

Notification Form

ANIMALS TO BE USED OR PORTRAYED IN A PRODUCTION

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

A written description of what is expected of animal(s) to fulfil the script requirements is needed. A Notification Form must be completed and a copy of the relevant script scenes attached.

Describe action sequences (multiple scenes with same action need only be described on once).

The Notification Form may also be used as the basis for the contract required under the Code. The contract should specify the responsibilities accepted by the Producer and the animal consultant(s) including agreement to abide by the Code.



IMPORTANT

The *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals in Films and Theatrical Performances* and the *NSW Film Industry Safety Guidance Notes* must be provided with the Contract.

Multiple copies are available from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) NSW, Animal Welfare League NSW (AWL) or the NSW Film and Television Office (02 9380 5599).

A copy of the Notification Form and attachments must be forwarded to either Animal Welfare League NSW, 45 Herley Avenue, Rossmore NSW 2557, fax (02) 9606 0560, or RSPCA NSW, PO Box 34, Yagoona, NSW 2199, fax (02) 9782 4446.

Telephone RSPCA (02) 9782 4474 or AWL (02) 9878 8099 for further information or to discuss your responsibilities under the Code

Issues that need to be considered

All portrayals of animals – whether achieved through live action, animatronics, CGI or models must be notified to RSPCA NSW or the AWL NSW. This will allow all productions showing animals to be monitored and ensures that no animals are harmed or mistreated.

RSPCA NSW and AWL NSW are happy to be involved as early as possible to discuss requirements. They are also aware of the need for commercial confidentiality for all projects.

Notification Form and attachments can be faxed or mailed to RSPCA NSW or AWL NSW. Only fully documented notifications will be considered.

If incomplete applications are received, the animal welfare agency will contact the producer to ensure the Notification Form has been received.

NB Producers are responsible for contacting one of the animal welfare agencies to ensure the Notification Form has been received.

Turnaround time starts from receipt of all information:

- 48 hours for TVCs
- seven to 14 days for other productions

- If there are concerns about animals to be used or what is required of them, the animal welfare agency will contact the producer to discuss the project.
- When the animal welfare agency is satisfied, the producer will receive an approval for use of the animals setting out any terms or conditions necessary to ensure the animals are protected. Authorisations will be faxed, with hard copy to follow by post.
- The animal welfare agencies advise each other of the productions that have approached them. Please do not try to play the agencies off against each other.
- Changes from the details in the Notification Form must be advised to the agency involved. Whether these changes require re-submission of the form will depend on the nature and scale of the changes. (Phone conferences may be sufficient in some instances).
- If the animal welfare agency is happy with the procedures, processes and conduct in the use of animals, productions can apply for use of a disclaimer. This will be accompanied by the agency's logo and number and can be used on the production and/or publicity material.

NB Use of the disclaimer is not an automatic right.

Problems

An independent mechanism exists to handle complaints if you are unable to reach a satisfactory arrangement with the animal welfare agency. Contact the Film and Television Office with details of your notification and the animal welfare agency's response.

Non-compliance

The Code includes strict guidelines for using animals and any member of the industry not complying with the Code can face prosecution.

Contracts

Producers must formally contract the services of a consultant. This consultant may be an experienced handler, trainer or veterinarian depending on the animals to be used and the actions required of them.

The animal consultant must be presented with a synopsis of what is required of animals, and a description of the locations, including any conditions that may affect the animal. The producer must also provide the consultant with copies of the Code of Practice and the Film Industry Safety Guidance Notes: Use of Animals. Multiple copies of these are available, together with the plain English version of the code.

The Notification Form may be used as the basis of the contract as it contains most of the required information.

The contract should also specify responsibilities accepted by the producer for the animals and the responsibilities of the trainers, handlers, suppliers and owners, including agreement to abide by the Code.

Responsibilities include:

- Copies of Regulation, Code of Practice and Film Industry Safety Guidance Notes must be provided.
- Providing early advice on animals suitable for the task(s) required for the production.
- Providing written advice prior to start of production on the use of animals on location.
- Training animals(s) to perform task(s) required.
- Transport of animals(s) to and from location in compliance with all relevant Codes of Practice.
- All aspects of management of animals(s) on location.
- All aspects of management of animals(s) on set.
- Providing means of conveying urgent messages.
- Providing facilities for holding, restraint and examination of animals.
- Ensuring animal personnel are not required to do tasks other than those directly associated with care of animal(s).
- Ensuring all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent disease or injury.
- Advising producer on health and welfare of the animal(s) and if veterinary assistance is required.
- Ensuring animals are returned to their normal conditions at the end of production.
- Notifying RSPCA or AWL of the production's requirements and use of animals and advise of any substantive changes to this information.

NB Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the welfare of animals and compliance with the Code of Practice rests with the producer or the producer's authorised agent, whether such person is on the or not.