Dangerous Wild Animals Licence Conditions

Under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1973, no person shall keep an animal that falls within the definition of the Act except under a licence granted by the local authority.

Licensing of Dangerous Wild Animals & Eligibility Criteria

Under Section 1 of the Act, an application must be made to the local authority for a licence to keep a dangerous wild animal. The local authority may grant a licence if the applicant is not disqualified under any of the following Acts:

- this Act, from keeping a dangerous wild animal, or
- the Protection of Animals Acts 1911 to 1964, or
- the Pet Animals Act 1951, or
- the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963, or
- the Riding Establishments Act 1964 and 1970, or

In determining whether to grant a licence the local authority must be satisfied that any animal covered by the licence shall:

- only be kept by the person(s) specified in the licence
- normally be kept at the premises specified in the licence
- not be moved from those premises except in such circumstances as may be specified in the licence

and also that:

- the person to whom the licence is granted holds a current insurance policy which insures them and any other person covered by the licence to keep the animal, against liability for any damage which may be caused by the animal
- it is not contrary to the public interest on the grounds of safety, nuisance or otherwise to keep the animal
- the applicant is a suitable person to hold the licence
- that animals will at all times be kept in secure accommodation which will prevent the animal’s escape and suitable with respect to construction, size of quarters, number of occupants, exercising facilities, temperatures, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness
- that animals will be adequately supplied with suitable food, drink and bedding material, adequately exercised, and (so far as necessary) visited at suitable intervals
- that all reasonable precautions will be taken to prevent and control the spread among animals of infectious or contagious diseases, including the provision of adequate isolation facilities.
• that appropriate steps will be taken for the protection of the animals in case of fire or other emergency.

The Applicant’s Right of Appeal against Refusal

Any person aggrieved by the refusal of a local authority to grant such a licence, or by any condition subject to which a licence is proposed to be granted, may appeal to a magistrates' court.

Offences against the Act

The Act specifies the following offences:

• keeping a dangerous wild animal without a licence; a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale of fines or three months imprisonment, or both
• keeping a dangerous wild animal in contravention of the conditions of a licence; a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale of fines or three months imprisonment, or both
• obstruction or delay of any person in the exercise of his powers of entry; a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale of fines

Where a person is convicted under any of the Acts listed above as disqualifying the applicant from making an application, the court also has power to cancel the licence to keep a dangerous wild animal and to disqualify such person from keeping a dangerous wild animal for such period as the court thinks fit.

Inspection of Dangerous Wild Animal Premises

The local authority is given power under the Act to authorise any of its officers or any veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner to inspect any premises in their area for which a licence has been granted under the Act and which is still in force. Such a person, on production of his authority if so required, has the statutory right to enter the premises at all reasonable times for the following purposes:

• to inspect the premises,
• to inspect any animals on the premises,
• to ascertain whether any offence is being committed on the premises.