

I, _____, being a registered veterinarian, hereby state that I have examined the dog named _____ of microchip number _____ in the presence of _____, who I understand will train the dog to wear a remote training collar and use such collar upon the dog for Snake Avoidance® training purposes. I have specifically examined the physical health of the said dog, examined its temperament and discussed its problem behaviour (being inability to avoid snakes) with _____, I understand Daniel Mannix or Scott McConnachie of the Victorian Dog Training Academy will conduct and oversee the Snake Avoidance® training program. Both trainers are qualified under the National Dog Trainers Federation certification. Snakes used will be surgically de-venomized snakes of relevant venomous species, certified as harmless and of no risk to the dog by veterinary surgeon Dr Richard Funk, supplied by Snakebusters® Australia's best reptiles®, being the only people in Australia licensed to supply snakes for Snake Avoidance® or Snake Aversion®.

On the basis of these examinations, I consider that the said dog is suitable to wear an electronic collar in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The basis of the training is outlined at:

<http://www.dogsnakeavoidancetraining.com.au/>

and

<https://www.vdta.com.au/services/snake-avoidance-dog-training/>

and

<http://www.dogsnakeavoidancetraining.com.au/Snake-avoidance-vet-letter-template-1.pdf>

and

<http://www.dogsnakeavoidancetraining.com.au/Code-of-practice-e-collars-2020.pdf>

Signed _____ of (name/practice) _____

Date _____

Ecollar process for Snake Avoidance®.

Upon arrival dogs participating will be fitted with e-collar in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and then allowed to habituate to them until no sensitivity to the novel equipment is observed. This makes it less likely that the dog learns they should only avoid snakes while wearing an electronic collar as we are aiming for them to maintain avoidance behaviour with no e-collar long after they leave.

The dog is placed on a long lead to prevent the occasional likelihood of fleeing the scene, yet feels free enough to walk and explore naturally.

To ensure a strong avoidance to odour the snakes are placed in ventilated boxes. These boxes are used to transport the snakes and while giving off odour of plastic, have a higher concentration of snake odour, snake odour is far more relevant to the dog due to intensity, and the fact it comes from a live animal. Food is placed on top of 3 empty boxes set out in a row, these boxes are free of snake odour and are stored at an entirely different location, the dog gets to repeat going to each box to take the treat, once the dog is proficient a box with snake inside is placed randomly in the line up, when the dog sniffs the snake box it will receive low level stimulation on the e-collar. The dog is then

rested, then the process is repeated .If the dog sniffs the box they will once again receive e-collar stimulation, solidifying understanding of avoidance to snake odour. This aims to ensure the dog can avoid snakes from a greater distance in a real world scenario without having to be too close or having visual recognition, a much safer result than visual avoidance only.

Out of sight of the dog, the most relevant snake species (vet certified surgically de-venomised, AKA Venomoid) is placed on the ground in a position so that when brought into the vicinity, the dog will be downwind and come across the snake via odour as organically as possible without coaxing or direction from the owner or trainer. This gives the dog the best chance of *only* learning avoidance to the snake, and negates the possibility of any negative associations made in relation to the trainer or the owner. The snake handler is also instructed to remain at a distance for this reason. Once the dog has detected the odour, tracked the snake and is investigating they are then stimulated with the e-collar briefly, they then remove themselves and are praised, should the dog immediately go back to investigate the snake the process is repeated on a slightly higher e-collar setting. Initial setting for stimulation level is determined by the handler's opinion on the individual dogs temperament, and breed characteristics. The collars setting are from 0-100 and the lowest possible level is used that will achieve a reliable long lasting avoidance behaviour. This is typically between 20-50 however some individuals fall either side of this.

If deemed appropriate the dog will continue the session off lead to ensure no incorrect associations are made with the lead. If all training is done on lead the dog may only avoid snakes when on lead, the aim is to create avoidance off lead also.

The process will be repeated in different locations across the chosen training area with other species geographically relevant to clients area or areas of travel. Locations are changed in an attempt to help the dog generalise avoidance behaviour to anywhere they may encounter a real snake. Location change may be anything from 30-500 meters. If in the event the dog is trained at a residential property locations would typically be backyard, indoors, front yard, and briefly off site.

Finally to ensure the dogs avoidance to snake odour is strong, four transportation boxes with snakes inside will be randomly hidden throughout the entire training area. Dog and owner will go for a walk past all the boxes as a final test.

The dog is then allowed time to relax or walk/play for 5-10 minutes before having the collar removed, once again this makes it less likely that the dog recognises they should only avoid snakes while wearing an electronic collar as we are aiming for them to maintain avoidance behaviour with no e-collar long after they leave.

If the participant desires refresher sessions may be carried out next summer.

[See also: Snake avoidance scam warning at:](#)

<http://www.dogsnakeavoidancetraining.com.au/scam-warning.htm>

Please also see below recommended legislative guidelines this above program is derived from.

Use of electronic collars

There are a number of considerations to take into account when training an animal to the use of an electronic collar:

The importance of timing when using collars

Timing is very important when training animals using any method. The application of the electric stimulation as an aversive or consequence at any time other than during or immediately after the dog or cat has misbehaved or been given a command must be avoided as it will cause confusion for the animal. The only exception is where an avoidance training program is being used (see below).

Timing is particularly important for dog handlers using radio controlled collars where the person has control of the stimulation and when it is applied. By comparison with anti-bark or containment collars the stimulation is automatic in response to the animal's behaviour (for example a bark or the approach of the animal to the boundary).

If the electronic collar is misused, for example by inappropriate or poorly timed stimulation, over a period of time the animal may develop anxious or aggressive behaviour or learned helplessness. Alternatively the animal may misunderstand which behaviour you are trying to change and instead will amend the behaviour it believes it is being punished for.

With containment collars it is important the animal understands the trigger for the stimulation so other distractions must be minimised when training the dog or cat to wear these collars.

If there is any negative behavioural changes when using an electronic collar use of the collar must cease immediately and further advice must be sought from a veterinary practitioner or qualified dog trainer.

Animals which are able to clearly associate the electric stimuli with their actions are able to predict and control the stressor and therefore are more likely to have a positive reaction to the electronic collar. They will also learn to avoid the stimulation by correctly changing their behaviour.

The outcome of any training needs to enable the animal to recognise and predict the collar stimulation so the animal can act appropriately to avoid it.

Avoidance Training

Electronic collars may be used in avoidance training methods, these training methods may also be referred to as escape or attention training. Using these methods the stimulation may be delivered to get the dog's attention or compliance with a command rather than in response to a particular behaviour. These methods must only be applied by qualified dog trainers, competent trainers or veterinary practitioners trained and competent in the use of these methods. The lowest level of stimulation that the dog responds to must be used.

The effect of an electronic collar can vary significantly

A dog or cat's response to an electronic collar differs depending on the individual animal. Therefore, it is important that when training an animal the collar is set to an appropriate stimulation level that will achieve the required behaviour change. In most cases it will not be necessary to use the highest level of stimulation in the first instance. The supervising veterinarian, competent trainer or qualified dog trainer will provide advice as to the best level to use when training an animal to wear an electronic collar and for any ongoing use.

Electronic collars must be used appropriately

Like all training aids, collars must be used without malice, emotion or anger. Incorrect use can cause tissue injury, physical lesions, physical pain and psychological damage to a dog or cat. In order to gain the desired response, the electronic collar must be used in a kind, calm and respectful manner.

Electronic collars must not be deliberately misused when worn by an animal.

Always ensure the collar is fitted correctly but is not too tight as this can cause irritation or injury. If there is any sign of irritation to the neck of the animal from the electronic collar do not put the collar on the animal until the irritation has cleared or a registered veterinary practitioner has examined the dog and advised the collar can be worn.

If electronic collars are worn for prolonged periods pressure from the contacts can result in skin damage or pressure necrosis. It is for this reason that collars cannot be worn for more than 12 hours in any 24 hour period and owners have a responsibility to regularly check the neck of the animal to ensure that there is no evidence of pressure necrosis occurring.

Training dogs to the use of all types of electronic collars

To avoid having the dog associate the stimulus with the collar rather than the behaviour it may be useful to allow the dog to habituate to wearing the collar with the stimulus turned off for a period of up to two weeks. Note that the same legal requirements apply whether the collar is turned on or off and therefore the collar can still only be worn for a maximum of 12 hours in any 24 hour period.

Dogs must be watched carefully when the activated collar is first put on the animal and when stimulation is first delivered or received; this is to ensure there is no unexpected and adverse response or reaction. Dogs differ in their responses and so must not be left unsupervised when first being trained to wear the collar and careful observation must be undertaken until appropriate behaviour is observed. This period will be at least one hour in duration, during which time several electronic stimulations may be applied, and until the dog is observed to react without confusion.

If an animal shows an extreme response to the stimulation, such as fear, anxiety, aggression or running away, or does not become accustomed to the collar it must be removed and further advice must be sought from the supervising veterinary practitioner, competent trainer or qualified dog trainer before continuing use. It is recommended that the dog is referred to a veterinarian for a further health assessment as the condition of the dog may require medication to be prescribed.

A leash must not be attached at any time to an electronic collar. If the dog requires a leash during training a flat collar or harness must be used in conjunction with the electronic collar. Ensure the dog is accustomed to being lead before using the electronic collar.

It is not recommended that dogs are tethered while wearing an electronic collar. However if it is necessary that a dog needs to be tethered while wearing an electronic collar it must be done in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Tethering of Animals. Dogs wearing containment collars must not be tethered while wearing the collar or when being trained to the use of the collar.

Remote collars

When training dogs using remote collars the stimulation must only be applied during or immediately after the unwanted behaviour or command. The stimulation must not be activated at any other time except if an avoidance training program (refer to earlier section) is being undertaken.

Where possible, introduce the dog to a remote training collar away from distractions and other animals.

Stimulation must only be applied where the dog is in clear sight of the operator so as to ensure the correction is applied at the correct time and only when the unwanted behaviour is occurring.

The trainer must be able to operate the transmitter without looking at it so as to ensure they can concentrate on the dog's behaviour and deliver the stimulation at the appropriate time.