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Introduction

The Canine Hydrotherapy Association (CHA) is striving to raise and regulate the quality, standard and consistency of canine hydrotherapy in the UK.

The need for regulation is twofold; firstly there exists a real threat that unless the industry regulates itself, in time regulation will be forced upon it. Secondly, there are commercial benefits to be attained through regulated quality and standards, with both the insurance and veterinary professions having a method of identifying those centres with which it is safe to work. The CHA is committed to promoting its member centres and the use of canine hydrotherapy by regulated CHA members to dog owners, veterinary surgeons and others to aid greater understanding of the use of hydrotherapy for canine welfare and to that end we may release members' relevant information where appropriate so to do.

All individuals wishing to hold CHA membership will have to comply with the Quality Standards detailed within this document. In order to add extra weight and credibility to these standards, centres will be audited as part of the membership application process and from time to time thereafter.

The quality standards detailed in this document are in no way intended to replace or amend any legislative requirements

Training

Purpose

To ensure that operators of canine hydrotherapy centres have the latest relevant skills and knowledge in order to provide the best, safest and most effective treatment.

Requirements

All centre members must have at least one fully qualified practitioner holding a minimum Level 3 Certificate in Hydrotherapy for Small Animals on the Qualifications and Credit Framework including a Level 3 Treadmill module. All hydrotherapists employed within the centre are to work and be trained under the guidance of this member of staff and this fully qualified practitioner **must have direct supervision within the treatment room.**

*Please see Criteria for Membership for any exemptions

Continual Professional Development (CPD)

- It is advised that new canine hydrotherapy and related courses are attended in order to keep abreast of the latest techniques and developments within canine hydrotherapy.
- All practitioners within a centre will be required to achieve a minimum 25 hours relevant CPD per year to enhance their skills in small animal hydrotherapy. CPD will need to include a minimum 12 hours external training, with any remaining balance made up by service training or self-directed learning.
- It is the centre owner's responsibility to ensure there is a reflective CPD programme in place for all their staff members whether qualified or unqualified.

First Aid

- During treatment times there must be at least one person in the treatment room who holds the Level 3 1st Aid certificate or who has subsequently attended a *CHA approved first aid revision course within the last 2 years.

****CHA approved refresher courses are those specifically offered by training establishments providing Level 3 (or above) hydrotherapy courses. At present we do not accept any online refresher courses.***

****RVN's and Veterinary surgeons are not required to carry out 1st Aid refreshers.***

Treatment Methods

Purpose

Centres and individuals involved in the hydrotherapy treatment of dogs operate showing due care and attention to the animal, taking into account the age and condition of each individual dog

At all times an animal undergoing treatment is under the direct supervision of the hydrotherapist.

- The hydrotherapist must be in the pool at all times with each patient and the use of "fixed anchorage systems" (e.g. tri ropes) in the pool are no longer permitted.
- Multi Dog Swimming

Only one animal is to be treated in the hydrotherapy pool or water treadmill at any time. The practice of multi dog therapy is banned, irrespective of whether the animal is attending for rehabilitation treatment or 'fun & fitness'. This applies to all members regardless of pool or treadmill size or if the patients are from the same family even if you have more than one therapist in the treatment room. For clarification: at no time will any of our members be allowed to have more than one animal in the pool or treadmill.

If "same family" dogs remain in the treatment room then a risk assessment must have been undertaken as to whether their presence could be detrimental to the therapy session being conducted. If they do remain then appropriate measures must be taken to ensure these dogs are under control at all times.

- Swimming Dogs Using a Pole Restraint

The use of a pole attached to a collar, restraint harness or floating device is banned.

- Secondary Drowning

Secondary drowning has been highlighted as a risk by a number of practitioners within our field, primarily by the use of SOFT water toys that have the capacity to hold water within them (very often the "favourite" toys brought in by the owner, e.g. teddies and the like) and as such soft water toys are banned. Although less so, a slightly smaller risk is still present with non-absorbent toys if the dog bites down into the water line and ingests water whilst so doing. There are, however, plenty of excellent, purpose-made aquatic toys on the market and common sense should prevail.

All toys must be fit for purpose, in good condition and any risks highlighted should be managed to provide a safe environment for patients. Every hydrotherapist and hydrotherapy centre has a duty of care to its patients and must carry out a risk assessment with each patient and toy they propose to use. Whilst this risk assessment does not have to be a formal written one for each dog, hydrotherapy centres may find it beneficial to have a written protocol for such practice. **CHA advise that toys should not be picked up from the water line by patients.**

Treatment Records

Purpose

An audit trail of a dog's treatment and progress is kept.

Requirements

Treatment records must be kept for all dogs and the records retained on file and available for inspection for a minimum of 5 years after the conclusion of treatment.

As a minimum, treatment records must include but not be limited to:

- Name of owner.
- Name, breed, sex & age of dog.
- Description of condition being treated.
- Initial assessment of the dog including: current diet, weight, daily exercise/ home environment, static assessment/palpation, movement assessment, goals and objectives.
- Date & time of session..
- Whether spa is used.
- Method of entry into pool.
- Duration of hydrotherapy, including time and power of anti-swim jets if used.
N.B Number of laps in a pool is not adequate
- Relevant comments and observations, such as: range of movement to an affected limb, muscle bulk measurements, lameness scores, gait analysis, etc.

Treatment Times

General guidance would suggest that the “aerobic exercise” content of initial treatment times should not exceed 2 minutes and such exercise should be increased conservatively over subsequent sessions, i.e. times should not be “doubled up”.

However there may be times when the aerobic exercise content could exceed these guidelines and timings should be based on: an individual basis; the initial assessment; muscle fatigue; gait patterning; surgical procedures and individual ability. In such cases clear documentation of the clinical reasoning behind the treatment must be kept.

In general dogs should not swim or treadmill for more than **5 minutes** without a rest period and clear documentation must be kept as to the clinical reasoning for exceeding this guideline. If a complaint were to be received by the CHA regarding treatment times this may lead to a disciplinary procedure and you would be required to clinically reason with the CHA Board why your times exceeded these guidelines.

Veterinary Liaison & Referral

Purpose

- An accurate diagnosis of any condition being treated is known, together with details of any treatment, surgical procedure or medication that has been undertaken or administered to the dog.
- The dog's veterinarian has the opportunity to pass on any areas of danger or caution.
- A qualified veterinary surgeon has deemed that the dog's general state of health is such that it is safe for the animal to undergo hydrotherapy.
- The dog's veterinarian is kept informed of the progress of any dog undergoing hydrotherapy treatment.

Requirements

- All dogs are to be accepted with veterinary referral only; this includes those dogs attending for purely recreational purposes.

The veterinary referral must be obtained prior to the commencement of hydrotherapy and must be in writing.

As a minimum the referral must include, but not be limited to: -

- The name and address of the client.
- The name and details of the dog.
- The name and address of the referring vet/practice.
- Diagnosed condition of the dog.
- Details of any veterinary treatment or surgical procedure undertaken or administered.
- Any areas of concern.
- Any medication currently being taken by the dog
- A signed declaration that the veterinarian believes the dog to be of suitable overall state of health to undertake hydrotherapy.
- For long-term treatment a new referral must be obtained at least every 6 months and/or when a new/different condition is diagnosed and/or a new veterinary treatment or surgical procedure has been undertaken.
- Veterinary referrals must be retained on file and be available for inspection for a minimum of 5 years after the last hydrotherapy session has occurred.
- Feedback on the dog's progress should be sent to the veterinarian (as a minimum) at the start of the patient's treatment, during and at discharge. Feedback on 'Maintenance' patients should be when deemed suitable by the practitioner, but at

least every 6 months. Feedbacks must be completed at any signs of deterioration or change in the patient's condition.

Water Quality Management

Purpose

- Pools and any other water based environments used in the hydrotherapy treatment of dogs are clean, safe and conducive to the well-being of patients, clients and staff (temporary and permanent).
- The water in which dogs are treated is safe from bacteria, virus and harmful micro-organisms.
- The level of chemical used to sanitise the water is kept to acceptable levels in order to minimise the chance of causing adverse effects to the dogs, owners and those working in centres.
- The water is regularly checked using accurate means of measurement, i.e. either a photometer or comparator.

Requirements

Members and operatives have a duty of care to ensure a safe environment for all users.

The CHA follows the national guidelines set out by PWTAG in their document "Swimming Pool Water" (ISBN 0951700766) for best practice and the relevant UK legislation. It is fully understood that these are aimed at humans; however much still applies as clients and staff are exposed to the aquatic environment and, as such, will be used to provide the underpinning guidance.

UK legislation states that pools (which will include UWTM and spa's) should be managed in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999 amongst others. Pool operators should be under no illusion that in the event of an issue/accident it is against these pieces of legislation/guidelines that their conduct will be judged along with CHA QS and Codes of Practice.

PTWAG state that "management should define and document a policy for the general operation and safety of water treatment systems" going on to advise that "management should ensure that this policy is communicated, implemented and maintained" throughout the centre. This "policy" and risk assessment should be periodically reviewed and/or amended where a change occurs.

CHA members need to be aware of and comply with (where appropriate) the following legislation/documents and their recommendations:

- Management of Public Swimming Pools. British Standards Institute BSI PAS 39.2003.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Legionnaires' disease. The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems (L8) ISBN 0717617726.
- Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools (HSG179) 3rd Ed. ISBN 9780717626861.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- The Legionella Code of Practice & Guidance on Regulations (L8 Fourth Edition) including HSG274 and/or Health Technical Memorandum 04-01.

Risk

Centres have a duty to minimise the risk to service users and staff. This is frequently in the form of risk assessments which need to be carried out as per UK legislation set out in "The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, 3242 Regulation 2" which states:

- (1) Every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:-
 - (a) the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work, and
 - (b) the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.

In addition to the normal risk assessments, the CHA strongly advises all its members to carry out a legionnaires risk assessment and follow any recommendations. This is a UK directive and a common expectation by investigative bodies. Legislative requirements for the control of legionella put the responsibility for compliance clearly with the owner/operator of the water systems. The above acts set out your responsibilities.

Regarding risks from legionella bacteria, all owner/operators of such systems have the responsibility to ensure that the risk is minimised and kept to an acceptable level. The Legionella Code of Practice and Guidance on Regulations (The control of Legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems) stresses that while the tasks required to achieve compliance to the acts may be contracted to an external specialists, it is the owner/operator's responsibility to ensure the competence of the service provider. The levels of service that should be expected from a service provider and an up to date copy of the Code of Conduct are available at www.legionella-conduct.co.uk

An integral part of managing risk will be the information contained within Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provided free by the suppliers of chemicals under the Chemical (CHIP) regulations 2002).

Managers should be suitably qualified in water management and/or appoint someone who is. They should assess the risk of each chemical, its use and storage (especially where co-located with other chemicals as this may be dangerous) ensuring staff are suitably trained and deemed competent for a given task(s).

The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) regulations 2002 place a duty not only on all managers to provide the necessary PPE but also for all staff to wear and comply with reasonable instructions.

Where centres have multiple staff, managers must monitor and ensure compliance to CHA Quality Standards and Code of Practice is adhered to by all operatives.

Managers and operators should be aware of the idiosyncrasies that some equipment contain and would be reasonably expected to ensure adequate protocols are in place to deal with these. For example, on some aquatic treadmills the water contained in the treadmill chamber may not be fully drained, leaving some residue under the treadmill belt. During a normal working day this may be acceptable but it may pose an increased hazard if left whilst the centre is not operational, i.e. closed for a number of days.

Emergency Procedures

All CHA centres should ensure they have an emergency action plan covering all foreseeable emergencies which could affect any service user or staff members and ensure that this is reviewed regularly. Where appropriate staff should complete an incident form and consider whether it is a "notifiable incident" to the relevant authority.

Centres should also have a list of chemicals on site (this may be in the form of the MSDS), where they are stored (in diagrammatic form, i.e. a site plan) and ensure this is made available to any emergency services where required. This is a legal requirement.

Water testing

Water used for hydrotherapy treatment must be sanitised using a CHA approved sanitiser. Testing must be done using a CHA approved method and must be kept within CHA approved levels. Testing must be carried out a minimum of twice a day, although 3 times a day or more is recommended especially in busy centres. Photometers are the preferred method of testing water as opposed to comparators as they are more accurate.

Water test records must be kept with all tests and remedial actions recorded. Test records must be retained on file and available for inspection for a minimum of 5 years.

As a minimum water test records must include, but not be limited to:

- Date & Time of Test.
- Tester's Name.
- Sanitiser Levels.
- Alkalinity.
- pH.
- Temperature.
- Number of dogs treated between each test.

- Remedial action taken.

Microbial testing should be carried out by a UKAS accredited laboratory. A monthly bacterial test must be carried out as a minimum on **each** piece of equipment (pool, treadmill and spa) and should include the following as a minimum.

- Pseudomonas aeruginosa (confirmed viable colony counts).
- E.Coli (confirmed viable colony counts).
- Coliforms.

A copy of each month's test report must be submitted onto the Skills+ system.

This satisfies part of the centres obligations under COSHH to assess and minimise exposure to hazardous substances. Centres would be well advised to ensure all personnel responsible for pool testing are appropriately trained/qualified and a register is maintained to record their qualifications/training.

Water used for hydrotherapy treatment must be heated within the temperature ranges shown below:

Pools & Underwater Treadmills 28°C to 32°C - operating pools outside of this recommended temperature range should be done with the utmost care and all physiological parameters such as fitness, size, age, duration of activity and clinical conditions should be considered. Any such deviation should be recorded in writing and retained on the records.

Spas 35°C to 40°C.

Water in pools and underwater treadmills must be filtered in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and in a manner appropriate to ensure compliance with the Quality Standards parameters laid down regarding sanitisation. Spas should ideally be permanently filtered but where this is not possible the water must be changed after each patient. In either instance the water parameters are the same as pools.

Sanitisers:

- Chlorine.
- Bromine.

Water Testing Equipment:

- Photometer (preferred).
- Comparator.

Water Quality Levels & Ranges

FREE CHLORINE - Recommended range 2ppm to 4ppm. Levels higher than 4ppm are permitted for short period 4-6 hours. However, where levels rise above 6ppm the source of chlorine should be removed or chlorine production ceased until the level falls below 4ppm. If the level rises above 10ppm treatments must stop until the level falls back below 4ppm. Free chlorine levels should not fall below 1ppm.

When referring to chlorine residuals such as 2-4 ppm, one should always refer as well to the pH value being maintained. It is a fact that you need three times as much chlorine at a pH of 8 as at a pH of 7 to give you the same killing power. pH - recommended range 7.2 to 7.6.

CHLORAMINES (COMBINE CHLORINE) - The ideal level is zero. In practice, levels should be kept as low as is feasibly possible and should never exceed 50% of the Free Chlorine. However, levels above 2ppm should be treated with super-chlorination (shocking) with levels over 4ppm addressed by dilution.

FREE ACTIVE BROMINE - Recommended range 4ppm to 6ppm. Levels higher than 6ppm are permitted for short periods 4-6 hours. However, where levels rise above 8ppm the source of bromine should be removed or bromine production ceased until the level falls below 6ppm. If the level rises above 10ppm treatments must stop until the level falls back below 6ppm.

BROMAMINES - There is no recommended level since these act as an active sanitiser.

SUPER-CHLORINATION (shocking) - There is much confusion surrounding shocking. CHA general guidance is that it should only be carried out when necessary; for example when water quality is poor, bacteria has shown up on your bacteria test report or upon the recommendation of your own pool water engineer who will be familiar with your centre's water quality management protocols.

This link to PWTAG's website <http://pwtag.org/technicalnotes/superchlorination-of-swimming-pool-water/> gives examples of when shocking is required and exactly what process you need to go through for a number of different circumstances. It is well written, extremely clear and highly informative. We would strongly urge you to take a look.

pH - recommended range 7.2 to 7.6.

ALKALINITY - recommended range generally 80-120ppm or within parameters set by your own pool engineer with such discussions documented for reference.

Equipment Specification & Safety

Purpose

Equipment used is suitable for purpose and safe to use.

Requirements

- Hoists and other equipment used for the lifting of dogs must be designed & built for purpose, with a tested weight loading of at least 100 kg. All hoist slings must have a four point pick up.
- Hoists must be fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specification and maintained in a good, serviceable condition.
- Tracked hoists must either use tracking supplied by the hoist manufacturer for that purpose, or to the specifications defined by the hoist manufacturer.
- A means of restraint must be worn by the dog undergoing hydrotherapy at all times. This is to facilitate removal of the dog from the pool/aquatic treadmill in the event of an emergency. It is unacceptable for dogs to be in the pool or aquatic treadmill without a means of restraint. Treatment records must include clinical reasoning as to why any patient may not be wearing a restraint harness in the pool or aquatic treadmill.

There are to be three categories of restraint:

- Floatation device.
- Hoist sling.
- Restraint harness.

There is a list of recommended floatation devices, restraint harnesses and slings at the end of this document.

Hoist Slings must be specifically designed for the lifting of dogs thereby fit for purpose and safe. They must have a tested weight loading of at least 100kg and hold the dog in a safe and balanced way with a 4 point pick up providing adequate contact to support the dog.

Flotation devices and restraint harnesses must be designed and manufactured specifically for their purpose.

Normal Operating Procedures

Health and Safety

Purpose

- The environment at centres is safe for the dogs, clients and operators.
- Members should be familiar and fully compliant with current legislation for all aspects of Health and Safety requirements at all times.

Particular attention should be taken with regard to:

- Equipment and any electrical appliances, especially in or near to wet areas.
- It is recommended that electrical installations and subsequent periodic testing is carried out by a person or persons recognised by the Electrical Safety Council in England or the Electro Technical Council for Ireland.
- Safe storage and handling of chemicals.

Emergency Procedures

Not applicable if the centre is run as part of a veterinary practice

Purpose

A formal procedure is in place to deal with an incident occurring to a dog, whilst at the centre, in a timely and professional manner.

Veterinary back up is available to provide the best and most timely assistance should an incident occur to a dog whilst at the centre.

Requirements

- There must be a telephone in the treatment area at all time with the number of that phone prominently displayed.
- If the main means of communication is by mobile telephone then the centre must ensure that the service is reliable and continuous.
- During treatment times there must be at least one person in attendance that has attended a CHA approved first aid course within the last 2 years.
- There must be an emergency procedure agreed with a veterinary practice where a vet can be contacted by phone to give advice should an incident occur to a dog whilst at a centre.
- All clients should be briefed on the emergency procedure as part of the initial session.

- The emergency procedure should be displayed in a prominent place in the centre at all times.
- An incident form (Sample Form Supplied) must be easily accessible in the treatment room for all dogs undergoing hydrotherapy.

The form must include the following details but not be limited to: -

- Name, sex, breed & age of dog.
- Condition being treated.
- Current medication.

The incident form must also have space to record the following details:-

- Nature of Injury.
- Severity.
- Time of Incident.
- Whether the dog is breathing or not.
- Whether the dog is conscious.
- Pulse rate.
- Whether the dog is improving or not.

Insurance

Purpose

Adequate insurance is in place to provide protection and benefit for the client, operator and staff.

Requirements

Centres must have valid insurance, which provides cover for, but is not limited to:

- Employer's liability.
- Public liability.
- Professional Indemnity; this must include cover for animals whilst at the centre and whilst being treated.

Inspection & Certification

Purpose

CHA member centres and those individuals seeking registration to the CHA conform to the latest version of the CHA Quality Standards.

Requirements

Centres must have passed a valid Audit in order to join or retain membership of the CHA.

Centres will be audited from time to time by either a physical or paper audit as requested by the Board without notice.

The Canine Hydrotherapy Association reserves the right to require inspection of all its member centres at any reasonable time.

New Members - centres seeking membership to the CHA will be audited as part of the membership application process. This audit will include a centre inspection with membership not being granted until an audit pass has been achieved. This also applies to ex-members seeking to re-join after allowing their membership to lapse.

- A person or body appointed by the CHA will carry out any inspections.
- Re-inspections in the event of a failed audit or inspection will be chargeable at the current rate and payable before the inspection takes place.

Membership Certificate - all centres must display a valid CHA Membership Certificate in a prominent and public place within their centre.

Appendix

CHA Recommended Equipment

HOIST SLINGS

- Westcoast - Dog Sling.
- Catac - Canine Hydrotherapy Sling.

FLOATATION JACKETS

- Baltic pet buoyancy aid.
- Crewsaver Petfloat.
- Ruffwear float coat
- Westcoast - dog sling.
- Outward Hound – petsaver.
- Hurtta life jacket.
- Non-stop Dogwear - safe life jacket.
- Ezydog buoyancy jacket.

RESTRAINT HARNESSSES

- Ruffwear webmaster.
- Activate your dog.
- Orthopets Help 'em Up.
- Akela Harness.

Useful Reading List

- **Black's Veterinary Dictionary**

Author: Edward Boden

Publisher: A & C Black

ISBN: 071 365 0621

- **An Illustrated Guide to Veterinary Medical Terminology (CD-ROM)**

Author: Janet Amundson Romich

Publisher: Delmar

ISBN: 076 680 7517

- **Guide to Veterinary Medical Terminology**

Author: Philip E Cochran

Publisher: Mosby

ISBN: 093 967 4319

- **Dog Anatomy: A Pictorial Approach to Canine Structure**

Author: Peter Goody

Publisher: J A Allen & Co Ltd

ISBN: 085 131 6360

- **Miller Anatomy of the Dog**

Author: Edward E Evans

Publisher: Saunders

ISBN: 072 163 2009

- **Atlas of Canine Anatomy**

Author: Wesley Anderson & Bettina G Anderson

Publisher: Lea & Febiger

ISBN: 081 211 535X

- **Colour Atlas of Clinical Anatomy of the Dog and Cat**

Author: JS Boyd & Callum Paterson

Publisher: Mosby

ISBN: 072 343 168X

- **Atlas of Surgical Approaches to Bone and Joints of the Dog and Cat**

Author: Piermatti

Publisher: Saunders

ISBN: 072 168 7075

- **Atlas of Veterinary Orthopaedic Surgical Procedures**

Author: Johnson

Publisher: Saunders

ISBN: 072 169 3814

- **Colour Atlas of Veterinary Anatomy: The Dog and the Cat**

Author: S Evans, N Strickland, S H Bone

Publisher: Mosby

ISBN: 072 342 4411

- **Clinical Anatomy & Physiology for Veterinary Technicians**

Author: Thomas Colville, Joanna M Bassert

Publisher: Mosby

ISBN: 032 300 8194

- **Physiology and Applied Anatomy for Veterinary Nurses**

Author: College of Animal Welfare

Publisher: Butterworth Heinemann

ISBN: 075 064 8023

- **Canine Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy**

Author: Darryl Millis, David Levine, Robert Taylor

Publisher: Saunders

ISB

- **Swimming Pool Water – Treatment and Quality Standards for Pools and Spas**

Author: PWTAG (Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group)

Although this book is not written with dogs in mind it does cover all the principles.