

Overview

This standard is about 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 their handling practices reflect current information, that the relevant handling techniques used are in accordance with the scope and remit of their role as well as within the 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 providing a duty of care under the 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. carry out your work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
2. comply with the relevant animal health and welfare and animal related legislation, local policies and associated codes of practice relating to dogs, at all times
3. continually assess and make provision for the health and welfare needs of the dog
4. maintain hygiene and bio-security in accordance with workplace instructions, organisational policies and the relevant legislation
5. agree and confirm the purpose for which the dog is being handled and the desired outcome of the handling with all those involved in the activity
6. assess the suitability of the dog to be handled, based on information from a range of relevant sources
7. 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
8. select the required handling and control methods and resources, for the particular dog and the desired handling outcome
9. approach the dog in a way that takes into account the breed and an assessment of the dog's current and known behaviour patterns
10. handle and control the dog in a way that minimise distress or injury
11. fit and use equipment safely, in accordance with 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
12. check that the resources are used safely and safeguards the health and welfare of the dog
13. use handling and control methods safely in accordance with the relevant health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies relevant to the handling technique or location
14. handle the dog in a way that minimises the risk to the health and safety of the dog, yourself, other animals or those involved in or affected by your work

15. monitor the dog's behaviour and response to handling, recognising any significant changes and taking appropriate action e.g. adjusting the handling method
16. 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
17. recognise when handling the dog may not be appropriate and identify alternative methods of achieving the desired outcome, e.g. with a dog that is fearful of other dogs, or a dog that is reactive to certain situations
18. recognise your own limitations and when to seek assistance, and refer the animal to an appropriate professional when necessary
19. maintain communication with colleagues and all those involved in, or affected by, your work
20. confirm that records are maintained and stored as required by the relevant legislation and organisational policy
21. work professionally and ethically and within the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your responsibilities under the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
2. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare legislation, and dog-specific legislation, local policies and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act with regard to the diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
3. how the welfare needs of the dogs you engage with may be assessed and addressed prior to and during handling
4. the importance of maintaining hygiene and bio-security and the methods for achieving this
5. the purpose for which the dog is being handled and the desired outcome of the handling
6. how to obtain and interpret information about the dog and any factors that may affect the handling technique, including temperament and usual behaviour patterns
7. the breed-specific behaviours and traits and their potential effect on handling, and the behaviours that could be presented as a result of such handling
8. the principles and techniques used in the handling of dogs, and the skills relevant to the desired goals or handling to be achieved
9. the different methods used to handle and control dogs and what to consider when selecting the most suitable method of handling for a particular dog or desired outcome e.g. current scientific evidence, previous experience, humane practices, legislation, the needs, abilities, capabilities, interests, aggression, traits, emotional and physical needs of the dog
10. how to develop a structured handling plan to achieve the required objectives
11. why it is important to monitor a dog's response to handling and observe any signs of negative responses, when these should be reported, why, and the potential consequences of not reporting
12. the importance of recognising and assessing canine behaviour and condition before and during handling activities and reviewing and revising the handling technique where necessary
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

physiologically and psychologically

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 the 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 the measures required to prevent injury to other persons not involved in the handling of the dog

18. the 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 factors that may affect the success of handling and how methods can be modified to improve the outcomes

21. how to recognise the limits of effective handling and control techniques and when they are appropriate to use

22. the importance of maintaining communication with those involved in, or affected by, your work and the best way to do this

23. 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

24. the records that need to be kept in relation to handling and controlling dogs and the safe handling and storage of data, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of current data protection legislation

25. the importance of appropriate insurance cover, including professional indemnity

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

Handle and control dogs

- nervous and endocrine systems

Professionals

- senior handler
- canine behaviourist
- veterinary surgeon

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

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