

Risk Assessment

Task: Taking care of Seeing Eye Dogs and puppies in the workplace

Location: All Workplaces

Context: This risk assessment provides health and safety management strategies for having Seeing Eye Dogs in training (including puppies and young dogs) in a workplace.

Vision Australia acknowledges that workplaces are not obliged to allow our dogs and puppies (in training) into the workplace, however for those wanting to enjoy the satisfaction of knowing they are assisting someone who is blind to live the life they choose, this document outlines recommended measures to minimise the risk of any harm or disruption to your employees. We, and our clients, would certainly appreciate, and welcome, your support and facilitation of this vital puppy and dog development.

Health and Safety at work is a focus of Vision Australia. We consider the keeping of dogs and puppies in the workplace, as a low risk, if the risk assessment is adhered to. Having these dogs and puppies in the workplace, will have many positive results for your workplace, as they can positively impact morale, and the feel of a site; they are a good stress relief, they can increase discussion and interaction between colleagues and can be a point of interest and discussion for your clients and customers.

It is recommended that Puppy Carer's discuss the requirements and arrangements for having a puppy/dog prior to bringing them to the workplace. Vision Australia understands that in some workplaces, having a puppy/dog may not be feasible.

Hazard/Risk	Recommended Controls/Discussion
Physical injury, by bites, scratches, mouthing, jumping up or unpredictable movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Puppies are playful and may in the early stages mouth, if a person interacts directly with them. As they develop this behaviour reduces dramatically with their training.▪ Carers must ensure the puppy/dog is tethered/secured to furniture, a person, or in a crate at all times, minimising the ability for the puppy/dog to approach or come in contact with others inadvertently.▪ When walking around the workplace, the Carer is to ensure the puppy/dog is kept on a leash or training harness at all times, Although the pup should be in jacket for identification, it won't mitigate these hazards.

Hazard/Risk	Recommended Controls/Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Carer is to educate and train others on how to appropriately interact with the puppy/dog. For example, asking permission before patting; When puppy is out walking and has their coat on, no one is to pat the dog, except for the nominated handler. ▪ Carers are educated on how to control jumping, mouthing, chewing etc., and are required to apply these techniques consistently.
Infection or infestation from microorganisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carer to provide proof of vaccination, worming and flea treatment (where practicable) ▪ All Seeing Eye Dogs are fully inoculated and treated for worms, ticks and fleas monthly. ▪ Regular hand washing is required by any person after contact with a dog/puppy. Alcohol based products or simple soap and water will suffice.
Slips, trips and falls due to moving animals around workplace and unpredictability of animal behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carer is to ensure the puppy/dog is tethered/secured, or in a crate at all times. They should not be allowed to roam freely in offices, corridors, workshops etc. ▪ When walking around the workplace, Puppy Carer's must ensure the puppy/dog is kept on a short leash or training harness at all times. ▪ Puppies/dogs are not be walked or taken care of by any other employees during work hours, unless explicit approval of management is received. ▪ Carer is to bring dedicated mat or crate, and place the water/food bowl in close proximity. The location of these items needs to consider others including foot traffic, movement of equipment etc. so as to minimise impact and avoid trip or slip hazards. Underneath a desk is a great option – as long as appropriate ergonomics can still be achieved. ▪ Any dog toys are to be confined to the dog bed and controlled at all times to avoid slip or trip hazards.
Accidents with vehicles or other moving objects such as forklifts etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carer's must ensure the puppy/dog remains on a leash at all times, and is well controlled in the workplace. ▪ No puppy/dog is to enter high traffic areas such as warehouses, etc. at any time. Pups/dogs may need to enter carpark if the carer parks there however.
Individual's objection due to asthma or allergic reactions, phobia, smell or other reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Carer and/or Employer should consult with other employees to determine if there are any employees that may be affected by, or object to, having an animal at work ▪ The Carer and Employer are to determine the location of the Employee in relation to the location of the puppy/dog and if there is mutually suitable solution for all parties. ▪ SEDA pups in training have the same access rights as a working dog guide to workplaces, restaurants, venues and so on. If there is a strong reason for an individual to have an objection to the dog or puppy being in the workplace such as major allergies, immune compromise etc. then this may be reasonable. ▪ Puppies/dogs are to be regularly groomed to minimize shedding of hair and dander, reducing the risk of allergic reaction.
Hygiene of workplace if Puppy urinates or defecates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paper towel, disinfectant and collection bags are to be supplied by the Carer and used as required. ▪ The Carer is responsible for cleaning and disinfecting any areas where the Puppy has urinated or defecated.

Hazard/Risk	Recommended Controls/Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion between the Puppy Carer and Employer to confirm a suitable outdoor relief area. ▪ Regular toilet breaks, dependent upon the puppy's stage of training.
Dog hair on floor, clothes and in workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dogs will moult and leave hair. This can be addressed by brushing of the dog, vacuuming as per normal cleaning arrangements or sweeping – as required. To remove hair from clothing, sticky tape or a lint roller may be used.
Distraction and loss of productivity due to having a Puppy at work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The main requirement for Carers when puppies/dogs are at work is to ensure regular toilet breaks are provided. Most Puppies' will spend majority of the time sleeping throughout the day. The breaks required can be part of the Employee's normal break allowances throughout the day. ▪ The Puppy should be secured at all times and kept under the desk of the Puppy Carer or in a crate to limit distraction to other employees. ▪ Once the puppy/dog and workforce establish and settle into a routine, this is less of a problem. ▪ Interaction with the puppy/dog can be positive for morale and mood, however management are to determine the appropriate frequency this can occur. The Carer must also try to avoid this being a problem by discussing this with colleagues.

Assessment completed by Michelle Emond (WHS Advisor) and Troy Pearl (WHS Manager) in consultation with Kate Turner Puppy Development Trainer.

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