

SHELTER MANAGEMENT



CORRECT USE OF A CATCHPOLE



A Dog Desk
Animal Action
Publication



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Introduction

The catchpole (also known as a control pole or snare pole) is a professional animal-handling tool designed to safely restrain aggressive, frightened, or hard-to-handle animals, primarily dogs.

When used correctly, it minimizes the risk of injury to both the animal and the handler.

However, misuse can cause severe harm or distress, so correct training and responsible application are essential.



Purpose Of A Catchpole

Safely restrain animals that are aggressive, fearful, or injured.

Protect handlers from bites and scratches.

Enable safe transfer of animals into cages, kennels, or veterinary facilities.

Provide controlled movement in high-risk situations (road rescues, animal cruelty seizures, dangerous dog encounters).



Anatomy Of A Catchpole

Pole Shaft: Strong, lightweight tube, usually aluminum or fiberglass.

Cable or Rope Loop (Snare): Adjustable, forms the restraint around the animal's neck or body.

Locking Mechanism: Secures the loop at the required size.

Release Mechanism: Allows rapid loosening/removal of the loop.

Safety Precautions

Training First - Never use a catchpole without proper instruction.

Last Resort Tool - Use only when gentler handling methods (leads, treats, calm approach) fail or are unsafe.

Never Choke - The loop is for restraint, not strangulation. Constantly monitor tightness.

Avoid Prolonged Use - Restrict handling time with the pole to the minimum necessary.

Correct Placement - Always position the loop high on the neck, just behind the ears, not mid-neck or chest.

No Dragging or Lifting - Dragging, hoisting, or carrying an animal using the catchpole is never acceptable and can cause serious physical harm and extreme distress.

Crate or Carrier Ready - Always have a secure crate or carrier nearby before applying the catchpole. The pole should only be used to guide the animal into this safe space.

Stay Calm - Sudden jerks or rough handling increase stress and risk of injury.

Correct Use: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Preparation

Place a crate within easy reach before attempting restraint.

Assess the environment for safety hazards

Plan your exit route before approaching the animal.

Step 2: Approach

Move slowly and confidently.

Speak calmly to avoid escalating fear or aggression.

Maintain a safe distance until ready to loop the animal.

Step 3: Positioning the Loop

Extend the pole and open the loop wide enough for the animal's head.

Place the loop smoothly over the head from above or slightly to the side.

Position the loop just behind the ears at the top of the neck.

Step 4: Securing the Animal

Gently tighten the loop until snug - secure but not choking.

Lock the loop in place using the pole's mechanism.

Hold the pole at waist level with both hands for stability.

Step 5: Controlling Movement

Stand to the side of the animal rather than directly in front.

Keep the pole at a slight angle (not straight up or down) to guide movement.

Use calm, firm pressure to lead the animal directly toward the crate.

Do not drag or lift - instead, walk at a steady pace until safely enclosed

Step 6: Releasing

Once the animal is inside the crate, release the loop.

Use the quick-release mechanism rather than pulling the loop off forcefully.

Remove the pole slowly and steadily to avoid a sudden startle reaction.



Situations for Use

Aggressive or dangerous dogs in rescue or enforcement operations.

Injured animals that may lash out in pain.

Stray animals in high-risk areas (busy roads, unsafe environments)

Court-ordered or welfare seizures requiring safe restraint.



Situations to avoid

Puppies or small animals that may be injured by the pole.

Animals that can be safely handled with a lead or crate.

Prolonged restraint where the animal may panic or injure itself.

Transporting an animal by dragging or lifting on the pole



Mistakes To Avoid

Looping mid-neck → causes choking and injury.

Over-tightening → restricts breathing and can cause trauma.

Leaving the pole on too long → escalates fear and distress.

Using as a punishment → the catchpole must never be used to intimidate or inflict pain.

Forgetting to prepare a crate/carrier → leads to unnecessary prolonged restraint.



Maintenance & Care

Clean after each use to prevent disease transmission.

Regularly check for frayed cables, bent poles, or faulty locks.

Lubricate moving parts to ensure smooth operation.

Store in a dry, accessible place, ready for emergencies.



Summary

A catchpole is a valuable safety tool when used correctly, but it carries risks if misapplied.

Proper training, careful handling, and respect for the animal's welfare are essential at every stage.

Always remember:

Have a crate or carrier close by before use.

Never drag, lift, or suspend an animal using the catchpole.

The catchpole is a tool of necessity, not convenience.

Disclaimer

This training material is provided for educational purposes only it is no substitute for face to face training.

The catchpole is a specialized tool that should be used only by trained and authorized personnel.

Improper use can cause serious injury or distress to animals and may place the handler at risk.

Always prioritize the safety and welfare of both the animal and the handler.

The catchpole must be regarded as a last resort handling tool and never as a substitute for safe, humane alternatives.

Dragging, lifting, or suspending an animal using the catchpole is strictly prohibited

Always have an appropriate crate, kennel, or carrier ready to ensure safe transfer.

The organization providing this guide accepts no liability for injuries, accidents, or misuse arising from improper handling or disregard of these guidelines.

By accepting this guide, users acknowledge their responsibility to follow safe and humane handling practices in accordance with local laws, animal welfare standards, and organizational policies.

