

# 38 Animals in the Workplace

## Contents

Title	Page
Introduction	1
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Risk Assessment	4
Retention of Records	5
Related Documents	5

## Introduction

1. This chapter sets out the procedures and guidance for the health and safety management for the keeping or bringing of animals onto the Defence estate (except public footpaths), Defence premises and vessels by Defence personnel or third parties (e.g. guide dogs or pet animals). This chapter does not cover animals used in the management of Defence business (e.g. police dogs, regimental mascots, ceremonial duties) or on working farms.

2. There is no specific legislation relating to the keeping or bringing of pet animals into the workplace, although the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act does require the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare, so far as is reasonably practicable, of its personnel and others.

3. Defence recognises that there are both positive and negative aspects to having animals in the workplace. Some animals can make the workplace a more relaxed environment in which to work and provide companionship for staff working alone; however, some people may find they increase stress, find them intimidating or find the smell offensive etc.

4. As a general principle, Defence does not support the bringing of pet animals into the workplace; where it is allowed, bringing them into the workplace is a privilege, and Defence personnel must treat it as such.

5. With the exception of public footpaths / rights of way, animals are not allowed to be brought onto the Defence estate / premises unless permission to do so has been approved in accordance with this guidance unless they are:

- a. an assistance animal accompanying a member of Defence personnel, for which an application for approval is pending; or
- b. an assistance animal accompanying a visitor; or
- c. an animal accompanying a visiting dignitary on official business.

6. In accordance with the Equality Act and Defence policy, reasonable adjustment must be made and funded by Defence to accommodate any request to bring assistance animals (guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf etc.) onto the

Defence estate. Approval should be granted for assistance animals and restrictions only applied where their presence poses a significant risk to health or safety (e.g. food preparation and storage areas).

7. The local policy decision to allow animals to be brought onto or kept on the Defence estate and which premises (including clubs etc.) rests with the CO / HoE. If animals are to be allowed, a local policy and rules should be developed and promulgated which defines (but is not limited to):

- a. the types of animals allowed;
- b. areas where they are either allowed or prohibited;
- c. the rules and responsibilities that shall be adhered to by the animal's owner or handler (including but not limited to):
  - (1) owners prompt and correct disposal of animal faecal matter and other waste;
  - (2) hygiene (including cleaning up of animal fluids);
  - (3) noise nuisance;
  - (4) distractions;
  - (5) restraint (particularly near traffic routes) etc; and
  - (6) emergencies (fire etc.).
- d. the procedures for the approval, rejection and renewal of applications to bring an animal onto the Defence estate;
- e. the rescinding of privilege to bring or keep an animal on the Defence estate;
- f. the assessing and monitoring of animals approved to be on the Defence estate; and
- g. how such animals that are approved, are recorded on a Unit / Establishment Register.

8. Suitable facilities and arrangements for the disposal of animal faecal matter and other animal waste (e.g. bedding) in accordance with the relevant host nation legislation must be put in place before approval for animals to be brought onto the Defence estate is granted and any costs incurred justified (e.g. to accommodate assistance animals).

9. Approval for pet animals to be brought onto the Defence estate will only be granted if the disadvantages are outweighed by the benefits provided by the presence of the animal and that there is a nil-cost to Defence. Approval should be

dependent upon completion of a risk assessment (undertaken with authority above that of the applicant) that identifies that the animal presents an acceptable risk to third parties and Defence; and that compliance with local policy will be achieved and maintained at all times.

10. Approval will not be granted or if already granted, will be rescinded (with the exception of assistance animals), if anyone has a valid objection to the animal's presence in the area where they work or have cause to visit on a regular basis (e.g. an allergy, phobia or religious belief).

11. Persons bringing animals onto the Defence estate / premises may be held liable for any injury to personnel or visitors, or damage caused to the premises or facilities by their animal; therefore, appropriate third party insurance cover is required.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Commanding Officer / Head of Establishment/ (CO / HoE)**

12. The CO / HoE should ensure that a local policy for animals on the Defence estate / premises is developed and promulgated; if animals are to be permitted onto the Defence estate, all costs to the public purse must be justified; and the following should be put in place and maintained:

- a. animal waste disposal facilities;
- b. animal welfare facilities (drinking water, shelter, etc.);
- c. procedures defining the approvals process;
- d. rules and responsibilities to be adhered to by the animal's owner or handler;
- e. a register of animals approved to come onto the Defence estate; and
- f. a process for monitoring and reporting compliance with local and MOD policy.

13. Advice on the management of animal waste can be found on the Environment Agency WEB site (for England & Wales); and legislation at [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk).

### **Managers**

14. Managers should ensure that Defence personnel within their area of responsibility are aware of the local policy and procedures, and that approval for an animal has been granted and recorded on the register prior to bringing it onto the Defence estate / premises (or applied for approval if an assistance animal).

15. Managers should ensure that Defence personnel who share the workplace are consulted prior to animals being brought into the workplace. On completion of the consultation and only if there are no valid objections (unless objections are overruled

by requirement to meet a legal obligation), then all documentation (vaccination and worming certificates, liability insurance, etc.) in support of an application for an animal to be brought onto the Defence estate should be evaluated as part of a risk assessment (and subsequent reviews) and subject to approval in accordance with local policy and procedures.

## **All Personnel**

16. All Defence personnel have the right to state their objection (e.g. an allergy, phobia or religious grounds, smell, distrust) to an animal's presence in the area where they work or have cause to visit on a regular basis.

17. Pet and assistance animals must be appropriately inoculated and under the control of the owner at all times or restrained by a leash or secured in an appropriate animal compound, carrier, crate, cage, kennel or stable; they are not to be allowed to roam freely in offices, corridors, hangars, workshops etc. The owner is responsible for the care of their animal at all times and the immediate and proper disposal of faecal matter deposited by any animal brought by them onto the Defence estate (if the site does not have provision of appropriate waste removal then pet animals may not be brought on to site). Owners may be held liable for any injury to staff or visitors, or damage caused to the premises or facilities by their animal; owners should therefore have appropriate third-party insurance cover.

18. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that any legal requirements in the keeping of animals are met (e.g. The Animal Health Act and subsequent regulations require dogs to wear a collar with the owner's name and address).

## **Risk Assessment**

19. The main risks associated with keeping animals in the workplace are physical injury, by bites, scratches, kicking or crushing and infection or infestation from micro-organisms or parasites, Zoonoses; and asthmatic or allergic reactions. Some people have phobias about particular kinds of animals. Many veterinary products are hazardous to human health; therefore Health and Safety Risk Assessments (JSP 375, Volume 1 Chapter 8) and COSHH risk assessments (JSP 375, Volume 1, Chapter 11) should be completed by a competent person for each application for an animal to be allowed to be kept or brought onto the Defence estate.

20. Information from the owner / handler may be necessary when completing the risk assessments as they will have knowledge of the character and requirements of the animal(s); however, they may underestimate the risks because of their familiarity with them and emotional bias. Some animals may be thought to be a negligible risk, domestic cats, dogs, etc. However, 'tame' or 'semi-tame' animals may still cause injuries as they have less fear of people and people may assume they are used to being handled.

21. Points that must be considered when conducting an animal risk assessment are:

- a. emergency evacuations, e.g. how will animals be evacuated without causing a hazard to others evacuating the area?;

- b. what hazards does the animal present? e.g. tripping, bites, scratches, transmission of diseases;
- c. by what routes can any micro-organisms be transmitted to humans? e.g. hand to mouth contact, bites, scratches, or through the air;
- d. all animals are regarded as potential sources of infection or infestation (where practicable, proof of vaccination, worming, flea treatment etc. shall be required);
- e. how many and who is exposed? does anyone have allergies or phobias?
- f. the areas the owner / handler is likely to visit during the course of their duties;
- g. the people likely to visit the area where the animal is normally based;
- h. are there any new or expectant mothers working in the area?;
- i. do children visit / pass through the area?;
- j. what other animals may be present? (are they territorial);
- k. vehicle movements;
- l. equipment / machinery; and
- m. animal welfare (storage of food etc.).

## **Retention of Records**

22. All records including the Unit / Establishment Register, Risk Assessments, etc. should be kept in accordance with JSP 375, Volume 1, Chapter 39 (Retention of Records).

## **Related Documents**

23. The following documents should be consulted in conjunction with this chapter:

- a. JSP 375, Volume 1:
  - (1) Chapter 01 - Emergency and Disaster Planning;
  - (2) Chapter 08 - Risk Assessment;
  - (3) Chapter 11 - Hazardous Substances;
  - (4) Chapter 20 - New and Expectant Mothers;

- (5) Chapter 39 - Retention of Records.
- b. Legislation and Guidance:
- (1) [Occupiers Liability Act;](#)
  - (2) [Equality Act;](#)
  - (3) [Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act;](#)
  - (4) [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations;](#)
  - (5) [HSE L5 – Control of substances hazardous to health;](#)
  - (6) [The Environmental Protection Act;](#)
  - (7) [Controlled Waste Regulations;](#)
  - (8) [Hazardous Waste Regulations;](#)
  - (9) [Special Waste Regulations;](#)
  - (10) [The Animal Health Act;](#)
  - (11) [Animal Welfare Act;](#)
  - (12) [Dangerous Dogs Act;](#)
  - (13) [Equality and Human Rights Commission;](#)
  - (14) [Guide Dogs for the Blind Association;](#)
  - (15) [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People;](#)
  - (16) [Support Dogs;](#)
  - (17) [Dogs for the Disabled;](#)
  - (18) [Canine Partners;](#)
  - (19) [Pets as Therapy.](#)