

Overview

This standard is about implementing training programmes for animals. This could be either basic training or training to meet specific objectives and is designed to be applicable to all animals that require such forms of training.

Basic training refers to training in handling and obedience and would include the routine training of animals. Training to meet specific objectives would include show and demonstration work.

You will be following a training programme that has already been developed and will be expected to review and record progress against the objectives set out in the programme.

All activities should be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Users of the standard will need to be suitably trained and confirm that their practice applies scientific information, animal welfare standards and policies, and that they work within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is suitable for those with responsibility for the implementation of training programmes for 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. 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
3. carry out your work in accordance with the relevant animal health and welfare and animal-related legislation, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
4. handle and interact with the animal in a manner that does not compromise animal welfare, avoids behaviour giving rise to welfare concern and allows training to be carried out safely
5. assess the animal's suitability for the planned training activities and take action where necessary
6. assess the capabilities of the handler to maintain the training
7. prepare the animal and resources necessary for the planned training activities
8. carry out training activities, using methods and resources in accordance with the training programme
9. monitor the emotional condition and physical behaviour of the animal both before and during the training
10. recognise the signs of stress, fear, aggression, pain, conflict and avoidance in the animal and respond accordingly
11. review, record and report the animal's progress towards the training objectives regularly, in accordance with the training programme
12. implement any agreed changes to the training programme to modify training activities, methods or resources
13. recognise if the training programme or a particular task is likely to be detrimental to the animal's health and welfare
14. maintain communication with colleagues and all those involved in, or affected by, your work
15. seek professional advice when necessary and refer cases on where required
16. plan, record, evaluate and reflect upon your 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 professional responsibilities as an animal trainer and the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. your responsibilities under the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
3. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare, and animal-related legislation, associated codes of practice, organisational policies and the legal limitations of the Veterinary Surgeons Act
4. how to assess the suitability of the animal for the planned training activity prior to its implementation
5. how to assess the suitability of environment and resources for the planned training activities prior to its implementation
6. how to assess the capabilities of the handler to maintain the training
7. the objectives of the training programme and how to monitor progress
8. the psychological and physiological effects that training activities may have on the animal
9. the range of training methods and how to evaluate these based on scientific information, animal welfare standards and policies
10. how to select the most appropriate training methods for the training programme and the animal
11. how to prepare animals for training and how this will differ according to the animal, the environment and the training activities to be undertaken
12. how to prepare and use the resources necessary for the training activities
13. the importance of recognising and assessing animal behaviour and condition before and during training activities and taking appropriate action as necessary
14. how to assess an animal's confidence levels and how this is related to performance
15. the correct ways of handling the animal concerned for the safety of the animal, yourself and all those involved in, or affected by, your work
16. the use of positive and negative reinforcement and the effects of these approaches on animal behaviour
17. the factors that can influence an animal's achievement of the training objectives and the actions to take if the training activities, methods or resources are ineffective

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18. how to recognise any potentially detrimental effects of the training programme on the animal's health and welfare
19. how to recognise the limits of effective training to achieve success
20. why it is important to regularly review and record progress and to whom this should be reported
21. why any modifications to the training programme must be made by the person who has designed the programme and not implemented without confirmation
22. the importance of maintaining communication with those involved in, or affected by, your work and the best way to do this
23. the records that need to be kept in relation to animal training programmes and the importance of completing these in accordance with the relevant legislation and organisational policy
24. your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence
25. where to obtain professional advice and guidance and the role of professional bodies and associations
26. the importance of appropriate insurance cover, including professional indemnity

Scope/range

Suitability of the animal for training could include consideration of:

1. species
2. breed
3. age
4. conformation
5. physical fitness
6. weight/condition score
7. training history
8. medical history

Resources:

1. personnel
2. training aids/equipment
3. handling aids/equipment
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Glossary

Animal welfare legislation could be the:

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

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Suite Animal Care and Welfare, Livestock Production, Veterinary paraprofessional activities

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