

***Issues identified for amendment and high-level guide to the proposed amendments
(context to support those participating in the public comment period)***

Issues identified as part of the 5-year review of the 2013 mink Code	Amendments proposed by the Code Amendment Committee (for review during the public comment period – please see all tracked changes in the specific sections)
Section 1.2.2 Pens	
Below Table 1 (in the 2013 Code), it is stated: “If lowering the feed strip, the lowered portion of the pen must have a minimum height of 12 inches (in) and extend to a maximum of 10 in.” In the assessment, the committee accepted 10 in minimum height of feed strip of pens that fall into Tables 2 & 3. This is not stated below these tables. Industry feels that similar statements should be listed below Tables 2 & 3 accepting minimum feed strip heights of 10 in.	- The bullet points on lowering the feed strip and meeting the requirements for juveniles by August 1 st or September 1 st of each year have been moved up and amended to clarify that they apply to all pens (whether Table 1, 2 or 3).
In the 2013 Code, the minimum height requirement for new pens is 15 inches (in) and 14 in for existing pens to be used for their lifetime. Recent research suggests that increased pen heights do not significantly improve welfare. And pen heights that are too high inhibit feed access especially for young kits. Concerns were also raised that more time is needed for the entire industry to transition to new pens and for new research to be done that can inform a clear, evidenced-based national standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent research on pen heights noted in the amended preamble (and citation given at the bottom of the section) - Context on the challenges of financing a transition to larger pens is outlined in new text that appears immediately above the requirements. This new text also outlines specific commitments made by industry and partners as it relates to research and overall improvements to the mink’s environment. - A minimum height was added to Table 3 to clarify this minimum expectation in these existing pens (any pens not meeting this minimum would not be acceptable).
Section 1.2.3 Nest Boxes	
While implementing this section’s requirements through the on-farm assessment, concerns were raised about the requirement to have a nest box with adequate bedding during whelping, lactation, furring, and winter months. Specifically, the winter climate varies considerably across Canada and some areas of B.C. occasionally experience warm winter periods, and it may be more humane to remove the nest box to promote gradual weight loss (rather than drastically reducing the feed to condition the mink for breeding).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First requirement in this section amended to mention the need to maintain the cleanliness of the nest box and bedding (for warmth during cold temperatures, comfort, and hygiene). - New requirement added outlining removal of the nest box in the context of re-training individual mink. - New requirement added explaining that, as a last resort (after gradual feed changes and early breeding), the nest box may be temporarily removed during warm winter periods if mink have another resource that permits them to hide.

<p>In addition, it is sometimes necessary to briefly remove the nest box to re-train individual mink not to soil in the nest box (to keep the area clean thereby safeguarding mink health and comfort).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need to primarily condition mink through gradual dietary changes is further reinforced in an amended requirement in Section 3.1.1. - New recommendations added to Section 1.2.3 outlining other strategies to support conditioning mink including in regions that may see temporary warm winter periods.
Section 3.1 Nutrition	
<p>This section of the 2013 Code requires that pens of mink that are over and under conditioned must be marked so the mink may be monitored more closely and fed accordingly. Concerns were raised that this requirement is vague and could be improved by defining the specific body condition scores that are too thin or over-conditioned (using the 1-5 scale given in Appendix A).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific body condition scores that make mink too fat or too thin were added as amendments to the 3rd requirement in this section.
Section 3.1.1 Breeding Mink	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first requirement in this section was amended based on the discussions on temporarily removing the nest box should there be a period of warm winter temperatures. It was felt that we needed to further reinforce the expectation that producers primarily rely on gradual, early dietary changes to condition breeders. The proposed amendment to Section 1.2.3 clarifies that nest box removal is a last resort after gradual feed changes and early selection of breeders. - New recommended practices added to complement the amended requirement.
Section 5.1 Animal Handling	
<p>In the 2013 Code, there is reference to the proper method of carrying a mink (which involves supporting the mink's body); however, there is no reference to the proper method of catching a mink and lifting it from its pen. The common practice, which appears to cause minimal stress to mink compared to other methods of catching/lifting, is to lift mink from the base of tail but this is not clarified in the current Code.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To address any possible risk of injury or pain associated with lifting or handling mink, preventing pain and injury was added to the 2nd requirement. - A requirement outlining the acceptable technique to lift mink was added with clarification on how long they may be carried this way and when the body must be supported. - Recommended practices were added or amended to complement the new requirements (as well as existing requirements).

Section 6.1 Euthanasia Methods	
Carbon monoxide (CO) from a compressed gas cylinder is the only acceptable method of euthanasia in the 2013 Code. Concerns were raised that the Code should clarify acceptable back-up methods should CO from a compressed gas cylinder be temporarily unavailable or should new health and safety regulations prohibit its use. Most, if not all Codes, outline more than one acceptable euthanasia method.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Requirement added on when a back-up method may be used and all context on acceptable back-up methods was added to the preamble. Back-up methods were informed by research and veterinary guidance, as noted in the new references.- The existing requirement on the required concentration of gas was amended to reflect the required concentration should carbon dioxide be used as a back-up method.
Section 6.2 Evidence to Confirm Death	
Concerns were raised that five different indicators must be checked when using an accepted method of euthanasia. Overall, it was felt that it was not practical to check all five indicators and that some indicators were difficult to reliably/consistently check on farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The requirement was amended to clarify the two indicators that must be checked to confirm death.- Context was added to the preamble explaining the need to assess/re-assess breathing over 5 minutes.