

Overview

This standard is about providing and evaluating the physical therapy of animals.

The current Veterinary Surgeons Act limits the activities that may be carried out by those who are not qualified veterinary surgeons. All activities should be carried out within the constraints of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act and the current Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order.

Users of the standard will need to be trained and confirm that their practice uses scientifically robust data, humane standards and policies. They must work within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is suitable for those providing physical therapy services to animals owned by others, on referral from a veterinary surgeon.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. work in accordance with the current Veterinary Surgeons Act, the current Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order and the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. work professionally and ethically and within the requirements of the relevant professional organisation
3. assess practices in a scientifically robust manner to determine their suitability, efficacy and welfare implications
4. comply with the relevant animal health and welfare and other animal-related legislation and associated codes of practice
5. assess how the needs of animals may be met while under your duty of care
6. assess the potential risks to health and safety when providing physical therapy to animals
7. confirm that hygiene and biosecurity are maintained
8. assess the animal's suitability for the physical therapy treatment plan, taking in account its health and behaviour, both in advance and on the day of treatment
9. introduce the animal to the therapeutic environment, equipment and treatment method
10. implement a method of handling and control that is suitable for the animal concerned and its treatment requirements, in order to minimise the risks to the animal, yourself and those involved in or affected by your work
11. adapt the handling and control of the animal in response to its reactions and behaviour
12. complete the required pre-treatment preparation before the physical therapy, this may include showering, removing animal clothing or rugs and clipping
13. provide physical therapy treatment to meet the needs of the animal, its condition and requirements
14. monitor and record the animal's response and progress throughout the physical treatment plan

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15. monitor the animal for signs of pain, distress or alarm and respond accordingly
16. recognise where the animal's progress may be influenced by activity in the immediate environment
17. recognise when behaviour of the animal may indicate that you should not continue with the activity
18. recognise situations that require referral back to the referring veterinary surgeon
19. complete post-treatment procedures and check that the animal is in a suitable condition to return to its owner or keeper
20. evaluate and review the suitability of the physical treatment plan as required
21. check that the animal's response and progress to the treatment plan is communicated to the owner or keeper and to the referring veterinary surgeon
22. offer advice to the owner or keeper on the care of animals following treatment and describe any actions that should be carried out
23. plan, record and evaluate your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
24. confirm that records are maintained and stored as required by the relevant legislation and organisational policy

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the requirements of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act and the current Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order in relation to your role and the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development to maintain professional competence
3. your responsibilities under the relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, associated codes of practice and organisational policies
4. your responsibilities under the relevant animal health and welfare and animal-related legislation and associated codes of practice
5. the importance of maintaining hygiene and biosecurity and how this can be achieved
6. how the needs of animals under your duty of care may be assessed and addressed
7. the anatomy and physiology of the animal species you are working with
8. the physiological effects of the physical therapy on the animal
9. the possible effects of the physical therapy on the animal's behaviour
10. the importance of introducing the animal to the treatment environment, equipment and method, and the techniques that can be used to do this
11. the precautions to be taken to prevent injury, stress or the worsening of existing conditions to the animal
12. the importance of recognising behaviour that indicates it would not be appropriate to continue with the activity
13. the factors that may cause distress, pain or alarm in animals and how to recognise and assess the signs, and the potential response of the animal
14. how to recognise emergency situations and the action to be taken

to deal with them

15. the principles of animal first aid and the protocols that apply to the provision of first aid and emergency treatment to animals in your therapy centre
16. how to identify faults or damage to the facilities, supplies, equipment or resources used for various animal therapy treatments, and the required action to be taken
17. how to recognise your own abilities and limitations with regard to the handling and control of animals and how these might be improved
18. how your actions, the actions of other animals or the actions of all those involved in or affected by your work may affect the behaviour, welfare and progress of the animal during physical therapy
19. how to implement and evaluate a treatment plan for an animal, taking into account specific medical or post-surgical conditions
20. why it is important to keep the owner or keeper informed of the actions being taken
21. how to advise the owner or keeper about the required actions to take post treatment and the importance of observing the animal's behaviour
22. the records that need to be kept in relation to providing and evaluating the physical therapy of animals and the importance of completing these in accordance with the relevant legislation and organisational policy
23. your legal and professional liability when working as an animal health and welfare para-professional and the importance of suitable insurance cover

Scope/range

Advice to the owner could include :

1. treatment or therapy equipment and methods available
2. overview of range of programmes and equipment, suitability, selection criteria and associated benefits
3. preparations prior to treatment/therapy
4. care after the treatment/therapy
5. client obligations in relation to animal welfare legislation.

Glossary

Current legislation relating to animals:

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

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