

## ADVISORY: Working with Private-Party Animals

American Humane encourages the use of professional, licensed animal handlers and animals that are trained and acclimated to work on a film set. Should production choose to use privately-owned and/or non-professional film animals, all federal, state, and local laws, regulations and, American Humane's [Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media](#) must be followed. **All animals at the filming location, whether working or not, are subject to American Humane's Guidelines.**

Should your production choose to use non-professional film animals that are privately owned by extras, cast, crew or other private individuals or entities, please take the time to review this Advisory and **distribute the Special Requirements Notice (page 2 of this Advisory) to owners of private-party and/or non-professional animals in advance of filming.**

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRODUCTIONS USING PRIVATE-PARTY ANIMALS:

- **CHOOSE animals that are well-trained, socialized and comfortable in groups of animals and people.**
  - Consider using a professional animal trainer when screening/casting animal extras to ensure that healthy animals with good temperaments are chosen. Animals should get along with other animals that will be present AND with your cast and crew.
  - Remember that Puppies and Kittens under 16 weeks of age require advance approval from American Humane.
- **CONSIDER hiring a professional animal trainer to oversee private-party animals**, especially if large groups of animals are used. Private party owners are not familiar with the film environment and the safety and welfare issues associated with working animals on a film production.
- **PLAN for animal holding areas that meet the needs of the animals used**, including shade, shelter, protection from weather, and food/water.
  - These areas should be away from cast and crew to allow privacy and rest for the animals.
  - Ensure that there is a safe area outside for exercise and pet relief.
  - Umbrellas, portable canopies, and pop up tents are a good source of shade, if interior holding areas are unavailable. Fans are suggested in warm/hot climates. Heaters may be needed in cold climates.
  - At NO time, shall an animal be left in a vehicle or trailer without proper ventilation/temperature regulation or improperly tethered.
- **NOTIFY owners to bring copies of vaccination and licensing documents**, in case of possible inspection by authorities and/or requests from American Humane. They should also bring other items necessary for the animal's comfort and welfare.
- **PREP owners/handlers about the planned animal action** AND what else will be happening in the scene. This helps to identify safety issues and concerns.
- **ENSURE that safety precautions are in place** to keep the animal safe while at the location and during filming.
- **SET-UP the scene without the animals whenever possible.** Rehearse actors and set up cameras and lights PRIOR to calling the animals. Call animals to set only after the work is complete.
- **LIMIT CREW access to set** to only those essential for filming, when animals are present.
  - Ensure that all remaining crew are quiet, still, and that no food is on set which could distract the working animals.
  - Cast and crew should not be allowed to pet, feed, or play with working animals.
  - No personal pets are allowed on set when animals are working.
- **BE CREATIVE, FLEXIBLE, and PATIENT!** Some animal action may be impossible to get without patience and the use of special techniques. Extras and private-party animals may have minimal training and may be unfamiliar with the film environment. Some animals are hired for their looks, not their talent, and may need additional time to acclimate to the activity and dynamics of a film set. **Do not expect private-party animals to perform tricks or stunts that are unnatural behaviors for the average pet.**
- **LIMIT TAKES!** When you've got it, move on!
- **BE PREPARED to give the animal rest breaks** during filming
- **When an American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative™ comes to you, listen and work together to resolve any issues.**

### **CAUTION** **Dog-Bite** **Incidents:**

- **Dog bites and dog attacks are becoming more common and are often severe. Please ensure the safety of the people and dogs on your set.**
- **Dog bites to people or to other animals that break the skin should receive prompt medical/veterinary attention.**
- **Dog bites that necessitate medical or veterinary care may have to be reported to the local animal control agency or public health agency (check local regulations) A veterinary examination and/or quarantine of the dog that did the biting may be required.**
- **Any person bitten (or any owner of an animal bitten) by a dog should be provided with the dog owner's name and address and copies of the dog's licensing and vaccination records.**

**AMERICAN HUMANE'S RESOURCE CENTER** - American Humane's Resource Center provides guidance to productions regarding best animal welfare practices, achieving desired animal action and care, licensing/permitting, transportation at no charge. Contact us at 1-800-677-3420 or email [filmunit@americanhumane.org](mailto:filmunit@americanhumane.org).

\*\*\*\*\* DISTRIBUTE IN ADVANCE \*\*\*\*\*

## SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRAS AND OTHERS WHO SUPPLY ANIMALS

American Humane is the only industry-sanctioned organization to protect animals in filmed media and the exclusive owner of the NO ANIMALS WERE HARMED® end credit certification. When animals that are privately owned by extras, cast, crew, or other private individuals or entities are used in film production, all applicable laws, regulations and American Humane’s [Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media](#) must be followed. **All animals at the filming location, whether working or not, are subject to American Humane’s Guidelines.** Please take time to review the following requirements and helpful suggestions to ensure the safety, welfare, and comfort of your pet while working on film productions.

<b>Proper permits and licensing to own and exhibit certain animals.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal, state, and local governments have strict rules and regulations regarding the possession and exhibition of certain animals. Ensure that your animals are properly licensed.</li> <li>Federal Law prohibits the transportation of puppies and kittens for commerce prior to the age of eight weeks. (<i>See American Humane Guidelines and Advisories for Using Puppies and Kittens.</i>)</li> <li><b>Puppies and Kittens under 16 weeks of age must receive advance approval from American Humane.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Animal Health and Vaccinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All animals should be in good health and condition and any known medical condition, medications, or limitations must be declared to American Humane prior to use.</li> <li>Extras/Owners must have a copy of their animal’s vaccination, health, and licensing records with them for possible inspection by authorities or requests from American Humane. <b>American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representatives™ may request proof of vaccination, health certificates, and medical records of all animals on set.</b></li> <li>Dogs and Cats must have received vaccinations at least two weeks prior to coming onto set.</li> </ul>
<b>Training and Socialization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extras/owners that bring their animals to a film set should make sure that their animals are well-trained, socialized and comfortable in groups of animals and people.</li> <li>Animals must be trained, prepared, and in appropriate physical and behavioral condition to perform the required work.</li> <li>If any animal appears aggressive, stressed and/or charges, threatens or bites any person or animal, it shall be removed immediately from the set and location.</li> </ul>
<b>Food/Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extras/owners shall bring a water bowl/container that is heavy enough not to be tipped over and large enough to satiate an animal’s thirst. Water must be available to the animal on and off camera.</li> <li>Extras/owners shall bring food for the animal as needed as film days may be long.</li> </ul>
<b>Shade and Shelter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production shall designate quiet animal holding areas that are restricted to cast and crew which allow animals access to shade, shelter, warmth and cooling as necessary for the species of animal.</li> <li>Housing -Crates, carriers and/or other appropriate housing shall be brought by extras/owners as there will be times when owners/handlers must step away for personal needs.</li> <li>At NO time, shall an animal be left in a vehicle or trailer without proper ventilation/temperature regulation.</li> <li>At no time, shall an animal be improperly tethered. (Local and State Laws may apply)</li> </ul>
<b>Adequate Rest and Exercise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All animals shall have adequate rest and exercise for the species of animal(s) used.</li> <li>American Humane recommends bringing a pet bed or blanket, toys and treats for rest and enrichment.</li> <li>Production should secure an outside area close to the animal holding areas for exercise and pet relief.</li> </ul>
<b>Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals shall be controllable at all times. No animal shall be loose or off leash.</li> <li>Animals not on a leash must be contained in a secure pen, fenced area, or crate.</li> <li>All dogs must wear a collar.</li> </ul>
<b>Prohibition Against Animals in Heat:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals may not be on set if they are in their heat cycle.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals shall never be left unattended or in the care of anyone who is unqualified to care for the animal properly.</li> </ul>

### LINKS TO IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

[General Guidelines \(for all animals\).](#)

[Guidelines for Location and Set Safety \(for all animals\)](#)

[Additional Guidelines for Dogs and Puppies](#)

[Additional Guidelines for Cats and Kittens](#)