



CHAPTER 7 STUNTS

ADVISORY: American Humane Society shall consider any animal performance intense or a stunt when the performance involves great effort or activity of an animal and/or provides for a degree of potential risk to the animal. Production, including the stunt coordinator, shall work collaboratively with the animal handler and American Humane Society to ensure the safety of animals. When stunts involve animals, it is ultimately the responsibility of the animal handler and American Humane Society to determine if the stunt is safe for an animal.

American Humane Society field personnel are trained and experienced and shall be considered a part of a production's safety team, ensuring a collaborative effort for the safety and welfare of the animals. Being a part of pre-production resolves many issues on set. Contact American Humane Society early in pre-production when animals will be involved in stunts.

- When stunts involve animals in water, see Water Safety in Chapter 5.
- When insert vehicles are used, see Insert Vehicle Safety in Chapter 5.
- When depicting rodeo scenes, see Rodeo in Chapter 8.
- When using horses and livestock, see Horse/Livestock Stunts and Strenuous Equine Action in Chapter 8.

7-0 American Humane Society field personnel shall closely monitor all strenuous or potentially risky animal action for:

- a. Any signs of stress and/or tiring of the animals.
- b. Any change in environmental, climatic or man-made factors which may affect the outcome of the stunt/intense animal action. (See *Guideline 1-23, Unauthorized Shot.*)
- c. Any breach of the Federal Animal Welfare Act and/or any state and local animal welfare laws and regulations, which clearly state that no animal shall be put at risk, overridden, overdriven, overloaded or ill-treated. Any violation will be reported.

ADVISORY: American Humane Society prefers to monitor all pre-production training of animals involved in stunts. Contact American Humane Society early in pre-production. (Also see *Guideline 1-3.*)

- 7-1 Animals shall be adequately trained, conditioned and prepped for stunts and/or intense animal action.
- a. American Humane Society will require the removal of any animals deemed unfit or inappropriate for use.
 - b. American Humane Society shall monitor the pre-production training and conditioning of animals that will be participating in a stunt or intense animal action as a means to determine their appropriateness for use in filming.
 - c. It is the responsibility of the production and the animal handler to contact American Humane Society in pre-production when stunts are planned.
- 7-2 Intense animal action must be reviewed in advance, as well as in safety meetings prior to filming, and must include a safety backup plan:
- a. American Humane Society shall be included in, and informed of, all action to be performed, and shall participate in any and all meetings, including safety meetings.
 - b. American Humane Society shall be notified of the safety plan once it is developed.
 - c. When stunts seem to pose a danger or involve risk, safety measures must be reviewed with American Humane Society, and the stunt shall be demonstrated at American Humane Society's request.
 - d. Should production have animated storyboards/video or other digital re-creations that are used to design the stunts, sharing those with American Humane Society can ensure that everyone is aware of what the animal will be asked to accomplish, and concerns can be discussed prior to the day of filming.
- 7-2.1 Animals shall be trained and conditioned to any special effects, props and costumes to be used during filming. (Also see Chapter 4, Costumes, Makeup, Rigging and Props, and Chapter 6, Special Effects.)
- 7-3 Everyone participating in the filming of a stunt or intense animal action, such as riders, drivers, animal handlers, stunt personnel, operators of vehicles or aircraft, production departments (such as special effects) and camera operators, shall participate in all prep and rehearsals to ensure that all members of the safety team are informed about all aspects of the scene, to ensure safety and eliminate possible hazards.
- a. All rehearsals shall be conducted at the filming location, at the same time of day, and under the same circumstances as required for the scene, in an effort to closely duplicate conditions on filming day.
 - b. Any prop or costume that may potentially hinder movement or impair the vision of animals or animal handlers shall be included in prep and rehearsals.
 - c. Any special effects (including any environmental or climatic conditions such as dust, rain and snow) or other noise or visual stimuli (such as gunfire and explosions) which may be present in the scene shall be included in prep and rehearsals.

- 7-4 Any intense animal action, including (but not limited to) chase or running scenes, must be staged to prevent animals from being overworked. This can be accomplished in the following ways:
- a. American Humane Society recommends that productions be proactive when choosing times or seasons in which to film animals, including not filming in the hottest or coldest times of year/day in areas where heat or cold may become an animal-safety issue.
 - b. Maintain a sufficient supply of ice and water at the filming location to be used to cool animals, including horses and livestock, during periods of excessive heat and/or humidity.
 - c. Film scenes in early morning or late afternoon, when temperatures are lower, during times of extreme heat and/or humidity.
 - d. Provide animals with shade.
 - e. Film these scenes during the warmest part of the day, when temperatures are warmer, during periods of extreme cold.
 - f. Provide animals with windbreaks and heaters during cold weather.
 - g. Limit rehearsals and takes.
 - h. Provide sufficient rest periods between takes.
 - i. Provide a sufficient supply of backup animals so the animals can be rotated.
 - j. Have an adequate number of animal handlers available to provide cooling or warming to the animals.
- 7-5 Environmental conditions such as terrain, temperature and humidity play a role in the safety and welfare of animals; therefore, the animal handler, a licensed veterinarian and American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representative(s)[™] will monitor animals for signs of heat or cold stress and other risks.
- a. Animal handlers and/or veterinarians on set shall have a rectal thermometer available should the need arise to monitor an animal's temperature.
 - b. Should the temperature of an animal rise above or fall below its normal range, the animal will be removed from use and not allowed to return to work for at least 24 hours with veterinarian approval and with documentation provided to American Humane Society.
- 7-6 A veterinarian familiar with the animals being used shall be present for all stunts where strenuous activity may pose risks. (Also see Chapter 2, *Veterinary Care Guidelines*.)

7-7.1 The following restrictions apply:

- a. No pregnant or lactating animals, including horses or livestock, shall participate in stunts or strenuous activity.
- b. No horse under the age of 4 years shall participate in horse-racing scenes.
- c. No tripping devices, wires or pitfalls are permitted for use with any animal. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #6, "Animal Handling Rules for the Motion Picture Industry," paragraph 10.)
- d. Branding of animals must be simulated. No actual branding is allowed.
- e. All animal fights (such as dog, bull and cock fights), hunting and fishing scenes, and scenes depicting the death of an animal, shall be simulated. (Also see *Guidelines* 1-28 and 1-28.1.)

7-8 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.)

7-11.1 American Humane Society recommends that animals riding in an open vehicle, such as in the back of a pickup truck, be restrained using a safety harness or proper tether. All animals must be conditioned and trained for this action prior to filming. Vehicles with a restrained animal shall not travel faster than 25 mph. Should a production require an animal to ride in an open vehicle without restraints, prior approval from American Humane Society must be obtained. Vehicles shall not travel more than 15 mph with an unrestrained animal.

ADVISORY: In some areas, riding with an unrestrained animal in an open vehicle may be illegal. Check all state and local laws and regulations before filming.*

