





## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Volunteer Program – Dog Walking

#### Statement

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc (PQSA) are committed to managing client needs through the timely provision of a responsible volunteer service. PQSA undertake the provision of client services that ensure the health and safety of clients, volunteers and the pets.

Approved by:  Chief Executive Officer	Date: October 2015
Registered by:  Manager, Human Resources	Date: October 2015

## **SCOPE**

Compliance with this policy is a condition of appointment for all workers engaged to provide services on behalf of PQSA.

## **PROCEDURES**

### ***A step by step process***

Risk management of injury prevention involves an approach that is planned, systematic and covers hazards and associated risks to volunteer and client safety.

**Identifying hazards and assessing risks** are processes that help identify:

1. What could harm volunteers and clients
2. How likely it is that harm may occur (eg: not very likely, very likely) and
3. How serious the harm could be (eg: minor injury, serious injury, death)

**Controlling risks** – is a process that concentrates on working out which risk control measures are the most effective to use according to the circumstances. Identifying hazards involves finding all of the things and situations that could potentially contribute to injuries while walking dogs in public and cause harm to people.

### **Managing the risks in the work environment**

#### **Hazards identified**

- ◆ Weather
- ◆ Other dogs/Animals /Dog bites
- ◆ Bicycles, cars
- ◆ Falls and trips
- ◆ Snakes (In some areas i.e. hills and bushland)

#### **Weather**

When it's hot it's best to walk in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid the hottest part of the day.

Protect yourself from sunburn:

- ◆ Wear a long sleeved shirt,
- ◆ Long trousers and
- ◆ A broad brimmed hat.
- ◆ Apply broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen, reapply regularly,
- ◆ Wear quality sunglasses.
- ◆ Stay hydrated, drink plenty of water.

Remember it is PQSA Policy that no outdoor activities are to be undertaken when the temperature is 35 degrees or over (Refer to the Hot Weather Policy and Procedures).

#### **Other dogs / Animals / Dog bites**

Children aged under 4 years are at the highest risk of dog bites, so avoid children playing with or patting the dog. Ensure dogs are kept on leads and supervised while you are walking them for your safety and the dogs.

If you are out walking a dog and a stray dog comes out of no-where and attacks the dog. **Your safety is the first priority, walk away, and do not try to get between the dogs to stop the fight.** Phone the owner of the dog you are walking, the Coordinator of Volunteers and 000 if appropriate.

## **Bicycles and Cars**

Cars and cyclists share the roads and footpaths. Always be alert and aware of your surroundings, get the dog to sit by the kerb before crossing the road, remember that you should follow basic road rules i.e. look both ways before crossing the road to avoid injury to you and the dog.

## **Trips and Falls**

Like all exercise dog walking carries some risks, especially for older people. Injuries can include broken bones, sprains and bruising caused by tripping or falling over the dog or on objects left on paths or walkways i.e. litter, leaves, branches. For your safety and the community please supervise the dog and keep it on a leash.

## **Snakes**

In hot months snakes are prevalent especially in hillside suburbs or when walking along creeks or streams. To reduce the risk of snakebites to you or the dog please read through the following:

- ◆ Avoid walking through long grass
- ◆ Wear long pants and enclosed shoes
- ◆ Be careful around bushy areas and wood piles – they are great places for snakes to sleep
- ◆ Stay on paths
- ◆ Watch where you step
- ◆ Leave snakes alone – they may see you as a threat.
- ◆ Most bites occur when people try to kill snakes.

### **Other safety walking tips:**

- ◆ Avoid dark alleys or laneways, walk in well-lit areas
- ◆ Walk in daylight hours
- ◆ ***In case of an emergency please take your mobile phone with you when walking.***

## **Documentation**

If an incident or injury does occur when walking a client's dog, please notify the Coordinator Volunteer Programs and complete an Incident/Injury Report Form. The Incident or Injury must be reported as soon as possible.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

- Workplace Health, Safety and Environment Management System
- Hot Weather Policy and Procedure
- Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control Management Policy

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

