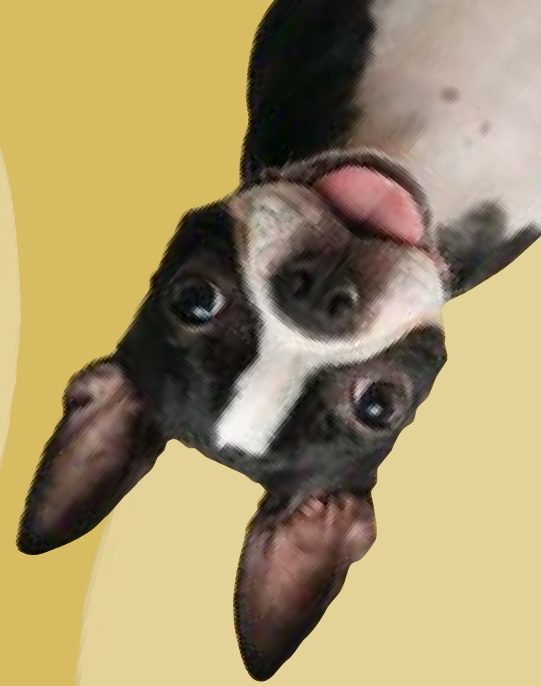


7



Biggest Mistakes to Avoid

When Building
a New Animal Facility

A new guide by



MASON
COMPANY **SINCE 1892**

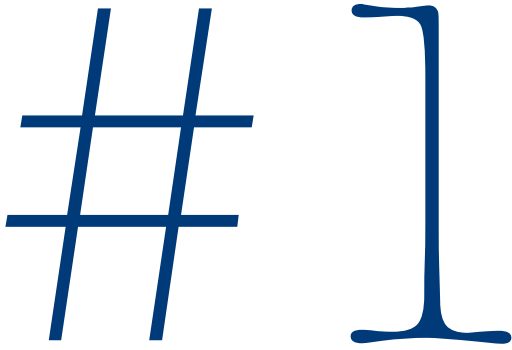
Trusted Animal Housing Solutions

7 Common Mistakes of Kennel Design

There are many different approaches to designing and building a successful animal housing facility. There are often trade-offs of one approach versus another. At Mason Company, we have *over 100 years of experience* supplying equipment for these various designs, and have seen thousands of facilities, some outstanding, others not so great. *The one common denominator found in better facilities is proper planning.* Following are the seven most common mistakes we see people make when constructing a new facility. For more details, contact a Mason Company sales consultant.



Mistake



Making all of the kennels the same size

We are often asked: “What is the proper size to make the kennels?” There are many differing views on this point. Depending on your location, 4’x 6’ might be

considered an average size, while others might call that a small kennel. The best facilities have a variety of kennel sizes available. Kenneling charges are often priced according to the size of the run requested by the customer. Small breeds are usually fine in smaller runs, although a customer with multiple dogs might like to put all of their small animals



together in one large run. Since kennels are usually oriented in a row, ***varying the widths with a common length is the most economical and operationally efficient approach.*** This way, larger dogs can use a wider kennel to stretch out. Another option is to build transfer doors into the panels between kennels which can be raised to share two adjacent runs. The key is to have a variety of sizes available.

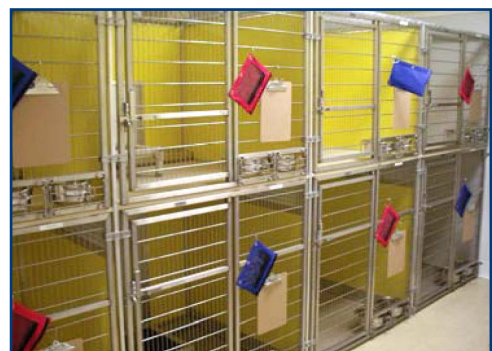
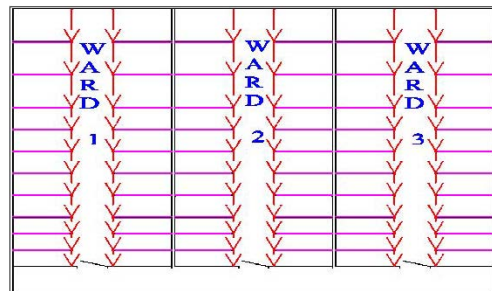
Mistake

#2

Putting all the runs in one large room

Since demand for boarding kennels is highly seasonal, there will be certain peak times (e.g., holidays) when your facility might be full, and other times when occupancy is significantly less. Arranging your facility in sections or wards allows rooms to be “shut off” when not needed, saving HVAC, electricity, and cleaning expenses. This approach is also better for noise control during high occupancy as *smaller groups of dogs will be less prone to barking from excitement of other animals.* However, a common mistake is to separate the wards into small, medium, and large runs. With this layout, you will likely have a few dogs in each room and will be unable to shut the room down. Each ward should instead have a variety of sizes available for use.

Mason Company also offers two different Double-Deck kennel systems. One with full height, walk-in runs on multiple levels, and a smaller stacked cage system. These types of systems allows for more capacity on a second floor when boarding levels are high without adding any more space and cost to your building.



#3

Not properly planning for drainage

No other aspect of the kennel's design has more impact on its operational efficiency than the drain system design. Kennel operators have varying opinions and preferences on the location and type of drains used. While Mason Company's equipment is designed to work with any drainage system, our recommended approach is *individual drains*, although this is unfortunately usually the most expensive choice. The most common – and usually the most economical – drain choice is a continuous trench drain in the rear of the kennel. A removable drain cover or swing-up rest bench guards any drain while allowing for quick, easy access when cleaning. Pressure wash systems or simple overhead hose bibs can push debris away to the back of the run into the open trench. A sloped floor to the drain is also helpful for quicker drying. It is common to locate a water valve at the end (high point) of the trench to keep debris moving as it gets pushed into the trench.

Another popular solution for existing buildings is to *use an above floor kennel, like Mason Company's UltraBase units*. These kennels have built in drains that can be plumbed under the units (but above the floor) and run to a single floor drain in the room, as shown above.



Mistake

#4

Not using a modern module kennel system

Kennel facilities have evolved through the years. Once located only in rural locations and primarily outdoor facilities, they are now commonly in urban and residential locations and are often indoor-only. *Shelters and pet resorts have found that upscale facilities increase their adoptions and revenue.* This has driven

the desire for kennel equipment to not only be durable, but aesthetically pleasing as well. New high tech materials such as FRP (Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic) offer an attractive, colorful appearance while still being extremely durable and easy to clean. Modular kennel systems like this are also maintenance-free (no yearly sealing and painting of block walls)



and use much less building space (1" instead of 4" or 6") than block walls separating the runs. Depending on your area, luxury runs with tempered glass doors, fancy dog beds, decorations and TVs are common. Whether you are designing an upscale pet resort or looking for extremely durable yet economical equipment, Mason Company has a variety of kennel systems to fit your budget.

#5

Overlooking building mechanicals when planning the run layout

Kennel equipment is often researched and designed months before a facility begins construction. During this time, more details are added to the plans that sometimes lead to problems. HVAC ducts, electrical switches, windows, building footers, and support posts can be located in areas that interfere with the kennel equipment operation or attachment. Proper communication of these conditions prior to kennel manufacturing will help avoid costly corrections required in the field. Metal buildings are becoming increasingly popular, but proper planning for provisions to attach kennel panels to the wall must occur. *An architect experienced in building animal facilities is ideal.* Talk to your Mason Company sales consultant for names of experienced architects and/or physical engineers in your area.



Mistake

#6

Not including cat boarding

Another new product type found in boarding kennels and adoption areas of shelters are upscale cat condos. Usually made from cabinetry, these units have shelves for cats to perch on as well as separate litter box areas. Another notable feature available on some units is an integrated ventilation system. This feature reduces litter pan odor as well as controls upper respiratory disease spread. Although cats are able to care for themselves for a few days, many facilities are finding that *longer term cat boarding is a popular and growing service.*



Mistake



Only comparing initial cost of kennel choices

Once you've decided on a layout for your kennel area, the next thing is to evaluate different kennel systems to house the animals. *There are many different designs and materials* used for this purpose, and they have *a wide range of prices*.

High quality equipment from a reputable enclosure manufacturer like Mason Company, though sometimes more expensive initially, is designed to last much longer, is backed by a longer warranty, and will cost less over the life of your facility. Finding the right balance of cost and durability will optimize your investment and keep your facility looking fresh and appealing for many more years. Inexpensive equipment is generally not made with the same quality of materials or manufacturing techniques, and this can cause them to fail much sooner or be easily destroyed by an aggressive dog. Certain materials are much better suited for life in a humid, harsh environment of a dog kennel. Mason's FRP panels for example, have no natural fibers in their core and have a tough outer shell that resists scratching. They are easily power washed or cleaned and disinfected with regular kennel



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continued next page

Only comparing initial cost of kennel choices

Mistake #7 continued

detergents. Other materials like stainless steel are built to last a lifetime without losing their initial appearance. Many facilities also use a variety of materials in a single building in order to offer customers different options and price points. For example, a boarding facility might use galvanized gates on its standard runs, but use stainless steel and tempered glass on its high-end luxury suites.



Other aspects that can lead to headaches are poorly designed above-floor runs that are hard to seal and usually leak into hard to reach areas under a kennel. This can lead to contamination and spread of disease. Properly drained systems such as Mason's UltraBase will provide you with a safe, easy to care for kennel with years of trouble free service. We recommend that you ***use a reputable kennel manufacturer*** who truly understands your requirements instead of the local fence company who is not familiar with the special needs of a commercial kennel operator or animal shelter.



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