
Overview

This standard covers the safe handling and control of dogs and is suitable for all persons who work professionally with dogs.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that handling practices reflect up-to-date information, that relevant handling techniques used are in accordance with the scope and remit of their role as well as within relevant policies and procedures. They will work within the limits of their authority, accreditation, qualification and expertise of handling, and have a developed knowledge and experience within the given arena of their work, supported by suitable canine-specific studies, which are experience-based and compassionate.

The handling and control of dogs can in most instances become a dynamic process. This standard will ensure that users will have the necessary skills to be flexible and dynamic in their approach, having due regard for all the aspects of safe control and handling of dogs.

Meeting the legal responsibilities for duty of care under relevant animal health and welfare legislation is of paramount importance.

Users of this standard will need to be fully aware of the importance of health and safety in connection with this work.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. comply with relevant animal health and welfare legislation, national legislation, local policies and codes of practice relating to dogs, at all times
2. continually assess and make provision for the health and welfare needs of the dog
3. agree and confirm the purpose for which the dog is being handled and the desired outcome of the handling with all parties concerned
4. assess the suitability of the dog to be handled, based on **information** from a range of appropriate **sources**
5. assess the dog's physical condition and emotional state, with consideration for the life stage of the dog (i.e. puppy, juvenile, adult, senior), before and during handling, recognising signs of stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, aversions, aggression, pain, conflict and avoidance, and respond appropriately
6. assess the handling and control needs and situation presented and develop a, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted (**SMART**) handling plan, which includes how you would deal with any contingencies that may arise
7. select the most appropriate handling and control methods and resources, for the particular dog and the desired handling outcome, with due consideration of current evidence, previous experience, safe and humane practices and legislation
8. approach the dog in a way that takes into account the breed and an assessment of the dog's current and known behaviour patterns
9. handle and control the dog humanely and safely and in a way that is likely to promote their co-operation and minimise the possibility of distress or injury
10. fit and use equipment safely, effectively and humanely having regard for the circumstances, the size of the dog, the purpose of using the equipment and the avoidance of maintaining or developing additional behaviour problems such as anxiety, fear, distress or aggression
11. ensure that resources are used safely and effectively to safeguard the health and welfare of the dog
12. use handling and control methods safely in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and any other policies or procedures relevant to the handling technique or location
13. handle the dog in a manner that minimises the possibility of risk to the health and safety of the dog, yourself and other animals and people in the environment and regularly assess the risks throughout the handling process

-
14. monitor the dog's behaviour and response to handling, noting any significant changes and taking appropriate action e.g. adjusting handling method
 15. monitor the effect of the handling on the dog's health and welfare and recognise if the handling or a particular part of the handling is likely to be detrimental in the short or long term
 16. recognise when handling the dog may not be appropriate and identify alternative methods of achieving the desired outcome, e.g. with a dog fearful of other dogs, or a dog which is reactive to certain situations
 17. recognise your own limitations and when to seek assistance, and **refer** to an appropriate professional when necessary e.g. senior handler, canine behaviourist, veterinary surgeon
 18. communicate effectively with others involved in the handling process
 19. ensure appropriate records are maintained and stored as required
 20. maintain professional and ethical conduct and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence, experience and the relevant legislation
 21. maintain professional competence by undertaking regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and work within the requirements of the relevant professional organisation

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your responsibilities under relevant animal health and welfare legislation, and other dog specific legislation, local policies and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the **Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966)** with regard to diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
2. how the welfare needs of the **dogs** you engage with may be assessed and addressed prior to and during handling
3. the purpose for which the dog is being handled and the desired outcome of the handling
4. how to obtain and interpret information about the dog and any factors that may affect the handling technique, including temperament and usual behaviour patterns
5. breed-specific behaviours and traits and their potential effect on handling and the behaviours that could be presented as a result of such handling
6. the principles and techniques used in the handling of dogs, and the skills relevant to the desired goals or handling to be achieved
7. the different methods used to handle and control dogs and what to consider when selecting the most appropriate method of handling for a particular dog or desired outcome e.g. current scientific evidence, previous experience, humane practices, legislation
8. how to develop a structured handling plan to achieve objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted (SMART)
9. what to consider when assessing the suitability of the handling technique for the dog including its needs, abilities, capabilities, interests, aggression, traits, emotional and physical needs
10. why it is important to monitor a dog's response to handling and observe any signs of negative responses, when this should be reported, why and the potential consequences of not reporting
11. the importance of recognising and assessing canine behaviour and condition before and during handling activities and of taking appropriate action as necessary
12. suitable methods of safely handling and controlling dogs, including when one or more are displaying signs of aggression, with due regard to your responsibility under relevant legislation and codes of practice, the welfare of the dog, your own safety and that of other people and other dogs
13. the **functional anatomy and physiology** of a dog and how to assess the potential short- and long-term effects of handling on the health and welfare of the dog, both physiological and psychological

14. the correct use and potential misuse of available control/handling equipment and the physical and psychological effects of these on the dog and its health and welfare
15. the legal, welfare and ethical considerations of the form of handling used, the implications of not handling in an appropriate manner, and the consequences of allowing a dog to be out of control
16. your responsibilities under relevant health and safety legislation, codes of practice and any other policies or procedures relevant to the handling technique or location and the importance of carrying out risk assessments prior to and during the handling process
17. how to implement health and safety measures to ensure safe handling practices are in place and followed during handling, including measures required to prevent injury to other persons not involved in the handling of the dog
18. suitable methods of safely handling dogs, including when one or more are displaying signs of aggression
19. how to ensure that the welfare of the dog is maintained throughout and that your behaviour does not cause adverse reactions, fear or distress
20. the importance of continually monitoring and evaluating the effect of the handling practices on the dog, and reviewing and revising the handling technique
21. the factors that may affect the success of handling and how methods can be modified to improve the outcomes
22. how to recognise the limits of effective handling and control techniques and when they are appropriate to use
23. the importance of maintaining communication with others involved in the handling process
24. the importance of seeking advice and guidance from more experienced professionals, where to obtain professional advice and guidance and the role of professional bodies and associations
25. the importance and relevance of maintaining accurate records, the safe handling and storage of data, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of current data protection legislation
26. the importance of appropriate insurance cover including professional indemnity
27. your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence

Scope/range

Information about the dog to be considered when assessing suitability for the proposed training:

- life history
- physical condition and capabilities
- age and development stage
- health and medical history
- diet
- reproductive status
- hormonal stage
- current level of training
- temperament/characteristics/traits
- breed and parentage
- motivational drivers and effects
- environment – living, working, training or learning
- legislation

Behaviours

- reflect on own performance with regards to handling practices
- reflect on past experiences with handling
- remain calm and confident, respond logically and decisively in difficult situations
- respond to challenges rationally, with consideration to the emotions of the dog
- manage ambiguity and deal with uncertainty and frustration when handling the dog
- manage conflicting pressure and tension during handling of the dog
- resist pressure to make quick decisions where full consideration is needed
- remain focused and in control of all situations during handling.

Glossary

Dogs - All domesticated dogs including working dogs

Sources of information could include:

- the client
- third party (e.g. veterinary surgeon)
- observation
- records

SMART objectives:

- Specific - Is the objective well defined and clear? Does it state exactly what is to be achieved?
- Measurable - How will I know when the objective has been achieved? What will success look like?
- Achievable - Is the objective attainable considering the capability of the dog?
- Realistic - Can the outcome be achieved with the resources, knowledge and time available?
- Targeted - Does the objective target a specific area for improvement?

Refer – includes formal or informal referral to a professional body, individual or organisation

Functional anatomy and physiology to include:

- skeletal
- vertebral
- nervous and endocrine systems

Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966)

All forms of complementary therapy that involve acts or the practise of veterinary surgery must be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, subject to any exemption in the Act. At the same time, it is incumbent on veterinary surgeons

offering any complementary therapy to ensure that they are adequately trained in its application.

Behavioural treatment of animals is not restricted under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) unless it constitutes the practice of veterinary surgery.

There is no specific exemption order for animal behaviourism and therefore there is no formal jurisdiction to insist upon the involvement of a veterinary surgeon before animal behaviour work is carried out. In many cases, however, animal behaviourists will work on referrals from veterinary surgeons to ensure they are not accused of making a diagnosis of disease or injury (which is restricted to veterinary surgeons).

Links to other NOS

LANCTB1 - Observe, assess and respond to the behaviour of dogs

LANCTB3 - Plan and implement training programmes for dogs

LANCTB4 - Plan and implement training programmes for dogs and handlers

LANCTB5 - Plan and implement programmes to address undesirable behaviour in dogs

Developed by Lantra

Version Number 1

Date Approved October 2014

Indicative Review Date October 2019

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating Organisation Lantra

Original URN LANCTB2

Relevant Occupations Dog Grooming; Dog Training and Behaviour; Veterinary paraprofessional; Animal Therapies; Animal Care Services; Animal Care Manager; Animal Care; Microchipping Animals

Suite Veterinary paraprofessional activities; Animal Care and Welfare

Keywords dog; canine; handle; control
