



CHAPTER 5 LOCATION AND/OR SET SAFETY

- 5-1 The American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative™ and the animal handler shall inspect working areas prior to each day’s rehearsal or filming to identify hazards, obstacles and environmental conditions that may injure animals and people working with those animals.
- 5-2 Production and animal handlers shall familiarize themselves with local plant life that may be toxic to animals.
- 5-3 Safe footing shall be provided at any location or set as well as on any path to or from the location/set that an animal is required to traverse.
- a. An easily accessible area shall be available for loading and unloading animals. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #6, “Animal Handling Rules for the Motion Picture Industry,” paragraph 5.)
 - b. When animals work on a studio stage or other potentially slippery surfaces (e.g., concrete, linoleum, wood, etc.), non-skid mats shall be placed in the area of action if needed to prevent slipping. An ample amount of rubber matting shall be supplied in order to maintain a safe pathway to or from the location/set that an animal is required to traverse.
 - c. It is preferable to avoid the use of stairs for some species of animals, such as horses and livestock, which have difficulty going up and down stairs. American Humane Society recommends the use of ramps for movement of these animals.
 - d. When filming on concrete or other hard-surface flooring (for example, to create an arena), the flooring must be covered in a manner to prevent injury to susceptible animals. Hard surfaces should be covered with rubber matting and, if necessary for set decoration, dirt may be added up to the recommended depth of 8 inches. If rubber matting is not used, dirt shall be placed on all hard surfaces to a recommended minimum depth

of 12 inches. Dirt that has been stored may need to be sifted and/or sanitized prior to use to exclude foreign objects, mold spores, and other harmful residue and debris found in stored dirt. American Humane Society recommends the use of fresh dirt. Under no circumstances shall silica dirt be used where animals will be present.

- e. When appropriate, non-skid boots on livestock shall also be used.
- f. In outdoor locations, the area must be checked for — and cleared of and/or mitigated for — railroad ties, holes and debris, such as tree branches, roots and stones, that could trip an animal, as well as slick or unstable ground, street or walkway conditions.
- g. Stream bottoms must be cleared of debris, such as rocks, logs and trash; holes; dips in terrain; and unsafe footing before being traversed by livestock.
- h. Deep muck, mire and quicksand must be avoided. If an animal encounters those conditions during filming, the animal must be extricated immediately and the physical condition of the animal must be evaluated, and the animal deemed uninjured, before it may be used further. The terrain also should be evaluated before deciding to proceed with any further action.
- i. Scenery and props should be secured, as objects such as ladders or pedestals may tip over and startle animals. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #6, “Animal Handling Rules for the Motion Picture Industry,” paragraph 11.)

5-4* To ensure safety when animals work near or on railroad tracks or crossings, proof must be submitted to American Humane Society of communication with the railroad company or companies regarding train schedules. Care must be taken near railroad tracks so that the animals do not ingest creosote. Railroads are now protected by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, making trespassing a federal offense. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #29, “Guidelines for Safety Around Railroads and Railroad Equipment.”)

5-5 Obstacles that might strike an animal in the face or on the body as it traverses a scene shall be removed. For example, low-hanging branches must be removed before riding or chase scenes. All nails, splinters, wires and other debris must be cleaned up or otherwise made safe for the animals.

5-6 Animals shall not be exposed to contaminants such as slow-moving or stagnant water, putrid odors and toxins.

5-7 Raised platforms must be large enough and strong enough to support the animals they are intended for and must be tested appropriately prior to use by those animals.

5-7.1 Care must be taken when large animals such as horses and livestock are required to traverse stairs for filming. Animals must be prepped, trained and conditioned to perform this activity. The number of steps being traversed must be considered, as well as the size, width and grade of the stairway. The larger the animal, the wider the step/step board will need to be to provide the animal with safe placement for footing as it traverses the stairway.

REMINDER: It is much more difficult for an animal to descend stairs than to ascend stairs. American Humane Society recommends that off-camera ramps be used to reset an animal.

- 5-7.2 Care must be taken to ensure that animals do not escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must have a safety plan in place that will prevent the escape of an animal from the set or location and provide for an animal's safe recapture should an accident or escape occur. (Also see *Guideline 1-36*.)
- 5-7.3 When filming in remote locations, the American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative™ should be included in location scouts pertaining to animal action.

AIRCRAFT SAFETY (helicopters, airplanes, ultralights, gliders, hot-air balloons)

NOTE: Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletins #3/3A, "Guidelines Regarding the Use of Helicopters in Motion Picture Productions"; #11/11A, "Fixed-Wing Aircraft"; #29/29A, "Hot Air Balloons"; and #36, "Miniature Remote-Controlled Camera Helicopters."

- 5-8 Animals must be adequately conditioned to work in and around aircraft prior to filming. Should animals become stressed, they shall be removed from the aircraft or filming area immediately.
- 5-9* Production shall ensure that the pilot is properly licensed and follows all applicable FAA rules and regulations.
- 5-10 American Humane Society, the animal handler, and the pilot or aerial coordinator shall work together to ensure the safety of the animals. The pilot shall in no way be responsible for operating the camera when animals are being filmed.
- 5-12 Whether hot or cold loading, small animals such as cats, birds, reptiles and rats must be loaded in cages or crates. Larger animals such as dogs or small livestock must, at a minimum, be leashed or otherwise restrained — and preferably carried — onto and off of the aircraft. At no time should any animal handler approach an aircraft or helicopter without a clear and intentional signal from the pilot.
- 5-13 All animals, kennels and other equipment must be secured before the aircraft leaves the ground.
- 5-13.1 Properly trained personnel must be available to assist in clear communication with the aircraft and the opening and securing of occupants, harnesses and doors.
- 5-14 Care must be taken to protect animals' eyes when near a running aircraft. When necessary and appropriate, the landing area should be cleared of debris and sprayed with water to keep dust and dirt at a minimum (i.e., rotor wash). (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #3, "Helicopters," paragraph 17.)

- 5-15 The following safe distances are required whenever engines and rotors are running (excluding remote-controlled aircraft) to prevent animals from being injured by debris.
- a. Animals and animal handlers shall avoid the rear of an aircraft at all times.
 - b. Except when loading, and only at the pilot's discretion, animals shall never be closer than 50 feet to the front or sides of the aircraft when on the ground.
 - c. When an aircraft hovers or steadily flies directly above animals during filming, the aircraft shall not come closer than 100 feet to any animal.
 - d. When flying at other angles, the aircraft shall not come closer than 50 feet to any animal.
- 5-16 When an aerial sequence is to be performed, all persons involved — including all American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative(s)[™] — shall be thoroughly briefed on any potential hazards or safety issues prior to filming. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #3, "Helicopters.")
- 5-17 Once an aircraft is airborne, no changes shall be made that affect the animal action without notifying the animal handler and the American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative[™].

WATER SAFETY

NOTE: Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #17, "Water Hazards."

- 5-19 Before any animal is placed in or around water, whether for swimming or water-crossing scenes, prior approval must be received from American Humane Society. Safety measures shall be reviewed with American Humane Society and demonstrated at American Humane Society's request.
- 5-20 Care should be taken regarding the native marine life, amphibians and reptiles in and around water.
- 5-21 American Humane Society must be consulted prior to filming when animal jumps or falls into water are planned. The distance of the jump or fall will depend on the species of animal being used and the water depth.
- 5-22 Water-quality tests are to be performed to ensure the water is free from contaminants.
- a. Slow-moving, stagnant water; putrid odors; and toxins shall be avoided.
 - b. Proof of an adequate water-quality test shall be provided to American Humane Society prior to filming.
 - c. Each species of animal is different in its tolerance of water contaminants. When in doubt, check with American Humane Society.
- 5-23 Supplies should be available to rinse and dry animals after water work.
- 5-23.1 Care must be taken so that animals do not become too chilled in swimming or water-crossing scenes. When in doubt about an animal's temperature limits, consult American Humane Society.
- a. When necessary, production shall provide equipment to adequately heat the water.
 - b. Depending on temperature conditions, animals may require warming areas at the location where the water work is performed.
 - c. Should wind be present, sufficient windbreaks may be necessary.

- 5-24 American Humane Society recommends that animals be dry before being transported in open trailers or vehicles.
- 5-25 Swimming and water crossings must be reviewed in a safety meeting prior to filming. American Humane Society must be notified and invited to participate in this meeting. The safety meeting shall include all emergency plans should a water-crossing or swimming scene encounter difficulties.
- 5-26 Swimming shall be limited to experienced animals, and strict attention must be given to each animal's logical limits of endurance. A plan for emergency rescue must be in place. If the water is swift, a swift-water animal rescue team should be consulted in the development of an emergency plan and should be on scene for the action.
- 5-28 Water flow rate and water depth must be computed to ensure the safety of all animals in the water. The force of the water must not be so great as to endanger the animals in the water. As the speed of the water flow doubles, the force of the flow triples.
- a. The general rule for determining if the water is safe for animals is to multiply the velocity of the flow (in feet per second) by the water depth (in feet). For safety, the product of that calculation should be less than 10.
 - b. To compute velocity, a small piece of wood, bark or other floating object can be tossed into the water and used as a floating "speed" reference by counting the number of seconds it takes to travel between a pre-marked 10-foot section of water, and then dividing 10 (feet) by the number of seconds to determine the number of feet per second. Water depth is computed by using a ruler or measuring stick.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Water flows fastest at its surface. The deeper the water, the more force it will have, making footing for animals and conveyances difficult. Production should consult with local park rangers, a water district manager or other expert to compute flow rates and shall provide such documentation to American Humane Society upon request.

- 5-29 All managers of dams or levees located upstream within a five-mile distance shall be notified of the intended animal action. Proof of communication with any agency upstream that controls the water level must be provided to American Humane Society upon request. Contact numbers for such agencies, including emergency numbers, must be available for communication and provided to American Humane Society during preparation, rehearsals and filming.
- 5-30 For bodies of water such as streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, the bottoms shall be checked for uneven or otherwise unsafe footing. Where uneven or unsafe underwater footing is found, alternate sites must be used or the area cleared of such debris and unsafe footing before being traversed by animals.
- a. This shall include debris on the bottom, including rocks, logs and trash, as well as holes, dips in terrain and floating debris.
 - b. The entrances and exits of water must be checked for safe entrance and exit. As a general rule, if the animal or apparatus it may be pulling can sink three inches into the bed of the water or on the bank, additional materials must be added to firm up the surfaces.

- 5-31 Above-water or underwater bridges or platforms may be used in situations where uneven or unsafe footing is found.
- a. Bridges and platforms must be constructed to support the combined weight of the animals, people and/or equipment (such as wagons) that will be crossing the structures at the same time.
 - b. A bridge or platform must be twice as wide as the widest object traversing it (this includes outriders to wagons) and must have a non-slip surface to ensure good footing for animals.
 - c. Underwater bridges and platforms must be constructed of wood that is arsenic- and creosote-free, or made of steel.
- 5-33 Special consideration shall be given to any and all wagons or conveyances connected to an animal, as these objects can and will float.
- a. To prevent floating, a wagon or conveyance must not be submerged up to the box of the wagon. When appropriate, wagons shall be weighed down.
 - b. When crossing moving water, there should be only one team of two animals harnessed to a wagon or conveyance.
 - c. When in water, quick release snaps or clevises must be used on the traces of animals in harness.
 - d. No tie-downs, bearing reins or over-checks shall be used in water crossings or swimming involving animals.
- 5-33.1 Animal handlers and/or qualified stunt personnel must carry knives — preferably with recessed blades — able to cut through leather so they can cut the hame straps and leather traces and free the harnessed animals, allowing them to swim free in an intense water situation, if necessary.
- 5-33.2 American Humane Society requires that animal handlers designate a spotter or spotters placed along the route of the animals' water crossing. These individuals should relay instructions on how to manage an intense water situation.
- a. An adequate number of spotters must be placed upstream with radios to warn of floating debris or objects in the water, such as logs or loose equipment.
 - b. An adequate number of spotters with experience in swift-water animal rescue must be positioned downstream with radios and appropriate rescue equipment.

INSERT VEHICLE SAFETY

An insert vehicle (often referred to as an “insert car”) is defined as any type of moving apparatus that has wheels and a camera mounted for purposes of filming moving action, including, but not limited to, cars, trucks, four-wheelers, three-wheelers, golf carts, dune buggies, bicycles, etc., and it includes any type of chase vehicle that may be used in filming traveling scenes. The term “insert vehicle” as used in this section shall mean any insert vehicle or chase car. The term “crane” refers to any arm, boom or crane with a camera attached, which moves independently of the vehicle.

- American Humane Society considers the use of ANY moving vehicle when animals are present as both intense animal action and a stunt.
- Productions, including the stunt coordinator and insert vehicle crew, shall work collaboratively with the animal handler and American Humane Society to ensure the safety of the animals.
- When filming includes the use of an insert vehicle, it is ultimately the responsibility of the animal handler and American Humane Society to determine if the action is safe for animals.
- American Humane Society shall participate in all prep, training and conditioning of animals that will be participating in filming with any type of insert vehicle, as well as any and all meetings, including safety meetings, and shall be notified of the safety plan once it is developed.
- American Humane Society field personnel are trained and experienced in all aspects of intense animal action and stunts involving animals and shall be considered a part of a production's safety team, ensuring a collaborative effort for the safety and welfare of the animals. (Also see Chapter 7, Stunts.)

American Humane Society must witness all filming with animals in order to properly document their use. Due to the complexity and length of filming with insert vehicles, American Humane Society may require more than one Certified Animal Safety Representative™ to witness all filming. Productions are required to notify American Humane Society prior to filming if they are using insert vehicles, in order for American Humane Society to ensure that ample personnel are on hand for filming. Production shall provide the American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative(s)™ adequate placement during filming in order to witness all animal action. In certain circumstances, this may include having access to a monitor, a clamshell, a production radio and/or other means of viewing the animal action as it takes place. (Also see *Guideline 1-22.*)

- 5-34 ALL animals working where an insert vehicle or chase vehicle is present shall be trained, conditioned and acclimated to working with the size and type of vehicle to be used, to ensure that the animals are comfortable with any noise, movement or other stimuli from the vehicle or crane.
- a. Animals shall be conditioned and acclimated to any special effects, props, costumes and/or any and all environmental or climatic conditions, whether real or man-made, that will occur in the scene. Any props or costumes that may potentially hinder the movement or impair the vision of the animals or animal handler shall be used in rehearsals. Any special effects used shall be inspected and reviewed closely prior to filming. The reaction of an animal to any special effects shall be closely monitored.
 - b. Once animals have been acclimated, any rehearsals must be conducted at slow speeds, gradually building to the desired speed required for filming.
 - c. Rehearsals shall be accomplished at the filming location, at the same time of day or night, and under the same circumstances as actual filming, in an effort to closely duplicate conditions on filming day.

- d. All persons participating in filming, such as riders, drivers, animal handlers, wranglers, stunt personnel, special effects personnel, vehicle drivers, crane operators, locations personnel, etc., shall participate in rehearsals to ensure that all members of the safety team are informed about all aspects of the scene and have the opportunity to confer with all departments with regard to safety and prevention of possible hazards.
- 5-35 Care must be taken to ensure that animals do not escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must have a safety plan in place that will prevent the escape of an animal from the set or location and provide for an animal's safe recapture, should an accident or escape occur. (Also see *Guideline 1-36.*)
- 5-36 The use of any vehicle, or any part thereof, to control any directional movement or speed of an animal is prohibited. It is the responsibility of the animal handlers to direct and control the animals.
- 5-37 The vehicles being used shall be inspected daily to ensure that they are mechanically sound and appropriate to perform under the conditions at the filming location.
- a. Areas of special concern during inspection are the tires, braking system, steering system, the weight and stability of the vehicle, and the size and type of vehicle.
 - b. Any crane/camera used on a vehicle must be properly counter-balanced.
 - c. It is important that the vehicle can be seen by the animals, is not overloaded and its weight is evenly distributed.
- 5-38 Drivers and crane operators shall be trained and experienced with the operation of the vehicle they will be using. Drivers and crane operators are considered an important part of the safety team and are important "spotters" during rehearsals and filming.
- 5-39 Terrain, whether natural or man-made, shall be inspected closely for potholes, bumps, uneven surfaces, obstacles such as rocks/gravel, trees, bushes, wet/muddy surfaces, curves, grades, etc.
- a. Consideration shall be given to the type of surface in relation to the speed of the action, whether the terrain is natural or man-made.
 - b. No extreme condition of terrain shall exist that will hinder footing/traction or visibility.
- 5-40 Climatic conditions, whether natural or man-made, shall be closely monitored to ensure that there is no change in footing/traction or visibility during rehearsals and filming. No extreme climatic condition shall exist that will hinder footing/traction or visibility, including bright light, darkness, fog, rain, snow, dust, etc.
- 5-41 The vehicle must:
- a. Maintain a speed — depending on surface and conditions, animals used, environmental and climatic conditions, and any special effects used — which will allow the driver and any crane operator to stay in control and react quickly to a hazard by braking and/or bailing out. Vehicle speed shall not exceed 30mph unless prior approval is given by American Humane Society, or, in a circumstance that would prevent an accident.

- b. Maintain a safe distance from any animal to allow the driver and/or crane operator to react to any deviation in direction by the animal. American Humane Society recommends that any moving vehicle, and parts thereof (crane, camera, etc.), maintain a minimum distance of 25 feet from any animal. More than 25 feet may be required depending on speed, terrain, and species of animal.
 - c. Have safety areas around it. The set/filming location shall have safety areas to the front, sides and rear of the vehicle at all times, to allow for the vehicle or an animal to bail out and/or perform a safety maneuver should the need arise. Specific attention shall be paid to the beginning and end of the filming areas and to any curves or grades that may be present at the filming location.
 - d. Never track directly behind, head-on or toward an animal. American Humane Society shall use on-site judgment to set safe distances between insert vehicles and animals.
 - e. Never be used to control the speed or direction of an animal.
 - f. Maintain a safe following distance between any animal, any insert vehicle and any chase car, to prevent collision.
- 5-42 Crane operators may position the crane/camera in front, behind or to the side of an animal, provided there is a safe distance between the crane/camera and the animal, and provided the ability exists to quickly perform a safety maneuver. American Humane Society shall use on-site judgment, based on the type of equipment used, animals used, special effects, and environmental and climatic conditions, to determine the distance a crane/camera may be placed from an animal.
- 5-43 Spotters with knowledge of the animals being used shall be utilized.
- a. There shall be an adequate number of spotters as determined by American Humane Society and the animal handler. If the route of the entire action cannot be clearly seen by one person, additional spotters shall be used to ensure that there is clear visibility along the entire route of filming.
 - b. All spotters, including the vehicle driver and any crane operator, shall be equipped with radio communications. A predetermined channel shall be used during all rehearsals and filming. This channel shall be kept open and clear, and people on this channel shall use communication that is simple and directive in nature to ensure quick reaction to any potential hazard.
 - c. It shall be the duty of the spotters to communicate any potential hazard, giving the driver, crane operator, animal handler, etc., as much time as possible to react to a potential hazard.
 - d. When filming scenes that are considered extremely intense, an animal handler who is familiar with the animals being used shall be located inside each vehicle.
- 5-44 The safety, placement and location of any animals being used as pickup horses should be addressed, to prevent a collision with them and the action being filmed.

- 5-45 The filming area shall be limited to only necessary cast, crew and equipment, to minimize the potential for a collision and to provide sufficient bail-out areas.
- 5-46 When filming with vehicles and animals, **THERE SHALL BE NO CHANGE IN ACTION ONCE REHEARSAL OR FILMING HAS STARTED**, with the exception of reacting to the spotters' communication of any potential hazards. Any change of action, including, but not limited to, speed, length, and distance between vehicles and animals, shall require another safety meeting to ensure that all members of the safety team, and other people participating in the filming, clearly understand and acknowledge the change and see no potential hazards in making the change.

