

This Chapter Covers:

- ◆ Working Safely with Chemicals and Pesticides
- ◆ How to Avoid Disease and Injury
- ◆ First Aid
- ◆ Physical Fitness and Stress Reduction

Working Safely with Chemicals and Pesticides

You use chemicals to clean your shelter. You use pesticides to control roaches, ants, flies, fleas, and ticks. Animal control officers (ACOs), other people, and animals can be hurt or killed if the chemicals (including pesticides) are used incorrectly.

Follow these rules when working with chemicals:

- Wear protective equipment (such as gloves and safety glasses).
- Read and follow all directions on labels.
- Mix chemicals accurately and **only** as stated on the label.
- Use chemicals only in a properly ventilated (good air flow) area.
- Dispose of old and empty containers properly.
- Use only in flame-free areas.

Remember: Follow all directions on labels!

Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) contain information about potentially hazardous chemicals you may use at your agency. The MSDS detail proper procedures for safely using these chemicals and dealing with accidental employee exposures. Make the MSDS for every chemical used at your agency available to all employees.

Shelter Safety (Basic)

How to Avoid Disease and Injury

Your duties may expose you to diseases and other health risks. **Here is a list of health risks and preventive measures you can take to protect yourself:**

<u>Infectious Diseases</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Get the preexposure rabies <u>vaccinations</u>.2) Avoid flea and tick bites by using insect repellent.3) Do not crush insects with your bare hands.4) Wash your hands often with soap and water.5) Wear protective gear when needed.6) Dispose of animal waste properly.7) Learn about <u>zoonotic</u> diseases.
Bites and Scratches	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Think and plan before acting.2) Use proper equipment.
Back Injuries	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Wear a back support.2) Keep your back straight when you lift; bend your knees.3) Keep floors dry.4) Ask for help if you need it.
Heat Stroke	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Drink plenty of water on hot days.2) Rest if you are tired or dizzy.3) Schedule outside work early or late in the day.
Angry Citizens	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Remain calm and <u>professional</u>.2) Leave and call for help if they become violent.
Vehicle Accidents	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Keep your vehicle in good <u>condition</u>.2) Wear your seat belt.3) Obey the rules of the road and practice defensive driving techniques.4) Use hazard/caution lights when the vehicle is stopped.

You can prevent many injuries and illnesses if you decrease or eliminate the risks involved in your job.

Shelter Safety (Basic)

First Aid

You may be the first person on the scene of an injury or other health emergency. It may be an animal or a person who needs your help. To be ready for this, it would be a good idea to attend training courses in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Classes should be available in your area. What you learn will be useful for both humans and animals.

Here are some basic first aid tips:

For Bleeding	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Apply direct pressure with a clean cloth.2) Do not apply a <u>tourniquet</u>.3) Avoid direct contact with another person's blood or the blood of an animal.
For Heat Exhaustion	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Move the person or animal to a cool area.2) Apply cool water to the head and hands/paws.3) If conscious, give cool water to drink.
For Bites	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Wash thoroughly with soap and water.
For Broken Bones	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Control any bleeding.2) Restrict movement of injured area.3) Do not try to set the bone.

In all of these actions, remember this is **first aid**. Call for the proper help as soon as possible.

Physical Fitness and Stress Reduction

You must be in good physical condition to work at your full potential. The job alone is not enough to keep you fit. A good diet, exercise, and an adequate amount of sleep will help increase your physical fitness.

Shelter Safety (Basic)

Good mental health is also important to your job performance as an ACO. Being stressed can make your job much more difficult.

Here are some suggestions to reduce stress:

- Rotate euthanasia duties. Euthanasia is generally considered the most stressful part of an ACO's job.
- Practice capture and other techniques to improve your confidence.
- Talk to someone about your feelings and emotions.
- Do stress reduction exercises, such as:
 - * slow, deep breathing; and
 - * meditation.

We are all more productive if we are mentally and physically fit. Being an ACO is not a career for the faint of heart or spirit.