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The Humane Society of the United States

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## Problems with Grid Flooring in Dog Kennels

Gridded, strand, or wire flooring in dog kennels does not promote either proper sanitation or adequate comfort and safety for dogs and puppies. Grid-style or wire flooring frequently leads to entrapment or injury, as dogs and puppies' feet become wedged in openings intended for feces. Grid flooring is designed to allow feces to pass through, but unfortunately any gap large enough for fecal matter is large enough to entrap an animal's foot or toe.

- Basic sanitation protocols require kennel owners to clean primary enclosures daily or as often as necessary to ensure that wastes do not accumulate. This is preferable to requiring dogs to mash solid wastes through floor openings, as is the presumption with gridded flooring. Requiring animals to walk on fecal matter to mash it through floor openings with their feet results in unsanitary conditions and can cause disease-spreading fecal matter to become caked on both the animals and their enclosures.
- Solid flooring is the standard flooring used in the best veterinary clinics, animal hospitals, and animal shelters. It is easier to clean and sanitize impermeable solid flooring than it is to remove feces caked on strand flooring. Solid flooring is also more comfortable for canines, allowing them to play, jump, and move about more naturally.
- The difficulties of moving naturally on grid flooring can cause animals to restrict their activity in order to avoid discomfort and can also lead to anxiety, depression, frustration, and other behavioral problems in animals denied solid resting surfaces.
- Grid flooring can bend and sag over time, leading to further issues with entrapment and discomfort. Wire coatings may be chewed off or crack and peel over time.
- Grid flooring increases drafts in extremely cold weather, making it difficult for dogs to maintain their body heat.
- In stacked caging situations, gridded flooring can cause fecal matter or urine to splash down on puppies in lower cages or run down the sides of the cages into lower enclosures.
- Confined dogs who are forced to live on grid or wire flooring for long periods of time frequently suffer from serious foot and leg injuries, including chronic, painful sores, infections and cysts between the toes, skeletal problems, toenails that curl into the paw pads from lack of pressure on the nail, and toenails being ripped out by snagging on the flooring. The conditions in the photos herein are typical of issues seen with wire or grid flooring.



PHOTOS: TOP: Wire mesh floor with openings larger than puppy's feet; feces and hair are adhered to and wrapped around the wire flooring - from USDA enforcement records. MIDDLE: Puppies straddling coated wire floors are unable to move freely and naturally – from New Jersey State Health Dept, Office of Animal Welfare records. BOTTOM: Wire flooring often sags, leading to increased issues with entrapment and interfering with dogs' normal movement – from N.J. State Health Dept, Office of Animal Welfare records. Text © The Humane Society of the United States 2010