

# Guidance for handling dogs

AND THE USE OF EQUIPMENT TO  
ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY  
OF HANDLERS, OTHERS AND THE  
WELFARE OF DOGS



**All Wales  
Dog Warden  
Technical  
Panel**



# Guidance for handling dogs

## AND THE USE OF EQUIPMENT TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HANDLERS, OTHERS AND THE WELFARE OF DOGS

<b>AIM:</b>	To provide national advice and guidance for all those who handle and use equipment in the course of their work when dealing with dogs to ensure public and handler safety as well as dog welfare.
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE:</b>	Police dog handlers (especially dog legislation officers), local authority wardens and animal welfare officers, RSPCA inspectors/officers, as well as other relevant staff who handle dogs.
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To improve the understanding and awareness of the use and impact of different techniques and equipment when dealing with dogs and bringing them under control as well as improve the safety for handlers and the welfare of the dogs concerned.

This document is split into three sections, each providing advice and issues to consider when dealing with dogs, the equipment to use, health and safety of the handler and the welfare of the dog.

**Part A** sets out the main legal requirements and issues to consider when dealing with dogs.

**Part B** sets out guidance on different types of equipment.

**Part C** provides further useful information.

This guidance document has the support and endorsement of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the All Wales Dog Warden Technical Panel, the National Dog Warden Association, and the RSPCA. It has been developed by experienced practitioners in the police, local authorities and the RSPCA and particular thanks goes to the following individuals:

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Mark Berry (Stockton Borough Council)  
Richard Bradley (Leicestershire police)  
Sarah Brown (Cardiff City Council)  
Phil Cannings (West Midlands police)  
Paul Cox (Greater Manchester police)  
Mick Flower (RSPCA)  
Steve Foster (Northumbria police)  
Sam Gaines (RSPCA)  
Dave Griffiths (East Hampshire District Council)  
Emma Grosvenor (Norfolk police)  
Dexter Hockley (Luton Borough Council)  
Rich Johnson (West Mercia police)  
Jenna Kiddie (RSPCA)

Jason Lennox (Cheshire police)  
Steve Mann (Bedfordshire police)  
Ian McParland (retired police sgt)  
Mark Milligan (Kent police)  
Dermot Murphy (RSPCA)  
Kevin O'Kane (RSPCA)  
Simon Parker (RSPCA)  
David Ryan (Clinical Animal Behaviourist)  
Simon Small (RSPCA)  
Charlie Sowerby (Cumbria police)  
Scott Tatton (Staffordshire police)  
Alison Waive (Swindon Borough Council)  
Paul Whitaker (Thames Valley police)  
James Yeates (RSPCA).

# PART A: ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN DEALING WITH DOGS

## 1 Legal requirements

The World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE) is an intergovernmental body that is recognised as a reference organisation by the World Trade Organisation. The OIE sets out clear guidance on stray dog control and requires animal health and welfare to be core parts of that work. While this may only focus on stray dogs the principles set out are relevant here with regards to handling of all dogs.

There are a wide variety of legal requirements that handlers and their organisations should be aware of from health and safety through to animal welfare. It is essential that all staff dealing with dogs are aware of the relevant legislation in their country and keep up to date with any changes.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the key pieces of legislation that are relevant for those working in England and Wales:

### Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- This sets out the responsibilities of employers and employees with regard to safety in the workplace.
- It states that the employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees (section 2). Thus in general terms he or she must:
  - a) Provide and maintain a safe workplace, plant and equipment;
  - b) Provide safe systems of work;
  - c) Provide the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to that employees endanger neither themselves nor their colleagues
  - d) Provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment.
- Additionally, the employer also has a responsibility for the health and safety of people other than employees whilst they are on the employer's premises on legitimate business (section 7).
- An employee has the following responsibilities under the Act:
  - a) To take reasonable care while at work for his or her own health and safety and for the that of persons who may be affected by her or her acts or omissions at work;
  - b) To cooperate with their employer on safety matters.

### Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992/Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

- These provide further information about assessments individual organisations should make when issuing equipment for use at work and also the need to provide training in the use of such equipment.

### Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- These Regulations provide further more detailed information about the responsibilities of employers to ensure the health and safety of employees whilst at work.

### Environmental Protection Act 1990

- Section 149 makes it a statutory requirement for local authorities to appoint an officer with responsibility for collecting and seizing stray dogs.

### Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

- Where a dog is temporarily under the control of a police dog handler, dog warden, animal welfare officer or RSPCA inspector and then injures someone or puts someone in fear of being injured (in a public place or place to which it is not allowed to be) an offence may have been committed (section 3).

- Therefore where dog/s are contained in a room or area, for example during the execution of a warrant, it is important to ensure that dog/s is monitored and an individual remains responsible for ensuring its safety and security and that it is not allowed to accidentally escape or run away.

### Animal Welfare Act 2006

- Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (AWA) those responsible for animals have a duty to ensure the welfare needs of the animals are met "to the extent required by good practice" by such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances and it is an offence to fail to do so (section 9).
- Section 9 also sets out five welfare needs: the need for a suitable environment; the need for a suitable diet; the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; the need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. (Particular attention should be paid to the last need as this is very relevant to operators when dealing with dogs).
- This can be on a permanent or temporary basis (section 3) so this applies to all those handling and dealing with dogs.

### Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 or Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007

- Both these pieces of legislation set out the rules concerning the transport of animals and there is a general duty of care to protect them from injury or unnecessary suffering as well as ensure they are transported in suitable containers.
- It should be noted that if the transportation is carried out in connection with an 'economic activity', as defined by the Regulations, then there are further legal requirements to comply with.

### Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010

- Since 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 the use of collars designed to administer an electric shock to dogs (and cats) has been banned in Wales. NB. It is not illegal to possess or sell them.
- This includes anti-bark collars, remote recall systems, invisible fencing systems (but not electric fences used for livestock) and electric pull leads.

In addition to these main pieces of legislation there are statutory Codes of Practice as well as non-statutory guidance that are relevant and again operators and their organisations should ensure all relevant staff have a good understanding of them. For example:

- The Welsh Government and Defra have produced ***statutory Codes of Practice for the welfare of dogs*** that provide practical guidance in respect of the AWA. Failure to comply with a relevant provision of either Code may be relied upon as tending to establish or negate liability for an offence under the Act.
- **The Highway Code** requires that animals should be "*suitably restrained*" when transported (Rule 57).
- **RSPCA and CIEH Guidance on ensuring the welfare of seized dogs** which presents information to follow to ensure compliance with animal welfare legislation especially when dogs are in a kennel environment.

See part C of this document for further information on the statutory requirements mentioned above.

## 2 Assessing the situation and equipment use

You should always opt for the least invasive, quiet and calm approach first (where it is appropriate and safe to do so). Indeed the OIE guidance mentioned above states that "*capture should be achieved with the minimum force required and equipment should be used that supports humane handling*" (Article 7.7.6, paragraph 4). While this is not always possible, for example execution of a warrant where a rapid entry is necessary either for the safety of officers or for the preservation of evidence, etc this should always be the starting point.

This guidance sets out different types of equipment – from tasty dog treats through to firearms and provides a conflict resolution model for dealing with dogs in a variety of circumstances and provides a framework for decisions by those dealing with dogs. It is in everyone’s interest to use the most appropriate and humane method as this can better protect the public, the handler and dog.

It should also be noted that not all of the equipment listed below will be suitable for use on all dogs or in all situations and it is important that the individual animal (and circumstances) is assessed (as part of an ongoing risk assessment) before any piece of equipment is used. Whatever equipment is used the objective should be to catch/control the dog without harm to the handler, any members of the public or the dog and minimising any distress caused to the animal itself.

Below is a useful diagram taken from the Association of Chief Police Officers National Decision Model which sets out many of the key considerations.

Figure 1: ACPO National Decision Model



No handler should use any equipment they are not trained or competent to use as this can increase the risk to themselves, the public and also the dog.

Some handlers recommend that there should be a minimum of two people attending any incident to provide back-up/assistance if needed. If a lone worker policy and procedure is the practice then it is important that procedures are in place for others to assist if necessary.

### 3 Keeping safe around dogs and awareness of canine 'signals'

Understanding the signals given by, and the 'body language' of, a dog is the most important 'tool' and responding to it appropriately is key and can ensure protection for both the public, the handler and the dog itself. Therefore those who are familiar with and have a good understanding of dog behaviour and 'body language' are the most appropriate to deal with such situations.

While we all have pressures at work to deal with jobs it is important that time is taken when dealing with dogs and this could mean the difference between being bitten or not. It is important senior management and those managing incidents are made aware of this and understand it so that the most appropriate response can be taken.

Below are some simple 'dos and don'ts' to consider when dealing with dogs.

- **DO take your time (where you can) - there is normally no need to rush and you should be safer.**
- **DO watch the dog's body language (see below).**
- **DO talk to the dog – it doesn't matter what you say it's the way you say it!**
- **DO talk in a light but calm voice much as you would use with a child.**
- **DO try to use treats (if it will take them).**
- **DO remember the dog may be scared and worried.**
- **DO remember the dog may have been mistreated.**
- **DO try to work from its side - keeping your body side on to the dog.**
- **DON'T make sudden or jerky movements (unless it's necessary).**
- **DON'T grab the dog – especially by the scruff or the collar.**
- **DON'T lean over the dog.**
- **DON'T pull or push the dog, encourage it to come to you.**
- **DON'T make direct eye contact with the dog.**
- **DON'T offer your hand for the dog to sniff – allow the dog to approach you with your hands by your sides.**
- **DON'T approach the dog face on – angle your body away from dog.**
- **DON'T assume a wagging tail means that the dog is happy and/or friendly.**

Dogs use body language to indicate that they are happy to be approached or that they want to increase distance between them and you. Problems can arise when a dog wants to increase the distance and you need to capture or restrain the animal and in some dogs, this can result in aggression.

When dogs use aggression it is almost invariably because they think that they are under some form of threat. For example, the threat could be to their personal safety, to take away something (or someone) they value highly, or they may feel their territory is threatened. A dog that feels threatened has a number of behaviours it can use to diffuse the situation and aggression is just one behaviour it can use to make the threat go away.

In general, you can tell whether a dog is feeling threatened and therefore likely to attack by paying close attention to his/her body language. In circumstances where a dog feels threatened it will normally give a

warning sign. Dogs will often try to remove themselves from the situation, or otherwise avoid a threat in some way but this is not always possible. If a dog cannot avoid you they may well use behaviours to tell you 'it' is not a threat and therefore 'you' should stop being threatening and move away. These behaviours, known as appeasement behaviours, include turning their head away or trying to walk away, licking their lips, yawning, lowered body posture and flattened or back-turned ears. The dog may also roll over onto its back to expose its belly. **If these behaviours are ignored and the dog still feels threatened it may feel it has to resort to aggression in order to remove the threat.**

**If you see these behaviours in a dog you are dealing with, and it is practical to do so, it is best to stop, back off a little and think about what adjustments can be made to the situation to calm the dog down. For example, allow the dog time to adjust to the situation and try again to see if it will come to you, or if there are a lot of people in the area with the dog consider asking some of them to leave, if the dog responds better to women rather than men, perhaps ask the men to leave the area, etc.**

Alternatively, some dogs may have learnt in the past that appeasement behaviours do not work to make the threat go away and so do not waste time showing these behaviours again in the future. If the dog has no obvious escape route or is confident that aggression works successfully to remove the threat it might show aggressive postures in immediate response to what it feels is threatening.

A slight stiffening of posture may be the first or only clue that a dog is about to attack but there are a number of other signs to watch out for. **Most dogs will give plenty of warning that they may be going to bite giving you time to retreat.** A stiffened posture might be accompanied by more obvious signals such as raising the hair on their neck and back, growling, snarling, showing their teeth and barking. Importantly, a wagging tail does not mean that the dog is friendly; a wagging tail can mean a lot of things including that it is about to bite. If you see this behaviour in a dog you need to carefully consider your response, for example are you appropriately equipped and competent to deal with a dog showing such aggression? Consider the options you have open to you and the different equipment listed below to ensure you, any members of the public and the dog remain safe as possible.

Where intelligence suggests aggressive dogs are present where a warrant is due to be executed full personal protective equipment should be considered for rapid entries. Equally where there is no or little intelligence the situation and dog's behaviour should be continually assessed and managed to ensure protection for handlers and the dog.

You should always remain alert to the dog as signals may be very short in duration, although some exhibit them for longer periods of time. Above all remain calm, whenever possible movements should be slow and accompanied by non-threatening, calm voice tones.

#### **4 Importance of clear, up-to-date, and responsible policies and procedures for dealing with dogs**

Policies and procedures provide the 'rules of engagement' for all those dealing with dogs and it is essential they are clear and understood. Where they do not exist or are unclear, approaches can be confusing to handlers and also members of the public and this can lead to reputational problems for different organisations.

These are often best drafted by, or at least in consultation with, those handlers who deal with dogs on a daily basis as they often have better understanding of what should be taken into account. These policies and procedures should also be regularly reviewed and updated and be in line with current legislation, science and good practice.

To support this all handlers should have a working knowledge of them as well as the use of different equipment to ensure it is used appropriately and effectively to protect not only them but also the dogs they will have to deal with. Their training should be regularly refreshed to ensure the most up-to-date humane methods and practices are followed.

Furthermore, different bodies, such as local authorities, the police and the RSPCA should be aware of and understand each other's roles and responsibilities when dealing with dogs.



## PART B: ADVICE CONCERNING DIFFERENT TYPES OF EQUIPMENT

As stated above it is important that no handler should use any equipment unless they are competent in its use either through required training or experience as this can increase the risk to themselves, the public and also the dog.

Deciding which level to start at and what piece of equipment a handler uses will depend on the individual handler and circumstances and this is why a dynamic risk assessment is an important aspect of any response.

Don't forget your own body language and tone of your voice are useful 'tools' in their own right. At all times try and remain calm and use non-threatening and calm tones when you speak to the dog.

### 1 Owner of/person responsible for dog

If it is appropriate, and the owner or person who has taken responsibility for the dog is suitable and amenable, then the least stressful method of dealing with the dog, and especially putting it in a vehicle, may be for them to walk the dog to the vehicle and lift it in. Clearly this will not always be appropriate but could be a first point to consider to minimise the risk to the handler's safety and welfare of the dog. During this procedure, the handler should pay continuous and close attention to the dog's behaviour, intervening should the dog become distressed, scared, anxious, or aggressive.

### 2 Treats

The use of dog treats, such as dog biscuits, hot dogs or cheese cut into small pieces, etc, should never be over-looked when trying to deal with a dog. This can be a good, positive method of reward to encourage a dog to come with you or get into a cage. Therefore, it is always helpful to have a small bag of such treats with you at all times. Throw food between you and the dog if the dog is too scared to approach right up to you. Don't offer food with an outstretched hand.

### 3 Leashes

A slip leash is also an effective and simple method for capturing a dog and bringing it under control with limited contact with the handler. The majority of handlers use these in a wide range of circumstances. It can be especially effective when used in conjunction with treats. They can be used to create a large loop that can be dropped over the dog's head and then quickly closed up and the dog brought under control.

Do not forget for many dogs (not all) seeing a leash is a positive thing meaning they will be taken for a walk. So where there is no obvious risk to the handler or others (both human and animal) this, potentially with treats, should be the first method used to try and deal with a dog.

The type of slip leash to use is likely to be down to the individual handler, however it should always be kept in good condition to prevent risk of injury to the dog and should be kept clean and hygienic. Some handlers recommend a simple rope one with a rubber stop which can be kept clean easily and is relatively cheap to replace if needs be, others prefer a leather one which can hold its shape better for a loop and can be wiped down with disinfectant after use. For those dogs likely to chew through such a slip leash then a plastic one with a metal core may be more suitable (they are also easy to keep clean). Many handlers have the two types available so they can select the most appropriate one for the situation they are dealing with.

**NB. The following pieces of equipment should not be used unless the handler is competent in their use either through required training or experience and that proper risk assessments (including dynamic) are carried out to ensure safety for the handler, public and the animal.**

## 4 Graspers/catch poles/dog poles

These can be necessary to use in some circumstances, for example where the dog is aggressive, or is trapped, but it is important that the handler has been trained and is competent in their use and that the grasper/pole is in good working order (i.e. it is kept maintained and lubricated). Many handlers see the use of such equipment as a last resort or only for the most aggressive or hard to reach dogs as the majority of dogs can be handled and moved using treats and slip leashes. When using graspers/poles they should only be used for the shortest period of time as possible.

Furthermore, handlers should be aware that in some circumstances using graspers/poles can actually inflame the situation and increase the aggressiveness of the dog and thus risk to handler and public. Therefore the continual risk assessment of the situation and the behaviour of the dog is very important.

They come in a range of lengths but most handlers recommend the heavy duty graspers (with a large diameter of pole to decrease chance of bending, etc). Some of the other types may not be strong enough for the more powerful or heavy dogs, and some are too complex and the dog can actually slip the loop. It is also important that there are quick release systems for releasing the dog if it goes into a 'death roll' while on the grasper/pole.

It is very important that handlers do not over-tighten the noose once it is on the dog as this can be perceived as threatening; removing the ability for the dog to escape and can result in an extremely aggressive response from the animal, for example biting the pole, etc. This can lead to injuries to the animal's gums, tongue, mouth, etc which should be avoided. The tendency can be to tighten the noose even more and 'fight' the dog's reaction whereas sometimes, where it is appropriate and safe to do so, just letting the noose slacken a little can be sufficient to calm the dog and walk it quietly to the vehicle for transport.

On any occasion where the dog's tongue turns blue then the grasper has been secured too tightly and the noose must be loosened immediately.

With very strong or aggressive dogs some handlers recommend the use of two graspers (with two handlers) to control and move the animal. This gives confidence to the handlers and allows for each grasper to be slightly looser than one alone would need to be, this can avoid the 'death roll' and can decrease the time for which the dog has to be restrained. It is also easier to move through a building or street with one handler leading and one behind.

## 5 Nets

While some individuals have used them, many handlers note they can be hard to use and tend not to be very effective. Furthermore, a tangled dog can become more frightened and/or dangerous and can increase the risk of injury to the handler or dog. Therefore these are not recommended for use when trying to capture and handle dogs although can be useful to block off escape routes.

## 6 Cage traps

Some handlers have used these especially where a dog is running free and is returning to the same area for food. Such traps should only be used according to the manufacturer's instructions (including being monitored at regular intervals) and should be checked at least every 8 hours (more if there are extreme temperatures). Care must then be taken when removing the dog from the trap to ensure it does not escape or cause injury to the handler or itself. Use of a slip leash or grasper/pole may be suitable in such circumstances.

## 7 Propellants and sprays

Handlers have mixed views about the use of such equipment. Some are very much against their use as they are based upon the use of an aversive (unpleasant) stimulus to decrease an unwanted behaviour (i.e. aggression) and therefore may escalate that aggression. Others feel in some situations they can be useful and effective.

- **Fire extinguishers**  
Small CO<sub>2</sub> fire extinguishers can be useful where a short, sharp blast is needed to get a dog to back off if it is coming towards you or move it to a room or area – especially in a rapid entry situation. However the risk of permanent damage to the dog's eye must be considered and when used in confined spaces, such as a flat or room, they can create a 'fog' and you can lose sight of the dog.
- **'Bite back'**  
This product is on the market and has been used by some handlers and again can be useful to get a dog to back off or move it to a room or area – especially in a rapid entry situation. Some handlers feel it works well with some dogs and not others.
- **Sonic repellants**  
It is understood these are sometimes carried by cyclists or joggers and their effectiveness is a matter of debate.

It should be noted if and when any propellants and sprays are used they are simply devices to gain a few seconds to bring to bear the secondary means of restraint this may be as simple as driving the dog into an empty room where it can be secured until such time as it can be dealt with calmly. Handlers must have a 'plan b' for example a grasper/pole, etc in case they do not work.

## 8 Shields

The need to use a shield should be carefully evaluated and considered. However they may be useful to 'guide' a dog into or out of an area and could be less harmful or aversive than propellants or sprays, etc. They can also be used as 'barriers' in a variety of situations from low to more high risk.

- **Standard shields**  
These can be effective as a temporary barrier especially after forced entry to prevent a dog from escaping from a property or area. These can also be effective to block an attacking dog however can be difficult to use in a house with furniture or on un-even ground.
- **Electric shields**  
These place a high voltage electric current across the surface of the shield, and deliver a shock, on contact, equal to that of some tazers. Only those trained and competent in the use of electric shields should have access to them however they can be effective if used in extreme situations. However, if the dog gets too close or actually attacks the shield then they may fail and as with propellants and sprays a plan b may need to be applied. Great care must be taken that they are not used on humans.

## 9 Sedation

- **Sedative and anxiolytic drugs**  
Sedative and anxiolytic drugs (for example ACP acetyl promazine and benzodiazepine) can be effective in some circumstances and for some individuals; for example, ACP can be used to calm a dog before it is euthanased whilst benzodiazepines block short term memory formation which can be beneficial if a particular procedure is likely to result in fear or anxiety. They are most effective where a dog is already in a calm state but may be aggressive. However, both sedatives and anxiolytics can disinhibit dogs making them dangerous and unpredictable so a vet should always be present to thoroughly assess the dog before deciding whether their use is appropriate. In addition, handlers appear to have mixed views on their use. It is important for the dog's safety that it is in a contained area so that it cannot ingest the tablets and then run away.
- **Tranquilizer rifle/jab stick**  
Sedation through the use of a tranquilliser rifle or 'jab stick' is both humane and can be very effective. It can be used to simply immobilise a dog for transport or so that the animal can be humanely euthanased. The RSPCA maintains a team of eleven darting officers and where practically possible they are happy to assist colleagues in police forces and the wider public sector. Some vets also provide such a service.

Since the introduction of a very effective sedative called Zoletil, where available, even the most aggressive dog that has seriously injured someone can be fully sedated in 1-2 minutes. However it is a sedative and a veterinary surgeon must prescribe it and be present at the darting. Thus its use may be limited to some pre-planned operations, or where a highly stressed or aggressive animal needs to be moved (and euthanasia is not an option) but in general where a trained RSPCA inspector is on duty and can attend a call they will. Furthermore, it is important that the dog cannot escape once it has been darted but before the drug has taken effect as this poses a risk to the animal.

The rifle itself is very quiet and can be used as close as 1m to a distance of 40m. It is reported that the dogs are rarely bothered by the dart; barbless darts are used, often dropping out prior to full sedation. No reversal agent is required and the effects generally wear off whilst the animal sleeps. It can be sedated for a short while or for several hours. However, when using this it is important to have a good description and estimate of the weight of the dog to ensure the correct dosage is given.

Darting is safe for the animal and often the least stressful and safe for both the animal and the handler alike in more serious situations where non-lethal control is the preferred option. However there is a financial cost to the use of such equipment.

## 10 Tasers

The use of a taser on a dog is highly controversial and while some police forces have used them the feedback on their effectiveness is mixed, although some acknowledge in a life and death situation they could be used if available. However the use of such a device could lead to the dog unintentionally biting its own tongue or where the dog is already biting someone it may simply make the dog bite harder. Therefore careful consideration should be given to the effectiveness and benefits of its use.

Secondly, if the dog is on the end of a grasper/pole the operator of the grasper/pole may also be subjected to an electric shock as the graspers/poles are not always suitably insulated. This should be a very last resort and the Taser operator should consider using the 'drive stun' operation as due to the angle the barbs are deployed at, there is always a danger both will not make contact with the dog (especially those with thick or long coats) and thus not create the desired electrical circuit and the dog is simply made more aggressive in much the same ways as other aversive approaches (see above).

Overall many handlers feel there are other options available that are easier and more effective to use in such circumstances.

## 11 Firearms and captive bolt

- **Captive bolt**

If a captive bolt was used on a dog the handler would need to be extremely close to the dog and position the bolt very carefully on the dog's forehead in order for humane use of the device. As a captive bolt only stuns an animal, a 'pither' would then need to be inserted to pierce the brain tissue to ensure death. If a dog is being extremely aggressive or dangerous this may be very difficult (and potentially unsafe) for a handler to do. From an animal welfare perspective these should not be used on any dogs in such circumstances.

- **Free bullet**

In serious circumstances where the dog is a serious danger to public safety and there is no other option then this should be considered. Dispatch of a dog by a free bullet can be humane however a number of issues must be considered to determine if it is safe and appropriate to do.

- An armed response unit needs to be available and authorised to attend. Consideration should be given to minimising the risk to the handler, others and the animal itself, for example, minimising risk of a bullet bouncing off a wall or floor. Firearms teams tend to need to be close to the dog to do this humanely and effectively so the dog may need to be secured in an area or on the end of a grasper/pole (although the latter then poses safety issues for the handler holding the grasper/pole).

Most firearms teams who regularly deal with such dogs use a shotgun with a 'hatton' or frangible round that presents far less danger to those around the dog and is an effective and humane means for dealing with the animal in such a situation. All RSPCA inspectors are licensed to carry and use .32 or .38 calibre firearms and these are also considered humane for dogs as long as they are used no further than 10cm (4") from the animal's head.

## 12 Breaking sticks

Breaking sticks can be effective in the more serious incidents especially once a dog has bitten or attacked someone. However, to ensure that the circumstances in which they are used are appropriate, the handler must be trained in how to use them. The use of such devices puts the handler in close proximity of the dog's mouth and in some situations breaking the dog's grip may result in the dog re-attacking.

## 13 Transportation

When transporting animals, there is a general duty of care to protect them from injury or unnecessary suffering and to ensure they are transported in suitable containers and vehicles.

Whenever transported, dogs should be fit and healthy for the intended journey. As a general rule injured and/or diseased dogs should not be transported unless they are being taken to a veterinary surgeon. The transporting of distressed dogs should be avoided whenever possible and if a dog is caused distress during capture then allow it a short period to calm down and settle before transporting it to a kennels. Sometimes the enclosed, dark atmosphere of a kennel/cage in a vehicle can assist with this.

Journeys should be kept as short as possible however as a rule there should be a break every two hours into a journey to offer water to the dog and the chance to go to the toilet. Breaks should be at least 30 minutes long to allow the water to be absorbed. Furthermore the dog should be transported straight to the kennel it is being taken to rather than on to further jobs or work.

- **Lifting to the vehicle**

Where possible the dog should be encouraged to get into the cage/vehicle unaided as this provides the best protection for the handler as well as the dog. Where a dog does need to be lifted it should have front paws placed on the ledge of the van and then assisted in by placing a hand on its rump. Alternatively it can be lifted with an arm around its rear and front legs and placed in the van. However both procedures place the dog very close to the handler's face. If there are concerns that the dog may attempt to bite the handler it should be muzzled, preferably using a basket muzzle and if not, a length of bandage can be used to muzzle the dog for a short period of time. A dog should never be 'handbagged' or 'scruffed' (i.e. lifted by grabbing the skin on the dog's back and/or neck).

There are 'dog ramps' available on the market which may assist with moving dogs and are likely to be safer and less stressful for the animal. They can also be especially useful for moving large or heavy dogs into a vehicle for transport.

- **Cages**

During a journey dogs should be securely and comfortably confined. If a dog is transported alone in a container he or she should have enough space to stand, sit erect, lie in a natural position and turn around normally while standing up. If transported with other dogs, there should be sufficient space for all the dogs to carry out these behaviours without touching other dogs. It is recognised this is not always possible in urgent or emergency situations.

Cages in vehicles should have solid walls between them to prevent injury to other animals and should also be easily cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- **Vehicle**

Dogs must not be left unattended in a vehicle for any length of time. It is also important to ensure that any vehicle used for transportation has the necessary ventilation and temperature control so that the dog's needs are met during the journey whatever the outside temperature. The vehicle should be specific for the transportation of animals and should also be easily cleaned and disinfected. Where possible the vehicle should have air conditioning for the animal compartments.

## **14 Personal protective equipment**

When handling dogs the risks of being bitten can increase and suitable personal protective clothing may be needed. There is a wide range of equipment such as gloves/gauntlets, arm guards, attack suits, helmets, etc. Even cricket boxes can and are used by some handlers to ensure their groin area is provided with some protection from larger breeds whose heads are at that height.

Some handlers have reported that wearing a full attack suit can be more intimidating to a dog and increase the risk of attack to the handler or any other people in the vicinity. It can also make the wearer slower and more cumbersome. Ideally, equipment, such as arm guards, etc that can be worn under normal clothes which can be less intimidating to an animal and also allow freer movement for the handler should be provided and used. Where such clothing is used it should be regularly checked and maintained and provided in a size specific to the individual handler.

## **15 Injury or death of dog**

If a dog becomes injured as a result of the handling, for example on a grasper, then veterinary advice must be sought and acted upon immediately (including where necessary taking the dog to the nearest vet for attention/treatment).

If a dog dies unexpectedly as a result of handling a post mortem should be carried out to determine the cause of death and enable reviews and/or updates of practices as necessary.

## PART C: FURTHER INFORMATION/USEFUL DOCUMENTS

### World Organisation for Animal Health

[www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health\\_standards/tahc/2010/en\\_chapitre\\_1.7.7.htm#rubrique\\_chiens\\_errants](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahc/2010/en_chapitre_1.7.7.htm#rubrique_chiens_errants) (accessed 24.02.12)

### Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37) (accessed 14.05.12)

### Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2966/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2966/contents/made) (accessed 14.05.12)

### Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/2306/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/2306/contents/made) (accessed 14.05.12)

### Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made) (accessed 14.05.12)

### Animal Welfare Act 2006

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents) (accessed 05.03.12)

### Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/3260/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/3260/contents/made) (accessed 05.03.12)

### Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007

[www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/1047/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/1047/contents/made) (accessed 05.03.12)

### Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010

[www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/943/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/943/contents/made) (accessed 05.03.12)

### Dog Codes of Practice

England: [www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf) (accessed 22.12.11)

Wales: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animalwelfare/pets/codesofpractice/o81205codeofpractdogs/?lang=en> (accessed 22.12.11)

### Highway Code

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG\\_o69853](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_o69853) (accessed 05.03.12)

**Good practice guide for enforcement bodies – meeting the welfare needs of seized dogs in a kennel environment** published by RSPCA, 2012.

**National Decision Model for the Police** produced by ACPO.

[www.acpo.police.uk/documents/president/201201PBANDM.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/president/201201PBANDM.pdf) (accessed 14.05.12)

**Meeting an unfamiliar dog** produced by the RSPCA, 2012

[www.rspca.org.uk/ImageLocator/LocateAsset?asset=document&assetId=1232729081569&mode=prd](http://www.rspca.org.uk/ImageLocator/LocateAsset?asset=document&assetId=1232729081569&mode=prd) (accessed 04.07.12)

