

PE2058/F: Require all dog boarding kennels to install smoke detectors, smoke alarms and sprinkler systems

Pet Industry Federation submission of 19 April 2024

Many thanks for the opportunity to respond to the petition.

We have contacted our kennel and cattery members in Scotland, who have replied with a range of views on the topic. These are summarized in our response below.

All of our members commented on the tragic circumstances around the deaths of these pets. As kennel/cattery owners it was a nightmare scenario and something which they all felt would be difficult to recover from.

All of the respondents said that they have fire/smoke detectors in place in their establishments, on top of the fire extinguishers required. None currently had sprinkler systems installed. However, some had additional forms of detection, such as the alarm from the kennels sounding in the owner's house and a heat detection system. Another had installed four intermediate bulk containers with water, as suggested by their local fire service.

The respondents could certainly understand the owner calling for a sprinkler system. Some felt that it was a step in the right direction and that as kennels/catteries were entrusted with peoples' pets, early fire detection and sprinkler systems would demonstrate and display to pet owners that they were putting their pet's welfare first.

However, there were also concerns, which we, as a trade association would echo, around the cost and economic viability of retrospectively installing a sprinkler system throughout a commercial boarding premises. In some circumstances, it could be physically impossible.

There was also the additional factor of private water supplies to consider, which some kennels had. Would there be a requirement to store water specifically for a sprinkler system? If so, how much would need to be stored for each building? Could it freeze in winter? What if there was a power cut - how would a sprinkler system work without electricity to power a pump? One business suggested that their small business would have to close if a sprinkler system were mandated.

PIF would therefore suggest that whilst a move towards a more sophisticated fire safety feature than fire extinguishers was important – something which PIF members already appear to have in place, we would suggest that any new requirements focus on better fire/smoke detection systems and alarms, rather than going as far as installing a sprinkler system. The cost of installing such a system is likely for many to be too high, and it would be difficult to support an additional requirement which could potentially put members out of business.