

## Overview

This standard is about providing first aid to animals that require assistance. It includes the health and safety of yourself and others, assessment of animals, and the safe handling, treatment and transportation of animals where required.

First aid is the immediate assistance given at the time of injury or illness to prevent deterioration of the condition, suffering and pain until veterinary assistance can be sought. In the UK, in accordance the Veterinary Surgeons Act, anyone can administer emergency first aid to an animal to save life or relieve pain or suffering.

Users of the standard will need to check that their practice reflects up-to-date information and policies, and that they work within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is suitable for anyone who needs to provide first aid to animals.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. work professionally and ethically and within the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. comply with the relevant animal health and welfare legislation, veterinary and medicines legislation and associated codes of practice
3. carry out your work in accordance with the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
4. maintain the contents of a first aid kit that is suitable for the animals you are working with, including personal protective equipment (PPE)
5. select and wear suitable clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE)
6. assess your own limitations to provide first aid to an animal
7. apply the aims and principles of first aid to the situation and the animal you are faced with
8. recognise a potential emergency situation
9. assess the type of emergency situation, identifying whether it is potentially life threatening, requires immediate attention or is minor
10. assess the risks before approaching an animal that requires first aid
11. approach, handle and restrain the animal in a way that minimises stress and maintains health and safety
12. undertake a primary assessment of the animal that requires first aid
13. recognise the visual signs of common conditions and situations and provide the relevant first aid for the animal
14. monitor animals following the provision of first aid, as required by the animal
15. transport the animal to the veterinary practice, if required maintaining health and safety of the animal, yourself and those involved in or affected by your work
16. recognise the signs of stress, fear, aggression and pain in animals
17. confirm that continuity of care of the animal is maintained by handing the animal over to a relevant person and giving details of the first aid assistance provided and the response of the animal
18. complete records as required by the relevant legislation and organisational policy

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

1. your professional and the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare and animal-related legislation and associated codes of practice
3. your responsibilities under the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessments, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
4. how to set up, use and maintain a first aid kit that is suitable for the animals you are working with
5. how to assess your own abilities and limitations to provide first aid to animals
6. what is meant by the term “first aid”, the main aims and objectives of first aid for animals and the limitations of its provision
7. the classifications of the three main types of emergency: life-threatening, immediate attention required, or minor
8. how to recognise an emergency situation and the importance of seeking veterinary attention and of knowing where to find the location and contact details of veterinary practices
9. how to assess the dangers of providing first aid to an animal
10. how to approach, handle and restrain an injured animal in a way that reduces stress and maintains health and safety
11. how to undertake a primary assessment of the animal that requires first aid
12. the visual signs for a range of common situations or conditions in the animal species you are working with and the first aid that is suitable for these
13. how to monitor the animal following the administration of first aid, as required by the animal
14. how to check that the animal’s welfare is maintained throughout and that your actions do not cause an adverse reaction
15. how to move and transport animals safely and securely
16. the actions to take when signs of stress, fear, aggression and pain in the animal you are working with are detected
17. the early indications of a change in behaviour that is associated with ill health, and the indicators of injury or pain, discomfort, disease or distress
18. the importance of maintaining hygiene and bio-security and the methods for

achieving this

19. how to confirm continuity of care for the animal through the handing over of care to a relevant person and the information that should be provided to them

20. the records that need to be kept in relation to providing first aid to animals and the importance of completing these in accordance with the relevant legislation and organisational policy

21. the zoonotic risk when working with animals

22. your legal and professional liability when providing first aid to animals

23. the requirements of the Veterinary Surgeons Act in relation to the provision of first aid to animals

## Scope/range

Carry out the following primary assessment of the animal requiring first aid:

1. behaviour
2. checking and clearing and maintaining the animal's airway
3. checking breathing
4. checking circulation
5. controlling a haemorrhage
6. the need for veterinary attention or advice

Monitoring the following in animals after receiving first aid:

1. the need for veterinary attention or advice
2. behaviour
3. temperature
4. pulse
5. respiration
6. colour of mucous membranes
7. posture
8. ability to stand and movement
9. production of urine and faeces
10. hydration
11. thirst and appetite
12. level of consciousness
13. abnormal swelling or discolouration
14. bleeding

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## Glossary

### **Current animal welfare legislation:**

- England and Wales, Animal Welfare Act
- Scotland, Animal Health and Welfare Act
- Northern Ireland, Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland)
- Veterinary Surgeons Act

### **Relevant person:**

- veterinary surgeon
- owner/keeper
- colleague

### **Visual signs of common conditions and situations:**

- asphyxia/suffocation
- bites
- burns
- collapse
- convulsions/fitting
- drowning
- dystocia
- electrocution
- eye injuries
- fractures
- gastric dilation volvulus or bloat
- haemorrhage
- hyperthermia/heat-stroke
- hypothermia

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- myiasis/fly-strike
- poisoning
- shock
- stings
- unconsciousness
- wounds

**Factors affecting the transportation of animals include:**

- method
- restraint
- separation, if transporting multiple animals
- hygiene and biosecurity
- ventilation and heat control
- monitoring of stress

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**Suite** Animal Care and Welfare, Veterinary paraprofessional activities

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