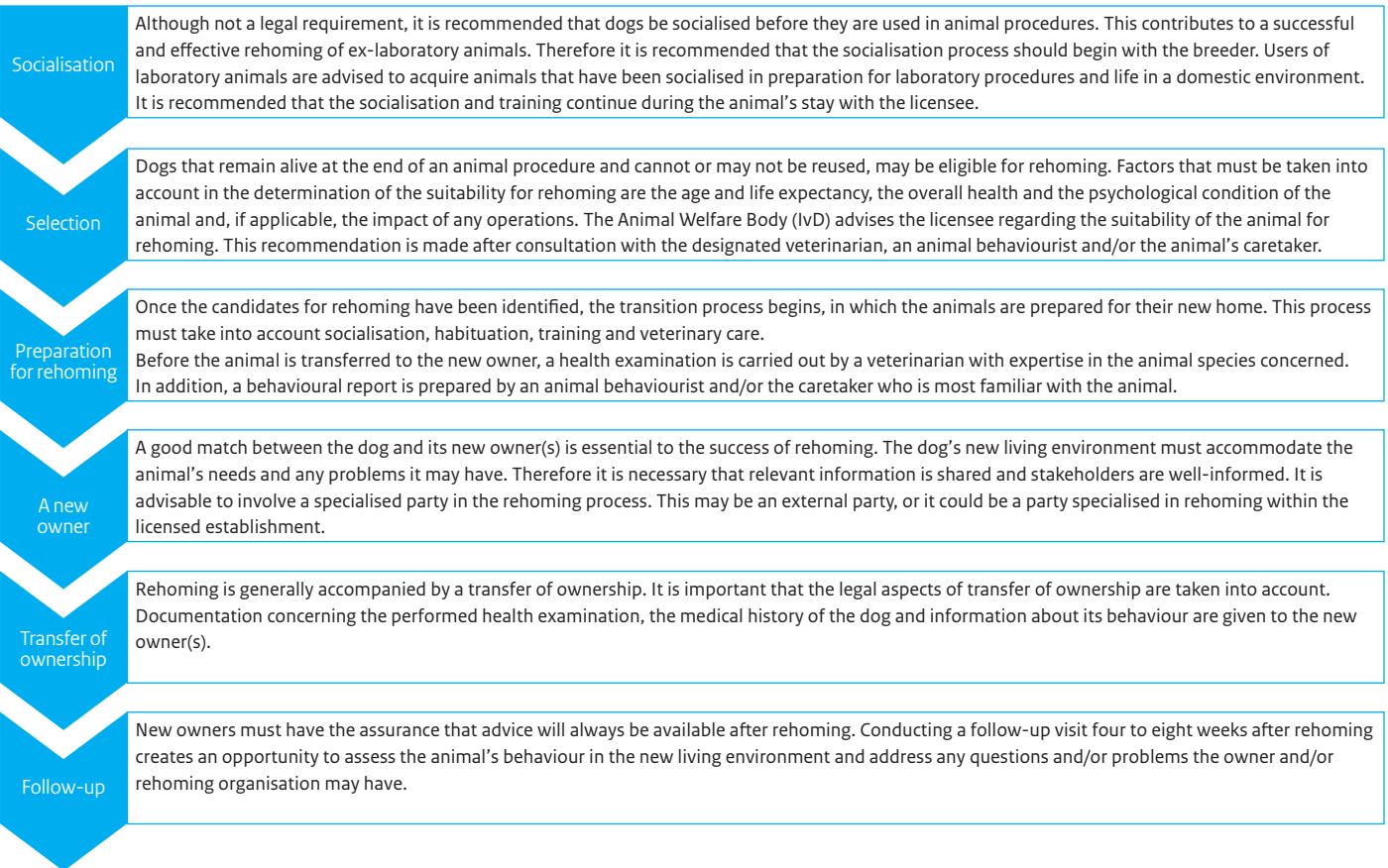


Code of Practice Dogs

Table of contents

Introduction	26
I. The internal process	26
Socialisation and training	26
Eligibility criteria for rehoming	27
Selection process	27
II. The transition process	28
Preparation for rehoming	28
Documentation	29
Finding a new owner	29
Transfer of ownership	30
Costs	30
III. The external process	31
New environment	31
Follow-up and aftercare	31
IV. Annexes	31
Annex 1: The socialisation of dogs	31
Annex 2: The socialisation and training of dogs	33

Code of Practice | Dogs



Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure the quality of life of former laboratory dogs that remain alive at the end of an animal procedure and are eligible for rehoming.

I. The internal process Socialisation and training

Although not a legal requirement, it is recommended that dogs be socialised before they are used in animal procedures, to improve the chance of a successful and effective rehoming. Early socialisation also contributes to the proper functioning of the dogs in a laboratory environment. It is recommended that users of laboratory animals acquire animals that have been socialised for animal procedures and who are familiar with the stimuli and situations that former laboratory animals are confronted with in a domestic environment. Breeders should therefore have a complete socialisation programme, which continues during the animal's stay with the licensee.

Training of the dogs is intended to ensure that they:

1. can function in a laboratory environment
2. can participate in animal testing without behaviour indicative of anxiety or distress
3. can function well in a domestic environment after rehoming

Each licensee must determine which combination of skills the dogs must learn, depending on the routine with which the animals are confronted. The skills needed to participate in testing will vary greatly between licensees. All animals must be trained so that they are

familiar with the procedures to which they are subjected during testing.

During the stay at the licensed establishment skills must be developed that are needed within a domestic environment. Examples include basic obedience, such as walking beside the caretaker without pulling, greeting people without jumping up on them and walking on a lead past other dogs without pulling. The training should be based on positive reinforcement. No use should be made of punishments, referring to aversive techniques such as water spray bottles, 'corrective' collars amongst others.

Dogs that are accustomed to people will experience less stress than dogs that are not. The probability of a successful rehoming increases when the dog has interaction with many different people. This allows the dog to gain confidence in interacting with people.

The training plan must be based both on teaching the dog skills needed to carry out biotech procedures and preparing the dog for transfer to a domestic environment. This Code of Practice includes an example of a socialisation process plus a variety of exercises that can be incorporated into a training plan.

The effectiveness of the training should be evaluated regularly, and any necessary changes can be made to achieve optimum training and ensure the desired end result. The dog's development must be monitored during the socialisation process and the training. This encompasses more than just assessment of the dog's performance during the specific training exercises; the animal's character and

behaviour must also be assessed so that the caretaker can determine whether they have improved or worsened.

Eligibility criteria for rehoming

Under Article 13d of the Experiments on Animals Act (Wod) an animal can only be released for rehoming if (a) the state of health of the animal allows it; (b) there is no danger to public health, animal health or the environment, and (c) appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the welfare of the animal.

The quality of life is crucial in the assessment of the suitability of an animal. A former laboratory dog can only become a pet if it can function in a domestic environment. It is therefore necessary to consider the quality of life, not the chance of survival, when assessing the suitability for rehoming. The following aspects of the animal must be included in the assessment:

- the animal's age and life expectancy
- the animal's general health
- the animal's psychological condition
- if applicable, the impact of operations that are required prior to the rehoming

The animal must be in good, yet not necessarily optimum, health. The new owner will need to be able to deal with a potential disorder. Even if the animal has a medical condition it can still be very suitable for rehoming, provided that a realistic and reasonable treatment plan is available so that the long-term prognosis is good. Also in this regard, the emphasis should be on ensuring the animal's quality of life.

Health reports will be made available, and advice will be given with respect to any zoonotic diseases. *Campylobacter*, for example, is endemic in most dog populations; it is usually asymptomatic, but it can transmit to humans. A virus status is not, in itself, reason not to proceed with rehoming.

If the decision is taken to release an animal for rehoming, the animal is operated on if necessary, to remove implanted instruments for example. There are no legal objections to such operations. The purpose of such an operation is to minimise further suffering. The veterinarian decides whether or not to operate on the basis of an assessment of the expected impact of the operation, the expected quality of life in the long term and the balance between the two.

Selection process

The final decision as to whether or not to rehome an animal rests with the licensee. The licensee is advised by the Animal Welfare Body (IvD). The IvD issue their recommendation after consultation with the designated veterinarian, an animal behaviourist (expert with formal qualifications in the field of normal and abnormal behaviour of an animal species and behaviour management and change) and/or the animal caretaker who is responsible for the daily care of the animal.

- The designated veterinarian contributes to the assessment of the health of the animal. He or she evaluates the options, considering only the animal's quality of life.
- An animal behaviourist and/or the caretaker who is most familiar with the animal or animal species must assess the animal's

behaviour and suitability for rehoming. Information can be obtained from other sources, such as the designated veterinarian or, if applicable, the animal's caretaker. Veterinarians and animal caretakers who perform this type of assessment should have a good understanding of species-specific behaviours, including undesirable or abnormal behaviour, behaviour management and change and establishing a prognosis of possible undesirable or abnormal behaviour.

II. The transition process

The process is coordinated by a rehoming organisation. This may be an external organisation – not a private person but rather, for example, an independent organisation with experience in the rehoming of animals (including laboratory animals) – but it may also be part of the establishment licensee that releases animals for rehoming.

It is important that throughout the process the applicable policy and legal frameworks are observed, such as the Animal Holders Decree (Besluit houders van dieren) and the policy rules quality rehoming animals (Beleidsregels kwaliteit opvang dieren).

Preparation for rehoming

Once it is clear which animals will be released for rehoming, they are further prepared for their new home. In preparing the animals, attention must be given to the following aspects:

Socialisation, habituation and training

Under Article 13e of the Experiments on Animals Act (WoD)⁹ a rehoming procedure must be followed that includes socialisation of the animals to be released for rehoming. The importance of socialisation has been highlighted in a preceding section.

Sensory stimuli should be part of the training. As part of the normal habituation process it is advisable to expose animals in the laboratory to as many different visual, tactile and aural stimuli as possible. Ideally, all laboratory dogs should gain experience with people of both sexes and varying appearance. Men with beards, people wearing glasses, people wearing a variety of clothing and people carrying large objects all provide valuable stimuli for laboratory animals. Animals may also have difficulty adapting to children and animals of a different species. According to animal welfare organisations, this is the most common reason for the failure of rehoming. Tactile stimuli are also important. Consider, for example, different surfaces such as grass or carpet.

Veterinary care

Stringent oversight of the health of laboratory animals is already a prerequisite for their care and use, but additional, specific assessment by a veterinarian and confirmation of vaccination and certification

⁹ **Article 13e of the Experiments on Animals Act (WoD):** When the breeder, supplier or user proceeds to release for rehoming of animals that have been used or were intended for use in an animal procedure, they employ a rehoming procedure that includes the socialisation of the animals released for rehoming. In the case of wild animals, they undergo a reintegration programme, if necessary, before they are returned to their habitat.

are essential. The animals are dewormed and a suitable form of contraception is considered.

Documentation

A dog is accompanied by a single report, containing relevant information on:

- the health
- the behaviour (including in relation to a domestic environment)
- the welfare
- the medical condition
- the medical history
- medical advice

Before the animal is transferred to the new owner, a health examination must be performed by a veterinarian with expertise in the animal species concerned. The veterinarian determines whether the animal is healthy or has a medical condition for which the long-term prognosis is good with a realistic treatment plan. The health report is given to the new owner(s) of the dog. The dog's welfare log, containing information about previous accommodation and the dog's character, is attached. The animal's medical history must be well documented, and accompanied with appropriate advice in the case of any zoonotic diseases.

In addition, a behavioural report is prepared by an animal behaviourist and/or the caretaker who is most familiar with the animal. The dog's behavioural profile describes the imprinted character traits, the interaction with other dogs and people, the behaviour in a new or unfamiliar environment and any anxieties,

undesirable behaviours or behavioural problems the dog may have. Any cases of aggression must also be included in the report.

Finding a new owner

To prevent laboratory dogs from being bought on an emotional whim, only well-informed, trained people should qualify as a potential new owner. The selection of potential new owners can be based on the following criteria:

- motivation
- the personal/family situation and the area around the house
- willingness to take classes at a dog obedience school
- willingness to seek professional advice when necessary

It is important that expectations are aligned at the beginning of the process and that potential new owners are told what they can expect, also in connection with future home visits.

Characteristics of new owner:

- Potential owners must be knowledgeable about keeping and caring for dogs. This includes (1) knowledge of dogs' general needs, particularly with regard to physical exercise, social needs and preventive veterinary care (vaccinations, worming, etc.). Potential owners should also have an understanding of how to train dogs through positive reinforcement as well as dogs' body language and behaviour. In addition, they must demonstrate that they have (2) the financial resources and time needed to care for a dog. Finally, potential owners must (3) understand the specific needs of the particular dog they want to adopt. This includes the animal's specific behaviours and veterinary needs.

- Keeping in mind points 1 and 2 above, the rehoming organisation must only place dogs with potential owners who have demonstrable knowledge of keeping and caring for dogs and have the time and financial resources necessary to do so.

Workshops and training sessions can be arranged to ensure that potential owners receive good information and advice on how to deal with any problems. In order to prevent these animals from being sold for breeding purposes (commercial or otherwise), sterilisation can be considered.

It is the responsibility of the Animal Welfare Body (IvD) and/or the rehoming organisation to carefully assess the dog for any undesirable behaviour that may affect the suitability as a pet. Problems that often occur in former laboratory dogs are: anxiety-related behavioural disorders, such as fear of people, objects or animals that are uncommon in a laboratory environment, urinating or defecating in undesirable places, separation-related issues, etc.

Medical file and advice

It is the responsibility of the Animal Welfare Body (IvD) and/or rehoming organisation to inform the potential owner of the dog's medical history. Special emphasis must be placed on existing medical conditions and related care as well as breed-specific medical problems that may arise as the dog gets older. For a successful rehoming it is essential that this information be tailored to the individual dog that is being rehomed.

Transfer of ownership

The rehoming is usually accompanied by a transfer of ownership. It is important that the legal aspects of transfer of ownership are taken into account.

Costs

The establishment licensee must take into account that there are costs associated with the rehoming of former laboratory animals. Costs are incurred for the internal process, for aspects such as socialisation, training, transportation, and, if applicable, operations, and for the external process, for aspects such as adaptation of the temporary accommodation to make it suitable for the animal, medical costs, etc. All costs must be taken into consideration.

III. The external process

New environment

The suitability of the new home environment is crucial to the success of rehoming. For a good match between dog and new owner it is important to take into account the personal situation of the new owner and the area surrounding his/her home.

Follow-up and aftercare

New owners need to be assured that they can always ask for advice. Advice can be provided by skilled and competent people, for example, a person designated by the establishment licensee, a specially designated local veterinarian or, if a rehoming organisation is involved, an employee of that organisation. If necessary, specialist

advice may be sought from an animal behaviourist or veterinarian. Conducting a follow-up visit one to two months after rehoming creates an opportunity to assess the animal's behaviour in the new living environment and address any questions and/or problems the owner and/or rehoming organisation may have.

Every animal responds differently to the rehoming to a new environment. When an animal does not adjust to its new home, other arrangements must be made. In such situations it is possible that the animal will be returned to the rehoming organisation. The reasons that the animal could not adapt must be carefully analysed. If the animal is considered suitable, then every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that the next attempt is successful. Possibilities include engaging an animal behaviourist or other specialist to assess the suitability of the animal and the future owner and to supervise the facilitation and management of the pet's behavioural change in the new environment.

IV. Annexes

Annex 1: The socialisation of dogs

There are several ways to socialise and train dogs. Examples of aspects that can be addressed in a socialisation programme follow hereafter.

Every dog that is acquired by a licensee as a puppy must undergo a socialisation and training programme that to the best of their knowledge is sufficient to ensure that the dog develops the skills necessary to live in a research institute and later in a home environment. If this does not happen, the result will be future

undesirable behaviour and risks to the welfare of the dog. Particularly for dogs up to four months of age, a tailored socialisation programme is necessary, plus a training and exercise programme designed specifically for young and young adult dogs.

Tailored socialisation programme for dogs up to four months of age

Aim	Parts of socialisation programme
Develop skills for living in a laboratory environment	<p>Exposure to all aspects of the laboratory environment</p> <p>Familiarisation with different types of people so the dogs are not afraid of strangers (such as visitors)</p> <p>Become familiar with a kennel from a young age, for the development of an appropriate bonding profile (confident in interacting with people, without excessive bonding or distress when no people are present)</p> <p>Interaction with littermates and various types of adult dogs for the development of the appropriate social skills</p>
The development of skills for the grooming/care that is to be provided and participation in testing	<p>Early positive associations with the interaction with people so the dogs can be examined by a veterinarian or used for a procedure without fear</p> <p>Beginning training for special testing requirements at an early stage so the dogs are fully trained for participation in procedures</p>
Developing skills for living in a domestic environment	<p>Exposure to aspects of a domestic environment that differ from those of a laboratory environment (noise and the presence of household appliances, etc.)</p> <p>Basic obedience training and skills training that are expected of a dog as a pet (walking on a lead, sitting up, etc.)</p>

Training and exercise programme for young and young adult dogs

- a. To continue the socialisation.
- b. In order to meet the need for physical exercise and to prevent undesirable behaviour as a result of too little stimulation and high tension.
- c. In order to meet all the training needs. This includes specific, consistent training using positive feedback to prevent undesirable behaviour that makes a dog less suitable for animal testing or a domestic environment.

Annex 2: The socialisation and training of dogs

There are several ways to prepare dogs for testing. An example of a possible design for a training programme is provided hereafter.

Socialisation

Puppies 0-8 weeks old -> Stay in the nursery

The socialisation process in dogs begins immediately after birth, when the puppies are helped to get used to people. After the mother dog has given birth and licked the puppies dry, they can be picked up to determine their sex and health.

While doing so, talk to the puppies with a soft, calm voice.

The condition of the mother dog and the puppies is checked each day. Talk to the puppies soothingly during this process.

Start petting and picking up the puppies when they are three weeks old. Keep the contact moments short: pick them up briefly, pet them and talk to them, and then put them back in the whelping box.

From the age of four weeks the pups may come out of the whelping box and they receive extra milk. The puppies are trained to drink milk from a metal bowl by placing them next to the bowl.

The socialisation training is also intensified:

- The puppies are picked up one by one and held slightly longer while being gently petted.
- The puppies are placed on their backs.
- Their front legs are grasped one by one and lifted slightly (to let them get used to having blood taken).
- The tail is lifted a little bit (to let them get used to rectal temperature measurement).
- The head is held and pushed back slightly while the neck is stroked (to let them get used to having blood taken).
- If they are carried to the play area, a lead is still attached.

During all of these interactions the handler speaks with a soft voice, which serves as a reward. This socialisation exercises are initially very short, but each exercise is extended by about a minute each week. After the preceding exercises have been completed the caretaker plays with the puppies in the kennel or play area.

The puppies tug on the caretaker's boots, etc. and learn to play with toys.

From the age of six weeks the puppies are trained to walk on a lead. This is done by means of positive reinforcement.

These training exercises are done daily, until the puppies are eight weeks old and leave the care department. If the puppies remain in the care department longer than eight weeks, it is important that the training exercises continue until the time they leave the department.

Puppies 8-16 weeks old -> Stay at the research institute

After the puppies arrive in a new building, it is important that something is done with them regularly, and preferably daily. It is very important to help them get used to their new caretakers.

In addition, the puppies must become accustomed to the new toys. To arouse the interest of a puppy in a toy, the caretaker can pull it away, triggering the puppy's hunting instinct.

When the kennels are being cleaned the puppies can be let loose in the animal room together with the other puppies (provided that the test procedure allows this) to develop socialisation skills in the context of a group. Even at these times toys should be present for the puppies.

Young adult and adult dogs >16 weeks old

When the kennels are being cleaned the dogs can be let loose in the animal room together with the other dogs (provided that the fertility cycle and test procedure allow this) where they are given toys to play with. The toys should be changed regularly to prevent habituation and boredom. Each animal room has two crates of different toys: one crate for the even weeks and one for the odd weeks. The caretaker keeps a close eye on the dogs while cleaning the kennels and intervenes if they begin to fight.

The caretaker maintains contact with the dogs by communicating with them and petting them regularly.

Training exercises

General

A dog learns faster when it is accustomed to being rewarded with food. Because we do not always do this, our voice is also an important way to reward a dog. The caretaker decides based on their own experience and insight whether the dog is rewarded with food or by voice during the training.

Reward with food

The danger of rewarding with food is that the dog can, in a manner of speaking, train the caretaker to feed it, for example by exhibiting unruly behaviour until it is rewarded or by performing certain tasks without being commanded to do so because it knows those behaviours will be rewarded. Therefore, the moments at which food is provided as a reward must be chosen carefully. An unjustified reward can reinforce unwanted behaviour.

If food is used as a reward, the dog should not be trained immediately after its morning or evening feeding. Reduce the daily amount of food by the amount given as a reward.

Train the dog so that it only accepts food when it is calm and, for example, is sitting or standing calmly next to the caretaker. Dogs that behave well can also be given food through the bars of the kennel at random times throughout the day to reward them (i.e. to train them).

Rewarding by voice

Dogs should not be continually rewarded with food. If they perform a task quickly or well, they can also be rewarded with the voice (depending on the caretaker's experience; see above, under 'General').

8 weeks and older

Stand

The command 'stand' is trained so that the dog can be effectively evaluated for local reactions, in order to make it easier to take the rectal temperature and to weigh the dog or conduct biotechnical tests.

To prevent puppies developing into irascible dogs, they are only picked up (rewarded) when they behave calmly.

Put the puppy on the examination table and let it stand quietly. If the puppy is restless, it is not corrected with the voice but rather lifted briefly, with both hands under its armpits.

The caretaker does not make eye contact and holds the dog away from him. Once the dog no longer offers resistance and quietly hangs in the caretaker's hands, he puts it down again.

Another method is to pick up the puppy by its chest and hindquarters, wait until it calms down and then put it on the table again.

Do not train the dog to do anything else before it has learned to be calm. Fearful puppies are an exception: such puppies should be spoken to during this training exercise to put them at ease.

Sitting

Once the dog has been trained to stand quietly, it is time to train it to sit. Train the dog by gently pressing on its hindquarters with one hand while pushing its chest backwards with the other hand.

Once the dog has learned this, it can be further trained by merely pressing its hindquarters to get it to sit.

Getting the dog accustomed to the electric shaver for drawing blood

Once the dog can sit quietly, its neck can be gently stretched in order to increase the pressure on the jugular vein. Rub the back of the

shaver slowly over the dog's neck. If the sound of the shaver makes the dog nervous, it can be useful to switch it on while it is still at some distance from the dog and only then move it closer.

Stretch the front legs out one at a time and rub the back of the razor gently over the vein in the foreleg.

Walking the dog on a lead

Remove the dog from the kennel and put a collar with lead around its neck. Do not put pressure on the dog by pulling on the lead; first allow the dog to get used to the situation. Use a calm command or a toy to get the dog to follow. Walk around with the dog without pulling on the lead, and stop every time he resists. Then get it to walk again with some quiet words or a toy.

If the dog absolutely refuses to walk on a lead, wrap it loosely around his neck or let him drag it along the ground behind him so the dog can get used to it. Detach the lead, walk away from the dog and call it or roll a toy away from it on the floor. Ensure that the dog relaxes once it cautiously starts walking by throwing a toy or walking away and calling it. Once the dog relaxes again and is cooperative, the lead can be taken in hand again and the dog can be walked around on the lead.

Stop walking if the dog begins to run and pulls on the lead, and only continue to walk again once the dog has calmed down. If the dog sits down when he is stopped next to the caretaker, this may be rewarded with a positive word. This also applies when the dog calmly walks alongside the caretaker while on the lead.

Climbing onto the examination table with a ramp

A ramp can be used to enable the dog to walk onto the examination table itself so the caretaker does not need to lift it. There are two ways to train this: 1) independently, without lead, or 2) on a lead.

1. Independently, without lead, the caretaker sets the puppy on the ramp and entices it to walk up with a verbal command, a toy or a dog biscuit, possibly helping with the hand. Once the puppy can do this fairly well, a second caretaker can set the puppy a few metres from the table and then enthusiastically call it from the other side of the table while offering a toy or dog biscuit. If the puppy then tries to climb the ramp, he may need help from the second caretaker. Once a puppy is finally standing on the examination table, he can be enthusiastically rewarded with positive words and/or a toy or dog biscuit. Repeat this several times (maximum three). Do not let the puppy walk down the ramp; that is not good for its bones, which are not yet fully developed. Dogs twelve months of age and older can walk down the ramp.
2. On a lead: this only works if the puppy has been trained to walk on a lead. Walk slowly to the ramp with the puppy and lead it up with calm verbal commands. It may be necessary to support the pup with the hand. Dogs twelve months of age and older can be trained to walk down the ramp in the same way.

Getting the dog to roll onto its back

It may be necessary to have the dog lie on its back on the examination table so its abdomen can be examined. A special pad can be used to comfortably hold the dog in position. Note: this should be done carefully, as the dog may experience it as an extreme form of dominance if it is laid on its back and held there; puppies will accept

this more easily than adult dogs. Do not keep the dog lying on its back longer than necessary.

A puppy can be easily turned over with one hand under its belly and placed on its back on the pad. If the caretaker keeps a hand on the puppy's belly, it will quietly remain on the pad. In most cases, it will also have a soothing effect when the attendant gently strokes the dog's belly.

Adult dogs first stand on the examination table. Bend over the dog and hold the two front legs in one hand and the two rear legs in the other; then carefully lay the dog on its side on the pad. Then roll the dog onto its back. Keep one hand on the dog's chest if it resists. The less the dog resists, the less pressure should be put on its chest.

Transportation

Laboratory dogs are moved from one kennel to another many times during their lives. If the dog is moved to another kennel in the same building, it can walk there on a lead. If it must be transported to another location (or if it is rehomed), it must be transported in a transport cage. To be able to transport a dog in a transport cage without stress throughout its entire life, it is advisable to repeat this exercise regularly, even after the puppy has left the care department. Leave the dog in the transport cage for a few minutes in a quiet place. It may be useful to reward the dog for this exercise with food. If the dog quietly accepts that he is in the cage, the exercises can be kept brief. For restless dogs, try to find a quiet time for this exercise. Never respond to agitated behaviour, and reward the dog when it is calm again.

Determining the character

For laboratory dogs, we distinguish between four different character types:

- Type A: The dog comes to the caretaker voluntarily and willingly undergoes biotechnical tests.
- Type B: The dog comes to the caretaker voluntarily but is very restless, making it difficult to conduct biotechnical tests.
- Type C: The dog hesitates but eventually comes to the caretaker. This type of dog undergoes tests voluntarily but exhibits submissive behaviour.
- Type D: The dog is nervous and does not come to the caretaker. This type of dog must often be kept in check and bites (or will do that later). It is difficult to control and test, and it tries to escape when it sees the opportunity.

Training results and determining the character

The results of each training exercise are noted on the training form. A separate form is used for each animal, with space for training data from several sessions. This makes it easy to see the results of the previous session and determine what requires additional attention. A score of 1 to 3 is granted, with 1 for a very poor training result, 2 for a poor result and 3 for a good result. An indication of the character is also noted on this form so the caretaker can see whether the character of the dog has improved or worsened.