

# Calgary Humane Society

## Training of Dogs

### **Position:**

The Calgary Humane Society supports the use of humane training methods and opposes training methods based on dominating the animal, use of aggression or methods that cause pain, fear and/or undue stress.

### **Rationale:**

- Historically, training methods for dogs focused almost exclusively on the use of force and coercion to obtain the desired behaviour. Dogs trained using these methods often perform out of fear and anxiety. Based on research and evidence, there has been a shift towards reward-based methods of training, such as clicker training and the use of food, toys, praise, and other rewards as motivators.
- The Calgary Humane Society supports the use of humane training methods that are based on and supported by current scientific knowledge of learning theory and animal behaviour. The Society uses current training techniques such as desensitizing and counter conditioning.
- The Calgary Humane Society encourages the use of Haltis, gentle leaders, body harnesses (non pain-inducing), and flat collars when training dogs. The Society chooses not to use choke (slip), pinch (prong), and shock collars due to their potential to cause stress, pain, and fear, especially when used by people with no expertise, experience, or credentials in humane dog training.
- Should an animal fail to respond to positive rewards training, and its behaviour is such that other methods must be explored, the Society urges all pet owners to find an experienced and certified trainer with whom to work on the issues.
- Abusive training methods are unacceptable as they cause the animal to suffer and by increasing its fear and anxiety can actually cause or increase aggression. Examples of abusive training methods include:

- Hanging a dog by the choke collar and leash.
- Spinning the animal off the ground (“helicopter technique”) at the end of a choke collar and leash.
- Beating a dog into submission.
- Alpha rolls (forcibly flipping the dog on its back, applying pressure to its throat until the dog submits).
- Hitting the animal’s snout.

References:

1. American Humane Association (2001). *Guide to Humane Dog Training*. Englewood, Colorado, USA.
2. Dodman, Nickolas (2000). *Dogs Behaving Badly: An A to Z Guide to Understanding & Curing Behavioral Problems in Dogs*. Bantam trade paperback edition.
3. Landsberg, Gary and Horwitz, Debra (2003). *Behavior of Dogs & Cats*. A LifeLearn Publication.
4. Miller, P. (2001). *The Power of Positive Dog Training*. Hungry Minds, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA.
5. Overall, K. (1997). *Clinical behavioural medicine for small animals*. Mosby-Year Book Inc. Missouri, USA.
6. Tucker, M.T., ed. *Professional Standards for Dog Trainers: Effective, Humane Principles*. Delta.

Notes:

- Neither the Canadian government nor any provincial jurisdiction regulates the conduct or certifies the skill of animal trainers or behaviourists.
- Though many dog trainers describe themselves as “behaviourists,” the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recognizes as Animal Behaviourists only those people who are both veterinarians and certified by the American College of Veterinary Behavior (AVCB) as Animal Behaviourists.
- Only trainers certified by either the Canadian Association of Professional Pet Dog Trainers (CAPPDT) or American Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) are certified by these associations as having mastered a body of knowledge regarding humane animal training methods.