

## Health and Safety Handbook



Prepared on behalf of: -

Damory Veterinary Clinic

By

Citation Ltd

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## Revision History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Version Comment</b>
1.0	03/06/2016	Kirsty Bresnahan	Automatic update due to Block 'Diabetes' change 'Update to block content - formatting'

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## **Health and Safety Policy Statement**

The following is a statement of the organisation'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 Damory Veterinary Clinic to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees working for the company and other persons who may be affected by our undertakings.

Damory Veterinary Clinic acknowledges 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 and revise where necessary, an annual plan to ensure that health and safety standards are adequately maintained.

The Practice Manager will implement the company's health and safety policy and recommend any changes to meet new circumstances. Damory Veterinary Clinic 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 Damory Veterinary Clinic 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 organisation aims to protect everyone, including visitors and members of the public, insofar 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 organisation in order that it can comply with the legal requirements placed upon it and in the implementation of this policy. Damory Veterinary Clinic will ensure continued consultation with the workforce to enable all viewpoints and recommendations to be discussed at regular intervals.

The organisation 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.

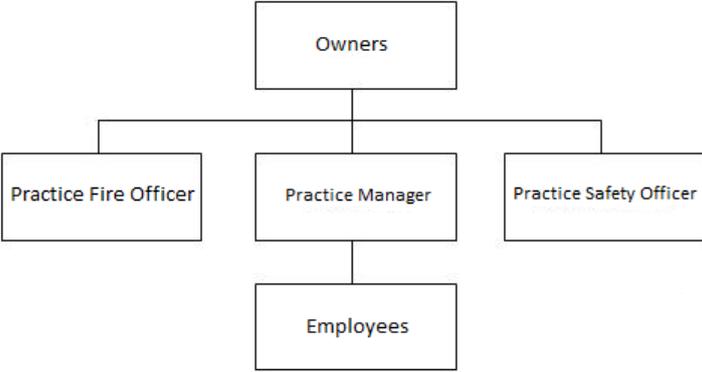
We are committed to providing relevant environmental training and promoting environmental awareness to employees and, where appropriate, to suppliers and to communicating our environmental performance.

We will implement processes to prevent environmental nonconformities 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.**

**Structure**



## **Employer's 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.

## **Employee's responsibilities**

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

Every employee has 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 Damory Veterinary Clinic 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 practise 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.

#### **Employee information**

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 completed with address of the local enforcing authority, the Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS) etc. and names of responsible persons.

- 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 employee's 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.

### Employee's 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:-
  - covers more than 10% of the body, or
  - causes 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 Damory Veterinary Clinic will ensure that:-

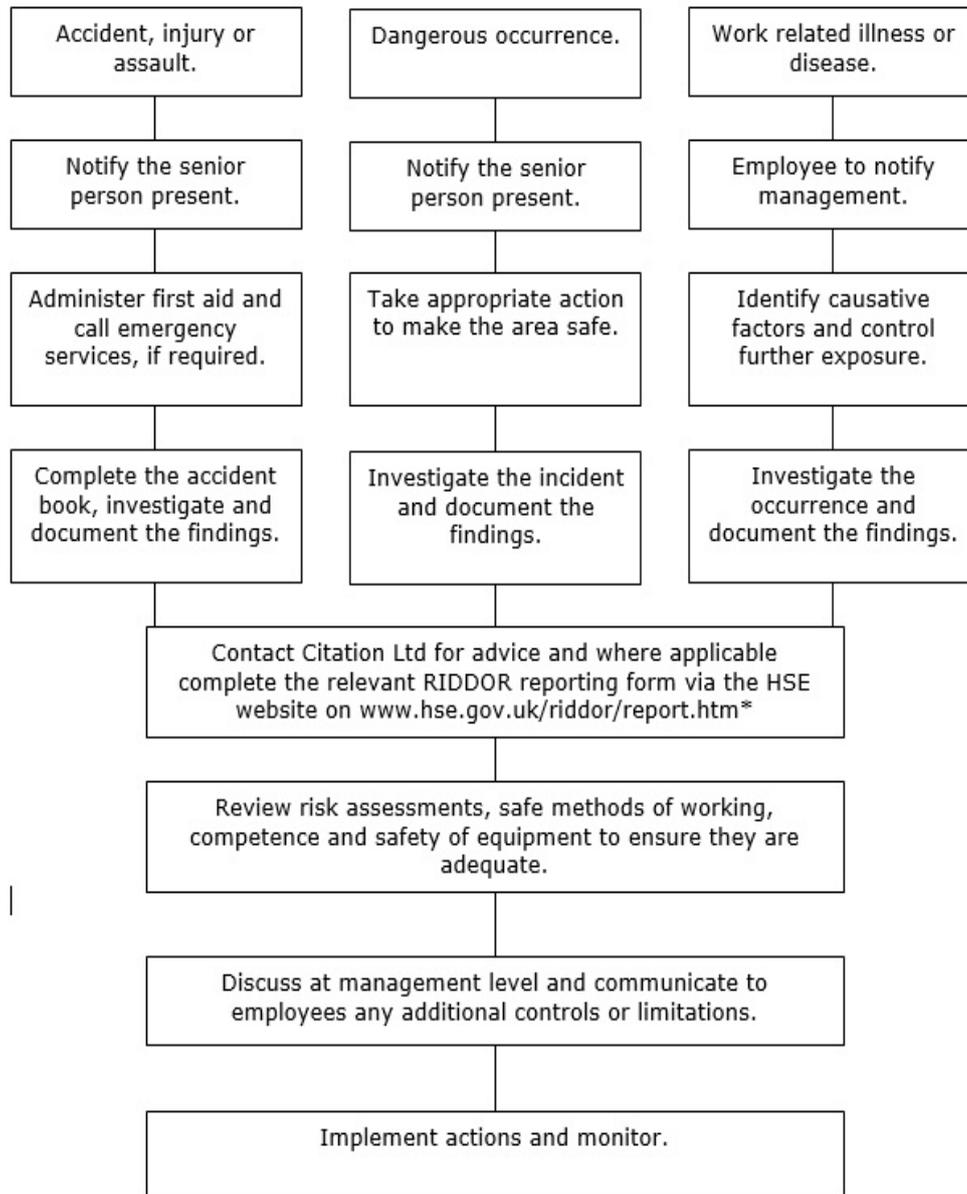
- All accidents and incidents, however minor, will be investigated to ensure the appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrence. In the majority of cases, the details contained within the accident book will constitute an investigation.
- The risk assessments will be reviewed and, if necessary, further control measures will be introduced.
- Improvement strategies will be implemented to help prevent or minimise occurrences, thus reducing future risk of harm.

### Employee's 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, judgment and sense of danger.
- Heightened sense, and use of, aggression towards others.
- Overconfidence in potentially dangerous situations.

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Not attend work whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Advise the Practice Manager if they are taking prescription medication which may affect their ability to use equipment and machinery or any other work 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 Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty if they are aware of a colleague who has an alcohol or drug related problem affecting their work. This will assist in the employee receiving the necessary support and assistance needed.

## **Anaesthetic gases**

### Description

Anaesthetic gases are substances used in veterinary surgical procedures to produce a state of unconsciousness by inhalation. Some anaesthetic gases have been assigned a statutory Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL), e.g. Nitrous Oxide, Enflurane, Isoflurane and Halothane.

### Applicable hazards

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

### Employee's responsibilities

- To follow training, guidance and instruction provided.
- Report any equipment faults to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.
- Use protective and safety equipment provided.

## **Animal handling**

### Description

The safe and humane handling of animals requires the creation of the correct handling environment for both handler and animal, 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

As anyone who works with animals knows only too well, animal handling can be unpredictable, dangerous and can easily result in disease, injury or even death if not carried out correctly. The obvious hazards include: -

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

Some hazards present a greater risk to pregnant women.

### On practice premises

- 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 substituted for the owners' lead & 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). We are responsible for the safety of clients. Use your judgement. If unsure ask for advice from a senior Vet.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing at all times including a disposable or washable apron when handling animals. Wear leather gauntlets or use a towel or blanket to reduce the risk of bites and scratches, which can be serious.
- The care of personal hygiene is of utmost importance, particularly when handling infective material, and hands should be washed immediately after any 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. Such animals are unpredictable, dangerous and often exhibit temporary changes in temperament.

#### Special (post anaesthetic) 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 methods.
- 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 cases should be sedated when appropriate.
- Muzzles are available for use where appropriate (always have one with you when attending home visits).
- Only ask owners to assist in handling animals if you are sure that they are competent to do so (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.
- When handling animals during visits away from the practice unknown animals should always be approached with caution.

#### Handling of horses

- 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 head collar 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 slipping back.
- Always ensure that gates to the stable yard are closed.

When in doubt as 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 which might frighten some horses.
- Footwear should have non-slip soles and **must have protective toecaps.**
- 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 the Veterinary Surgeon and the handler.**

#### Employee's responsibilities

The following guidelines will be taken into consideration at all times: -

- Faeces & urine etc, to be cleaned up promptly (by staff and not clients).
- Wear disposable gloves and apron when cleaning up and always wash your hands before handling food.
- Animal hair/feathers should be avoided if you have a known allergy.
- All staff involved in animal handling should be protected against Tetanus.
- If animals require isolation/quarantine, they must be handled according to the Barrier Nursing Codes of Practice.
- Beware of zoonoses, do not allow sick animals to lick your face or hands.

- Report all injuries, (bites, scratches, kicks, muscle strain etc) to the first aider and record them in the accident book.

## **Animal handling**

### Description

The safe and humane handling of animals requires the creation of the correct handling environment for both handler and animal, 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

As anyone who works with animals knows only too well, animal handling can be unpredictable, dangerous and can easily result in disease, injury or even death if not carried out correctly. The obvious hazards include:-

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

Some hazards present a greater risk to pregnant women.

### On practice premises

- 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 substituted for the owners' lead & 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). We are responsible for the safety of clients. Use your judgement. If unsure ask for advice from a senior Vet.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing at all times including a disposable or washable apron when handling animals. Wear leather gauntlets or use a towel or blanket to reduce the risk of bites and scratches, which can be serious.

- The care of personal hygiene is of utmost importance, particularly when handling infective material, and hands should be washed immediately after any 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. Such animals are unpredictable, dangerous and often exhibit temporary changes in temperament.

#### Special (post anaesthetic) 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 methods.
- 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 cases should be sedated when appropriate.
- Muzzles are available for use where appropriate (always have one with you when attending home visits).
- Only ask owners to assist in handling animals if you are sure that they are competent to do so (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.
- When handling animals during visits away from the practice unknown animals should always be approached with caution.

#### Handling of horses

- 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 head collar 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 slipping back.
- Always ensure that gates to the stable yard are closed.

When in doubt as 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 which might frighten some horses.
- Footwear should have non-slip soles and **must have protective toecaps.**
- 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 the Veterinary Surgeon and the handler.**

#### On farms:-

Animals, especially the larger farm animals, can at times be extremely dangerous and most animals are apprehensive of strangers and are 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 separated from their fellows, animals newly arrived on to strange premises, animals

recovering from anaesthesia, thoroughbred horses etc. are unpredictable in their behaviour and must be handled with special care.

Whenever possible the owner and/or animals usual attendant should be present to assist in the restraint – 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.

It is important that you 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 persons 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.

### Employee's responsibilities

The following guidelines will be taken into consideration at all times:-

- Faeces & urine etc. to be cleaned up promptly (by staff and not clients).
- Wear disposable gloves and apron when cleaning up and always wash your hands before handling food.
- Animal hair/feathers should be avoided if you have a known allergy.
- All staff involved in animal handling should be protected against Tetanus.
- If animals require isolation/quarantine, they must be handled according to the Barrier Nursing Codes of Practice.
- Beware of zoonoses, do not allow sick animals to lick your face or hands.

- Report all injuries, (bites, scratches, kicks, muscle strain etc) to the first aider and record them in the accident book.

## **Autoclaves**

### Description

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

### Associated hazards

The major dangers associated with autoclaves are explosion, flying debris and the release of toxic or corrosive substances. Other dangers, due to frequent opening of the doors for loading and unloading materials, will include: -

- Heat, steam.
- Chemicals, micro-organisms.
- Damaged containers (glass etc).

### Employee's responsibilities

- Follow any training, guidance or instruction given in the use of the autoclave.
- Report any hazardous or dangerous situations to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.
- If identified by risk assessment, wear personal protection equipment (PPE) provided when loading/unloading autoclaves.

## **Barrier nursing**

### Description

It is likely that the veterinary practice will encounter a number of animals that are infected with various organisms, including MRSA. On occasions animals may be moved into isolation if they display symptoms of, or have been diagnosed with, a particularly contagious disease such as parvovirus diarrhoea or cat flu. The cross infection to humans may be rare but all precautions will be taken to reduce the risk to both humans and other animals.

### Associated hazards

- Micro-organisms which may infect humans (zoonoses).
- Parasites transmissible to humans and animals.

### Employee's responsibilities

- Follow all procedures especially in observing good hygiene and good hand washing practises.
- Report any symptoms of animals under their care, which may lead to the need for barrier nursing.
- Report to the employer any incidents relating to the barrier nursing practices that could result, or have resulted, in a breach of the barrier nursing.

All visits from the animal's owners will be discouraged until the patient is removed from the isolation area. If it is necessary for the owner to visit the animal then they should be instructed to follow the practice's procedures.

If sick animals are to be nursed by the owner in the owner's home, then the practice will advise the individual about the risks involved and the necessary safety precautions which must be followed.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.
- Needlestick injuries.

### Employee's 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.

### Employee's 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.

### Employee's 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.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

### Description

Everyone involved in the workplace must be committed to ensuring that satisfactory standards of hygiene are achieved. The requisite standards will be clearly and effectively communicated and reinforced by management. Cleaning schedules will be developed as a communication link between management and staff and are necessary to ensure that premises and equipment are cleaned effectively and if necessary, disinfected.

### Associated hazards

- Chemical storage and handling.
- Mixing of chemicals in different containers.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Dermatitis.

### Employee's responsibilities

- Co-operate with the employer in relation to maintaining a clean and tidy workplace.
- Follow training, guidance and instruction to prevent injury or ill health.
- Make use of any personal protective equipment provided.
- Report to the employer any hazardous or dangerous situation.
- Co-operate with management arrangements for health and safety.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

Where reasonably practical, Damory Veterinary Clinic will prevent exposure by:-

- Changing the activity so that a hazardous substance is not required or generated.
- Replacing the hazardous substance with a less hazardous substance.
- Using the substance in a safer form.

If prevention is not practicable, Damory Veterinary Clinic will control exposure by:-

- Total enclosure/isolation of the activity.
- Partial enclosure and installation of extraction.

- Using a system of work, including handling, that minimises potential for leaks, spills and escape of the hazardous substance.
- Providing suitable storage and transport facilities for hazardous substances and medicines/drugs; following manufacturer's guidance and ensuring containers are correctly labelled.
- Determining the need by risk assessment for health or medical surveillance of employees.
- Ensuring control measures (e.g. ventilation, scavenging and extraction systems) remain effective by inspection, testing and maintenance of plant and equipment.
- Provide employees with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by risk assessment.
- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place and that arrangements to dispose of waste are implemented.
- Providing a copy of each relevant COSHH assessment to those persons considered at risk.
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision in the safe use and handling of hazardous substances.
- Regularly monitor compliance to the control measures implemented.

Note: See also the Policy Arrangement "Infection control".

Damory Veterinary Clinic will also consider the risks to other persons who may come into contact with hazardous substances, particularly vulnerable groups, e.g. young persons or women of childbearing age and implement the necessary controls to minimise or eliminate harm.

#### Employee's 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.
- Report any concerns to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty.
- Wear, use correctly and maintain any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) 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.

### Employee's 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.

### Employee's 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.
- 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.

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

- 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 Manager or Senior Vet on duty.

### Employee's responsibilities

- 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 or tablets where the job entails driving. Notification to the DVLA is a strict legal requirement. However, if the condition is managed by diet alone, there is no obligation to inform the DVLA.

## **Disciplinary rules**

### Description

Damory Veterinary Clinic believes that health and safety is a critical to running a business. To enable Damory Veterinary Clinic 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

- To take care of the health and safety of themselves and others.
- To co-operate with Damory Veterinary Clinic
- Not to misuse or interfere with anything provided for their health, safety and welfare.
- 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.
- Conduct themselves in such a way as to not create a potential risk of injury or danger to themselves or anyone else.

## 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.

### Employee's responsibilities

It is recognised 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.

### Employee's 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 Damory Veterinary Clinic.
- Familiarise themselves with the contents of the relevant risk assessments.
- Request Damory Veterinary Clinic 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: with no competency, no training, poor 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.
- Other work tasks: attending to breakdowns, treatment of patients following road traffic accidents.

### **Mobile telephones**

The Road Safety Act sets fixed penalty fines and points for using a hand-held phone while driving. Penalties also apply for not having proper control of a vehicle - a measure that can also be used where a driver has been distracted by using a hands-free mobile phone.

If required, hands-free kits will be provided to members of staff who are required to use mobile telephones whilst working away from the premises.

Under no circumstances are employees permitted to use hand-held telephones including via hands free kits, or similar hand-held devices whilst driving. The prohibition also applies when stationary at traffic lights or other delays that may occur.

### **Mobile phone use**

If mobile phones are used whilst driving it is important that the phone is held in a cradle.

Drivers still risk prosecution (for failure to have proper control) even if they use hands-free phones when driving.

The following guidance is given to all drivers who are required to use mobile phone hands-free kits:-

- Only use the phone when it is safe to do so.
- Understand how your phone operates.

- Only acknowledge incoming calls on a hands-free system where answering is automatic or one touch button.
- Only use short responses and indicate that you will return the call when it is safe to do so. Only use the mobile phone when it is essential to do so and do not talk longer than is necessary.
- Whenever possible, drivers should not make outgoing calls whilst driving.
- When making calls to, or receiving calls from mobile phones, always ask whether it is safe to speak.

### Employee's 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, 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.
- If someone stops, ring the police and give them the vehicle registration details. If the driver approaches, inform him/her you have contacted the police who will be arriving shortly. Avoid opening doors or windows to converse with strangers.
- If you decide to get out of the vehicle and await breakdown assistance (this is dependant 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, e.g., AA, RAC.

## **Electricity**

### Description

It is vital that electrical systems and equipment installed within the Practice are used with care.

### Associated hazards

- Contact with live parts, causing electric shock and skin burns.
- Fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of ignition.

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees have a responsibility to:-

- Comply with management arrangements for electrical safety in the workplace.
- Use the protective and safety equipment provided as applicable.
- Not endanger themselves or others.
- Not carry out repair work to electrical systems or appliances unless competent to do so.
- Report hazardous or dangerous operations/incidents.
- Follow the training and guidance provided to prevent injury to themselves and others.
- Not bring private electrical equipment onto Practice premises without prior authorisation from the Practice Manager. Any such equipment must be tested in accordance with Practice procedures.

# **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.

## Employee's responsibilities

- Co-operate with Damory Veterinary Clinic 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 Practice 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 Practice 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 Practice 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. Damory Veterinary Clinic has a responsibility for ensuring 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 policy of Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

### Employee's 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.

Damory Veterinary Clinic 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 (if trained to do so) with the appliances provided but without taking personal risks.

The Senior member of staff on duty fire will call the fire brigade immediately by:-

- Using the phone to dial 999.
- Giving the operator the telephone number and asking for the fire brigade.
- When the fire brigade reply, give the response distinctly:-
- "We have a fire at Damory Veterinary Clinic and give the operator the address from which the call is being made.
- Do not replace the receiver until the fire brigade has confirmed the details.
- Call the fire brigade immediately to every fire or on suspicion of a fire.

### **On notification of a fire**

- Everybody that is affected will evacuate the building by the nearest available exit and proceed to the nominated fire assembly point as identified on the fire action notices.
- Senior member of staff on duty will take charge of the evacuation and ensure that everybody is accounted for.

**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 and extinguishing the fire.**

## **Firearms**

### Description

Firearms include rifles, shotguns, dart guns, pistols or other portable guns and certain air weapons, capable of firing live ammunition rounds, cartridges or pellets. Certain firearms are used by Veterinary Surgeons for the purpose of euthanasia or tranquilisation of patients.

They are extremely dangerous and must be treated at all times as loaded and ready to fire. Whether loaded or unloaded, a gun must not be pointed at anyone.

### Associated hazards of firearms and live ammunition are:-

- Negligent discharge.
- Theft.
- Detonation, which may occur under extreme heat or careless handling.

### Damory Veterinary Clinic will ensure that:-

- Records of all ammunition purchased are kept.
- The issue and return of firearms, ammunition and equipment are kept in a firearms logbook including, e.g. the number of rounds fired.
- Appropriate hearing and personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued for use with firearms as identified by risk assessment.

### Firearm certificate holders will:-

- Comply with the requirements of their Firearm Licence and the Practice Standard Operating Procedures.
- Draw firearms and ammunition from storage, in accordance with the Practice arrangements.
- Be held responsible for the safe handling, storage, care and use of firearms and ammunition issued to them.
- Report any mechanical defects, miss-fires, hang-fires or hazardous incidents to the Practice Manager.
- Wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE) and routinely examine the equipment for defects.

## **Emergency plans**

### Description

Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Employee's 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 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 pregnant women.

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.

### Employee's 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.

## **Handling patients**

### Description

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

### 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, kicks, etc.
- Infection from faeces, urine, blood, body tissue, etc.
- Allergy from hair, mites, feathers, etc.

Some hazards present a heightened risk to pregnant women.

### Employee's 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.

## **Handling patients on farms**

### 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.

Whenever possible, the owner and/or patients usual attendant should be present to assist in patient restraint, if necessary.

### Associated hazards

Hazards include:-

- 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 pregnant women.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Associated hazards

For example:-

- Tripping on trailing wires or loose floor coverings.
- Faulty equipment or electrical fittings.
- Uneven floors.
- Obstructed emergency exit routes.
- Locked Fire Exit doors.
- Slippery surfaces.

### Employee's 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.

An identified hazard must be reported immediately to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty. The Practice Manager or Senior Vet will assess the situation and implement necessary control measures to minimise unsafe conditions and prevent injury so far as is reasonably practicable.

## **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, which a risk assessment has identified as having a reasonable likelihood of occurring.

It requires implementing procedures to achieve this, including 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.

Health surveillance records should be kept for forty years and 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.

### Associated hazards

- Noise.
- Hand-arm vibration.
- Certain solvents, fumes, dusts, biological agents and other hazardous substances.
- Dermatitis.
- Asthma.
- Asbestos
- Ionising radiation.

### Employee's 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 an employee has a concern about health and safety, or that of others affected by their work or experiences symptoms of ill health, they must inform the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately.

## **Housekeeping**

### Description

Poor standards of housekeeping are a common cause of injury and damage at work and can create possible fire hazards. Unsatisfactory housekeeping is often the result of poor working practices, lack of direct supervision and/or organisational deficiencies within the workplace.

### Associated hazards

- Fire.
- Slipping, tripping/falling over.
- Poor cleanliness.
- Dirty equipment.
- Cluttered pedestrian gangways.

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Co-operate with management arrangements for good housekeeping in the workplace.
- Follow any guidance and instruction given to prevent injury or ill health.
- Report to the employer any hazardous or dangerous situations.

## **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, Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

### Employee's 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 an employee experiences 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 and training**

### Description

Preventing accidents and ill health caused by work is a key priority for Damory Veterinary Clinic. Health and safety information, instruction 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.

### Employee's 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.

### Employee's 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

A third of all reported falls from height incidents involve ladders or stepladders. Many injuries are caused by inappropriate or incorrect use of equipment.

By conducting a risk assessment it may be determined that ladder/stepladder use is acceptable for work of short duration (between 15 and 30 minutes) and low risk, providing three points of contact are maintained whilst working from the ladder/stepladder.

### Associated hazards

- Failure of the ladder/stepladder itself, causing persons or equipment to fall.
- Items being dropped from above while using the ladder/stepladder.
- Users falling from the ladder/stepladder by over-reaching.
- Exceeding the rated capacity of the ladder/stepladder.
- The ladder/stepladder slipping and falling due to being insufficiently secured.
- Faulty ladder/stepladder.
- Inappropriate use of ladder/stepladder.
- Manual handling while using ladder/stepladder.

### Employee's responsibilities

- Follow the instruction, training and information provided by the Practice on the safe use of ladders/stepladders.
- Check whether the type of work activity requires the use of a ladder/stepladder; establish whether the ladder/stepladder is suitable for the task and match the ladder/stepladder to the job.
- Ensure the ladder/stepladder is in good condition.
- Report any defective ladders/stepladders to the Practice Manager or Senior Vet on duty immediately.

## **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.
- Slip, trip, falls.
- Biological risks from infected laundry.
- Fire.
- Occupational dermatitis from laundry chemicals.

### Employee's 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 eat or drink in the laundry area.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.



## **New and expectant mothers**

### Description

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

### Associated hazards

- Physical (e.g. from handling patients, standing for long periods).
- Biological (e.g. from zoonoses).
- Chemical or physical agents (e.g. from medicines, drugs, anaesthetic gases, radiation).
- Psychological (e.g. work load, stress, patient owners).

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Report (optional) to the Practice as soon as pregnancy is confirmed or if breastfeeding.
- 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 appropriate remedial action can be taken.
- Use all protective or safety equipment provided by the Practice.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.

## **Manual handling**

### Description

Manual handling injuries occur wherever people are at work. 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

- Sprains, strains.
- Hernias.
- Damage to joints, ligaments, muscles and vertebrae.
- Slips, trips and falls.

### Employee's 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.
- Attend training sessions as required.
- 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.

## **Mobile telephones**

It is an offence for a person to drive a motor vehicle if they cannot have proper control of the vehicle.

The Road Safety Act sets fixed penalty fines and points for using a hand-held phone while driving. Penalties also apply for not having proper control of a vehicle - a measure that can also be used where a driver has been distracted by using a hands-free mobile phone.

If required, hands-free kits will be provided to members of staff who are required to use mobile telephones whilst working away from the premises.

Under no circumstances are employees permitted to use hand-held telephones or any similar hand-held device e.g. Personal Data Assistant (PDA) or Palm Pilot whilst driving. The prohibition also applies when stopped at traffic lights or during other hold-ups that may occur during a typical journey when a vehicle can be expected to move off after a short while.

To comply with legislation, it is important that the phone is sat in a cradle (not resting on a seat or in a pocket) fitted in a position that would not distract you from the road during use.

Drivers still risk prosecution (for failure to have proper control) even if they use hands-free phones when driving.

The following guidance is given to all drivers who are required to use mobile phone hands-free kits:-

- Only use the phone when it is safe to do so.
- Understand how your phone operates and utilise the one-touch speed-dial facility.
- Only acknowledge incoming calls on a hands-free system, where answering is automatic or one touch button.
- Only use short responses and indicate that you will return the call when it is safe to do so.

Whenever possible, drivers should delay making outgoing calls whilst travelling.

### General Use of Mobile Phones

Only use the mobile phone when it is essential to do so and do not use the phone any longer than is necessary.

Do not press the telephone to your ear or the side of your head; try to leave a gap between your ear and the handset if possible.

When making calls to, or receiving calls from mobile phones, always ask whether it is safe to speak.

## **Occupational asthma**

### Description

Damory Veterinary Clinic recognises that occupational asthma is the most frequently reported occupational respiratory disease in Great Britain. To reduce the risks from occupational asthma the company will assess the potential and introduce controls to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

### Associated hazardous substances include

- Isocyanates.
- Flour/grain dust.
- Wood dusts.
- Latex.
- Solder flux.
- Animals.
- Glues or resins.

### Employee's responsibilities

- To comply with the information, instruction and training provided.
- Wear all personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.
- Report to your line manager if you believe you may have any symptoms relating to asthma

Sensitisers are unpredictable, it is estimated that only 5-25% of individuals will actually become sensitised. Sensitisation may occur after times of exposure varying from months to years. These arrangements will be implemented and are intended to reduce the risk as low as reasonably practicable.

## **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.

### Employee 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.

## 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 Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

### Employee's responsibilities

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

## **Smoking in the workplace**

### Description

Second-hand or passive smoking has now been shown to cause lung cancer and heart disease in non-smokers. In addition, tobacco smoke is a cause of discomfort and irritation to many people, particularly those suffering from respiratory illnesses such as asthma, and may lead to increased absence.

Damory Veterinary Clinic will comply with statutory duties in respect of smoking in the workplace and, in particular, fulfil obligations to assess the risks associated with smoking in the workplace. Effective measures to prevent or control any ill health effects or accidents arising from such activity will be applied.

This policy is not concerned with the right of individuals to smoke but with where they smoke whilst on Damory Veterinary Clinic's premises and with due regard to the effects this may have upon the health and wellbeing of others.

### Associated hazards

- Health risks including stroke, cancers and heart disease.
- Fire damage to building and associated risks to those in and around the premises.

**Note:** the above list of hazards associated with smoking is not exhaustive.

### Employee's responsibilities

In order for Damory Veterinary Clinic to control the hazards associated with the effects of second hand smoke on non-smokers and to reduce the risks of fire, compliance with our arrangements for smoking is critical to the safety of everyone. Employees must:-

- Adhere to our arrangements for smoking, follow instructions and comply with 'No Smoking' signage.
- Not smoke in any area or vehicle that is designated as 'Non-Smoking'.
- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others.

Any employee who refuses to comply with the smoking policy may be in breach of employment law and subject to disciplinary action.

## **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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Employee 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.

## Employee's 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 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.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment is an important step towards protecting employees and others, and is a requirement in health and safety law.

### 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.

### Employee's 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.

## **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.

### Employee 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.

## 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.

### Employee's 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.

### Employee's 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.

Employee's 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

### Description

Damory Veterinary Clinic 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, syringes), infected waste, X-ray materials.
- Food wastes.

### Associated hazards

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

### Employee's 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.

## **Work equipment**

### Description

Equipment used in Veterinary Practices includes photocopiers, laboratory, 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.
- Unintended discharge of gas, liquid, vapour or other substance.
- Excessively hot or cold surfaces.

Note: The above listing is not exhaustive.

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Use work equipment safely and in accordance with the information, instruction and training provided.
- Only use 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 employer.
- 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.
- Make full and proper use of any personal protective equipment (PPE) provided.

## **Working at height**

### Description

Working at height is considered to be work in any place where there is a risk of falling and causing personal injury, even if it is below ground. In the UK, falls from height account for the largest cause of fatalities and are one of the main causes of major injury.

### Associated hazards

- Falls of persons and materials.
- Collapse of work equipment.

### Employee's responsibilities

- Do not access height unless you are suitably trained and competent.
- Follow the control measures as detailed in the risk assessments, method statements and where applicable, permits to work.
- Use the equipment provided following specific training or instructions in its use.
- Wear all personal protective equipment (PPE) that is required by risk assessment and local site rules.
- Employees must never throw anything from height.

## Young persons

### Description

Most young people cannot wait to get their first job, be it a paper round, shop work or dog walking. But some young people may be unaware of the hazards the workplace may hold.

There are specific legal requirements and restrictions, on those who employ young people (and even more so, children).

A young person is defined as anyone under 18 years old.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached the official age at which they may leave school, just before or just after their 16th birthday (often referred to as the minimum school leaving age (MSLA)).

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.

### Associated hazards

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

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

### Employee's responsibilities

Employees must:-

- Co-operate with management arrangements for young people in the workplace.
- Report any hazards to the employer.
- Follow any guidance, information, instruction and training given by the employer.

Young people must:-

- Ask the employer or senior member of staff if unsure about anything.
- Make full and proper use of all PPE that has been issued to them.
- Not undertake any tasks unless they have been trained.
- Report any hazards or defects to the employer or a senior member of staff.

## 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 animals 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 Animals.
- 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.

#### Employee's 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 employee 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

Damory Veterinary Clinic 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.

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

Please return this form to the Ms Caroline Raven