

Greyhound euthanasia

Industry Practice Guide 16.0



NSW Greyhound Code of Practice

Relevant Standards

9.4 It is an offence for a participant to transfer a greyhound in circumstances where the participant knows, or ought to know, or has reason to believe, that the greyhound may be euthanased. **R.**

9.5 It is an offence for a participant to euthanase a greyhound, or cause a greyhound to be euthanased, other than in emergency circumstances where:

- a) delaying euthanasia would result in the greyhound experiencing unacceptable pain and suffering; and,
- b) a veterinarian has been consulted but is unable to attend in a timely manner, and,
- c) transporting the greyhound to a veterinarian would unreasonably prolong its suffering; and,
- d) the euthanasia is performed using humane methods. **R.**

The purpose of this Guide is to clarify the standards in the NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice relating to euthanasia.

Transfer of greyhound for the purpose of euthanasia

Standard 9.4 prohibits transfer of a greyhound when you know, ought to know or have reason to believe that the greyhound is going to be euthanased.

Standard 9.4 is necessary to prevent unlawful euthanasia of greyhounds in NSW. This unlawful euthanasia occurs where a participant transfers a healthy greyhound to a non-participant who they know or suspect intends to euthanase the greyhound.

To remove any doubt, standard 9.4 does not apply to situations where a participant has transferred a greyhound in good faith, and the greyhound is subsequently euthanased for reasons unknown or unrelated to the participant.

Does this mean that I can't transfer a greyhound?

Participants can still transfer greyhounds.

Transferring greyhounds to others is part of rehoming.

The Greyhound Rehoming Policy requires participants to make genuine attempts to rehome any greyhounds that they do not wish, or are unable, to keep themselves.

The purpose of these requirements is to ensure that healthy greyhounds who are no longer suitable for racing are rehomed. Many greyhounds that have health issues can also be rehomed if their health issues are properly managed.

The Commission understands that most greyhounds' lives will probably end in euthanasia when the greyhound is very old and/or ill, and the Greyhound Rehoming Policy allows this. Euthanasia of any animal is appropriate when its suffering cannot be relieved by other means.

However, transferring a greyhound that may be euthanased at some point in the future is quite different to transferring a greyhound to someone who does not have obligations under the Code of Practice or the Greyhound Rehoming Policy so the greyhound can be euthanased.

The Commission understands that such cases are very rare. Indeed, the vast majority of participants who rehome retired greyhounds do everything they can to ensure that their greyhounds will be well cared for.

Euthanasia of a greyhound in an emergency

Standard 9.5 requires that euthanasia of a greyhound must be performed by a veterinarian. Someone other than a veterinarian (e.g. a participant) may euthanase a greyhound only in an emergency.

An emergency occurs only where the greyhound is so ill or so badly injured that it is cruel to keep it alive, it is not possible for a veterinarian to attend in a timely manner, and transporting it to a veterinarian would prolong its suffering.

This is known as "emergency euthanasia", and is also provided for in the Greyhound Rehoming Policy and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (POCTA). The intent of emergency euthanasia is to

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relieve the animal's suffering.

Standard 9.5 sets out the circumstances in which it is permissible for someone other than a registered veterinarian to euthanase a greyhound.

Such circumstances are extremely rare but may arise if a greyhound is critically injured at a remote property, for example.

Standard 9.5 requires participants to consult a registered veterinarian before euthanasing a greyhound – your veterinarian can provide advice about whether emergency euthanasia is appropriate and the appropriate method.

Offence provisions

The NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice is made under the Greyhound Racing Act 2017. This means that the standards in the Code are legal requirements, and disciplinary action or other penalties may be applied if the standards are breached.

Section 39 of the Greyhound Racing Act states that 'a person who contravenes a provision of the code of practice that is identified in the code as an "offence provision" is guilty of an offence'.

Standards 9.4 and 9.5 have been identified as offence provisions under section 39. This means that extra penalties may be applied if these standards are breached. This may include prosecution in court.

Standards 9.4 and 9.5 are the only standards in the Code that have been identified as offence provisions. This is because breaching standards relating to greyhound euthanasia is viewed by the NSW Government as extremely serious.

Section 39 will be invoked only where there is clear evidence that a participant has deliberately done the wrong thing.

The Commission anticipates that such cases will be rare.

The Code of Practice and the Greyhound Rehoming Policy

Standards 9.4 and 9.5 also appear in the GWIC Greyhound Rehoming Policy.

The Policy includes more detail about preparing greyhounds for rehoming and trying to find homes for retired greyhounds.

Both the Code and the Policy apply. This means that participants are required to comply with both the Standards in the Code and the requirements in the Greyhound Rehoming Policy.

