



Zorgbeest

#### 4. Training of the dog:

- Training does not occur at the workplace, but in another calm environment. During AAI you of course remain consistent with cues and rewards, but teaching new behaviours is best done in a calm environment.
- Obedience training is part of the preparations for AAI dogs (Coppinger, Coppinger & Skillings, 1998).
- One single person (the handler) should do the training with the dog.
- The handler must have good knowledge of learning principles in order to train the dog correctly.
- The handler and the dog form a team that is selected, trained and receives continuous support from a specialised organisation (Ng et al., 2015).
- The chosen organisation must use training methods based on positive reinforcement. This is more efficient and animal friendly (Ng et al., 2015; Hiby et al. 2004) and does not cause aggression- or fear-related problems. Such training methods should be based on the following principles:
  - Each dog has his or her own personality. Good training is adapted to each individual dog and is respectful of the dog's personality.
  - Reinforcing the desired behaviours instead of focusing on correcting undesired behaviours. This only improves the human-dog relationship.
  - Avoid punishment.
  - The reward (or in exceptional cases, punishment) must follow immediately after the behaviour (Holmes John & Mary, 1957).
  - Plan short training sessions in a calm environment with a reward the dog considers as a reward and a good reward schedule (this also includes rewarding cues the dog already knows).
  - Train the dog with stimuli he or she will experience on a regular basis (e.g. bright light, sudden noises, slippery substrates, etc.) and how he or she should respond so that he or she is prepared as much as possible and can have more control over the situation.
  - To ensure the dog's welfare during the training, it is extremely important that his or her environment remains predictable and can be controlled at all times.
  - To prevent confusion, each stimulus (cue) must lead to a different reaction (Ödberg & Gombeer, 2010). Thus, use a different cue (visual or audio) for each trained behaviour.
  - The more a specific stimulus is accompanied by other stimuli, the smaller the chance that it will be clearly identified and that the dog will give the expected response (Ödberg & Gombeer, 2010).
  - Do not use contradictory signals.



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- In the case of undesired behaviour, try to turn it into an acceptable form instead of attempting to abolish it, or try to prevent the undesired behaviour by adapting the environment.
- Turn the undesired behaviour into a stimulus controlled behaviour (cue) and only encourage it under suitable conditions.
- Select and reinforce an alternative behaviour that is not compatible with the undesired behaviour.
- Use a neutral “time out” (without reward or punishment) for undesired behaviour that has an affiliative motivation (e.g. attention seeking, overly excited during play).
- The use of devices such as ultrasound, choke chains, e-collars or metal collars (with or without prongs that pinch the dog’s neck), is prohibited during training and during AAI sessions (ESAAT 2010: Principles for animal-assisted work with domestic animals and pets).