



GUNDOGS IN THE UK

A CODE OF PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

BASC strongly recommends that anyone who goes shooting should be accompanied by a trained and competent gundog. Using a well-trained gundog aids the humane recovery of the quarry and shows a responsible attitude. Furthermore, the ownership and delight in working a well-trained gundog is an enjoyable pastime in itself.

High standards underpin public and political support for sustainable shooting, now and in the future.

The code provides advice at two levels:

Advice that **must** be followed in order to achieve best practice. Unless otherwise stated the term 'must' only applies to meeting the standards set by this Code of Practice and does not refer to a legal obligation.

Advice that **should** be followed in order to achieve best practice, any deviation from which would need justification.

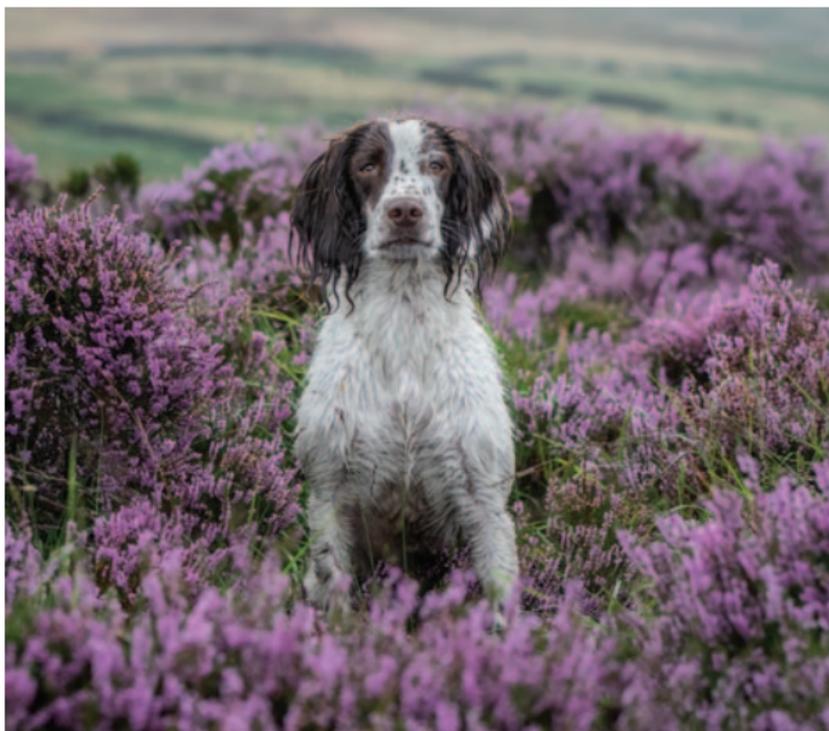
THE FOLLOWING GOLDEN RULES APPLY:

1. The health, welfare and security of your dog is paramount.
2. Never leave any dog, no matter how confident you are about its temperament, unattended with a young child.
3. Dog owners should consider other people and dog owners when in public places.
4. Always ensure that you comply with your legal obligations as a dog owner.

2. GUNDOGS

Dogs at home

- Never leave any dog unattended with a young child, no matter how confident you are about its temperament.
- There are criminals who will steal valuable working dogs, so always consider the safekeeping and security of your dog.
- Ensure that a new puppy is vaccinated to protect it against diseases such as distemper, parvo virus and leptospirosis (as advised by your vet).
- Ensure that your dog receives booster injections for these diseases as advised by your vet.
- Ensure that your dog is microchipped in line with legal requirements.
- Ensure that your dog is wormed and regularly treated (follow medication manufacturer's advice) to control roundworms, tapeworms and other parasites. This is particularly important if young children are around.
- If an infestation of lice, fleas, ticks or ear mites occurs ensure it is treated promptly. Remember to treat bedding, carpets and furniture used by the dog at the same time.
- Provide your dog with living quarters that are warm, dry and draught free.



- Ensure that your dog has clean drinking water available at all times.
- Feed good quality food appropriate to the dog's age, working regime and any other individual dietary requirements.

Dogs in the car

- Do not leave your dog unattended in a car unless absolutely unavoidable. If you have to do so, park in the shade, ensure adequate ventilation and security and leave the dog for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Never leave a dog unattended in a car on a warm or sunny day. Even with the windows open, a car can quickly become an oven.
- When travelling with a dog in a vehicle, make sure that water is available.

Dogs in the field

- Always treat game with respect.
- Be confident that your dog is under control before you take it out in the field. An untrained dog can be a danger to livestock, other dogs and people.
- Ensure that your dog will be welcome before taking it onto a shoot to which you have been invited.
- Never take a bitch in season (oestrus) onto a shoot where there will be other dogs.
- Ensure that your dog is under control when not working, particularly near roads and around cars and livestock.
- Remove your dog's collar before going into the field to prevent the dog from being caught on fences, branches, obstacles in water etc.
- Know where your dog and others are when walking up cover.
- Know where your dog is when loading and closing guns, particularly in confined spaces such as pigeon or duck hides.

- Check with the keeper/shoot organiser where and when you may work your dog, and do not let your dog disturb ground which is still to be shot.
- Never tie a dog to yourself or your equipment. Use a proper dog anchor if necessary.
- Monitor your dog throughout the day for any signs of fatigue and regularly check for cuts and thorns and treat them promptly.
- Always have a first aid kit available for your dog.
- If you have to leave the shoot to get veterinary attention for your dog always remember to tell someone you are leaving.
- Seed heads can get into dogs' eyes, ears and toes and long-haired breeds can become tangled with burrs. These should be removed.
- Make sure that your dog has regular access to water, especially on warm days.
- Fences, especially barbed-wire, can cause serious injury to dogs and great care should be taken when crossing these.
- Always attend to your dog before yourself; ensure it is warm and dry before travelling. If you have a long journey home, your dog may need food and a drink before you leave.

Dogs on the foreshore and working in water

- Try to make your dog comfortable and make sure they have a dry seat.
- Send your dog to retrieve birds as they are shot.
- Dogging the tide line will often recover lost birds. When retrieving from running water, try to get downstream from the dog during the retrieve to avoid it having to return against the current. The handler should also assess where the dog can get out of the water before sending it to retrieve. During and after the shoot remember the health and welfare of your dog is paramount.

3. TRAINING

Make sure that training sessions are enjoyable for both you and your dog. Formal training will not begin until a puppy is several months old but good manners can be taught from the beginning. Mixing with other dogs will help steady and 'socialise' a young dog. Gundog training and obedience classes at local clubs can help you and your dog.

4. THE LAW

Basic points of law

If you own or are responsible for a dog, even on a temporary basis, you have a legal obligation under animal welfare legislation to care for it properly.

- In public places all dogs (including gundogs) must wear a collar with the owner's name and address, except where the dog is being used for sporting purposes at the time. Sporting purposes include shooting, beating, picking up and training.

- Dogs must be kept on a lead when on a designated road (identified as such by the local authority), except where the dog is being used for sporting purposes at the time.
- It is an offence to have any dog dangerously out of control.
- Gundogs must not be sent to retrieve game that has fallen beyond a shoot boundary without the prior consent of the adjoining landowner or occupier; to do so constitutes civil trespass.
- It is a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped and registered on a recognised microchip database by the time they are eight weeks old.
- In Northern Ireland, there are requirements for dog licences for ownership with certain exceptions. You can find more details on the Northern Ireland Government website or by contacting BASC Northern Ireland.

The control of dogs

Owners and handlers of dogs commit an offence if their dogs worry livestock on agricultural land.

- Landowners and occupiers, or a person entitled to act for the protection of that livestock, have a defence in law for shooting a dog that is not under the close control of its owner on agricultural land, if it is, or has been worrying livestock, and there is no other reasonable means of preventing the worrying.
- If a dog kills or injures livestock, the keeper (owner or person in possession) is liable for damages to the livestock owner.

Transport of animals

Be aware that if you are transporting your dog in connection with an economic activity you may be subject to rules and regulations governing the transport for journeys over 65 km (40 miles). Shooting, beating and picking up carried out for recreation are not normally considered to be an economic activity.

As per Rule 57 of the highway code, make sure a dog is suitably restrained so they cannot distract you while you are driving or injure you, or themselves. Suitable methods can be crates, dog guards or seatbelt harnesses.

While travelling you should provide suitable breaks for your dog to meet their normal routine and provide a chance for water and exercise.

5. INSURANCE

It is advisable to consider additional insurance for your dog. BASC Working Dog insurance policies are available and for more details, or to obtain a quote please visit: agriapet.co.uk/gun-dog-insurance-basc/ or call 03330 308 205.

6. BECOME A BASC GUNDOG MEMBER TODAY

Join the largest field sports organisation in the UK and benefit from first resort liability insurance when working and training your gundog*, advice from our specialist departments, access to training opportunities, exclusive member offers and much more.

Your membership also supports the continued fight for the future of sustainable shooting and conservation across the UK and beyond.

Discover your BASC membership.



7. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further help and advice, call the BASC gundog helpline on 01244 573 019 or email gundogs@basc.org.uk

For nutritional advice, call the Skinner's helpline on 01379 384 247.

BASC is the largest representative body for sporting shooting in the UK.

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*Insurance cover can vary between different BASC membership categories. Visit our website to find out more.

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