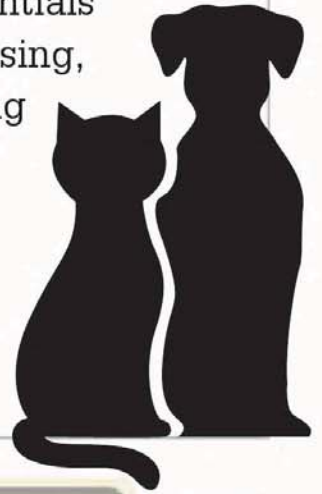




ANIMAL CARE WORKER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Animal care workers provide the essentials of life—from food and water to exercising, cleaning, grooming, and administering medical care—to ensure that pets or domesticated animals are healthy. They work in a range of places, such as kennels, stables, pet stores, rescue centers, and animal hospitals.



SALARY

Animal care worker ★★★★★
Animal care manager ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Job tasks can vary greatly from one position to another • Public interest in treatment of domestic and captive animals has tightened standards

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS • Animal welfare • English • Chemistry • Mathematics • Biology • Physical education



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Formal qualifications are not always required; some vocational training in animal care is desirable.



LIFESTYLE Since animal care is an all-day job, working hours often involve shifts over evenings, weekends, or public holidays.



LOCATION The work is often outdoors, and may involve a range of domesticated or wild animals. Travel is often required, either to move animals or visit sites.



THE REALITIES Salaries are modest and the work often physically exhausting. Some situations can be emotionally upsetting.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **ZOOKEEPER** *see pp. 164–165*
- ▶ **ANIMAL TECHNICIAN** Cares for laboratory animals used for research in the medical, veterinary, and dental industries. Animal technologists are responsible for the welfare of the animals, and may also administer medication and monitor the animals during testing.
- ▶ **VETERINARY TECHNICIAN** Assists vets in taking care of sick, injured, or hospitalized animals. Veterinary nurses may take X-rays, prepare animals for surgery, administer drugs and treatments, and also keep records. A degree in veterinary nursing is usually needed, but it may be possible to qualify through vocational study and experience.

In the United States, animal care is expected to grow 15 percent between 2012 and 2022.

CAREER PATHS

A formal degree is not always necessary to enter this career, but a vocational course or experience through volunteering will improve your job prospects. Career progression is usually achieved through specialization.

ASSISTANT If you have prior experience of working with animals, you can apply for work-based trainee jobs straight out of high school.



GRADUATE You will need an undergraduate degree in animal care management or animal sciences to enter this sector in a professional or managerial role.



ANIMAL CARE WORKER Many animal care workers specialize in a particular type of care, such as rehabilitation through hydrotherapy—exercising animals in a pool of water—or massage. With experience and qualifications, you could move into training or managerial roles.



ANIMAL TRAINER Trains animals to respond to cues and commands. Trainers work with performing or working animals, such as guide dogs, or with rescue dogs and animals that have behavioral problems.



ANIMAL THERAPIST Treats animals with joint or muscular problems by massaging muscles or flexing and stretching affected areas. Animal therapists need further qualifications for practicing.



STABLEHAND Provides daily care for horses at a yard or farm to ensure that they are healthy, happy, and in good condition. Duties include feeding, cleaning, and preparing horses for exercising and events.



PET GROOMER Keeps a pet's coat in good condition, advising owners on care of pet hair, grooming, and nutrition. Groomers can be employed by pet salons or may run their own business.



PET STORE MANAGER Cares for animals, birds, and reptiles prior to their sale as pets, and provides advice to customers on the feeding, housing, exercising, and general welfare of their pets.

SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent communication skills for interacting with colleagues, vets, customers, and visitors.



Good observation skills to monitor animals for different behavioral patterns and signs of any disease.



Physical resilience for working outdoors in all weathers and for lifting animals and bags of feed.



The ability to organize and prioritize routine tasks, and to manage time effectively.



Good computer skills for maintaining records and accessing the correct information for clients.