

Code of Conduct when Using Dogs in the Bush

AN 16

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This Advisory Notice is directed to those people who specifically use their dogs in the bush whether it be on trail/walks, conservation, hunting, leisure or any other purpose. The objective is to ensure that the dog is adequately equipped to cope with those bush demands which we feel require a bit more of him than the normal domestic environment. We therefore advise that attention be paid to the following matters: -

1. Physical Health

He should be thoroughly checked out each morning and for at least three mornings prior to all bush exposures.

Particular care must be taken regarding eyes, ears, nose and feet. The feet should be hardened carefully from the age of six months of age by exposing the youngster slowly to rougher terrain for longer periods.

He should be free of wounds, and those that he might carry should be immune to infection.

His coat should be in good condition, free of parasites, and well groomed.

He should be well fed and at full strength, though this in no way decries him being in "bush-trim".

His vaccinations/inoculations etc. should be up to date.

2. Mental Ability

If the firing of weapons is likely he should not be gun-shy but able to remain comfortably off lead at heel while the weapon is being fired.

He should be mentally fully alert and ready to cope with whatever comes his way before he goes out to meet it.

Though mainly a function of genetics and training, the owner/handler should be confident that he has the character/temperament to successfully handle whatever he must face.

Whereas we have no qualms about the dog laying down his life in defense of his owner/handler we expect the latter to equip himself, and be capable of expert use of, whatever weapons the situation demands in the protection of his dog.

The dog must be obedient and trained to whatever is required of him during every bush exposure. Obviously the more people and dogs involved at the time the more important this becomes from everyone's point of view.

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3. Special Requirements for Specific Animals

Lion. Though he may be quite capable of coping comfortably with one lion the complete opposite could be the case when there are two or more, or there is even one very aggressive lioness. If two or more dogs are involved again the position changes....

Leopard. Though he may handle a lion with ease this does not presuppose that he will cope equally

Giraffe....

Snakes. Spitting Cobra....

Crocodile

Bush-pig

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4. Special Equipment

First Aid. The dog is at greater risk than his owner/handler therefore as a result there is a greater need for basic first aid care for him. Circumstances will determine what is required here.

Protective Gear. Thought should be given to providing him with boots, leather jacket, etc should it be necessary. Preferably his pads and feet in general etc, should cope with whatever environment he is operating in. Further as far as the prey is concerned, he should have the speed of mind and body to look after himself and avoid direct physical contact

5.

General Statement of Policy:

In all bush terrain excercises, including hunting, the Lion Dog Group of the Rhodesian Ridgeback International Foundation supports the inclusion of dogs which BAY and do not BITE.