

Environmental Sources of Stress for Kenneled Dogs: Noise and Lighting

Dog welfare is more than just food, water, and good physical health. Several aspects of the environment can impact a dog's welfare. Dogs have a very different sensory experience from humans. Make sure your kennel is tailored to meet your dog's needs.

Noise Reduction

Excessive noise in kennels poses a serious health and welfare concern. Sound levels in many kennels are dangerous to humans and dogs and can cause hearing loss. Dogs are even more sensitive to sounds than humans.

Excessive noise can lead to overstimulation and distress. As a result, dogs may engage in unwanted behaviors such as repetitive barking. Unfortunately, dogs cause most noise in kennels. Reducing noise caused by resident dogs can be challenging.

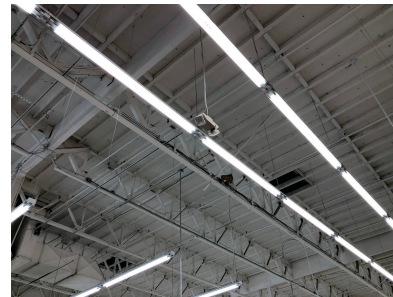


Mitigating noise in the kennel environment

- Know how loud the kennel is. Available phone apps and handheld decibel meters allow you to take quick measurements of noise. Aim for less than 85 dB.
- Reduce dog stress through enrichment, exercise, and social interactions. This can reduce barking.
- Organize the kennel to minimize dog exposure to loud equipment. Be aware of noise caused by equipment (water hoses, temperature control, and refrigeration).

Mitigating noise in the kennel environment:

- Computer monitors and fluorescent lighting are also sources of high-frequency sounds.
- Remember that human activity can contribute to noise levels. Yelling and banging gates can increase stress for dogs.
- Use sound absorbing materials such as baffling. Create self-contained rooms within larger spaces to reduce noise.



Dog-friendly Lighting

Lighting is often designed to meet human needs. Artificial light cycles can be stressful. Circadian rhythms and the production of some hormones are often tied to light cycles. Disruptions to these cycles can cause experiences similar to jet lag. Lighting can impact sleep, emotional states, and stress.

- Avoid continuous exposure to light. Replicate natural light cycles to the extent possible by turning lights down or off at night.
- Provide natural light when possible. Design kennels with windows or skylights.
- Fluorescent lights flicker at a frequency that is not detectable by humans but is by dogs. LED lights are an energy efficient alternative.
- Lighting that is too dim or too bright can be stressful. Dogs are more sensitive to light than humans. Some animals show increased fear and aggression under bright lights.
- Use lighting that is adequate to observe your dogs' behavior and health.

