

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MICROCHIP DISTRIBUTORS AND MANUFACTURERS

OBJECTIVE

The Code is aimed at producing minimum requirements and standards that should be put in place and adhered to by all microchip distributors, and associated businesses.

The aim is to provide a safe, permanent identification system for companion animals and equines and an effective reunification system for animals that stray.

Adherence to the Code of Conduct is a requirement of membership of the Microchip Advisory Group.

EQUIPMENT

Microchips

Microchips must be supplied in Pre-Packed Sterile (PPS) units which can be either disposable syringe style or re-usable gun formats. All microchips intended for companion animal and equine markets should meet ISO standards 11784 and 11785, the FDXB standard with a 15-digit code and pass the performance and competence tests approved by ISO.

The distributor must not supply chips with a country code in the UK until there is a single national authority authorised to issue microchip numbers or with the prefix "999". The PPS unit should be provided in a package, which includes the following:

- Sterilisation indicator
- Expiry date
- Minimum of 3 self-adhesive bar codes advising the unique number for distribution to the owner/keeper, the implanter and the database.
- The delivery container should be batch numbered to ensure full traceability of chips to a particular implanting agent.
- The distributor should have full product liability insurance

It is suggested but not mandatory that

- The supplier offers a microchip that minimises the chance of migration
- The supplier provide a repurchase facility for agents' unused PPS units to ensure their safe disposal

Scanners

Scanners should have passed the ISO approved performance test and be able to read chips that comply with ISO standard 11784 and FDXA chips until 2026. It is suggested that a test chip be included when delivering the Scanner to customers.

Battery powered scanners should have a low battery indicator and stop operating when operating function is compromised by low power input.

The Wide distribution of scanners is an essential element of the microchipping system. The policy of distributors on pricing and availability should reflect their responsibility to maintain the system.

Where a scanner does not fully comply with the ISO standard it must be fully marked as such.

TRAINING

Training should only be carried out by a competent organisation and the quality of the training is the responsibility of the distributor. Training should be specific to the products. Training of implanting agents should be comprehensive and cover:

- a) Introduction
 - Responsible Pet Ownership
 - Health and Safety issues
 - Potential adverse reactions
- b) The Chip
 - RFID technology - how it works
 - ISO 11784 and 11785, other relevant standards
 - Unique numbers, manufacturers' and/or country codes
- c) The Scanner
 - ISO 11785
 - scanning techniques and effect of low battery on performance
 - Effect of environment and interference on the scanners' ability and performance.
 - Performance of individual models of scanners in reading different types of microchip
- d) Implanting
 - Appropriate route of implantation for different types of animals as per RCVS guidance
 - Preparation procedure – preferred implantation sites
 - Migration – local and distant
 - Supervised practice session at implanting animals including restraint
 - Minimum of 2 animals satisfactorily implanted
- e) Databases
 - Purpose: reunification; national and international databases
 - Registration forms/online registration

- Back track system
- f) Regulations
 - Requirement for collar and tag in dogs and third party liability
 - Pet travel scheme
 - Sharps disposal in accordance with regulations
 - Microchip Adverse Reactions Report Scheme
- g) Insurance
 - Public liability cover essential

A certificate should be issued to non-veterinarian agents along with an Implantation Manual, which confirms the basic contents of the course attended.

Each manufacturer should provide a copy of their Implantation Manual to each transferring Agent.

DATABASE

All Database records held by a manufacturer or supplier or their agents should comply with the Data Protection Act and comply with the DIG database code of practice.

Backtrack System

Each distributor must have a system that enables the registration of the chip number on a reunification database at the point of sale to the implanting agent.

Each manufacturer or supplier must ensure a database maintains the unique numbers of each chip issued and to which implanting agent they have been issued, in order to track stray animals prior to registration on a reunification Database.

Reunification

- a) Databases that are used for reunification directly by finders of strays, e.g. dog wardens and rescue charities, need;
 - A central point of contact and working relationship between national and international databases
 - Data protection procedure. At the time of registration customers should be made aware that the details held on the database about them will be released to a recognised agent, such as a vet, dog warden, police etc; in the event of their pet being found by an agent.
 - The details entered for reunification purposes should be standardised.
- b) Essential details to be taken on owner:
 - Owner/Keeper's full name and address
 - At least 2 contact telephone numbers (day/evening/mobile)

Suggested best practice (additional owner/keeper details)

- Third party contact details
- E-mail address

c) Essential details be taken on owner of Pet:

- Pet's name
- Species
- Breed
- Sex
- Year of birth
- Colour/description
- Chip number and date of registration/implantation

Suggested best practice (additional pet details)

- Pet special needs i.e. diet food
- Vet details
- Medical problems e.g. allergies, diabetes
- Medication if applicable

d) A recognised pin number/password should be provided before releasing information to:

- Another database: All the standardised information may be released.
- Finder of a lost pet:
 - Dog warden, police, veterinary practice, animal charity – owner details disclosed if they give a valid password/pin number.
 - General public – should be directed to the appropriate authority e.g. dog warden, veterinary surgeon or police to ensure the microchip is read.

e) Reunification must to be available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year through one telephone number and internet portal..

f) There should be common standards for service levels such as answering calls within a certain time, time scale for entering registration details, etc.

g) Initial registration must be included with the price of the chip and with clear conditions for continued registration and altering the database as owners details change etc.

h) There should be contingency plans to preserve the information on the database and to maintain access to it in case a reunification database suffers a system failure or ceases in business.

POLICING

In the event any distributor becomes aware of the misuse of microchips, for example that microchips are being implanted by untrained Agents or by non-veterinarians in species other than dogs or cats, or other Breaches of the Code of Practice; then

- a. In the first instance it will be reported to the chairman of the MAG who will contact the distributor, who will have responsibility to investigate and ensure that there is no misuse or continued misuse
- b. In the event of continued misuse or failure to follow the code of conduct then other sanctions will have to be considered, which may require the intervention of other parties such as Veterinary organisations and ultimately expulsion from the Microchip Advisory Group.

In addition, it is a requirement that the distributors abide by the guidelines laid down regarding microchipping by the RCVS.