



Animal Care Tech Note

Identification and Recordkeeping Requirements for Dogs and Cats

As a breeder, dealer, or exhibitor licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), you are required to identify and keep records of all dogs and cats in your possession. This Tech Note explains the requirements and your options for meeting them.

Identification Requirements

Dogs and Cats: You must identify all dogs and cats 16 weeks of age or older, including those held temporarily for breeding, personal pets used for breeding or housed with breeding animals, spayed/neutered dogs and cats housed in the kennel/cattery, and exhibited dogs and cats. You must use one of three acceptable forms of official ID: tag affixed to an appropriate collar, tattoo, or microchip.

Exhibitors who do not want to use one of the three forms of official ID may instead identify dogs and cats by:

- Placing an official ID tag on the door of the animal's cage or run;
- Maintaining a record book that has each animal's ID number, a written description of the animal, all required recordkeeping data, and a clear photo of each animal; **and**
- Keeping a duplicate tag that accompanies each dog or cat whenever it leaves the facility.

Puppies and Kittens: Identification requirements for puppies and kittens less than 16 weeks old include:

- Unweaned puppies or kittens housed with their officially identified mother must be listed on the official birth record (APHIS Form 7005) or on the litter's cage card. Unweaned puppies and kittens that are removed from their birth mother and placed with another litter may be listed on the foster litter's cage card.
- Weaned puppies or kittens maintained as whole litters may be identified individually with a tag, tattoo, microchip, or plastic-type collar **or** listed on a cage card.
- Weaned puppies or kittens no longer maintained in a litter must be identified individually with a tag, tattoo, microchip, or plastic-type collar.



Identification Standards

Whichever form of ID you use, it must meet the following standards:

Tags and Plastic Puppy Collars

- Must be legible and made of durable metal or plastic (see *U.S. Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 9, Section 2.51 for acceptable dimensions and materials).
- Must contain the letters "USDA," your USDA license number (e.g., 48-A-0000), and the animal's individual number (e.g., 1, 27, 32, etc.).

Tattoos

- Must be requested in writing from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Send requests to animalcare@usda.gov. We will review your request and, if approved, assign the tattoo coding scheme (letters and numbers) you must use to identify your animals.
- Must be applied in a humane manner.

Microchips

- Must be placed below the back of the neck in subcutaneous tissue between the shoulder blades.
- You must have a working microchip scanner available for APHIS to use during inspections.

USDA		License number: 99-A-0000			
DAM ID number: MICROCHIP 12345678DD		Breed: Cocker Spaniel		Date of Birth: 4/1/22	
ID number	Sex	Description	Date of removal	Date of death/euthanasia	Medical record
22-08	M	Black with white toes		4/2/22 (died)	5/1/22: Pyrantel
22-09	M	Black with white spot on nose	6/8/22		5/13/22: Distemper/parvo
22-10	F	Black merle	6/8/22		6/1/22: Group fecal (negative)

Licensees can use cage cards like the one shown above not only for identification (shaded areas) but also inventory and group medical records.

Cage Cards

- Must be legible and include the letters “USDA,” your USDA license number, and the animals’ individual numbers.

You may purchase tags and microchips from **any** company that can meet the requirements. Known manufacturers¹ include:

Ketchum Mfg. Co. ketchummfg.com (800) 222-0460	AVID Identification Systems, Inc. avidid.com (800) 371-7505
Keyes-Davis Company keyesdavis.com (269) 962-7505	HomeAgain homeagain.com (888) 466-3242
National Band & Tag Company nationalband.com (859) 261-2035	Revival Animal Health, Inc. revivalanimal.com (800) 786-4751

Lost or Unreadable Identification

If a dog or cat loses its ID, you should make a diligent effort to find and reapply it to the animal. When an ID is lost or unreadable, apply a new ID and record **both** the old and new ID numbers in your inventory recordkeeping documents. You must not repeat or use an official ID number on more than one animal for at least 5 years.

Recordkeeping Requirements

Breeders, dealers, and exhibitors must keep records of dogs and cats in their possession, including all offspring. To meet AWA recordkeeping requirements, you may:

- Use APHIS Forms 7005 (Record of Acquisition of Dogs and Cats on Hand) and 7006 (Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats). Go to **aphis.usda.gov** and search “aph7005” or “aph7006” to download copies.
- Request permission from APHIS to create and maintain a computerized recordkeeping system that captures all information required in Section 2.75 of the AWA regulations.

¹ Mention of companies or commercial products does not imply recommendation or endorsement by USDA over others not mentioned. USDA neither guarantees nor warrants the standard of any product mentioned. Product names are mentioned solely to report factually on available data and to provide specific information.

You must keep all records, regardless of form, for the duration of time you have the animal in your possession and a minimum of 1 year after its disposition (i.e., sale, rescue/adoption, transfer, death, or euthanasia). The APHIS Administrator may issue a written notice to extend the period you’re required to keep records.

Using Cage Cards for Recordkeeping

You may use cage cards as an additional option to meet AWA recordkeeping requirements for puppies and kittens born at your facility. When used for both identification and recordkeeping, the cage card must include:

- The letters “USDA”
- Your license number
- The dam or foster mother’s ID
- Identification numbers of puppies or kittens
- Dates of birth
- Sex
- Breed
- Description (i.e., color, markings, etc.)
- Date of disposition (i.e., died, euthanized, removed, sold)

Using Cage Cards as a Medical Record for Puppies

You may also use cage cards as a group medical record to document all routine preventive treatments (e.g., vaccines and deworming medications) administered to a whole litter of puppies as required by Section 3.13 of the AWA regulations. A group medical record must contain the identification number, breed, sex, and age of each animal in the treatment group; the names and dates of all vaccines and preventive medications given; and any routine tests performed (such as fecal examination for intestinal parasites).

For More Information

To learn more about AWA identification and recordkeeping requirements for dogs and cats, contact your local USDA Animal Care inspector, call us at (970) 494-7478, or send an email to **animalcare@usda.gov**.