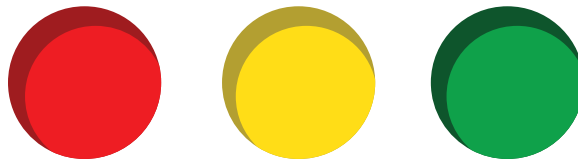


**ACTRA**  
**TORONTO**

# Best Practices for Working with Animals

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# BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH ANIMALS

ACTRA Toronto is committed to ensuring safe workplaces for all. The film and television industry is a workplace like no other. When working with animals on set, there are many things to take into consideration. We believe that these best practices will ensure the safety of all on set when working with animals.

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE

ACTRA Toronto is pleased to present the following guidelines to assist Performers and productions in ensuring the most positive and creative interactions when working with animals.

## WHAT IS AN ANIMAL COORDINATOR, AND WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?

An Animal Coordinator in the film and television industry is recognized, trained, and knowledgeable in the engagement, coordination, safety, and handling of animals on and off camera, and is responsible for the planning, supervision and wellbeing of animals and the Performers and crews who work with them. The engagement of a professional Animal Coordinator to oversee Animal action is a crucial preventative measure to ensure the safety of all on set. An Animal Coordinator shall be qualified as per the Best Practices guidelines. The Animal Coordinator shall be responsible to;

- i. determine which animal(s) shall be used considering their health, temperament, training, and overall suitability to perform the required animal action/performance,
- ii. Animal Coordinators should be engaged on all ACTRA sets with scripts calling for animal actors, and included in all meetings where animal action is discussed.
- iii. determine the number and category of qualified personnel required to work with the Animals,
- iv. coordinate animal action with all departments including but not limited to stunts, wardrobe, hair and make up, special effects, camera, etc.,
- v. participate in pre-production, location scouts, on set safety meetings, assist in script breakdowns and manage expectations within the confines of the script,
- vi. plan and implement safety precautions and measures to ensure the protection of Performers, crew and animals,

- vii. monitor performances, on set conditions and creatively collaborate to achieve optimal Animal related action,
- viii. coordinate communications with all departments to ensure the safest working environment for Performers, crews and animals.
- ix. coordinate suitable shelter, penning, transportation, water, feed, bedding, climate control/air flow and security for the animals on and off set,
- x. ensure the handling of Animals complies with provisions set out for the protection of workers in any local, Provincial and Federal workplace guidelines/acts.
- xi. ensure the handling of Animals complies with provisions set out for the protection of animals by entities including but not limited to:
  - a. Ontario Filmsafety Guidelines
    - i. Guideline No. 40 – Animal Handling
    - ii. Guideline No. 41 – Indigenous Pests
    - iii. Guideline No. 42 – Exotic Animals
  - b. American Humane
  - c. Movie Animals Protected (MAPS)
- xii. Animal Coordinators should be included in pre-production meetings and surveys to assist in streamlining animal action to provide efficient, cost effective, creative, and physical support to the production. Their contact information should be included on crew lists and daily call sheets.
- xiii. Animal Coordinators should be sent daily updates including day out of days, specifically related to work being done with animals.

The Animal Coordinator shall determine the need to employ Assistant Animal Coordinator(s), Key Animal Wrangler/Trainers, and Animal Wranglers, who work directly under the supervision of the Animal Coordinator.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Safety of Performers, crew and animals is paramount and shall prevail over all activities with animals on set.
- Animals working with Performers must be in good health physically and behaviourally.
- Animals are required to be fully vaccinated in accordance with recommendations of a Dr. of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) familiar with the needs of both animals and persons on set
- It is understood that vaccine and health evaluation methods will vary by species.
- Veterinary health certificates shall be required in place of vaccines when deemed medically appropriate.
- Do not approach, touch, or feed animals on set unless you are involved in scripted engagement with the animal, and only with consent by the Animal Coordinator.
- Remember, Animals are not props. They live, breathe, feel, and work just like you!

# ANIMAL ACTION PLAN

Similar to the industry recognized practice of stunt plans prior to filming, animal action plans are also required and should be submitted to ACTRA as well as insurers.

Such plans should include;

- Nature of the animal action including interaction with Performers and crew.
- Species details and health status (above) of animals submitted for the role
- Emergency plans, including but not limited to:
  - o Containment on and off set
  - o Animal owner contact information
  - o Venom treatment
  - o Veterinary support
  - o Evacuation plans
  - o On set animal to wrangler ratio
  - o On set animal care/feed/housing/comfort
  - o Advance notification of other animals or household pets on set
- Animal coordinator reports to include:
  - o Personnel booked and time worked
  - o Animal health and preparation
    - Training; does the animal respond to a click/reward/buzzer
    - Veterinary health

# MINORS AND ANIMALS

The Producer shall advise the Minor's Parent(s) at the time of engagement if they will be working with animals, and the type of animal they will be working with. ACTRA and the Animal Coordinator should also be advised accordingly.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I have animal allergies. What do I do?**

For your safety, be sure to let Production and the Animal Coordinator know so they can make alternate arrangements.

### **What if I have a fear of animals?**

Advise Production of your fear and ask to speak with the Animal Coordinator. Be honest. The Animal Coordinator is there to help you!

### **We have booked a Performer to work with an Animal and notified the Animal Coordinator. When should we let them meet the animal?**

Speak with the Animal Coordinator to determine the best time to set up a "Meet and Greet". The Animal Coordinator and their team are there to help Performers give their best performance in working with their fellow animal actors.