

SUNY CORTLAND POLICY

Live Animals In Performing Arts Campus Productions*

Policy Purpose:

- A) The presence of live animals in rehearsal or onstage can create safety and health hazards for cast, crew, patrons and the public. This policy is intended to protect those who might be at risk of an injury from a live animal, who might have specific sensitivities (allergies or phobias) to certain types of animals, and to prevent the possibility of disease transmission. Additionally, implementation of this policy is expected to provide for the proper care and protection of an animal while in a production.
- B) This policy does not apply to service animals as defined by the ADA.
- C) The determination to use an animal in a production requires careful consideration by all involved. Having a proscribed process by which the use of live animals can be evaluated provides guidance, and establishes a best practice related to the safe and humane use of live animals in production.

Basic Principles

- A) All animals used in production shall be treated in a humane manner.
- B) Animals are not to be unduly stressed or caused distress for the sake of the production or performance.
- C) Animals must be handled and managed by a Competent Animal Handler, who should be present at all times the animal is present in the facility.
- D) An Experienced Animal Handler may be required if the nature of the animal's involvement in the production requires specialized training, stunts or similar specialty action, or the animal is known to be difficult to handle.
- E) Only well-trained animals are to be used in stunts or special effects.
- F) The use of general anesthesia or sedation on an animal is prohibited for the purpose(s) of the production.
- G) The obligation is on the production staff to reduce risk and exposure related to the use of an animal.

Procedures

- A) A statement of the reason for the use of an animal, its intended use(s) in the production, will be circulated at the start of the rehearsal period by the director to the department chair, production staff and the school dean.
- B) The statement will identify:
- The number and type(s) of animal(s) to be used.
 - Details related to the arrival and departure of the animal, including frequency of rehearsal and performance calls, the length of time on-site, location of the animal while on-site, etc.
 - A plan for the care of the animal while on the premises, e.g. housing, feeding, waste disposal, etc.
 - The name and contact information of the designated animal handler.
 - The name and contact information of the animal's owner.
 - A signed statement by the animal owner about vaccinations etc.
 - Information and estimates related to costs (fees, rental, and equipment), other required resources, care instructions, consumables, etc.
- C) The director will be responsible for notifying at the outset of the production all involved in the production (cast, crew and artistic staff) about the use of the animal.
- D) The Dean may choose to accept the statement or require specific alterations.

Precautions and Prohibitions

- A) Animals are not allowed in or around areas where food is being prepared, served or consumed.
- B) Animals are not allowed to be in contact with patrons or the public unless trained to do so, and are managed by an Experienced Animal Handler.

- C) Patrons and the public must be notified of the use of an animal in production by appropriate signs in the lobby of the theater.
- D) The time that an animal is on-site or on-stage should be kept to a minimum. Rehearsal and performance schedules should be planned to limit the actual contact and on-site time of the animal.
- E) The preferred plan for an animal's care is for the animal to be cared for off-site by its owner or handler, with the animal brought on-site only as necessary for rehearsals or performances.
- F) Only the animal handler and those who must have direct contact with the animal should be allowed to do so. Unnecessary contact (petting, etc.) is not permitted.
- G) Animals may not be sedated or drugged for the purpose of performance enhancement.

Other

- Definition of Competent Animal Handler: A person capable of the management, care, feeding, and handling of the species of animal to be used, but not necessarily having prior professional experience in these practices.
- Definition of Experienced Animal Handler: An animal handler who has prior professional experience in the management, care, feeding, training, and handling of the species to be used
- In the event of any dispute or concern raised about the implementation of this policy, the Dean and Department Chair will consult with the Cortland Animal Care and Use Committee
- A sample statement is attached and may be used as a template.

Adopted May 2015

Jerome O'Callaghan
Chair, Performing Arts

R Bruce Mattingly
Dean, Arts and Sciences

**The core of this policy is adapted from the Live Animals In Undergraduate Productions Policy at Yale University.*