  **Pre-strategy** | **Strategies** | **Responsible** | **Risk**  **Post-strategy** |
| Microbial risks (bacteria - i.e. Salmonella, Campylobacter, Toxocara, Toxoplasma) and  Parasite (i.e. tape worm, fleas, mites) |  | Pre-admission pet assessment. Care plan with schedule and documentation for vaccinations, worming, flea treatments | Vet/Resident |  |
| Co-resident scared of animals |  | Pre-admission assessment of all residents – physiotherapist and GP. Care plan of resident to identify and address concerns. Pet alert signage. | RACF/resident/co-resident |  |
| Lack of understanding of animal/species body language |  | RACF to offer in-house training and information on animal and behaviours. RACF to seek assistance from Vet or animal body | RACF |  |
| Co-residents that don’t like animals/particular species |  | Pre-admission review of all residents. Care plan of resident to identify animal of concern and actions. | RACF/resident/co-resident |  |
| People becoming possessive of animals (causing conflict) |  | Ongoing assessment and care planning. Care plan of resident to identify concern and actions. | RACF |  |
| Tripping/falling over pets |  | Consideration to pet location and appropriateness of where they can move – i.e. on a lead, in a pet box. Inclusion in pet care plan and ongoing review. | RACF/resident |  |
| Owner trip/falls risk |  | Resident assessment for the ability to safely manage pet – physiotherapist and GP. Identify daily activities when pet will leave the room with resident – i.e. animal walk, resident recreation activities for assessment and oversight. Resident care plan -staff oversight and assistance as required. | RACF |  |
| Human Allergies to cat/dog |  | Pre-admission assessment of all residents. Care plan of resident identifies allergies. Staff pre-employment assessment information, staff allergy species documented, consideration to rostering and resident allocation processes. Facility cleaning process – including heap filter vacuuming. Pet alert signage. Allergic people to avoid animal areas and not touch animals. Pet grooming outside or off site. | RACF/resident/staff |  |
| Animal scratches/bites |  | Vet pet pre-admission health and behaviour assessment. Pet care plan – trial period, nail/claw grooming. Care management process for bites/scratches. | RACF/Vet |  |
| Infections spread from humans to animals (salmonella, MRSA) |  | Vet health and behaviour assessment pre-admission. Annual and as required vet reviews. Resident care plan including identification and management of infections. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across facility. Consideration for alternate pet care. | RACF |  |
| Infections spread from animals to humans |  | Vet health and behaviour assessment pre-admission. Annual and as required vet reviews. Pet care plan including identification and management of infections. Hand hygiene should be performed after every interaction with animals -residents, staff, visitors. Discourage pets licking the face and mouth. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across facility. | RACF |  |
| Pet nutrition (resident over/under feeding) |  | Pet care plan with dietary requirements and feed plan, also to include suitable pet locations i.e. not in dining areas. Raw meat should not be fed to pets, commercial food only. Fresh water daily. Routine vet assessments. | RACF/resident |  |
| Cleaning/disinfection |  | Facility cleaning process and schedule. Cleaning process for pet – including pet grooming, bedding wash, vacuuming of dog hair/cat fur, pet waste management, pest management process. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across facility. | RACF |  |
| Animal noise disturbing co-residents |  | Pre-admission behavioural assessment. Trial admission period and assessment. Pet care plan. Resident room door to remain closed. | RACF/resident |  |
| Animal smell disturbs co-residents |  | Pet care plan – including grooming. Resident room door to remain closed. Pet cleaning process – including waste management. | RACF/resident |  |
| Animal injury from another resident’s animal |  | Preadmission behaviour assessment. Pet to remain in residents’ room. Door remains closed. Pet leaves room at designated time or in pet carrier or on a leash. Pet alert sign on the door. | RACF/resident |  |
| Animal escapes |  | Pet to remain in residents’ room. Door remains closed. Pet leaves room at designated time or in pet carrier or on a leash. Pet alert sign on the resident’s door and external doors. All pets are microchipped or wear identification. | RACF/resident |  |
| Death of an animal leading to distress |  | Documented bereavement process | RACF |  |

(Based on the ‘Safe Animal Friendly Environments’ framework by the University of South Australia)

**Individual risk and strategies associated with dogs** **in residential aged care facilities (RACF)**

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| **Identified Risk** | **Risk pre strategy** | **Strategies** | **Responsible** | **Risk after strategy** |
| Mites |  | Pet care plan identifies monthly parasiticide (to include mites) | Vet/Resident |  |
| Sarcoptic mange |  | Pet care plan identifies monthly parasiticide (to include mites). Avoid interaction with stray dogs. | Vet/Resident |  |
| Dog jumping/scratching |  | Pre-admission behavioural assessment, admission trial period. Behaviour trainer for behaviour management strategies. Discourage dogs licking the face and mouth. Pet care plan. Dog leashed when in common areas. | Vet/resident |  |
| Dog barking |  | Pre-admission behavioural assessment. Trial admission period. Vet or behaviour trainer assessment as required with environmental and behaviour management strategies. Medical treatment if required depending on diagnosis and assessment. Pet care plan. Resident room door to remain closed. | Vet/resident |  |
| Dog bite |  | Pre-admission behavioural assessment. Trial admission period. Staff and resident education on dog body language, positive reinforcement training, careful and safe handling of dogs, avoid triggers, provide dog a safe zone to rest and retreat. Pet care plan. Dog bite protocol. | RACF |  |
| Dog sleeps on owners’ bed |  | Resident decision. Trial admission period. Pet response to environment and staff actions. Pet care plan. Pet sign on the door. Routine linen management. | Resident |  |
| Dog waste management |  | Pet care plan. Allocate area for to void. Dog waste should be collected daily using gloves (attend hand hygiene after removing gloved) and disposal bag, dog waste spills are managed as routine spills. |  |  |
| Dog has inadequate exercise |  | Pet care plan identifying exercise requirements in relation to age and health status. Engage designated person/volunteer assistance as required. | Resident/designated person |  |
| Dog doesn’t settle into facility |  | Dogs should be de-sexed. Admission trial period. Vet advice on changes in environmental management, behaviour modification and medication if required. Pet care plan. | RACF/Vet/resident |  |

**(**Based on the ‘Safe Animal Friendly Environments’ framework by the University of South Australia**)**

**Individual risk and strategies associated with cats in residential aged care facilities (RACF)**

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| **Identified Risk** | **Risk pre strategy** | **Strategies** | **Responsible** | **Risk after strategy** |
| Cat litter disposed inappropriately |  | Tray to be checked and managed daily.  Management of soiled/used kitty litter is to be attended outside. Gloves and apron should be worn when handling used kitty litter. Kitty litter is to be bagged and tied before placing in waste bin. Clearly identified (external and lidded) general waste bins should be used for disposal. Kitty litter cannot be placed down waste shuts. Hand hygiene should be performed on doffing PPE. Staff and resident education on waste management.  Pregnant women not to assist with kitty litter disposal or manage urine / faeces spills. Staffing allocation. | RACF/Resident |  |
| Cat scratch/bite |  | Pre-admission behaviour assessment. Pet care plan identifies claw clipping schedule and responsibilities. Tial admission period. Protocol for bites and scratches. Reduce cat stress, especially when staff cleaning or attending care. Staff entering room to be aware of cat body language. |  |  |
| Fur balls (vomiting and diarrhoea) |  | Pre-admission assessment. Pet care plan. Ongoing observation by resident/staff. Odour and frequent kitty litter management. Avoid abrupt dietary change. Vet advice. | RACF/Resident |  |
| Cat yowling at night/other times |  | Trial admission period. Vet assessment for cause. Behaviour usually reduced once cause rectified. Resident room door to remain closed. | Vet/resident |  |
| Cat maintenance - claw clipping |  | Pre-admission review and management. Pet care plan identifies claw clipping schedule and responsibilities. | Resident/Vet |  |
| Cat sleeps on owners’ bed |  | Resident decision. Trial admission period. Pet response to environment and staff actions. Pet care plan. Pet sign on the door. Routine linen management. | Resident |  |
| Trip/fall risk to others when walking cat on harness or in trolley |  | Pre-admission assessment. Tial admission period. Harness and trolley to remain close to resident while walking, identify acceptable times for movement out of room. Pet care plan. | Resident/RACF |  |
| Trip/falls risk for resident |  | Pre-admission assessment – physiotherapist and GP. Tial admission period. Monitor cat behaviour, especially entwining around legs. Resident assessment to step over cat. Cat to remain in residents’ room or on harness. | Resident/RACF |  |
| Cat doesn’t settle into facility |  | Can be identified by cat toileting outside of kitty litter tray. Act on first notice, can usually be resolved if less than 3 weeks since first incident. Admission trial period. Vet advice on changes in environmental management, behaviour modification and medication if required. Pet care plan. | RACF/Vet/resident |  |
| Cat confined to enclosure to long |  | Cat has freedom of resident room, unless resident care or cleaning provided, then cat is placed in carry cage. Resident door to remain closed. Cat has confined outdoor cat area. Pet alert sign on the door. |  |  |