

***Thrums Veterinary Group***



***Health and Safety Handbook***

Prepared by  
**Citation Ltd**  
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## **Health and Safety Policy Statement**

The following is a statement of the Business's health and safety policy in accordance with Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

It is the policy of Thrums Veterinary Group to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees working for the Business and other persons who may be affected by our undertakings.

As a business we acknowledge that the key to successful health and safety management requires an effective policy, organisation and arrangements, which reflect the commitment of senior management. To maintain that commitment, we will continually measure, monitor, improve and revise where necessary, our Occupational Safety and Health (OH&S) management system to ensure that health and safety standards are adequately maintained.

The Health and Safety Co-ordinator will implement the Business's health and safety policy and recommend any changes to meet new circumstances. The Business recognises that successful health and safety management contributes to successful business performance and will allocate adequate finances and resources to meet these needs.

The management of Thrums Veterinary Group looks upon the promotion of health and safety measures as a mutual objective for themselves and employees. It is therefore, the policy of management to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property. Also, the Business aims to protect everyone, including visitors and members of the public, in so far as they come into contact with our activities, from any foreseeable hazard or danger.

All employees have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and are informed of their personal responsibilities to take due care of the health and safety of themselves and to ensure that they do not endanger other persons by their acts or omissions. Employees are also informed that they must co-operate with the Business in order that it can comply with the legal requirements placed upon it and in the implementation of this policy. We are committed to continued consultation with the workforce to enable all viewpoints and recommendations to be discussed at regular intervals.

The Business will ensure a systematic approach to identifying hazards, assessing the risks, determining suitable and sufficient control measures and informing employees of the correct procedures needed to maintain a safe working environment. We will provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe places and systems of work, safe plant and machinery, safe handling of materials and substances, the provision of adequate safety equipment and ensure that appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision is given.

We regard all health and safety legislation as the minimum standard and expect management to achieve their targets without compromising health and safety.

**A signed copy of this statement is available on request.**



## **Environmental Statement**

We are committed to preventing pollution and to complying with all relevant environmental legislation, regulations and other environmental requirements.

We will regularly evaluate the environmental impact of our activities, products and services and we will take action to continually improve our environmental performance.

It is our policy to:

- Minimise the use of energy, water and natural resources
- Minimise waste through prevention, re-use and recycling where possible
- Dispose of waste safely and legally
- Avoid the use of hazardous materials, where practical
- Work with environmentally responsible suppliers
- Prevent environmental damage and minimise nuisance factors such as noise and air pollution.

We will define environmental objectives, targets and improvement actions that are related to this policy and to our significant environmental aspects. We will regularly evaluate progress.

We are committed to providing relevant environmental training and promoting environmental awareness to employees and, where appropriate, to suppliers and to communicating our environmental performance.

We will implement processes to prevent environmental non-conformities and to ensure that we are prepared to deal with potential environmental emergencies.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to take account of organisational priorities and changes, environmental legislation and best practice.

**A signed copy of this statement is available on request.**

## Safety Management Structure



## **General Responsibilities**

As employers we have a duty to all employees, casual workers, part-time workers, trainees, visitors and sub-contractors who may be in our workplace or use work equipment provided by us. Consideration will also be given to our neighbours and the general public.

Management will ensure they:

- Assess all risks to worker's health and safety and bring the significant findings to the attention of employees
- Provide safe plant and equipment that is suitably maintained
- Provide a safe place of work with adequate facilities and safe access and egress
- Provide adequate training and information to all employees
- Have provisions in place to guarantee that articles and substances are handled and stored in a proper manner
- Provide health surveillance to employees where it is deemed necessary
- Appoint competent persons to help comply with health and safety law
- Provide employees and other workers who have little or no understanding of English, or who cannot read English, with adequate supervision, translation, interpreters or replace written notices with clearly understood symbols or diagrams.

### Employees Responsibilities

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 details two main sections which employees are required to comply with. These are: -

- All employees have a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 7, to take reasonable care of himself/herself and any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work
- In addition to the above, Section 8 states that under no circumstances shall employees purposely or recklessly interfere or misuse anything provided in the interest of safety or welfare, lifesaving equipment, signs or firefighting equipment
- Employees also have a duty to assist and co-operate with Thrums Veterinary Group and any other person to ensure all aspects of health and safety legislation are adhered to.

Employees are obliged to:

- Always follow safety rules, avoid improvisation and comply with the health and safety policy
- Only perform work that they are qualified to undertake
- Always store materials and equipment in a safe manner
- Never block emergency escape routes
- Always practice safe working procedures, refrain from horseplay and report all hazards and defective equipment
- Always wear suitable clothing and personal protective equipment for the task being undertaken
- Inform the First Aider or Appointed Person of all accidents that occur.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require all employees to: -

- Utilise all items that are provided for safety
- Comply with all safety instructions
- Report to management anything that they may consider to be of any danger
- Advise management of any areas where protection arrangements require reviewing.

#### Sub-Contractors/Self-Employed Personnel Responsibilities

Will be made aware of the organisation's health and safety policy, safety rules and:

- Will be fully aware of the responsibilities and requirements placed upon them by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legislation
- Will comply with all instructions given by management
- Will co-operate with Management to ensure a high standard of health and safety on all contracts with which they are involved
- Will carry out risk assessments in relation to their activities, ensure that adequate health and safety arrangements are implemented and co-operate as necessary with all affected parties
- Will comply with signing in and out procedures.

## Information For employees

Information regarding health and safety law is provided in a number of ways:

- Employees are provided with a copy of the 'Employee handbook'
- The approved poster "Health and Safety Law – What You Should Know" is displayed on the premises. This poster is advisably completed with names of responsible persons. Alternatively a leaflet version of the Health and Safety Law poster is available and should be distributed to all staff
- Management and employees have access to our Health and Safety Management System that contains all relevant information with regard to recording and monitoring procedures.

## Joint Consultation

The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations require all employers to consult with their employees who are not represented by safety representatives, as detailed in the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations.

We recognise the importance and benefits to be gained by consultation and will maintain clear avenues of communication to ensure effective consultation between management and employees. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that consultation takes place in good time on matters relating to employees health and safety at work.

If at any time the method of consultation becomes ineffective due to the size or nature of the Business then the organisation will recognise the rights of employees or groups of employees to elect one or more persons to act as their representative for the purpose of such consultation.

Health and safety will be on the agenda of all management meetings. Items that may be included in the meeting are:

- Review of accident statistics, near misses and trends
- New legislation
- Compliance with the objectives of the health and safety plan
- Occupational health issues
- Introduction of new technology
- Result of health and safety audits
- Review of significant findings identified by reports produced by Citation Ltd
- Completion of corrective actions
- Review of training needs.

Citation Ltd along with other professional bodies will inform senior management of any

relevant changes to health and safety. Management will disseminate this information to all relevant employees.

If any visitors or customers raise any concerns with regard to health and safety, senior management will investigate the issue and if required, take appropriate action to deal with the matter.

# **Access And Egress**

## Description

Safe access and egress within this arrangement includes the safe movement of persons into, around, and out of the place of work.

## Associated Hazards

Slips, trips and falls:

- Slips caused by, e.g. snow, ice, wet floors, spilt pelletised food, polished floors
- Trips and falls caused by, e.g. uneven floors, trailing wires, uncontrolled patients, products poorly stored
- Slips, trips and falls caused by, e.g. poorly maintained stairs or steps, poor lighting, inappropriate footwear, poor manual handling practice
- Movement of vehicles, equipment and patients.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Follow advice and information given by the Practice in relation to safe access and egress
- Regularly check that there is sufficient space to move about their work area freely
- Report any situation to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty where safe access and egress is restricted or obstructed so that appropriate remedial action can be taken
- Keep areas tidy and clean
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Do not leave equipment, tools, cables and rubbish to cause obstructions or tripping hazards in work areas
- Take care when walking around the premises.

# **Accident Reporting**

## Description

There are many hazards present in veterinary workplaces. Control measures, when implemented, should reduce the risks from those hazards to a level as low as is reasonably practicable in order to prevent accidents and cases of ill health. This arrangement provides advice and guidance to all members of staff, together with information necessary for the reporting and subsequent investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses. An accident is an unplanned event that results in personal injury or damage to property, plant or equipment. A 'near miss' is any incident, accident or emergency which did not result in an injury.

## Death

- Workers and non-workers who have died of a work-related accident.

## Specified Injuries

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- Amputations
- Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- Serious burns (including scalding) which:
  - cover more than 10% of the body, or
  - cause significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- Any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
  - leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness, or
  - requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

## Over Seven-Day Injury

This is an injury, which is not a specified injury but results in the injured person being away from work or unable to carry out their normal duties for more than seven

days. Apart from the day of the accident, weekends and days that would not normally be worked, such as rest days, are counted.

### Occupational Disease

- Tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm
- Severe cramp of the hand or forearm
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Hand arm vibration syndrome
- Occupational dermatitis
- Occupational asthma
- Any occupational cancer.

Any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent, e.g. anthrax, zoonoses, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), influenza, legionella, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

### Dangerous Occurrence

There are 27 dangerous occurrences which are relevant to most workplaces, e.g:

- Collapse, overturning or failure of load bearing parts of lifting equipment
- Electrical short circuit or overload causing fire or explosion
- Accident or incident which results or could result in the release or escape of a biological agent likely to cause human infection or illness
- Any breach of a radiation source.

### People Not At Work

- A member of the public or a person not at work has suffered an injury and is taken from the scene of an accident to hospital for treatment to that injury
- A member of the public or person who is not at work has died.

In addition employees will ensure that:

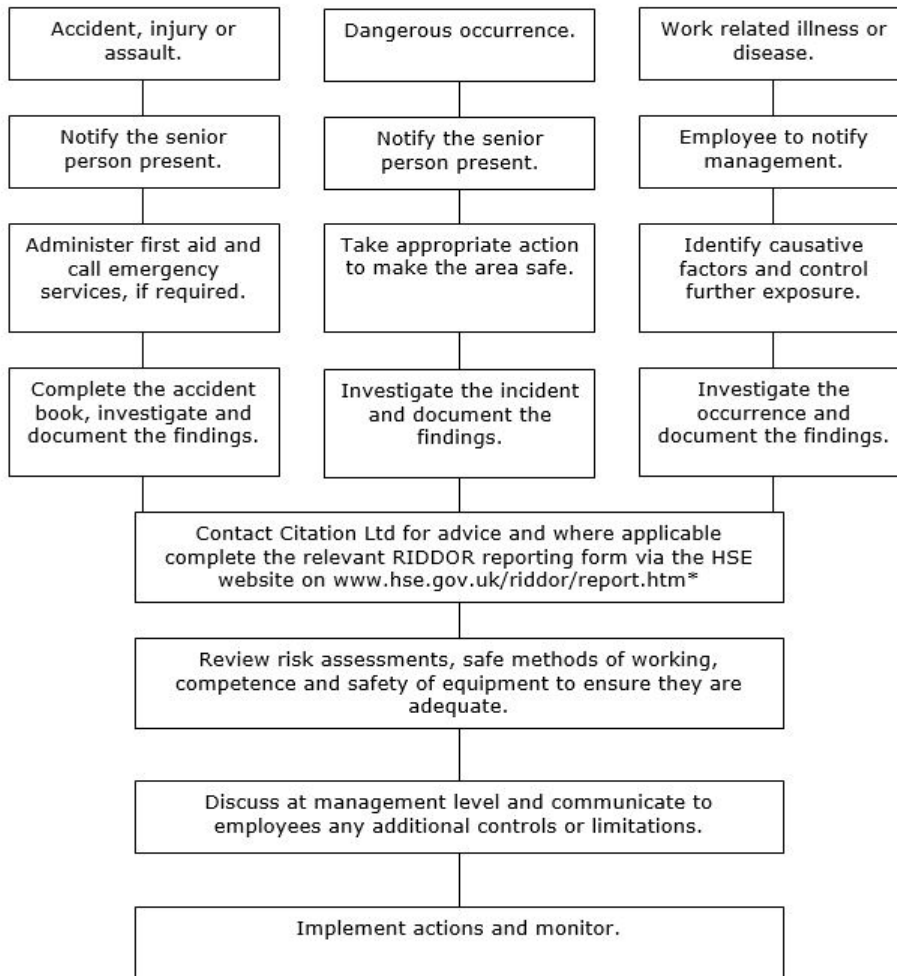
- All accidents and incidents, however minor, will be investigated to ensure the appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrence. In the majority of cases, the details contained within the accident book will constitute an investigation

- The risk assessments will be reviewed and, if necessary, further control measures will be introduced
- Improvement strategies will be implemented to help prevent or minimise occurrences, thus reducing future risk of harm.

#### Employees Responsibilities

Any members of staff who are involved in, or aware of, an accident must follow the accident reporting procedure and inform the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty, either orally or in writing as soon as possible after the accident occurs. The nominated person will complete the necessary documentation including accident book entry, investigation and comply with any notification and reporting requirements.

## Accident And Incident Reporting Flowchart



\*Note the Incident Contact Centre telephone reporting service is only available for specified injuries and fatalities on 0845 300 9923.

# **Alcohol and Drugs Misuse**

## Description

Evidence confirms that alcohol or drug use and / or abuse significantly reduces personal performance and contributes to increased absence rates. Safety is paramount and any form of drug or alcohol related problem is a serious matter and in some circumstances a criminal offence. The scope of this policy extends to alcohol, illicit drugs or substances, and over-the-counter or prescription medication when abused or taken irresponsibly.

## Associated Hazards

- Impaired co-ordination
- Inability to drive or use equipment safely
- Lack of awareness, judgement and sense of danger
- Heightened sense, and use of aggression towards others
- Overconfidence in potentially dangerous situations.

## Disciplinary Procedures

- If an alcohol or drug related problem comes to light which results in unacceptable behaviour or performance it will be dealt with in accordance with Company disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, summary dismissal depending on the circumstances of the individual case.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:

- Not attend work whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Not bring alcohol, illicit drugs or substances of abuse onto company premises
- Advise the Department Manager if they are taking prescription medication which may affect their ability to use equipment which requires fully functional mental skills and judgement
- Seek help voluntarily if they recognise they have an alcohol or drug related problem
- Advise the Health & Safety Co-ordinator if they are aware that any employees have an alcohol or drug related problem that is affecting their work. This will ensure that employees receive the necessary support and assistance.

# **Anaesthetic Gases**

## Description

Anaesthetic gases are substances that are sometimes used for surgical procedures and produce a state of unconsciousness when breathed in or absorbed. Some anaesthetic gases have been assigned a statutory Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL), e.g. Nitrous Oxide.

## Applicable Hazards

- Short-term (acute) exposure may result in headache, drowsiness or nausea
- Long-term (chronic) exposure may result in possible liver, kidney and central nervous system disorders and/or bone marrow suppression. In females it may result in reproductive problems and birth defects etc
- Fire and explosion.

-

## Anaesthetic Induction and Recovery

Normal rules for sedation and intravenous anaesthetic induction should apply. Assisting the horse or pony to the ground should be the responsibility of an experienced handler who can better predict the animal's movements. In the rare event that an adverse reaction causes an animal to strike out or become violent, personal safety of the employees is of the utmost importance and no one should put themselves in danger.

Animals should be placed in a safe, padded recovery box and left to 'come round' on their own. In the event of a violent recovery, employees should not attempt to intervene. However, local protocol should be in place should the vet need to go into the box mid-recovery if assistance is required.

The use of Etorphine (e.g. Immobilon) is deemed inappropriate in equine practice. There are situations whereby its use in wild animal restraint is appropriate and some CVS Sites carry out this work. However, the extensive set of rules and guidelines associated with its use should be observed and adhered to.

The senior vet present should make appropriate decisions as to the number of theatre employees required on a case by case basis, for example additional personnel may be required for procedures involving stallions.

Decisions should be made as to the necessity for hard hats to be worn at the discretion of the handler. Hard hats should not cause employees difficulty in either manoeuvring or impinge on their view.

Where possible a winch should be used for the safe movement of patients under anaesthetic. However the cost of installing a winch at a site should be balanced with the associated manual handling risk to employees, including frequency of anaesthetic induction at that site.

For reasons of operator safety CVS prefers castrations to be performed under general anaesthetic. We understand that due to client and veterinary preference, standing castration may be an alternative, preferred procedure. This process should be discussed locally and a risk assessment completed locally so that all employees are aware of the risks and how to mitigate.

#### Employees Responsibilities

- Follow training, guidance and instruction provided
- Report any equipment faults to the employer
- Use protective and safety equipment provided
- Co-operate with management arrangements for health and safety.

# **Autoclaves**

## Description

An autoclave is a pressure vessel with a lid/s and door/s positioned for ease of access and are used in various processes. Autoclaves can be front loading, top loading and both fixed and portable. They are used primarily for materials that are to be subjected to pressure greater than atmosphere and in most cases elevated temperatures for such purposes as sterilising.

## Associated Hazards

The major dangers associated with autoclaves are explosions and the release of components and contents upon failure. Other dangers, due to frequent opening of the doors to allow materials to be loaded and unloaded, will include;

- Heat
- Steam
- Chemicals
- Biologicals
- Sharps such as surgical instruments.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Not use the autoclave unless trained to do so
- Follow any training, guidance or instruction given to prevent injury or ill health
- Wear and keep in good condition any personal protective equipment that is issued to them for the activity
- Not tamper or remove any of the safety devices
- Perform a pre-user check prior to operation as instructed in training
- Report any hazardous or dangerous situation to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Report any injuries/incidents
- Co-operate with management arrangements for health and safety.

# **Biosecurity**

## Description

Biosecurity measures are required for a number of situations including occasions when there is an outbreak of a notifiable disease in an area, and for premises under specific disease control restrictions.

Farm to farm movement of infected livestock is the most common means by which patient diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease can be spread. Contact with patients and with their excrement also poses significant risks. Clothes, boots, vehicles and equipment can become contaminated and can carry disease from one premise to another.

## Associated Hazards

- Transmission of diseases that can spread to humans, e.g. Salmonella, e-coli
- Transmission of disease from one farm to another.

## Employees Responsibilities

- All employees have a duty of care to adhere to all Company protocols and procedures applicable to bio-security measures
- To be aware of the location and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and to use only the materials provided for disinfection or removal of a potential source of infection
- Control surface contamination during sanitising operations
- To dispose of all contaminated waste in accordance with Practice procedures
- Where appropriate, ensure that all contaminated equipment and materials are correctly contained and disposed of.

## **Blood Borne Viruses (BBV)**

### Description

We recognise that there is a potential risk of employees coming into contact with Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) such as hepatitis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). To reduce the risks posed by these viruses we will assess the potential for exposure and introduce controls to reduce the risk.

### Associated Hazards

- Direct contact with infected blood or saliva
- Contact with clinical dressings
- Needle stick injuries.

### Employees Responsibilities

- Immediately report any spillage of bodily fluids and arrange for suitable isolation and cleaning in line with their level of training
- Report to management in confidence, if they become aware that they are a carrier of a BBV, if it is relevant to their employment.

The risk of BBV infection is low, as direct contact with blood and body fluids does not occur regularly. Much depends on the nature of the exposure and not all exposures result in infection.

## **Body And Fashion Jewellery**

### Description

The wearing of body jewellery and fashion jewellery at work could lead to injury or ill health.

### Associated Hazards

- Infection/cross-infection
- Injury to the wearer (i.e. rips or tears) or to others
- Entanglement.

### Employees Responsibilities

- Employees are responsible for the care of themselves and others engaging in work activities where jewellery is permitted to be worn
- Follow Practice guidance and instruction.

# **Centrifuges**

## Description

A centrifuge is a mechanical device that uses centrifugal forces to separate substances of different densities, such as solids from liquids or liquids from other liquids (e.g. blood, urine).

## Associated Hazards

- Microbiological
- Corrosive chemicals
- Mechanical failure
- Contact with moving parts
- Leaking samples
- Samples not balanced correctly, resulting in the machine moving
- Contact with contaminated components.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Only operate a centrifuge if trained
- Check the equipment for damage, faults and cleanliness, before operation
- Never attempt to open the centrifuge whilst it is in motion
- Follow instruction, training and guidance given
- Report all faults and spillages immediately to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

# Compressed Air

## Description

A compressed air supply, either from a cylinder or from a compressor must be treated with respect. It must never be used for blowing dust or other material from clothing, skin or glassware or for ventilation purposes nor used for leak testing. It is particularly dangerous to direct a jet of compressed air at the body as this may introduce air into the bloodstream, or inflict serious eye injury, or cause a burst eardrum.

Pipe connections must be appropriate for high-pressure work, standard worm driven hose clips are not acceptable for this purpose.

## Associated Hazards

- Skin penetration
- Eye damage
- Hearing damage
- Explosion.

## Employees responsibilities

- Never use compressed air hoses to dust down clothing or skin
- Always isolate the main air supply before disconnecting any air tools
- Follow the manufacturer's and any specific company instructions at all times
- Only use tools for which they are trained
- Wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) which has been provided for use with the equipment
- Report any defects immediately and do not use the equipment until the problem has been safely rectified.

# **Compressed Gas Cylinders**

## Description

Accidents involving gas cylinders can be very serious and may result in major injuries or death.

The term 'gas cylinder' includes varying types of pressure vessel used to transport and store gas under pressure. They are used for different purposes. e.g., oxygen supply, anaesthetic gas supply, in heating appliances and in fire fighting appliances.

## Associated Hazards

- Fire and explosion
- Bodily injury from flying debris
- Inhalation
- Skin contact
- Manual handling
- Falling gas cylinders.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Undertake training in the safe use of compressed gas and follow information and instruction provided
- Wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) issued
- Report any damage to cylinders or attachments to the Practice Manager
- Do not drop, roll or drag gas cylinders
- Use equipment provided by the Practice to handle cylinders.

# **Construction, Design And Management (CDM) Client Responsibilities**

## Description

- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) cover a very broad range of construction activities such as building, civil engineering, engineering construction work, demolition, site preparation, site clearance, renovation, decoration, installation, maintenance, and dismantling of structures
- Under the CDM Regulations, legal duties apply to clients, designers, and contractors for all construction projects even for simple, short duration work. However, for those projects that are likely to take more than 30 days or involve more than 500 person days of construction work, additional management duties are imposed and projects are notifiable to the regulators. CDM Co-ordinators and Principal Contractors must be appointed by clients for notifiable projects.

## Associated Hazards Include

- Slips, trips and falls
- Fire and explosion
- Vehicular movement
- Falling objects
- Manual Handling
- Excavations
- Hazardous substances.

## Client's Responsibilities

Clients are defined as companies, organisations or individuals for whom a construction project is carried out including for those who operate or own veterinary practices (but excluding domestic clients).

## For All Projects, Clients Will:-

- Ensure that designers and contractors are competent and adequately resourced
- Provide information ('Pre-Construction Information') including site rules and details of site hazards, to those planning or bidding for the work
- Where important information is not available, take reasonable steps to acquire such information including construction drawings, plans, manuals, survey reports and location of utilities

- Ensure that the project is planned and managed suitably for its duration
- Facilitate good communications, cooperation and co-ordination between project members
- Allow sufficient time and resources for the design, planning and construction work to be done properly
- Ensure that adequate welfare facilities are arranged
- Ensure that structures constructed for use as a workplace conform to the requirements of the Workplace (Health and Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

For notifiable projects, i.e. those that are likely to take more than 30 days or involve more than 500 person days of construction work, the client will undertake the following additional duties:-

- Appoint a competent and adequately resourced CDM Co-ordinator prior to detailed design of the structure
- Appoint a competent Principal Contractor
- Provide information ('Pre-Construction Information') as early as possible to the CDM Co-ordinator relevant to the health and safety of the project
- Ensure that work does not start before the welfare facilities and the Construction Phase Plan are in place
- Agree the format of the Health and Safety File with the CDM Co-ordinator and retain the file for future access after completion of the project.

# **Contractors**

## Description

A contractor is anyone who undertakes work on behalf of Thrums Veterinary Group and who is not a direct employee. Contractors may be employed to undertake maintenance and repair work, installation, construction, window cleaning, engineering and many other jobs. Work undertaken for a client by a contractor is usually covered by a civil contract.

Whilst it is good practice for health and safety requirements to be written into such a contract, health and safety responsibilities are defined by criminal law and cannot be passed on to another by a contract- either written or verbal.

Thus, in any client/contractor relationship, both parties have duties under health and safety law.

## Associated Hazards

- Movement of vehicles
- Slips, trips and falls
- Electricity/fire/gas
- Hazardous materials.

## Contractor's/Sub-Contractor's Responsibilities

All sub-contractors undertaking work on behalf of Thrums Veterinary Group:

- Must accept responsibility for complying with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions in respect of the work comprising the contract
- Must provide suitable and appropriate supervision to plan, control and monitor their operations having carried out risk assessments for the work
- Must agree risk assessments and any safe methods of working with employees before work commences
- Must inform employees of any unforeseen hazards arising from the work to enable the necessary precautions to be put in place
- Shall undertake electrical work and work involving the use of electrical tools and equipment in accordance with the appropriate regulations and industry guidance
- Must ensure plant and machinery brought on site is fully guarded and complies with the requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)

- Must make available for inspection, test certificates issued by a competent person for equipment such as lifting equipment
- Must report all accidents to employees immediately.

## **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**

### Description

Using or handling hazardous substances and medicines or drugs at work may put employees health at risk. Employers are legally required in terms of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), to control exposure to hazardous substances and to prevent ill health to employees and others who may be exposed.

Hazardous substances include: -

- Substances used directly in work activities, e.g. cleaning agents, X-ray developing chemicals, medicines, drugs, anaesthetics, disinfectants
- Substances generated during work activities e.g. dusts, fumes, waste)
- Naturally occurring substances (e.g. dust)
- Biological agents (e.g. pathogens, zoonoses, bacteria and other micro-organisms).

Effects of hazardous substances can range from mild eye irritation to chronic lung disease or even death.

### Associated Hazards

- Skin irritation
- Asthma
- Loss of consciousness
- Cancer
- Infection from bacteria and/or micro-organisms
- Possible irreversible effects, e.g. infertility.

N.B. This list is not exhaustive.

### Employees Responsibilities

Employees have responsibilities in terms of COSHH Regulations, and are expected to: -

- Take part in training programmes
- Observe container hazard symbols and instructions
- Follow safe working practices when using hazardous substances following training provided

- Report any concerns to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Wear, use correctly and maintain any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and respirable protective equipment (RPE) provided
- Return all hazardous substances to their secure location after use
- Observe all control measures correctly.

# **Dental Work**

## Description

The combination of using dental equipment, handling patients and undertaking dental work can lead to a high risk environment unless strict control measures are implemented to minimise harm to dental staff.

## Associated Hazards

- Patient handling
- Use of anaesthetics, sterilisation and antiseptic chemicals
- X-rays
- Legionella
- Cuts and sharps
- Dental tools.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Follow the Practice Standard Operating Procedures or safe systems of work, as applicable
- Only undertake dental work if trained and competent to do so
- Report any unsafe conditions or activities to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Wear the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) whilst undertaking dental work.

# Dermatitis

## Description

The word 'Dermatitis' derives from the Greek words for skin, "**derma**" and inflammation, "**itis**". Dermatitis is a skin condition usually caused by contact with something that irritates the skin or causes an allergic reaction. Contact Dermatitis affects mainly the hands but other parts of the body can also be affected. Dermatitis can be caused by:

- Wet work due to repeated and prolonged contact with water, e.g. by hand washing more than 20 times or having wet hands for more than 2 hours during a shift
- Chemical agents, e.g. through contact with chemicals, including by direct contact, splashes, contaminated work surfaces and tools, airborne particles settling on the skin
- Biological agents, e.g. through contact with plants, bacteria, spores, moulds, fungi
- Physical agents, e.g. by vibration, radiation or low humidity from air conditioning
- Mechanical agents, e.g. by abrasion.

## Associated Hazards

The main categories relating to work-related Contact Dermatitis are classified as:

- Irritant Contact Dermatitis: mainly caused by chemical and physical irritants and is the most common form of Contact Dermatitis. Common chemical irritants include solvents, soaps, detergents, latex, cosmetics, metalworking fluids, oils and alkalis
- Allergic Contact Dermatitis: common allergens include, UV cured printing inks, adhesives, wet cement, some plants, nickel and chromium which can cause an allergic reaction, hours or days after contact. In rare cases a severe reaction can occur, known as an 'anaphylactic shock'
- Photo Contact Dermatitis: is a reaction that develops where chemicals are applied to the skin, e.g. sunscreens, fragrances, creams, insecticides, disinfectants.

Symptoms of dermatitis generally include a localised rash and/or irritation of the skin and can develop into flaking, scaling, cracking, bleeding, swelling and blistering which can take days or even weeks to heal.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Observe hazard symbols and instructions displayed on product containers

- Co-operate with the employer and follow the safe working procedures to minimise contracting dermatitis
- Wear suitable PPE and use skin care products according to the control measures identified in the risk assessments
- Use work equipment and methods of work that prevents the skin coming into contact with hazardous substances
- Regularly check skin condition and report any symptoms of dermatitis to the employer and seek medical advice, if necessary
- Ensure that hands are washed and dried regularly, including before and after the wearing of protective gloves
- Use 'before and after' work creams to ensure that the skin is kept in good condition – ***remember that barrier creams are not a substitute for protective gloves.***

# **Diabetes**

## Description

Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness in the UK and can also lead to serious complications such as heart disease, kidney failure and stroke.

The level of treatment will vary greatly from individual to individual and within each individual from day to day. It may therefore be necessary to seek specialist advice.

## Symptoms Associated With Diabetes

- Weakness, faintness or hunger
- Palpitations and muscle tremors
- Strange actions or behaviour where the employee may seem confused or drunk, belligerent or even be violent
- Sweating
- Pallor
- Cold clammy skin
- A strong pulse
- Deteriorating level of response
- Shallow breathing
- Frequent urination
- Loss of weight
- Blurred vision
- Cuts or sores that take a long time to heal
- Itching skin or yeast infections
- Excessive thirst
- Dry mouth
- Leg pain.

*This list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive.*

Employees may have a warning card (MedicAlert) or bracelet, sugar lumps, tablets or an insulin syringe (which may look like a pen) among their possessions.

### Employees Responsibilities

- To co-operate with the Practice in relation to health and safety arrangements
- Follow any training, guidance and instruction
- Report any accident or incident to the Practice Manage or Senior Vet on duty.

### Diabetic Employees Responsibilities Include

- Alerting the Practice if their condition is having an adverse effect on their day-to-day ability to work or increase the likelihood of an accident.
- Notifying the employer and the DVLA if:
  - receiving treatment with insulin where the job entails driving any type of vehicle or
  - receiving any type of medication for diabetes where the job entails driving Group 2 vehicles.

If the condition is managed by diet or non-insulin medication (or both) there is no obligation to inform the DVLA provided the employee is free from certain diabetes related complications, listed on the DVLA website, or has not been advised to do so by their GP, specialist or optician.

## **Disciplinary Rules**

### Description

Thrums Veterinary Group believes that health and safety is a critical to running a business. To enable Thrums Veterinary Group to control health and safety, a number of safety rules have been established. Failure to comply with these rules may result in disciplinary action.

### Employees Responsibilities

- Not to misuse or interfere with anything provided for their health, safety and welfare
- Co-operate with their employer and conduct themselves in a way that does not create risk of harm to themselves and others
- To report any hazards to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- To comply with clearly indicated and specific safety rules
- To wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided

# **Dispensing Of Drugs And Medication**

## Description

There are many medicinal and veterinary products that are known to cause harm to persons exposed to them. Some substances may cause an allergic reaction, others, if not handled correctly, could prove fatal.

The following is general advice regarding safe handling and management practices and must be followed by all members of staff:

- Before handling the product, staff must have knowledge and understanding of the relevant COSHH assessment
- All controlled drugs must be locked away securely when not in use
- A Controlled Drugs Register will be maintained and drug use entries made at time of use
- Only nominated members of staff will handle controlled drugs
- All dispensed drugs must be labelled correctly with the name and address of the Practice; owners name and address; date when dispensed; standard warning, i.e. *'for animal treatment only'*, *" keep out of reach of children"*. In addition, the animals name, product quantity and strength; directions for use; product warning; details of food/drink withdrawal (where necessary)
- All spillages must be dealt with immediately in accordance with the relevant assessment
- All drugs must be dispensed in childproof containers unless otherwise specified by the customer
- Out of date drugs must be disposed of in the correct manner.

## Employees Responsibilities

It is recognised that some products may have harmful effects on expectant mothers and their unborn child. Some products may have a sensitising effect or cause allergic reactions. Employees have a responsibility to inform the Practice as soon as they are, or expect they are, pregnant. Also, if staff suffer from asthma or known allergies they must inform the Practice at once in order for appropriate control measures to be implemented.

Staff are requested to:

- Not eat or drink in areas where drugs are used or handled
- Wear appropriate protective clothing e.g. gloves, goggles etc
- Wash hands after handling drugs/products even when protective clothing has been used.

All staff must follow safety procedures and report any failings or hazards that affect safety.

# **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**

## Description

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) based work can potentially have serious effects on health.

DSE users can experience a range of different physical and psychological health problems including eyestrain, blurred vision, headaches, and musculoskeletal problems including repetitive strain injury (RSI) and work related upper limb disorders (WRULD).

Problems are caused by a combination of badly designed jobs, equipment and work environment. However, most of these conditions are preventable by giving attention to the way in which work is organised, and providing appropriate equipment and workplaces.

## Associated Hazards

- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)
- Work related upper limb disorders (WRULD)
- Visual fatigue
- Stress.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Inform the Practice Manager in confidence as soon as possible if a health problem arises through the use of display screen equipment
- Work in accordance with any advice or guidance given by Thrums Veterinary Group
- Familiarise themselves with the contents of the relevant risk assessments
- Request Thrums Veterinary Group to arrange and pay for eye and eyesight tests where required and if the employee is identified as a user of DSE equipment.

## **Driving At Work**

### Description

It has been estimated that up to one third of all road traffic accidents involve somebody who is 'at work' at the time, making work-related road collision the biggest single safety issue for many UK businesses. Promoting safe driving practices and a good safety culture at work is also beneficial to private driving, and could reduce the potential for employees getting injured in a road traffic accident whilst away from work.

### Associated Hazards

- The driver: competency, training, fitness and health
- The vehicle: suitability, mechanical condition, safety equipment (seat belts) and ergonomic considerations
- The journey: routes, scheduling, time, distance, weather conditions
- Crime: theft, violence, personal injury, property damage
- Breakdowns and other emergencies

### Employees Responsibilities

- Employees must follow any advice, information, instruction and training given by the employer
- All employees who are expected to drive on company business must have a valid drivers' licence for the class of vehicle they are driving
- Drivers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the vehicle is adequate for the purpose including being roadworthy, is in safe mechanical condition, is not overloaded, loads are secure and seat belts are worn
- Drivers shall comply with traffic legislation and The Highway Code, be conscious of road safety and demonstrate safe driving
- Employees driving vehicles on company business will not be under the influence of drink or drugs and must not drive whilst disqualified
- Drivers must stop after a crash or similar incident with which they are involved
- Employees must provide to the Practice Manager a copy of their driving licence and declare any driving convictions. Employees using their own vehicles for work should also provide a copy of their insurance certificate and a valid MOT certificate for the vehicle where applicable
- Employees must inform the Practice Manager if they become aware of any medical condition or take medication that might affect their ability to drive
- Promptly report defects, hazards and concerns to their Practice Manager.

## Personal Safety – Staying Safe In Your Vehicle

### Plan ahead:

- Check your route; keep a map in the vehicle
- Check if the place you are visiting has parking. If not, try and use a manned, well-lit car park
- Check you have enough fuel
- Check basic vehicle maintenance, i.e. oil, water, tyre pressure etc
- Check vehicle breakdown cover and keep the number with you
- Check you have something in the vehicle to keep you warm, e.g. coat or blanket, bottle of water, food snack and a torch in the event of unexpected, lengthy delay due to road traffic accident or inclement weather
- Ensure your office know where you are travelling to, whom you are meeting, and your expected time of return. Inform them if you change your journey plan
- Take a mobile phone with you and ensure it is fully charged (do not use the phone whilst driving)
- Keep any valuables, including handbags, mobile phones and laptops out of sight. They can easily be snatched when you stop at traffic lights, especially if windows are left open and doors unlocked
- Do not leave luggage or documents on display within your vehicle
- Do not leave the parking ticket on display – unless it is a requirement of the car park facility
- When returning to your vehicle, immediately lock the doors and drive off promptly
- Avoid taking unnecessary risks – be aware - if someone is flagging you down it may not be genuine. You may be as much help by reporting the incident by phone to the emergency services
- Do not get into a vehicle with a stranger, or offer a stranger a lift.

### In The Event Of A Vehicle Breakdown

- Try to reach the side of the road and contact the vehicle breakdown services. Advise them if you are female and alone
- Switch on hazard warning lights
- Avoid opening doors or windows to converse with strangers.
- If you decide to get out of the vehicle and await breakdown assistance (this is dependnt on how safe you feel outside the vehicle) ensure you take the ignition key with you. Lock all the doors with the exception of the passenger door. This should be left wide open so you can quickly get back into the vehicle. If you breakdown on a motorway hard shoulder it is always advisable

to get out of the vehicle and await assistance behind a barrier or away from the road side

- When the breakdown vehicle arrives, check they know your name and have your details – especially if the vehicle you were expecting is not clearly identifiable.

# Electricity

## Description

The safe management of electrical installations and equipment is essential to our business. It is therefore imperative that electrical systems and equipment are designed, constructed, selected, maintained and used with care. Not only is there a potential for harm, but loss of power supply could impact our ability to conduct business and force temporary closure.

## Associated Hazards

- Direct or indirect contact with live parts, causing shock, burns, heart fibrillation and tissue damage
- Faults that could cause a fire due to equipment overheating
- Fire or explosion where electrical arcing could be the source of ignition
- Contact with overhead lines.

## Portable equipment and testing

Definition - Equipment, which is not part of a fixed installation but is able to be connected to a fixed installation, or a generator, by means of a flexible cable via a plug and socket assembly.

This includes equipment that is either hand-held or hand-operated while connected to the supply, or is intended to be moved while connected to the supply.

Thrums Veterinary Group is responsible for ensuring that all portable electrical appliances are maintained in a safe condition and inspected at suitable intervals. Equipment will be marked to identify the date tested. The results of inspections shall be logged and records made available for inspection.

Experience of operating the maintenance system over a period, together with information on faults found, should be used to review the frequency of inspection. It should also be used to review whether and how often equipment and associated leads and plugs should receive a combined inspection and test.

Any defective equipment will be removed from use until it can be repaired/replaced, with remedial action being recorded. All items of equipment that cannot be repaired will be withdrawn from use. Under no circumstances will any makeshift or temporary electrical repairs be made on any electrical equipment.

On occasion, we may hire equipment from a reputable supplier. This equipment must be treated the same as company equipment and not subjected to abuse or neglect.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees have a responsibility for: -

- Co-operating with management arrangements for electrical safety in the workplace
- Visually checking equipment before use for any obvious defects such as cable or casing damage or scorch marks
- Reporting any defects, faults or dangerous activities
- Using equipment only in line with the manufacturers operating instructions e.g. jet washer used with additional RCD or RCBO protection
- Complying with safety rules and use work permits/lock out procedures as applicable
- Not bringing personal electrical equipment onto company premises without prior authorisation from management. If allowed, any such equipment must be tested in accordance with company procedures
- Gaining permission before using extension leads or adaptors
- Switching off any non-critical equipment when not in use
- Not attempting repairs to electrical appliances or circuits unless qualified to do so
- Exercising caution when placing drinks near to appliances or power outlets.

## **Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)**

### Description

Electromagnetic fields, EMF, occur wherever there is electricity, whether a kettle or a mobile phone base station, either electric or magnetic fields (or both) will exist in close proximity. These fields can be large or small, powerful or benign, and will mainly be based on the power being supplied to the equipment.

Employers are required to follow the requirements of the Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulation (CEMFAW) relating to EMF.

### Associated Hazards

Dependent upon the field type and frequency range, different frequencies affect the human body in different ways causing sensory and health effects e.g. nausea, vertigo, muscle contraction, deep tissue burns, thermal stress.

Other effects include interference to active or passive implanted or body worn medical devices, electric shocks sparks which can cause electro-explosive devices to initiate.

### Employees Responsibilities

Employees will: -

- Follow training, guidance and instruction given, to prevent injury or ill health
- Abide by safe controlled areas and only access if authorised
- Use protective and safety equipment provided and trained
- Report any unsafe conditions or dangerous situations
- Report any health effect potentially caused by an EMF.

# **Emergency Plan**

## Description

Thrums Veterinary Group will create a safe working environment and implement a suitable and sufficient plan to control emergency situations.

## Associated Hazards

- Fire and explosion
- Flooding
- Asbestos
- Asphyxiation
- Working at height
- Hazardous substances
- Power failure
- Patient behaviour
- Violence and aggression
- Bomb threat
- Spillage.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Comply with and follow emergency procedures as trained
- Raise the alarm on discovering an emergency situation
- Only use emergency equipment if you have been trained and authorised to use such equipment
- Report immediately any faults, damage to emergency equipment or concerns with emergency plans.

# **Epilepsy**

## Description

Epilepsy is defined as having repeated seizures which start in the brain. A brief disturbance to the brain's normal electrical activity causes the nerve cells to fire off random signals. The result is like an electrical storm which causes a temporary overload in the brain.

There are many different kinds of seizure. Some are over in seconds while others may last several minutes. People affected may lose their sense of time and place during a seizure, often losing consciousness. Each person's experience is unique.

## Recognition of Minor Epilepsy

- Sudden 'switching off'; the casualty may be staring blankly
- Slight and localised twitching or jerking of the lips, eyelids, head or limbs
- Odd 'involuntary' movements such as lip smacking, chewing, or making noises.

## Associated Hazards

Some jobs present considerable risk to a person who suffers frequent seizures, as well as to their colleagues. These can include working: -

- At height or underground
- Near open water
- On unguarded machinery or when driving
- On high voltage / open circuit electricity.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Co-operate with Thrums Veterinary Group in relation to health and safety arrangements
- Follow any training, guidance and instruction
- Report any accident or incident to the Practice Manager.

Employees suffering from Epilepsy have an additional duty to:

- Alert the Business Manager or Senior Vet on duty if his/her epilepsy is having an adverse effect on his/her everyday ability to work
- Where necessary, to inform the Business Manager or Senior Vet on duty if the condition is likely to increase the risk of an accident at work
- If part of the job requires driving, to notify the Business Manager and the DVLA if receiving treatment or medication. Notification to the DVLA is a strict legal requirement.

# Fire

## Description

Fire prevention is an important obligation for all businesses. Thrums Veterinary Group has a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who may have access to the workplace as well as adjoining businesses or premises. These general duties include safety in relation to fire hazards, both from work activities, as well as general fire safety in the workplace.

It is the responsibility of Thrums Veterinary Group to ensure that all employees, visitors and contractors are protected from the risks of fire. In order to achieve this, appropriate fire prevention, precautionary and evacuation measures shall be taken in compliance with the relevant fire regulations and recognised good practice standards including the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme.

## Associated Hazards

- Serious skin burn and bodily harm
- Asphyxiation through smoke inhalation
- Toxic fumes
- Falling building or construction materials.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees are required to:

- Practice and promote fire prevention
- Raise the alarm on discovery of a fire
- Report any concerns regarding fire safety to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty, so that shortfalls can be investigated and remedial action taken
- Receive basic training in emergency action procedures
- Follow instructions and training in relation to fire safety in the workplace
- Co-operate with management arrangements for fire prevention in the workplace
- Not chock or wedge fire doors open.

Thrums Veterinary Group does not expect employees to fight fires, however, extinguishing action can be undertaken if it is safe to do so and training has been received. On no account should a closed room be opened to fight a fire.

# **Fire Action**

## If You Discover A Fire

- Immediately operate the nearest alarm call point or notify the senior person present
- Attack the fire (only if trained and if safe to do so) with the appliances provided. **Do not take personal risks.**

The senior person present will call the fire service immediately by:

- Using the phone to dial 999
- Giving the operator the telephone number and asking for the fire service.

When the fire service reply, give the response distinctly:

- Give the company name and location (as per Fire Action Notice / Fire Plan) to the operator from which the call is being made
- Do not replace the receiver until the fire service has confirmed the details.

**Call the fire service immediately to every fire or on suspicion of a fire.**

## On Notification Of A Fire

- The senior person present will take charge of the evacuation and ensure that everybody is accounted for
- As soon as the alarm is heard, all non-essential personnel and visitors will leave the building by the nearest available exit and proceed to the nominated fire assembly point as identified on the fire action notices
- Remaining personnel will proceed with the phased evacuation of young people to an area of safety.

The senior person present will liaise with the fire officer in attendance, and arrange such assistance as the fire service may require.

**Use the nearest available exit.**

**Do not stop to collect personal belongings.**

**Do not re-enter the building until told to do so by the Senior Fire Officer.**

**In the event of a fire, the safety of a life shall override all other considerations, such as saving property or extinguishing the fire.**

# **First Aid In The Workplace**

## Description

People at work can sustain an injury or become ill. It is important that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called for in serious situations. The provision of adequate First Aid cover is essential, it can save lives and prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.

## Associated Hazards

- Bodily injuries: blows, cuts, scratches, bites, impact, crushing, stabs, grazes, scalds, falls
- Illnesses: asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc.

## First Aid Kits In Vehicles

Where at-risk employees travel in and operate from a specific vehicle, the First Aid kit may be allocated to the vehicle (where it must remain) rather than an individual. The contents of these First Aid kits must be monitored.

## First Aid Provision For Non-Employees

Whilst the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations place a duty on employers to make provision for their own employees, there is no legal responsibility towards non-employees. However, the Health and Safety Executive strongly recommends they be included in an organisation's First Aid provision. Therefore, when calculating the number of First Aiders for a workplace, the number of persons that may use or be present in the building at any one time should be taken into account.

## First-Aiders Are Responsible For:

- Ensuring that their First Aid at Work or Emergency First Aid at Work Certificate is kept up to date
- Undertaking an appropriate training course and, if required, attending refresher courses annually
- Assessing the immediate situation where First Aid is being applied, acting without placing themselves or others in danger and making the area safe
- Administering First Aid as required but within their capabilities. Where there is any doubt, managing the situation while waiting for medical assistance to arrive.

## Appointed Persons Are Responsible For:

- Only administering the level of First Aid for which they are trained
- Calling for the appropriate medical assistance.

## Employees Responsibilities

To reduce the risks of suffering personal injury or delay in getting treatment, employees must:

- Co-operate with management arrangements for First Aid in the workplace
- Know the procedure for summoning help
- Follow any guidance or instruction given, to prevent injury or ill health
- Report any hazardous or dangerous situations to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

# **Gas Safety**

## Description

Every year, a number of people die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances or flues which have not been properly installed or maintained. When gas does not burn properly, toxic carbon monoxide is produced.

## Associated Hazards

- Tiredness
- Drowsiness
- Headache
- Stomach pains
- Nausea
- Chest pains.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:

- Co-operate with management arrangements for gas safety in the workplace
- Not carry out repair work to gas appliances unless competent to do so
- Follow any training, guidance and instruction given to prevent injury or ill health
- Report any hazardous or dangerous situation to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

# **Hand Protection – Latex Gloves**

## Description

Latex products are durable and flexible, affording a high degree of protection against micro-organisms, simultaneously giving the wearer sensitivity and control. However, health risks associated with exposure to natural rubber latex (NRL) have been increasingly recognised.

## Associated Hazards

Exposure to NRL proteins can lead to a number of health problems including:

- Irritant contact dermatitis – redness, soreness, dryness or cracking of the skin exposed to latex. The symptoms could be due to contact with the product. Occasionally symptoms will disappear when contact ceases and will not reoccur
- Allergic reaction (Type I) – local or generalised rash; inflammation of the mucous membranes in the nose, red and swollen eyes with discharge and asthma-like symptoms. The effects occur almost immediately and in rare cases cause a severe reaction known as ‘anaphylactic shock’
- Allergic Reaction (Type IV) – Dermatitis and itching with oozing red blisters, localised to the hands and arms and occurring within 10-24 hours after exposure, can worsen over the following 72 hours. Chemical additives used in the NRL manufacturing process can cause this allergic response
- Skin sensitisation - The amount of latex exposure required to produce sensitisation is unknown and a product capable of causing sensitisation is also capable of causing an allergic reaction in certain people. Once sensitisation has taken place, even the slightest trace will cause symptoms to recur
- Respiratory sensitisation - Proteins in latex gloves can leak into the powder in powdered gloves. The powder can become airborne and subsequently inhaled when the gloves are removed.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Comply with this policy and follow the associated protocols/procedures/safe systems of work within their areas of work and responsibility
- Wear non-latex gloves where possible according to control measures identified in risk assessments
- Minimise the time that gloves are worn
- Report any allergic reactions to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Ensure that gloves are in good condition when worn and regularly replaced as required
- Dispose of gloves in accordance with the Practice waste procedures.



# Handling Farm Animals

## Description

Farm patients, especially the larger ones, can at times be extremely dangerous. Most patients are apprehensive of strangers and likely to react violently to sudden movement or noise.

Certain classes of stock e.g breeding males, females with young at foot, females newly separated from their young, animals which are sick and/or recovering from anaesthesia, may be unpredictable in their behaviour and must be handled with special care.

Whenever possible, the owner and/or patients usual attendant should be present to assist in patient restraint, if necessary but only if the veterinary surgeon considers that they are competent and that to do so would not put them at risk. Staff should not handle animals unless they have been adequately trained in the necessary handling techniques.

## Associated Hazards

- Physical injury from bites, scratches, crushing, kicks, etc
- Infection from faeces, urine, blood, body tissue, etc
- Allergy from hair, mites, feathers, etc.

**Some hazards present a heightened risk to expectant mothers.**

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Use equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), as instructed and trained when handling patients
- Follow good hygiene procedures
- Inform the Practice Manager of any allergies, e.g. hair, feathers or dust
- Report any unsafe situations to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty and seek assistance if required when handling patients
- Report all injuries, (bites, scratches, kicks, muscle strain, etc) to the First Aider and record them in the accident book
- Follow established health and safety rules or codes in force.

## General Guidelines

It is important to check before actually handling any farm animal that:

- The restraint equipment is suitable for the job in hand
- The area is well illuminated and that the necessary helpers are available and know what to do
- Bulls, stallions and boars should only be handled when assistance is available
- No person should enter a bull pen, stallion box or boar pen alone. Persons entering such places should decide on a way of quick exit should the situation demand it
- Protective clothing including toe-capped boots should be worn at all times
- Handlers should be protected against tetanus
- Be aware of the other potential hazards present on farms and take appropriate precautions e.g. dust, noise, fumes, vermin, agrochemicals etc
- On farms be aware of and abide by any established health and safety rules or codes in force
- Be aware that camelids bite.

# Handling Of Horses

## Description

The safe and humane handling of a horse requires the creation of a safe handling environment for both handler and horse. A horse handler must be confident of controlling a horse without risk of injury to either the horse or him/herself. A handler with a positive and confident approach, using safe methods and equipment will minimise stress, fear and possible trauma to the horse and contribute to a safe working experience for the handler.

## Associated Hazards

Horses can be unpredictable, dangerous and easily cause injury, disease or even death if not handled correctly. Obvious hazards include:

- Physical injury from bites, scratches, kicks, crushing, etc
- Infection from faeces, urine, blood, body tissue, etc
- Allergy from hair, mites, etc.

**Some hazards present a heightened risk to expectant mothers.**

It is important for the Practice to eliminate the hazards wherever possible or reduce any subsequent risks to a level as low as is reasonably practicable.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Use equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), as instructed and trained when handling horses
- Follow good hygiene procedures
- Inform the Practice Manager of any allergies, e.g. horse hair or dust
- Report any unsafe situations to the Veterinary Surgeon and seek assistance if required when handling horses
- Report all injuries, (bites, scratches, kicks, muscle strain, etc) to the First Aider and record them in the accident book
- Follow established health and safety rules or codes in force whilst on third party sites.

## General Guidance

- When applying minor dressings or bandaging a horse for the first time, the horse should be held by an assistant. Thereafter, if the horse is of suitable temperament these procedures may be carried out with the animal tied up.
- Leading out may be done with a headcollar and long line unless in doubt as to the temperament when a bridle should be used.
- Rugs should be removed or secured properly with the breast strap to prevent them from slipping back
- Always ensure that gates to the stable yard are closed
- When in doubt to a horse's temperament, a competent owner or their representative must be present before the animal is handled by a veterinary surgeon.

#### Restraint of Horses by Staff

- Sensible, practical clothing must be worn, with due regard to the fact that plastic and rubber make a noise that may frighten some horses
- Footwear should have non-slip soles and must have protective toe-caps
- Where possible floors should be dry and non-slip to prevent the horse losing its footing
- All staff involved in the restraint of horses should be proficient in the use of a twitch or lifting of the forelegs as a means of restraint

#### Restraint by client

- No client should be required to hold a horse for any minor surgical procedure unless the veterinary surgeon is in attendance
- It is the responsibility of the veterinary surgeon to explain fully the requirements and procedure to be undertaken and the methods of restraint to be adopted
- When dealing with fractious horses known to rear or strike out in front, hard hats must be worn by both the veterinary surgeon and the handler.

# Handling of Small Animals

## Description

The safe and humane handling of animals requires the creation of the correct handling environment for both handler and animal and an animal handler must be confident that they can control an animal without risk of injury. A positive and confident approach by a handler using the correct methods and equipment will minimise stress, fear and possible trauma to the animal and should ensure humane and efficient handling.

## Associated Hazards

- Patients can be unpredictable, dangerous and easily cause serious injury or disease if not handled correctly. Hazards include:
- Physical injury from bites, scratches, etc
- Infection from faeces, urine, blood, body tissue etc
- Allergy from hair, mites, feathers etc

**Some hazards present a heightened risk to expectant mothers.**

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Use equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), as instructed and trained when handling patients
- Know the whereabouts of all items of equipment. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure these items are serviceable. If they are broken or damaged, then the matter should be reported to the Practice Manager
- Follow good hygiene procedures and wash hands thoroughly after handling animals. Do not allow sick animals to lick your hands or face
- Inform the Department Manager of any allergies, eg hair, feathers or dust
- Report any unsafe situations to the Department Manager and seek assistance if required when handling patients
- Report all injuries (bites, scratches, muscle strains etc) to Department Manager and record them in the accident book
- Follow the established health and safety rules or codes in force especially in regard to barrier nursing and animals in isolation.

## Guidance on handling animals within small animal practice

- Under no circumstances must an animal be carried free in the arms without the approved means of restraint
- Dogs must not be allowed to roam free in the waiting room, and owners must be politely asked to keep them on a lead. Practice choke leads are to be substitutes for the owners' lead and collar for movements of the dogs around the practice.
- Under no circumstances should a cat, or other small animal, be carried free in the arms from one room to another. It must always be examined in a closed room and put in a basket or other suitable container when it is moved out
- The care and restraint of patients under treatment must only be undertaken as advised by the consulting Veterinary Surgeon
- Owners will not be allowed to handle/restrain the animal unless it would be safer to do so (for example if the animal is more placid when held by the owner). It is recommended that you use your judgement, and if unsure, ask for advice from a senior vet.
- Appropriate protective clothing should be worn at all times, including a disposable or washable apron when handling animals. Leather gauntlets should be worn or a towel or blanket used to reduce the risk of bites or scratches, which can be serious.
- Personal hygiene is of utmost importance, particularly when handling infectious material and hands should be washed immediately after examinations.
- Care should be taken when lifting any heavy objects or patients and in particular cadavers. Always use a stretcher or trolley and seek assistance.
- Care must be taken when handling animals recovering from anaesthetics as they may be unpredictable, dangerous and often exhibit temporary changes in temperament.

#### Post anaesthetic guidance

Special care must be taken when:-

- Moving the animal into the recovery area
- Removing any endotracheal tubes
- Manipulating the tongue to clear the airway.

#### Difficult animals, home visits and unknown animals

- Approach the animal with caution and use appropriate restraint techniques
- Assume that unknown animals will be difficult. Ask the owner about the animal's habits and past history (for details of specific hazards rather than an assurance of safety)
- Some animals are very territorial and may be more aggressive in their own homes and sedation should be considered where appropriate

- Muzzles are available for use where appropriate (always have one available when attending home visits)
- Only ask owners to assist handling animals if you are sure that they are competent to do so (as we are also responsible for their safety).

#### Animals being carried in vehicles

- Dogs and cats must be caged and must be fitted with a tight collar and lead to aid safe handling on removal
- Cats and other small animals must be in secure cages or containers – cardboard cat carriers are NOT adequate.

## Hazard Reporting

### Description

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm, ill health or injury. The associated risk is the likelihood that a hazard will cause harm, during the course of the work activity, and the severity of any potential injury.

### Associated Hazards

For example:

- Tripping on trailing wires or loose floor coverings
- Faulty equipment or electrical fittings
- Waste anaesthetic gas
- Unsheathed needles
- Obstructed emergency exit routes
- Locked Fire Exit doors
- Slippery surfaces.

**Note - This list of hazards is not exhaustive.**

**Hazard reporting includes 'near miss' reporting. Near misses are hazardous incidents with the potential to cause an injury or damage, e.g. employee tripped over a trailing cable, but no actual injury occurred.**

### Employees Responsibilities

- employees are to use the hazard reporting system as a means of communicating potentially dangerous situations or practices that may be present in the workplace
- When a hazard has been identified, it must be reported immediately to your Supervisor. It is their duty to assess the situation and introduce the necessary control measures, so far as reasonably practicable, to prevent injury or unsafe conditions.

# Health Surveillance

## Description

Health surveillance is conducted by observing, communicating and systematically watching for early signs of work-related ill health. Health surveillance is essential if there is an identifiable disease or adverse health effect related to an employees exposure to a health risk, where this has been identified by a risk assessment.

It requires implementing procedures to achieve this. These can include simple methods (e.g. looking for skin damage on hands), technical checks (i.e. audiology tests) or more involved medical examinations.

Some hazardous substances require health surveillance as a condition of use, such as asbestos.

Health surveillance records should be kept for forty years and must include:

- Surname and forename
- Permanent address
- Sex
- Date of birth
- National Insurance Number
- Date of commencement of present employment
- A historical record of jobs involving exposure to the hazardous substances requiring the health surveillance.
- Date they were carried out and by whom
- Outcome of the test/check
- The decision made by the occupational health professional in terms of fitness for task and any restrictions required. This should be factual and only relate to the employees functional ability and fitness for specific work, with any advised restrictions.

## Associated Hazards

- Noise
- Vibration
- Certain solvents, fumes, dusts and other hazardous substances
- Biological agents and animal allergens
- Ionising radiation (monitoring)

-

## Health Effects

Examples include:-

- Dermatitis
- Respiratory symptoms (allergens)
- Hand arm vibration from surgical tools
- Hearing loss.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Employees must co-operate with their employer on matters of health and safety. This extends to health surveillance where it has been identified as a necessary control measure or where there is a specific statutory requirement
- If any employees have a concern about their health or experience symptoms of ill health, they must inform the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately.

# **Infection Control**

## Description

Employees may be exposed to biological hazards through patient handling and treatment, pests, waste and cross-contamination. Infection control is an effective part of a risk management programme to improve the occupational health of staff.

## Associated Hazards

- Bacteria, viruses and fungi
- Zoonoses, e.g. Salmonella, E Coli, MRSA, Campylobacter, Leptospirosis, Ringworm , Toxocariasis
- Waste products, e.g. faeces, urine, vomit, patient carcasses.

***Note: The above list of hazards is not exhaustive. Micro-organisms can also cause allergies and/ or be toxic.***

Where significant risks are identified, Thrums Veterinary Group will prevent exposure by:

- Changing the way in which employees work, so that the job/task/equipment presenting the risk is no longer needed
- Modifying the work to remove any hazardous products or waste.

If these options are not reasonably practicable, the following approaches will be used to control infection:

- Employ principles of good occupational hygiene and follow the Practice Standard Operating Procedures, where relevant
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to employees regarding infection control and on the symptoms of infection to enable them to detect occupationally acquired illness
- Provide separate areas for washing, disinfecting and food storage away from clinical areas
- Provide equipment that is fit for purpose, designed to minimise cross contamination, regularly inspected and maintained
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), as identified by risk assessment
- Obtain advice from medically qualified practitioners with regard to any relevant health issues
- Report to the enforcing authority as required by the Reportable Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR), any reportable disease diagnosed by a registered medical practitioner, e.g. brucellosis,

anthrax, rabies, tetanus, Q fever, leptospirosis, contracted as a result of work activities

- Investigate all infection control incidents and implement any action identified as necessary to prevent a recurrence. Monitor the effectiveness of the actions.

#### Barrier Nursing

- Patients diagnosed with infectious conditions will be placed in isolation
- Cross infection to humans may be rare but all precautions will be taken to reduce the risk.

Thrum's Veterinary Group is responsible for:-

- Identifying infections which require barrier nursing
- Providing an isolation unit as far away as reasonably practicable from other patients to prevent cross infection
- Erecting suitable signs advising staff that the area is being used for quarantine purposes and to restrict entry to designated personnel only
- Wherever possible, designating a dedicated employee to the isolation area
- Providing suitable decontamination equipment and facilities for changing protective clothing
- Ensure that all waste materials, faeces etc. is bagged prior to being moved to the waste collection area
- Advise owners on the safe practices necessary to home nurse their animals.

#### Employees Responsibilities

To take care of themselves and others in the Practice where activities give rise to the potential for infection and to also:

- Observe good hygiene practice before and after handling patients particularly before eating and drinking
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with suitable waterproof dressing and wear gloves, where necessary
- Use any equipment provided, including PPE as authorised and trained
- Treat all patient faeces and urine as infectious and follow the Practice waste procedures accordingly, particularly pregnant women
- If employees experience symptoms they feel may be work related they must notify the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately
- Report to the Practice Manager any hazardous or dangerous conditions relating to infection control and barrier nursing procedures
- Report all bites and scratches to the First Aider.



# **Information, Instruction, Supervision and Training**

## Description

Preventing accidents and ill health caused by work is a key priority for Thrums Veterinary Group. Health and safety information, instruction, supervision and training helps the Practice to ensure its employees are not injured or made ill by the work undertaken; promotes a positive safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone; and enables the Practice to meet its legal duty to protect the health and safety of its employees.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Co-operate with the Practice in relation to all training aspects
- Attend all training courses identified as necessary
- Follow training, guidance and instruction to prevent injury or ill health
- Use protective and safety equipment provided
- Report hazardous or dangerous situations to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

# **Laboratory Safety**

## Description

Veterinary laboratory activities may involve testing, e.g. blood, urine and faeces of patients.

## Associated Hazards

- Hazardous substances including those leading to infection, e.g. from blood and bodily fluids
- Slips and trips
- Physical injury, e.g. broken glass.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Follow training, guidance and instruction given
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety equipment provided
- Follow good hygiene practice and refrain from eating and drinking in the laboratory
- Report any hazardous or dangerous situations to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

# **Ladders and Stepladders**

## Description

Over a third of all reported falls from height incidents involve ladders or stepladders, many injuries are caused by inappropriate or incorrect selection and use of equipment.

By conducting a risk assessment, it may be determined that ladder use is acceptable for work of short duration (less than 30 minutes), providing three points of contact can be maintained whilst working from the ladder or steps, necessary control measures and training are adhered to. The duration of work should not determine whether ladders are the most suitable means of working at height. Selection of ladders should be considered, as part of a risk assessment, if the intended work is low risk and safer means of working at height (e.g. a fully guarded working area or mobile elevating work platform) are not reasonably practicably.

## Associated Hazards

- Failure of the ladder itself, causing persons or equipment to fall
- Items falling from the ladder
- Users over-reaching or over stretching from the ladder
- Overloading of the ladder
- The ladder slipping and falling due to not being correctly secured
- Faulty, damaged or poorly maintained equipment
- Inappropriate use of ladders
- Manual handling when using ladders.

## Safe Use of Leaning Ladders

- Leaning ladders should be appropriate for the job and not exceed 9 metres in length
- Leaning ladders should comply with British/European standards, ladders purchased should conform to EN131 Professional standard
- Domestic ladder equipment should not be used
- Leaning ladders must be undamaged and free of paint or any other coating which could hide cracks or splits
- Leaning ladder stiles must be undamaged and unbent
- Wood should be free of warping or splitting
- Metal ladders must be free from corrosion, sharp edges or dents and rungs free from distortion

- Footpads must be in good condition
- Leaning ladders should have slip-resistant rubber or plastic feet
- Leaning ladders must be free of missing/loose rungs
- Leaning ladders should be regularly inspected and defective ladders removed from use
- If ground conditions are poor, ladder feet should be tied into stakes in the ground, with a large flat wooden board as a base
- During use, leaning ladders should extend at least 3 rungs (1 m) past the landing point or above the highest rung on which feet rest
- Leaning ladders should be positioned one metre out at the base for every four metres in height
- Leaning ladders should be secured at the top or, if this is not practicable, should be secured near the bottom, weighted or footed to prevent flipping. Footing should be considered a last resort
- Leaning ladders should have a strong upper resting point (i.e. not glazing or plastic gutters) – a stability device may be required to ensure an adequate upper resting point
- The overlap for extendable leaning ladders should be up to 5m closed length 2 rungs, 5-6m closed length 3 rungs, and over 6m closed length 4 rungs
- There should only be one person on the ladder at any one time
- Employees should be trained to transport tools in a shoulder bag or wear a tool belt. Consider the use of a gin wheel or other lifting equipment
- employees should be fully trained in ladder use
- Never use ladders in strong winds or within 6 horizontal meters of overhead power lines (unless it has been made dead or protected with insulation)
- Do not move or extend the ladder whilst it is in use.

#### Safe Use of Stepladders

- Stepladders should be of robust construction and in good condition, any replacements purchased should conform to EN131 Professional standard
- Stepladders should not be used to access another level, unless they have been specifically designed for this purpose
- Any retaining cords or straps must be of equal length and in good condition
- Any metal braces between the legs must be locked into place
- Legs of stepladders must be opened fully when in use
- All legs need to be firmly and squarely placed on a solid level surface
- The stepladder should be positioned close to the work to prevent over-stretching

- The stepladder should be placed at right angles to the work if the work could cause sufficient force to make the stepladder unsuitable if used sideways
- The top tread should not be used unless it has been designed as a platform with a secure handhold
- When in use, the knees should be kept below the top of the steps for support and stability
- Only one person should use the stepladder at any one time.

### Employees Responsibilities

Employees will: –

- Follow instruction, training and information provided by the employer on the safe use of ladders
- Check whether the type of work activity requires the use of a ladder; establish whether the ladder is suitable for the task and match the ladder to the job. Work should not commence if a point of work risk assessment deems a ladder unsuitable for the task, until further instruction from a supervisor or line manager is sought
- Ensure the ladder is in good condition; check that it has been inspected and stored correctly; any repairs have been carried out correctly; that it has been regularly maintained and that it is free from defects, of good construction and of sound material
- Carry out visual inspection prior to use, following an event which may have caused damage to the ladder and when moving to a different environment (e.g. from a dirty area to a clean area)
- Avoid holding items whilst climbing (e.g. use a tool bag or belt)
- Do not use defective ladders and report any defective ladders to the employer immediately
- Make use of any personal protective equipment provided by the employer
- Avoid over reaching through proper positioning of the ladder. Employees naval/belt buckle should remain within the styles
- Always grip the ladder and face the rungs while climbing or descending. Never slide down the styles
- Advise the employer of any health issues, which may affect the ability to work at height.

# Lasers

## Description

LASER is the abbreviation for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission Radiation.

There are many kinds of lasers and the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) laser is the most common laser used by veterinary surgeons. CO<sub>2</sub> lasers deliver an intense beam of infrared light at a specific wavelength for the treatment of soft tissue and surgical procedures.

This arrangement covers use of Class 4 Laser products for veterinary surgical operations.

## Associated Hazards

- Eye damage
- Fire
- Burns
- Electrical – high voltages
- Chemical/fumes when cutting.

Thrums Veterinary Group will also ensure that:-

- Only authorised persons will be permitted to install, adjust and operate the equipment
- Operators are provided sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to use the laser equipment
- Only competent people use the equipment
- Areas where laser equipment is used are controlled, e.g. using display warning signs, barriers, dedicated secure rooms. These areas must be restricted to authorised people only
- Controlled areas are protected against unintentional direction or reflection of the laser beam
- Access to the light source is controlled to prevent skin and eye damage using, e.g. screening, filters, interlocks
- Equipment is regularly maintained following manufacturer's instructions
- Maintenance and repair of laser equipment is only carried out by competent people
- Beam guards and/or screens are correctly fitted and maintained
- Equipment is checked before use including all safety interlocks and beam indicator devices

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided as identified by risk assessment (e.g. eye and skin protection)
- When not in use, the equipment is secured, preventing unauthorised access. The key to the power isolation should be secured
- Equipment that has been identified as “Unsafe to use” should be labelled as such and taken out of service
- The effectiveness of these arrangements are regularly monitored and reviewed.

### Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Follow training, guidance and instruction given, to prevent injury or ill health
- Maintain safety control areas and restrict access to authorised persons
- Use protective and safety equipment provided
- Stop the work safely and report to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty any hazardous or dangerous situations.

# **Laundry Safety**

## Description

Practice policy is to ensure that the laundry equipment and area is safe for use by the equipment operators and others who have access to the area.

## Associated Hazards

- Manual handling, entrapment and musculoskeletal injuries
- Slips, trips, falls
- Biological risks from infected laundry
- Fire
- Occupational dermatitis from laundry chemicals.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Use equipment as instructed and follow manufacturer's guidelines
- Not to interfere with any safety device fitted on laundry equipment
- Report any faulty equipment to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Familiarise themselves with COSHH assessments and safe handling of laundry chemicals before use
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as provided
- Not to eat or drink in the laundry area
- Maintain good personal hygiene.

# **Legionella**

## Description

Legionnaire's disease is one of a group of diseases known collectively as Legionellosis which is contracted by people inhaling aerosols contaminated with Legionella bacteria. Legionella bacteria can be found in showers, taps, fire sprinkler systems, hose pipes, water jets, fountains, and hot water systems containing dead-legs. The disease can affect anyone however, the old and weak are more susceptible.

## Associated Hazards

- Legionnaire's disease, Pontiac fever, Lochgoilhead fever.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must: -

- Co-operate with Thrums Veterinary Group arrangements for the control of Legionella in the workplace
- Follow any information, training and instruction given by Thrums Veterinary Group to prevent ill health
- Report to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator on any disease diagnosed as Legionnaires' Disease
- Report to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator or Senior Vet on duty, any hazardous or dangerous situations.

# Leptospirosis

## Description

Two types of Leptospirosis can affect employees in the UK:-

**Weil's Disease:** a serious and sometimes fatal infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats.

**The Hardjo form of Leptospirosis:** this is transmitted from cattle to humans. Symptoms include: a flu-like illness, severe headache and vomiting.

With both forms bacteria can enter the body through cuts and scratches, through the lining of the mouth, throat and eyes. This is normally after contact with infected urine or contaminated water found in sewers, ditches and ponds.

## Associated Hazards, Those At Risk:-

- Farmers, sewer or ground workers
- Vets and abattoir workers
- Dairy farmers or fishery workers
- People who participate in outdoor water sports in contaminated water.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Co-operate with management arrangements for the prevention and control of Leptospirosis in the workplace
- Follow information, guidance and instruction given by the employer
- Report any incidences of ill health to the employer
- Make full and proper use of all personal protective equipment that has been issued to them
- Maintain a high level of personal hygiene.

# **Lone Working**

## Description

Employers have a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their employees including lone workers. Lone workers include anyone working alone without direct contact or supervision. Examples include a vet on callout and persons working in a Practice on their own.

## Associated Hazards

- Work related injury
- Hazardous substances, medicines, drugs, zoonoses, etc
- Fire
- Violence at work
- Manual handling activities
- Transport breakdown/accident en route
- Severe weather conditions
- Poor visibility/lighting.

## Employees Responsibilities

Lone workers will:-

- Follow rules and procedures designed to protect their safety
- Provide information on their whereabouts during working hours to the employer
- Report all incidents relating to lone working.

# **Maintenance**

## Description

Work equipment in a veterinary practice includes X-ray equipment, operating tables, chairs, ladders, surgical equipment, cages, trolleys, computers, printers, restraints, scales, centrifuges, etc.

By using safe, well maintained equipment, operated by adequately trained staff, accidents and associated financial costs can be reduced or prevented. Maintenance includes cleaning and adjusting.

## Associated Hazards

- Bodily injury
- Exposure to hazardous substances or radiation
- Fire.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Follow instruction, guidance and safe systems of work in respect of equipment or machinery maintenance
- Notify the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty of any problems or hazards with any equipment
- Not carry out any maintenance activities on machinery unless trained to do so
- Make full and proper use of all personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been issued to them.

# **Manual Handling**

## Description

Manual handling is defined as the supporting and transporting of a load by human effort and includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. Load means equipment, materials, substances or patients.

Manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work and causes over a third of all workplace injuries which include work related Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) such as upper and lower limb pain/disorders, joint and repetitive strain injuries.

Manual handling injuries can occur anywhere in the workplace.

## Associated Hazards

- Heavy, unstable or unpredictable loads
- Restrictive working environment
- Uneven or wet floors
- Poor manual handling technique.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must: -

- Follow the safe system of work introduced by the Practice
- Use any mechanical aids that have been provided for their use and for which they have been trained. Any faults with mechanical aids should be immediately reported to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Assist and co-operate with the process of the assessment of risk
- Attend training sessions as required and apply knowledge gained from training
- Report all accidents, injuries, near misses and any unsafe practices
- Inform the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty if they are unable to undertake their normal manual handling duties because of injury, illness or any other condition
- Not undertake any manual handling operation that they believe is beyond their capability.

## **Monitoring, Inspection And Review**

### Description

There is a legal requirement to monitor and review health and safety arrangements. The frequency of monitoring and review will be decided by the level of risk, competence of people, legal requirements, results of accidents and the recommendations of manufacturers or suppliers of equipment.

Monitoring includes:-

- Establishing compliance with Thrums Veterinary Group Health and Safety Policy, and safe systems of work (e.g. Standard Operating Procedures)
- Inspecting and testing of work equipment
- Inspecting workplace locations and activities
- Establishing competence of workers
- Establishing the wellbeing and health of workers.

### Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Check equipment, including any personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied, is safe before use
- Co-operate with management arrangements in respect of workplace inspections
- Follow any training, information, guidance and instruction given by the Practice for checking and inspection of safe practices
- Report any hazards or defects to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately.

# **New And Expectant Mothers**

## Description

Thrums Veterinary Group is committed to protecting the health and safety of all new and expectant mothers. The phrase "new and expectant mother" means an employee who is pregnant, or who has given birth within the previous six months or who is breastfeeding. "Given birth" is defined as having delivered a living child or, after 24 weeks of pregnancy, delivered a stillborn child.

## Associated Hazards

- Physical agents (e.g. handling patients, standing for long periods of time, radiation)
- Biological agents (e.g. zoonoses)
- Chemical agents (e.g. medicines/drugs anaesthetic gases)
- Working conditions (e.g. workload, working alone or stress).

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Report to the Practice as soon as pregnancy is confirmed
- Follow advice and information given by the Practice in relation to safe working practices
- Report any hazardous situation to the Practice so that arrangements for the appropriate remedial action can be taken
- Co-operate with arrangements for health and safety and use all protective and safety equipment provided by the Practice.

# **Noise**

## Description

Hearing damage caused by exposure to noise at work can be permanent and incurable. Hearing loss is usually gradual due to prolonged exposure to noise.

## Associated Hazards

- Hearing damage/loss
- Tinnitus.

Employers are required by the Control of Noise at Work Regulations to comply with the following noise exposure values: -

### **Lower exposure action values:-**

- Daily or weekly exposure of 80dB(A)
- Peak sound pressure of 135dB(C).

### **Upper exposure action values: -**

- Daily or weekly exposure of 85dB(A)
- Peak sound pressure of 137dB(C).

There are also **Exposure Limit Values (ELV)** which must not be exceeded: -

- Daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87dB(A)
- Peak sound pressure of 140dB (C).

The ELV should account for any hearing protection provided and worn.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Comply with signs and notices identifying hearing protection zones
- Wear hearing protection where identified by risk assessment. Use, keep clean and store hearing protection as instructed and as trained to do. Report any faults of the hearing protection to the Practice Manager
- Report any noisy areas or equipment to the Practice Manager
- Attend hearing checks (audiometric testing), where required.

# **Operating Rooms**

## Description

The operating rooms must be available for the conduct of sterile surgery at all times.

## Associated Hazards

- Patient handling
- Hazardous and dangerous substances
- X-rays
- Cuts, injections, scratches.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Follow the Practice Standard Operating Procedures or safe systems of work for working in the operating room
- Not take food or drink into the operating room
- Only undertake work in an operating room if trained and competent to do so
- Report any unsafe conditions or activities to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE) whilst working in the operating room.

# Oxygen

## Description

Oxygen is very dangerous and reactive. Pure oxygen, at high pressure from a cylinder, can react violently with common materials, e.g. grease, whereas many materials will burn vigorously in oxygen e.g. textiles, rubber.

## Associated Hazards

- Increased oxygen levels in the air from leaking equipment
- Use of materials not compatible with oxygen
- Use of oxygen in equipment not designed for oxygen service
- Incorrect or careless operation of oxygen equipment
- Maladministration of oxygen to patients.

## Employees Responsibilities

- To comply with Standard Operating Procedures for administration of oxygen to patients
- To not use a naked flame where oxygen is being used
- To deliver oxygen only if trained and authorised to do so
- To report any adverse incidents and any faults with the equipment.

# **Personal Protective Equipment**

## Description

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. PPE will only be used as a last resort when preventative or other control measures cannot be applied.

PPE includes protective gloves, aprons, overalls, hearing protection, glasses, face masks.

## Associated Hazards

- Bodily injuries: - bites, scratches, impact, crushing, stabs, cuts, grazes, scalds, falling objects
- Health hazards: - dust, fumes, vapours, gases, chemicals, bacteria, viruses, fungi
- Noise and vibration
- Slipping and falling
- Electrical hazards
- Ionising radiation.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must: -

- Make full and proper use of all PPE that has been issued
- Inspect all PPE before use to ensure it is suitable, clean and undamaged
- Report any defective PPE to the Practice Manager
- Report any discomfort or ill health experienced as a consequence of wearing the equipment
- Not undertake any work unless the correct PPE is being worn and fits correctly
- Store PPE securely at all times and minimise any damage during storage.

# **Pest Control**

## Description

Pests can be divided into three groups: - rodents, insects and birds. They can enter a building via open doors and windows as well as gaps in building structures, looking for warmth, food and shelter. Unfortunately they can spread disease, viruses, bacteria and parasites so any infestation requires urgent action. Pests also cause damage to premises and equipment by their habits, for example burrowing and gnawing.

## Associated Hazards

- Bacterial contamination (bacteria on the pest or in droppings)
- Physical contamination (droppings, eggs, hair and dead bodies)
- Cross contamination (bacteria left on surfaces and utensils)
- Chemical contamination (poor and uncontrolled use of insecticides)
- Damage to premises.

## Employees Responsibilities

- Ensure windows and doors are kept closed when not in use
- Cleaning schedules are followed and premises are kept clean and tidy
- All spillages and food debris will be cleared away immediately to ensure that a good standard of housekeeping is achieved at all times
- Not to allow waste receptacles to overflow, especially those in external areas
- Good storage procedures will be followed and regular stock rotation will be employed to identify any pest activity that may be present
- Inform the employer of any evidence of infestation
- Not interfere with any measures taken by the employer to control pest infestation.

# **Portable Electrical Appliances**

## Description

Portable electrical appliances are generally classed as equipment that has a lead (cable) and plug. Typical equipment used by a Veterinary Practice includes autoclaves, centrifuges, washing machines, electric clippers, computer equipment, kitchen appliances, portable heaters, X-ray screens, portable lighting, and equipment such as cable extension leads. Where equipment is powered from the mains electrical supply there may be a significant electrical hazard that will need to be specifically controlled.

## Associated Hazards

- Shock or burns
- Uncontrolled start up of equipment
- Fire or explosion
- Trips and falls.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Visually check the equipment before and during use, looking for signs of faults, overheating or damage to the equipment including to the wiring, plugs, casing and any guarding
- Immediately stop work if faults are found and report any defects to the Practice Manager
- Do not carry out any electrical repairs unless trained to do so
- Take care of the equipment that has been provided
- Disconnect the equipment from the supply before making any repairs
- Ensure that equipment is plugged into the correct supply by an approved method, do not attempt to use a makeshift temporary connection
- Do not bring into the workplace personal electrical equipment unless authorised to do so.

# Respiratory Protective Equipment

## Description

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety from harmful substances contaminating the air in the form of dust, mist, vapour, gas or fume or from oxygen-deficient atmospheres that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.

## Associated Hazards

- Harmful substances, including chemicals and biological agents in the air - in the form of dust, fumes, vapours, gas, mist resulting from a work activity or present in the working environment
- Oxygen-deficient atmospheres where a supply of clean air is needed.

RPE must be adequate and suitable. It must be right for the hazard, matched to the job, the environment, the exposure level and the wearer so that the wearer can work freely and without additional risks due to the RPE.

## Types Of RPE

**Respirators** (filtering devices) can be tight fitting or loose and use filters to remove contaminants from the air being breathed in.

**Breathing apparatus** can be tight fitting or loose and use a supply of breathing-quality air from an air cylinder or compressed air.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Wear RPE as provided and trained to use
- Carry out pre-use checks of RPE every time it is used
- Follow manufacturer's instructions
- For tight fitting face pieces, carry out a 'fit check' when the RPE is first put on
- Not wear RPE if a good seal cannot be achieved
- Be clean shaven to achieve a good seal when using tight fitting face pieces
- Report any defective RPE to the employer

- Report any discomfort or ill health experienced as a consequence of wearing RPE
- Inform the employer of pre-existing or new medical conditions that may affect the use of RPE.

# **Risk Assessment**

## Description

In many workplaces there are risks, which may affect the health and safety of employees. There is an absolute duty on employers to 'conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments' in the workplace, under Regulation 3 of the management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations. In many instances, straightforward measures can control risks, and whilst the law does not expect employers to eliminate all risks, they are required to protect people so far as is reasonably practicable.

## Associated Hazards

- Physical, chemical and/or biological agents
- Working conditions and processes
- Manual handling activities
- Exposure to infection
- Work-related stress
- Workstations
- Other workplace hazards.

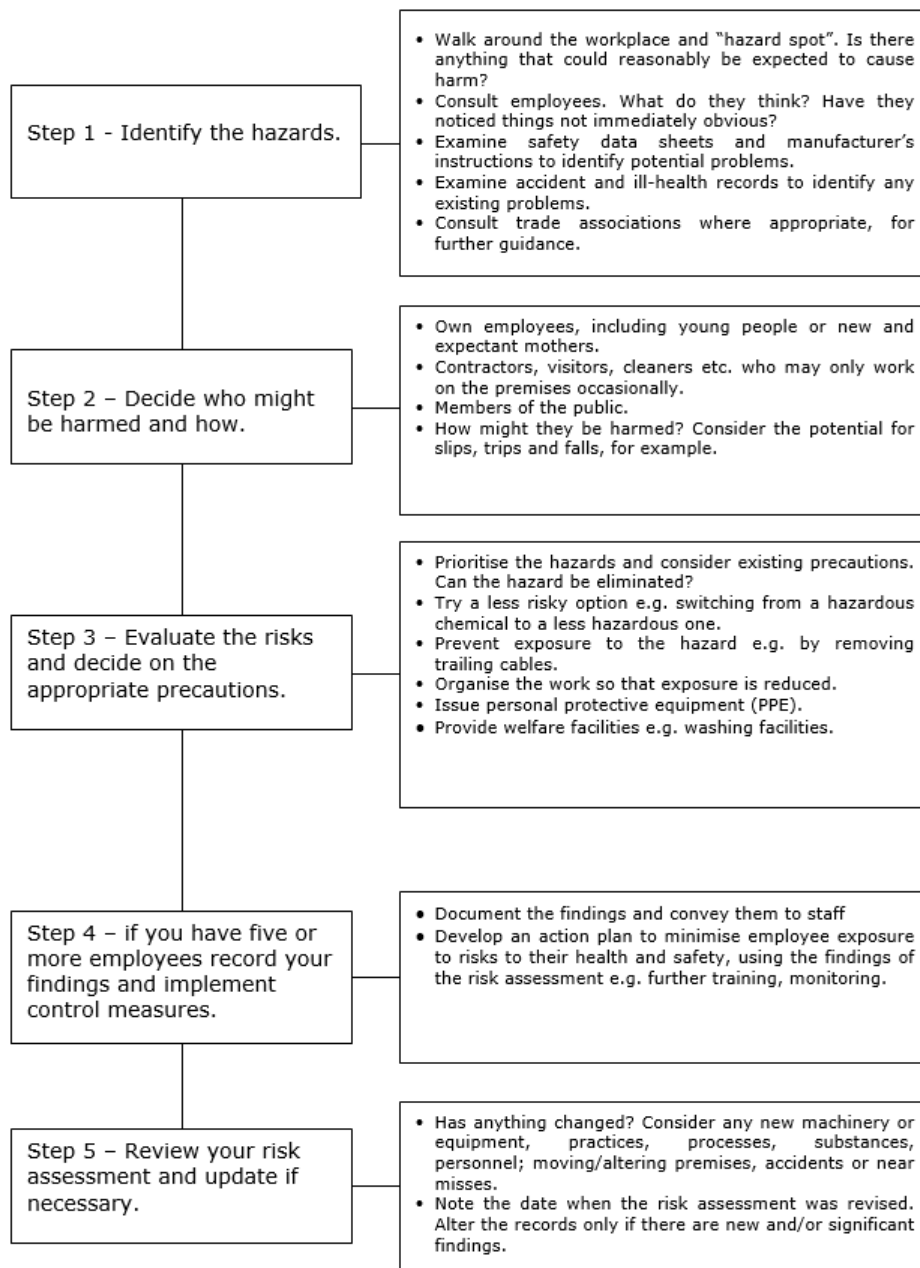
## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Co-operate with Practice arrangements in respect of workplace risk assessments
- Follow any training, information, guidance and instruction given by the Practice
- Comply with any control measures laid down within risk assessments
- Report any hazards or defects to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately
- Make full and proper use of any personal protective equipment (PPE) provided.



# Risk Assessment Process



# Safety Signs

## Description

Safety signs include the use of illuminated signs, hand and acoustic signals (e.g. fire alarms), spoken communication and the marking of pipe work containing dangerous substances. Traditional signboards such as prohibition and warning signs may need to be supplemented to comply with more specific legislation, e.g. photo luminescent signs for fire exits and fire-fighting equipment.

Thrums Veterinary Group will provide specific safety signs whenever there is a risk that cannot be avoided or controlled by other means, for instance by engineering controls and safe systems of work. Where a safety sign would not help to reduce that risk, or where the risk is not significant, there is no need to provide a sign.

All safety signs are colour coded and each colour has a meaning, for example: -

- White circle with red edging and a diagonal line indicates **PROHIBITED** e.g. no smoking



- Blue signs indicate that it is **MANDATORY** to carry out an action, e.g. the wearing of personal protective equipment



- A triangular sign with black edging and a yellow background indicates **WARNING** of a hazard and would normally contain a black pictogram, e.g. radiation



- Green signs identify or locate safety equipment as well as marking emergency escape routes.



## Employees Responsibilities

- Comply with any signs and notices on display
- Report damaged signs to the Practice Manager.

# **Standard Operating Procedures**

## Description

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are common in Veterinary Practice and set out how a particular process or task will be carried out. These can also be used to detail the possible dangers and risks associated with an activity. The health and safety aspects of an SOP are generally developed using the findings of risk assessments and contribute to further controlling the risks associated with a task. SOPs are particularly useful as support in the training of staff.

## Typical SOPs Are Documented For:-

- Surgical operations
- Use of anaesthetics, hazardous substances, medicines
- Dealing with wastes, pathogens, zoonoses, infection
- Sending pathological samples to external organisations
- Lifting and manual handling operations
- Use of medical and veterinary equipment, e.g. scavenging, autoclaves, centrifuges, gas cylinders
- Injection procedures
- Use of X-ray equipment
- Handling patients.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Carry out work in accordance with the SOP
- Co-operate with Practice arrangements in respect of SOP procedures
- Report any inaccuracies of the SOP to the Practice Manager
- Follow instruction, training and guidance given by the Practice.

# **Storage And Dispensing Of Drugs And Medication**

## Description

Many drugs and medicines found in a veterinary practice are classified as hazardous and require suitable procedures for storage and dispensing.

## Employees Responsibilities

Some products may have a sensitising effect or cause allergic reactions to employees.

Certain products may have harmful effects to expectant mothers and their unborn child.

Employees should inform the Practice as soon as they are, or suspect they are, pregnant. Also, if staff suffer from asthma or known allergies they must inform the Practice at once in order for appropriate control measures to be implemented.

Staff are required to:-

- Not eat or drink in areas where medicines or drugs are used or handled
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where required by risk assessment
- Wash hands after handling drugs/products even when protective clothing has been used.

All staff must follow safety procedures and report any failings or hazards that affect safety.

## Stress

### Description

Stress is not a weakness and can affect anyone. Thrums Veterinary Group recognises that there is a difference between pressure and stress at work and that taking action to reduce the risk of ill-health, because of work-related stress, leads to the creation of a good working environment and a healthy workforce.

Although a certain amount of pressure can be motivational and enable employees to perform at their best, it is when too much pressure is experienced, leaving employees unable to cope, that stress can result.

The Health and Safety Executive has defined stress as 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

Work-related stress can be tackled by the company and its employees working together to identify sources of stress and how those can be managed.

Sources of stress can include:

- Demands of the role, leading to an unmanageable workload
- Being under challenged or having no autonomy, leading to a lack of job satisfaction or low esteem
- Environmental factors, such as noise, temperature, lone working
- Lack of support from management or colleagues
- Organisational changes and how those are communicated and managed
- Relationships and being subjected to unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying.

### Employees responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Follow Employees reporting procedures if they are experiencing work-related stress. It will be beneficial to do this at an early stage, to prevent a situation from getting worse
- Contribute to the development of any work-related stress risk assessment carried out by the employer
- Read all communications from the employer that concern work related changes and the reasons behind those
- Attend any counselling or stress management training sessions provided by the employer.

# Vibrating Tools

## Description

Vibration White Finger (VWF) is the most common symptom of Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). It is possible to suffer from HAVS when using veterinary equipment, e.g. grooming clippers, depending on their design, condition and exposure period. The first sign of VWF is when fingertips become white, or feel numb.

For HAVS there are prescribed legal Exposure Action Values (EAV) and Exposure Limit Values (ELV) where:-

- EAV is the amount of daily exposure (8 hours) to vibration at, which if reached or exceeded, employers are required to take action to reduce the risk
- ELV is the maximum amount of vibration which an employee may be exposed to in any single day (8 hours).

The legal values and levels for HAVS are:-

- Exposure Action Value (EAV) is **2.5 m/s<sup>2</sup> A (8)**
- Exposure Limit Value (ELV) is **5.0 m/s<sup>2</sup> A (8)**

## Associated Hazards

- Damage to blood cells
- Reduced circulation
- Nerve damage to the hands and fingers
- Loss of manual dexterity, grip, strength, etc.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Report tingling, numbness, pain and change of colour (white) in the fingers to the Practice Manager
- Report any loss of manual dexterity or loss of strength to the Practice Manager
- Use equipment provided and as trained
- Avoid gripping tools too tightly

- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) provided
- Check all equipment before use
- Report all defective equipment to the Practice Manager.

# **Violence And Aggression**

## Description

The Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related violence is 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'. Employees whose job requires them to deal with the public can be at higher risk of violence.

## Associated Hazards:-

- Physical attacks
- Verbal abuse
- Low morale
- Stress or depression.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Attend appropriate training sessions regarding violence or aggression at work
- Report to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty, any incidents of violent or threatening behaviour
- Complete an incident report form regarding the event.

## **Visit By An Enforcement Officer**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation conveys powers on inspectors/ fire officers who are appointed by the relevant enforcing authority to enforce statutory compliance.

Non-compliance may lead to prosecution but this is always seen as a last resort, except for:-

- Failure to comply with an Improvement or Prohibition Notice
- Failure to manage fire safety or notify the Fire Service of any significant risks on the premises
- A breach of law that has significant potential for harm, regardless of whether it caused an injury
- Reckless disregard for the health and safety of workers or others
- Repeated breaches of legal requirements where it appears that management is neither willing nor structured to deal with adequately
- Substantial legal contravention, where there has been a serious accident or a case of ill health.

Employees Responsibilities Include:-

- Not obstructing any reasonable request made by an Enforcement Officer
- Complying and co-operating with requests by the officer
- Follow instruction and guidance given by the Practice.

# **Waste Disposal**

## Description

Thrums Veterinary Group has a legal 'duty of care' to ensure that it produces, stores, handles, transports and disposes of its business waste without harm to human health or the environment.

Examples of waste produced include:-

- Office waste, e.g. waste paper, empty printer cartridges, fluorescent tubes sanitary and hygienic wastes
- Industrial waste, e.g., packaging, defective products, electrical waste, scrap metal, chemicals
- Pharmaceuticals, carcasses, blood, body parts, sharps (blades, needles), infected waste, X-ray materials
- Food wastes.

## Associated Hazards

- Fire
- Cuts, abrasions
- Health hazards
- Poor housekeeping.

## Employees Responsibilities

Practice good personal hygiene. All personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn as instructed; defective equipment should be reported.

Details of incidents, accidents, illness or suspected symptoms, which may relate to waste, should be notified to the Practice Manager.

Employees will:-

- Dispose of waste as instructed
- Inform the Practice Manager of any unidentified waste
- Not climb onto skips or other waste receptacles
- Inform the Practice Manager if waste receptacles are full and need emptying
- Not remove items from waste receptacles

- Use the equipment provided as instructed and trained
- Follow all information, instruction and training provided.

# **Welfare**

## Description

The provision of welfare facilities in the workplace is taken seriously and is applicable to all areas of the Practice premises. Welfare facilities will also be provided for those people who are not employees but who may use the premises infrequently, e.g. clients, visitors and contractors.

For disabled persons it may be necessary to specifically adapt parts of the workplace to make facilities accessible to them, e.g. toilets, washbasins, doors, passageways, etc.

Thrums Veterinary Group will assess the safety requirements of the workplace based on risks and implement adequate control measures to minimise harm with regard to:-

- The floors and traffic routes; providing suitable standing for vehicles and persons
- The safe use and maintenance of lifts, where relevant
- Housekeeping, including safe and frequent removal of waste and regular cleaning of the workplace
- The position, integrity and visibility of transparent windows, doors, gates, etc
- Windows or other translucent surfaces in walls, partitions, gates or doors with regard to contact with people and breakage.

In the interests of safety, windows and patio doors should be constructed of safety glass to a recognised standard or alternatively be fitted with a suitable safety film to prevent the glass from shattering. Thrums Veterinary Group will also clearly mark the doors and windows affected in a prominent position, to prevent people colliding with them when closed.

- Any windows accessible to people above ground level, where a fall could result in personal injury, and which can be opened, will be fitted with suitable restrictors to prevent them being opened and thereby prevent any such fall. To permit adequate natural ventilation in the room the opening gap will be restricted to approximately 100mm
- Safe methods for cleaning or replacing lights or windows
- Security
- Lighting.
  - to enable good access and egress particularly in an emergency
  - work is carried out by natural light wherever possible
  - lights are positioned to avoid risks, e.g. fire.

### Employees Responsibilities

Welfare facilities provided and maintained by Thrums Veterinary Group are for the benefit and safety of all employees and visitors. Employees have a responsibility to use them in a proper manner and not damage or misuse any equipment provided.

Personal responsibility should be taken for clearing personal waste and cleaning of utensils when eating or drinking on the premises.

### Employees Will:

- Co-operate with Practice arrangements for good housekeeping in the workplace
- Report to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty any hazardous or dangerous situations including damage to floors, doors, windows, fixings, signs, defective lighting, discomfort experienced as a consequence of lighting in the workplace
- Follow training, guidance and instruction to prevent injury or ill health
- Not smoke within any workplace premise or in any other area or vehicle that is designated as 'Non-Smoking'.

# **Work Equipment**

## Description

Equipment used in Veterinary Practices includes photocopiers, laboratory equipment, surgical, ultrasonic, dental and X-ray equipment, stethoscopes, display screens, ladders, scales, operating tables, vehicles, restraints, etc.

## Associated Hazards

- Sharp objects
- Electric shock
- Fire, overheating or explosion
- Gas, liquid, vapour or hazardous substance
- Excessively hot or cold surfaces.

Note: The above listing is not exhaustive.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees will: -

- Use work equipment safely and in accordance with the information, instruction and training provided
- Only use, clean and maintain the equipment that they are trained on
- Visually check and carry out other checks, required by risk assessment, prior to and during use and report any faults and unsafe conditions to the Practice Manager
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions
- Co-operate with the Practice in the management arrangements for the provision and use of work equipment
- Seek the permission of the Practice Manager before bringing any personal items of equipment to work
- Make full and proper use of any personal protective equipment (PPE) provided
- Inform the employer if they are taking any prescription medications that may affect their ability to safely operate any item of work equipment.

# X-Ray Equipment

## Description

The Practice uses X-ray equipment for diagnostic imaging of patients and must conform to the Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017. This arrangement describes the basic safety requirements for the protection of the health of employees and others against the dangers arising from ionising radiation.

This arrangement does not cover radiotherapy or use of Computer Tomography (CT) equipment.

## Associated Hazards

- Radiation burns and eye damage
- Risk to unborn child
- Small, long term risk of malignant disease.

## Employees Responsibilities

All Employees will: -

- Only use the X-ray equipment and related equipment including personal protective equipment (PPE), personal dosimeters, if authorised and trained to do so
- Make reference to and acknowledge risk assessments compiled for x-ray use
- Ensure that the use of the x-ray machine is limited to nominated personnel only. Such employees should work in accordance with any safe operating procedures implemented by the practice
- Inspect the equipment prior to use and immediately report all defects to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- All female employees aware that they are pregnant or breast-feeding will inform the Practice to ensure exposure to radiation control measures can be adopted. This will prevent the likely dose to the foetus exceeding 1mSv for the remainder of the pregnancy.

## **X-Ray**

### Description

The Practice in consultation with a Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA), has designated a specific area where radiography is to be conducted. This area will so far as reasonably practicable be solely used for this purpose, however if the area is required to be used for dual purposes then no other activity will be conducted whilst radiography takes place.

### Associated Hazards

- Radiation burns and eye damage
- Risk to unborn child
- Small, long term risk of malignant disease.

### Employees Responsibilities When Using X-Ray Machines For Small Animals

All Practice employees will observe the following rules for use of the x-ray machine: -

- Make reference to and acknowledge risk assessments compiled for x-ray use
- The use of the x-ray machine is limited to nominated personnel only, who should work in accordance with any safe operating procedures implemented by the practice
- The equipment will only be used if there is a clear clinical reason to do so
- Prior to use, the machine will be inspected for damage and if any is noted the equipment will not be used. All defects must be reported to the Radiation Protection Supervisor
- The x-ray beams wherever possible will always be pointed downwards onto the x-ray table
- The operator of the x-ray machine will ensure that only the minimum number of people required, stay in the room when in operation
- The beam of the x-ray will be kept to the minimum size necessary to limit radiation scatter
- The light beam diaphragm will be adjusted prior to each exposure to ensure an unexposed border is achieved on the processed radiograph
- Grids will only be used where absolutely necessary i.e. where the part of the animal being x-rayed is more than 100mm thick
- The operating lead to the x-ray machine will be either outside of the controlled area or of suitable length to ensure the operator can stand behind the protective screen provided and will be at least 2m away from the x-ray

- No animal will be manually restrained unless there is a good clinical reason to do so. Anaesthesia and sedation will always be the preferred option with the use of positioning aids. If manual restraint or manipulation is necessary, the duty will be shared amongst the designated persons over a period to minimise the effects of the radiation dosage levels to any individual
- No part of any person's body (including fingers and hands) will be exposed to the useful beam of the x-ray machine, whether or not protective clothing covers the part of the person's body. Where there is even the slightest risk that an unprotected finger or hand could be exposed during manipulation or restraint of an animal undergoing radiographic examination, an exposure will not, under any circumstances, be taken
- An exposure register will be compiled and will hold details of exposure i.e. date, animal details, area x-rayed, detail of exposure and people's names who were involved in the manual restraint of the animal
- Personal protective equipment will be supplied by the Practice to the employees involved in radiography. This will consist of an apron with a lead equivalent of 0.25mm and hand and forearm protectors with a lead equivalent of 0.5mm. This equipment will always be used when employees are in the controlled x-ray area
- Lead aprons must be visually inspected on a regular basis and stored by hanging on an appropriate hanger. Lead aprons must not be folded
- The designated persons will wear personal dosimeters at waist level in the middle of the trunk at all times. When not in use, the dosimeters will be kept in a dry part of the Practice premises, away from heat and not in or near the designated radiography area. At no time will film badges be worn outside the surgery premises
- All female employees aware that they are pregnant or breast-feeding will inform the Practice to ensure exposure to radiation control measures can be adopted. This will prevent the likely dose to the foetus exceeding 1mSv for the remainder of the pregnancy.

#### employees Responsibilities When Using X-Ray Machines For Large Animals

Where radiography is undertaken at the Practice's premises, specific control measures for small animals being x-rayed will be adopted. However, it is recognised that radiography may be required to be conducted at the animal's place of keeping or even at public places such as horse racing courses. In these situations, horizontal projections may be required, therefore a controlled area will be established, as the direction and distance of the beam will be more difficult to establish. Where necessary, the Practice will consult with the Radiation Protection Advisor on these issues and set up local rules.

All Practice Employees will observe the following rules for use of the x-ray machine whilst working away from the Practice: -

- Make reference to and acknowledge risk assessments compiled for x-ray use

- The use of the x-ray machine is limited to nominated personnel only who should work in accordance with any safe operating procedures implemented by the practice
- The x-ray machine will only be used if there is a clear clinical reason for its use
- Prior to use, the machine will be inspected for damage, and if any is noted the equipment will not be used
- All defects must be reported to the Radiation Protection Supervisor
- Wherever possible the controlled area will be set up within a building with low light levels but sufficient for the radiographer to see all of the area
- The operator of the x-ray machine will strictly control access to the controlled area and ensure only specified persons are present
- A copy of the local rules will be on site and brought to the attention of all people involved with the x-ray procedure including any person involved with handling the animal
- The animal being treated will be restrained in the controlled area with the use of ropes, horses with the bridle fitted (if possible) but not a head collar, as this will not adequately control the animal
- The animal will only be sedated at the Veterinary Surgeon's discretion as it may make the animal unsteady and difficult to manoeuvre
- The area to be x-rayed will be cleaned to prevent contaminated and spoiled exposures thus preventing repeat exposure
- The beam from the x-ray will be aimed at a barrier such as a wall, if an impenetrable wall is not available then a beam stop will be used which will be
- beam diaphragm will be adjusted prior to each exposure to ensure an unexposed border is achieved on the processed radiograph
- An exposure register will be compiled and will hold details of exposure i.e. date, animal details, area x-rayed, detail of exposure and peoples names who were involved in the manual restraint of the animal at least 2mm thick lead of suitable size placed behind the cassette in the line of the x-ray beam
- Where the x-ray beam is to be projected horizontally, all persons will stand as far away as possible and the radiographer will stand behind the x-ray tube head with the operating cable at full length
- The beam of the x-ray will be kept to the minimum size necessary to limit radiation scatter

The animal's owner may have the desired calming effect to ensure the animal remains stationary while the x-ray procedure takes place. However, consent should be gained from the owner to their presence in writing after explaining the following: -

- The part they are to play in the procedure
- Local rules including the wearing of personal protective equipment and the part they are to play in the procedure

- The risk of exposure to ionising radiation and the requirement to comply with all instructions given by the radiographer
- How it will be monitored or that it has been assessed as being as low as reasonably practicable and below the dose limit for members of the general public 1mSv (5mSv over five years)
- They will be asked if they have any medical condition that prevents them assisting, are they pregnant and are they over 18 years of age
- An exposure register will be compiled and contain details of: - date, animal details, area x-rayed, detail of exposure and names of any persons who were involved in providing assistance to the animal

Any concerns regarding radiation issues will be directed to the trained Radiation Protection Advisor, and/or safety advisor). If the answer is unsure or unclear the Radiation Protection Advisor will always be contacted for advice.

## **X-Ray (Small Vet)**

### Description

The Practice in consultation with a Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA), has designated a specific area where radiography is to be conducted. This area will so far as reasonably practicable be solely used for this purpose, however if the area is required to be used for dual purposes then no other activity will be conducted whilst radiography takes place.

### Associated Hazards

- Radiation burns and eye damage
- Risk to unborn child
- Small, long term risk of malignant disease.

### Employees Responsibilities

All Practice employees will observe the following rules for use of the x-ray machine:-

- Make reference to and acknowledge risk assessments compiled for x-ray use
- The use of the x-ray machine is limited to nominated personnel only, who should work in accordance with any safe operating procedures implemented by the practice
- The equipment will only be used if there is a clear clinical reason to do so
- Prior to use, the machine will be inspected for damage and if any is noted the equipment will not be used. All defects must be reported to the Radiation Protection Supervisor
- The x-ray beams wherever possible will always be pointed downwards onto the x-ray table
- The operator of the x-ray machine will ensure that only the minimum number of people required, stay in the room when in operation
- The beam of the x-ray will be kept to the minimum size necessary to limit radiation scatter
- The light beam diaphragm will be adjusted prior to each exposure to ensure an unexposed border is achieved on the processed radiograph
- Grids will only be used where absolutely necessary i.e. where the part of the animal being x-rayed is more than 100mm thick
- The operating lead to the x-ray machine will be either outside of the controlled area or of suitable length to ensure the operator can stand behind the protective screen provided and will be at least 2m away from the x-ray

- No animal will be manually restrained unless there is a good clinical reason to do so. Anaesthesia and sedation will always be the preferred option with the use of positioning aids. If manual restraint or manipulation is necessary, the duty will be shared amongst the designated persons over a period to minimise the effects of the radiation dosage levels to any individual
- No part of any person's body (including fingers and hands) will be exposed to the useful beam of the x-ray machine, whether or not protective clothing covers the part of the person's body. Where there is even the slightest risk that an unprotected finger or hand could be exposed during manipulation or restraint of an animal undergoing radiographic examination, an exposure will not, under any circumstances, be taken
- An exposure register will be compiled and will hold details of exposure i.e. date, animal details, area x-rayed, detail of exposure and people's names who were involved in the manual restraint of the animal
- Personal protective equipment will be supplied by the Practice to the employees involved in radiography. This will consist of an apron with a lead equivalent of 0.25mm and hand and forearm protectors with a lead equivalent of 0.5mm. This equipment will always be used when employees are in the controlled x-ray area
- Lead aprons must be visually inspected on a regular basis and stored by hanging on an appropriate hanger. Lead aprons must not be folded
- The designated persons will wear personal dosimeters at waist level in the middle of the trunk at all times. When not in use, the dosimeters will be kept in a dry part of the Practice premises, away from heat and not in or near the designated radiography area. At no time will film badges be worn outside the surgery premises
- All female employees aware that they are pregnant or breast-feeding will inform the Practice to ensure exposure to radiation control measures can be adopted. This will prevent the likely dose to the foetus exceeding 1mSv for the remainder of the pregnancy.

Any concerns regarding radiation issues will be directed to the trained Radiation Protection Advisor and /or the safety advisor. If the answer is unsure or unclear the Radiation Protection Advisor will always be contacted for advice.

# Young Persons

## Description

There are specific legal requirements and restrictions on those who employ young persons or offer them work experience. A young person is defined as anyone under 18 years old.

Under health and safety law, employers must assess the risks to young people before they start work/work experience and tell them what the risks are.

After leaving school a Young Person must:

- Stay in full time education e.g. college, or
- Start an apprenticeship or traineeship, or
- Spend 20 hours or more per week working or volunteering while in part time education or training.

## Associated Hazards

Some young people may be at particular risk because of: -

- Their lack of awareness, skills and training
- Unfamiliarity with their work environment
- Being physically or psychologically less suited to certain tasks.

## Employees Responsibilities

Employees: -

- Co-operate with Practice arrangements for young persons in the workplace
- Report any hazards or defects to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty
- Follow any guidance, information, instruction and training given by the Practice
- Ask the Practice Manager or senior member of staff if unsure about anything
- Make full and proper use of all personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been issued to them
- Not undertake any tasks unless trained.

# Zoonoses

## Description

All animals have the potential to transmit diseases, called zoonoses, to humans. These diseases can affect anyone, with young and elderly people being especially vulnerable if they are in direct contact with the contaminant. The specific legal requirement for control of risks from biological agents comes under the control of substances hazardous to health regulations that require the practice to carry out an assessment of the risks.

## Associated Hazards

These include common zoonoses such as: -

**Anaerobic Bacteria:** – This may be passed from bites and scratches from all animals.

**Psittacosis:** – A disease in wild and caged exotic birds, can also be found in poultry. Causes flu-like symptoms and can progress to pneumonia, endocarditis and hepatitis.

**Newcastle disease:** – Occurs in domesticated and many wild birds, however this is rare in the UK. Causes painful conjunctivitis, followed by flu-like symptoms for up to three weeks. No long-term effects on health known.

**Salmonella:** - Caused by direct contact with most mammals, birds, reptiles and fish. Effects are diarrhoea, fever and abdominal pain. Can occasionally cause fatalities, particularly in vulnerable people.

**E Coli 0157:** - Carried by ruminants and pest birds (seagulls). Causes diarrhoea that can lead to serious complications and can be fatal in the young and elderly.

**Campylobacter:** - Source is direct contact with raw poultry and livestock. Causes bloodstained diarrhoea, abdominal pain and can mimic appendicitis.

**Ovine chlamydiosis:** - Can be infected by products of ingestion of infected sheep, goats and cattle. Flu-like symptoms with headaches, chills, fever, joint pains and cough. In pregnancy, severe systemic illness with renal and hepatic complications can lead to stillbirth or abortion.

**Cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis:** - Sources of infection are faeces of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Symptoms are diarrhoea, abdominal pains and flu-like symptoms, which may persist for up to six weeks. Vulnerable people may be at risk.

## Control measures

Control measures that should be considered are as follows: -

- Monitoring of health and information provided to employees to detect occupationally acquired illness. Explanation of the symptoms of infection and consider providing medical contact cards to alert their general practitioner

- Carry out employment screening including verification of immune/vaccine status of employees
- Where a risk of exposure to zoonoses occurs vaccination should be offered
- Care should be taken in handling a dead animal and when dead animals are used for feed
- Practice good animal husbandry including regular health checks and the highest standard of personal hygiene
- Do not use mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on newborn animals
- Correctly dispose of animal waste and do not handle birth products
- Provide adequate personal protective equipment
- Avoid using equipment that causes cuts and abrasions.

### Prevention

All staff involved with handling animals should be vaccinated against Tetanus. If an animal is showing signs of disease and/or a zoonotic condition is suspected, employees are expected to follow the following guidelines: -

- Wear disposable gloves and aprons
- Wash hands before and after handling the animal
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings
- All animal faeces and urine should be considered as infectious and treated accordingly. Pregnant women should not handle cat faeces
- Always wear a face mask when animals present with respiratory disease and prevent ingestion or inhalation of such animal's saliva
- When animals present with skin disease always examine with gloves and treat any samples taken as infectious
- Dead animals should be bagged and removed promptly and the area thoroughly disinfected
- Control fleas and ticks on animals and in the environment
- Treat all bites and scratches seriously by thoroughly washing and disinfecting – use the accident book to record all incidents
- Never post-mortem birds suspected of suffering from psitticosis – soak the carcass in a suitable disinfectant and bag appropriately
- Handle all pet rodents with gloves and wash hands immediately after handling.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with other documentation provided in the Health and Safety Management System that covers other health and safety matters.

There are numerous biological agents that you may encounter during veterinary work, the 'Zoonotic reference chart' in the following pages outlines: -

1. The more common zoonotic organisms/diseases in veterinary practices.

2. The group of animals most commonly involved: -

- Group 1: Cats, Dogs & Small Animal
- Group 2: Rodents & Vermin
- Group 3: Birds

3. The source of infection: -

- A = Abortion and/or discharge
- B = Bites and scratches
- D = Dead animals
- F = Faeces
- M = Mastitis
- N = Nervous Disease
- R = Respiratory Disease
- S = Skin Disease, Wounds
- T = Ticks, External Parasites
- U = Urine and Soiled Bedding

4. The symptoms expressed in humans on contraction of the disease.

5. The risk of contracting infection if all safety measures are followed: -

- H = High Risk
- M = Medium Risk
- L = Low Risk

#### Employees Responsibilities

All employees should follow the systems of work developed within the practice, including: -

- Personal hygiene
- Animal handling
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Safe working procedures.

If an employees suffers from symptoms they feel may be connected with their work activity they must notify the Practice Manager immediately.

Receipt of health and safety handbook is on the next page

## **Receipt Of Health And Safety Handbook**

Thrums Veterinary Group have compiled a health and safety policy as legally required under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the full policy is available for inspection upon request.

To assist with the communication of information, the organisation will issue each employee with a reduced copy of the health and safety policy, this is in the form of a handbook. It is important that the contents of the handbook are read and understood prior to returning this acknowledgement slip.

I confirm that I have read and understand the employee health and safety handbook and will comply with all rules that are imposed in the interest of safety.

I acknowledge receipt of this Employee Handbook, which is the property of the Company, and which forms an integral part of my Contract of Employment. I agree that if I have been issued a hard copy version of the document, that there may be a charge incurred if not returned on leaving the business.

Name:-
Signature:-
Date:-
Email address:-

Please return this form to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator