



Information on how your dog can become a working canine actor can be found at a number of places on the internet. The links provided below can help to get you started.

[https://www.hollywoodpaws.com/talent\\_agency.htm](https://www.hollywoodpaws.com/talent_agency.htm)

<https://www.animalactors2.com/>

<https://animalcastingatlanta.com/>

### **What Makes a Good Studio Animal?**

Basic Obedience - Your pet should have reliable basic obedience. Typical obedience commands include heel/loose-leash walking, sit, down, wait, recall (coming when called) and stay. Proofing all obedience behaviors around distractions and at a distance is key for studio animals.

Environmental Conditioning - Exposing your pet to challenging and interesting environments with stimulating sights, sounds, smells and textures.

Socialization - Exposing your pet to new environments that include interaction with pedestrians, crowds, small children, other dogs, other animals, motor vehicles and machinery. On a set, your pet will be working with trainers and actors and must be able to work with people other than his or her owner!

The Dog Scout Test – This is the place to start if you want to set your dog on the path of becoming a canine actor! <http://dogscouts.org/base/dog-scout-title/>

From:

Answers from an AHA movie rep to interview questions:

### **Q: Are personal pets allowed to be in movies?**

A: Our Guidelines recommend that filmmakers use professional animal actors obtained through trainers, but we know that filmmakers, especially small independent and student filmmakers are going to use their own pets or the pets of friends and family in their movies. We understand that, that's a reality in this business. But even if it's no more than filming their own pet cat or dog sitting in a chair or walking across the room, filmmakers should get in the habit of contacting our office. When producers choose dogs, for instance, they should look for dogs with outgoing personalities, dogs that aren't afraid of people. Fear can cause a disaster. The dog can bite someone out of fear if they get in a situation in which they're not comfortable. If more than one dog is to be used on set, the dogs should be used to being around other dogs. If one dog shows aggression toward another dog on set, the aggressive dog must be removed. Dogs that live together and are accustomed to being with each other are good choices.



**Q: What advice do you give students or aspiring filmmakers wanting to use pets? Your Guidelines can look daunting.**

A: If filmmakers choose to use a pet instead of trained animal, we have no control over that but we still recommend they review and adhere to our Guidelines. If the Guidelines seem overwhelming, call our LA office with questions, say - "All I want is for my dog to sit in a chair or walk across the room while we're doing our filming, what are the guidelines?" Most of it is just common sense. Know that the animal you're using is friendly and completely safe to be around people and other animals. You don't want an animal on set that's aggressive, skittish, or snaps. Think about what you're going to do with this animal while you're setting up shots. How many times do you actually need the real animal? Can you use a stuffed animal if there's any concern about using a real animal? You don't want a real dog sitting under hot lights while you're setting up. Go to a toy store and get a stuffed look-alike of whatever animal you're using. Make sure the animal won't be in the way of a moving dolly and that she won't be in area in which she can get stepped on.

When she's not being used on set have a suitable place for her to hang out, that she's not running around loose. There needs to be a safe area like a crate or separate room for the animal. Make sure the pet has breaks and gets to lie down and rest or get something to eat and drink. If the pet isn't kept in a crate, make sure it's on a harness or leash so that should she get spooked by a loud noise or quick movement, she can't jump down and run away. Plan ahead and prepare for all possible scenarios. That's critical. If an animal won't do what you want, what are your options? Have back up plans. How far should you go to try to get an animal to do something? If the animal won't or can't do what you want him to do, forcing him is inviting disaster. Even if the animal normally does something, an animal is an animal. You can never predict what it's going to do or not do. It's like working with a child. The producer has to be prepared.

**Q: Who is responsible for the safety of a pet during filming?**

A: The ultimate responsibility lies with the owners as they will suffer the anguish and grief if something happens to their pet. I recommend that pets not be passed around to people on set to play with. That can be over stimulating to animals, and if they're all excited, they may not be able to perform the action you want them to perform. Many trainers make a general announcement on set - don't touch animals while they're working. Obviously, with the exotics, people are pretty good about asking before touching them but a lot of times, with dogs and cats, people just walk up and pet them without asking.