CHAPTER 8
DOMESTIC CAT GUIDELINES

8-11.1... American Humane’s Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media apply to anyone bringing an animal to the set, including members of the cast or crew.

8-11.2*... In accordance with federal requirements, to exhibit a cat in filmed media, the owner or exhibitor is required to have a USDA Exhibitor’s Permit or to obtain an exemption from such permit requirements from the USDA prior to filming. (Also see the Advisory in Chapter 3A, “Reality Programming,” regarding USDA Requirements.)

8-11.3.... For safety and efficiency, American Humane recommends that producers hire animal handlers experienced in motion picture production to supply all cats for production. However, if production chooses to obtain cats from private owners — including cast and crew — all requirements of the Guidelines must be implemented.

8-11.4.... When applicable, producers shall distribute in advance the instruction sheet on “Special Requirements for Extras/Others Who Supply Animals.”

8-11.5*... For all cats (pets, cats brought by extras or crew, and cat actors) on set, except for kittens under the age of 16 weeks, the following requirements apply:
   a. The cats must have been vaccinated for rabies, distemper and feline leukemia at least two weeks prior to coming onto the set.
   b. Proof of vaccination and the name and phone number of the veterinarian who vaccinated the cats must be provided to the American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative upon request.
   c. American Humane may request proof of health certificates where applicable.
d. Animal handlers (including cast, crew and extras) must bring the necessary documentation to the set.

**ADVISORY:** Animal handlers (including cast, crew and extras) should be aware of locations where ticks, fleas and mosquitoes are found and should take appropriate measures, such as tick, flea and heartworm prevention, to prevent disease and intestinal parasites.

8-12*........ When filming scenes involving the birth of kittens or the use of kittens under the age of 8 weeks, prior written approval from the USDA and American Humane is required. Per the USDA, kittens may not be transported or sold in commerce until they are 2 months old and fully weaned. (Also see Guideline 2-8.)

8-12.1 .... Only healthy kittens should be used for filming. Should very young kittens be requested, please contact American Humane for approval.
8-12.2*... American Humane advises that only kittens that are a minimum of 8 weeks of age be used for filming, per the USDA.
   a. All kittens (pets, cats brought by extras or crew, and cat actors) on set should have been checked by a veterinarian and deemed healthy.
   b. Proof of vaccinations may be requested by American Humane.
   c. American Humane may also request most recent veterinary health certificates.
   d. The health and vaccination reports are critical when mixing kittens from separate litters or households. Owners should be prepared to show proof of vaccination and the name and phone number of the veterinarian who vaccinated the cat.
   e. Animal handlers (including cast, crew and extras) must bring the necessary documentation to the set.

**ADVISORY:** Kittens being brought to the set should be examined by a veterinarian, tested for feline leukemia, be free of parasites, and have received core vaccines (FVRCP-C — feline viral rhinotracheitis [or “cat flu”], calicivirus, panleukopenia and chlamydophila) at 8 weeks of age, then once every 3 to 4 weeks until the kitten reaches 4 months of age. After 4 months, cats should be vaccinated once each year. The rabies vaccination is due at 4 months, then again within 12 months.

Although vaccination helps reduce the risk of cat flu, this disease can still occur in vaccinated cats. Kittens are more likely to develop severe disease and die as a result of the flu. Any kittens that show signs of flu shall be removed from the set and examined by a veterinarian.

8-13*........ Pursuant to USDA regulations, anyone who sells or acquires a dead dog or cat from a private, unlicensed source is required to obtain a USDA license (see Chapter 1) and provide that documentation to American Humane.

8-14 ........ When cats are working with other cats or other species of animals, in addition to production and the animal handlers ensuring the safety of the animals, the cat must be trained and prepped to work with the animals so that the work is not stressful. (Also see Guideline 1-28.2.)
a. When predator/prey relationships are to be depicted, animals must be trained or conditioned to accomplish the action, or the action must be simulated.
b. Predator/prey situations can be a threat to one or more of the animals, as well as to cast and crew.

8-14.1 Animals should never be left unattended or unsecured in a manner that would be unsafe or uncomfortable for the animals. Animals shall not be left in the care of any person who is inexperienced in the care of those types of animals.

8-14.2 Care must be taken to ensure that animals do not escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must also have a safety plan in place that will prevent the escape of an animal from the set or location and provide for an animal's safe recapture should an accident or escape occur. (Also see Guideline 1-36.)

8-15 Domestic cats that are underweight, overweight or otherwise not in appropriate physical or behavioral condition to perform the required work shall not be used. An animal shall not be used if, in American Humane's judgment, the animal is not in appropriate condition.

8-15.1 Although the special requirements apply to extras and owners, production is always ultimately responsible for the safety of the animals and people on the set. The precautions necessary to ensure human and animal safety include:
a. **Water:** Extras/owners shall bring a water bowl that is heavy enough to prevent overturning and large enough to satiate a cat's thirst. Water should be available to the cat as needed.
b. **Control:** Cats shall be controlled by using a crate, cage or secure pen. When working outdoors, only cats trained and handled by professional trainers should be used. Cats shall not be left unattended at any time or in the care of an unqualified person. If a cat exhibits any aggressive or fear behaviors, such as threatening, scratching or biting any person or animal, it may be removed. Improper chains and tethers are prohibited.
c. **Cats in Heat:** Cats should not be on set if they are in their heat cycle.
d. **Housing/Comfort:** Extras/owners shall arrive with the cat secured in a crate. Extras/owners shall coordinate with production to address considerations for protecting the cats from weather, including heat or cold, wind, rain, etc. This should happen prior to the cat's arrival on set.

**ADVISORY:** Animal handlers (including cast, crew and extras) should be aware of locations where ticks, fleas and mosquitoes are found and should take appropriate measures, such as tick, flea and heartworm prevention, to prevent disease and intestinal parasites.