Reptile and amphibian rehabilitation

Trainers' guide for the wildlife rehabilitation sector

**Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water**

NSW GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Summary

This trainer's guide has been developed as a companion resource to *Reptile and amphibian rehabilitation: training standards for the wildlife rehabilitation sector* (the training standards) (DCCEEW2024). Training developers, trainers and assessors within the wildlife rehabilitation sector can use the guide to assist them in ensuring their rehabilitation training complies with the training standards.

The standards ensure compliance with the NSW *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians* (DCCEEW 2024) and a minimum level of care for reptiles and amphibians across the sector.

The guide is divided into 2 parts:

Part 1: Introduction to training design, delivery and assessment provides helpful hints for planning and delivering training and assessing competency. This section of the guide has been designed to provide an overview of training, introduce adult learning and explain how to engage learners in productive and efficient ways.

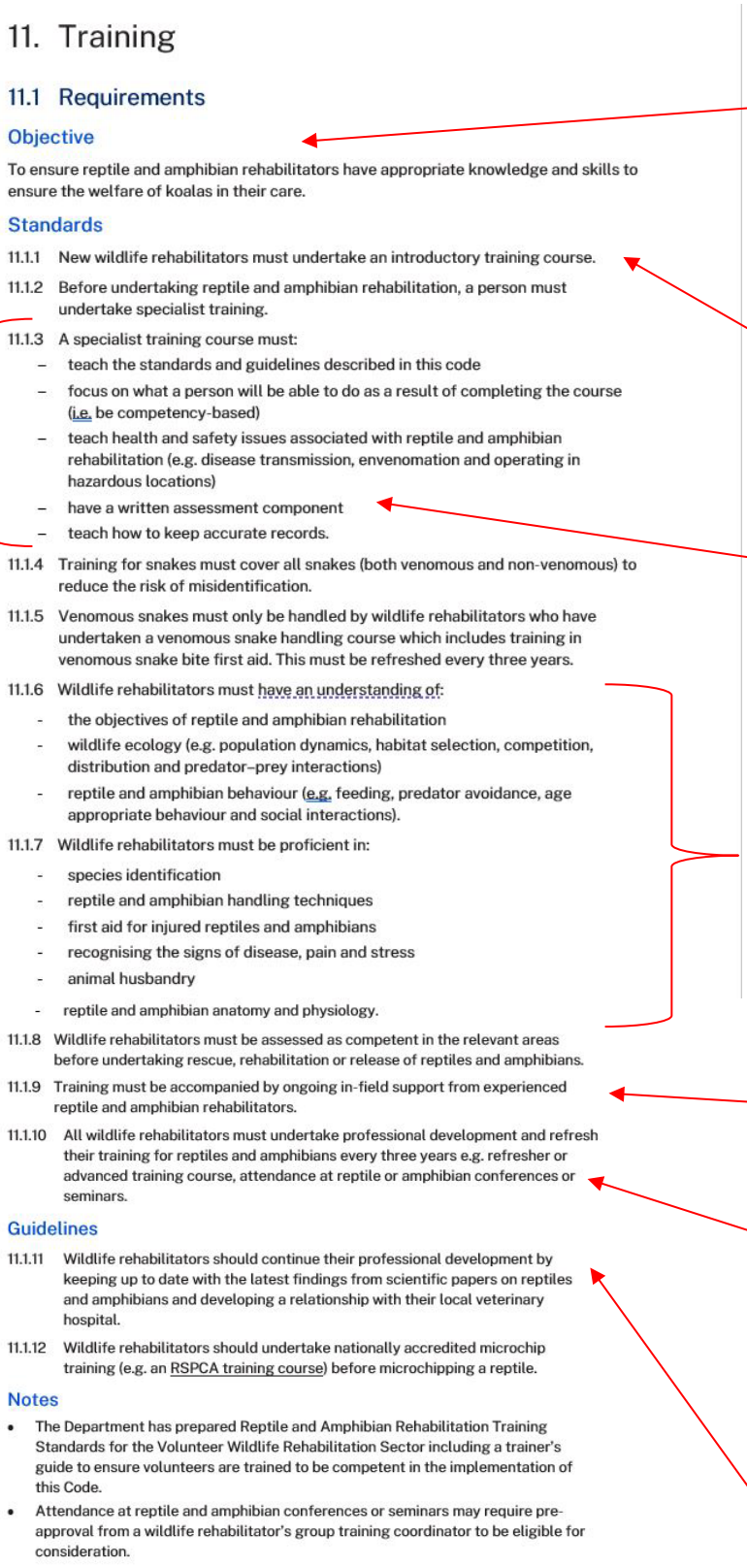
Part 2: Understanding the reptile and amphibian rehabilitation standards suggests topics to include in training programs and assessment types applicable to individual standards. There are 2 examples provided for each assessment. These assessments can be used to determine competency related to individual standards.

The guide has been developed as a resource to support the sector in implementing the training standards.

Part 1: Introduction to training, design, delivery and assessment

Training requirements of the code

The first thing you will need to look at when designing or evaluating your training is the NSW *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians* (the reptile and amphibian code). The figure below with notes on **Section 11 – Training** explains what is required.



11. Training

11.1 Requirements

Objective

To ensure reptile and amphibian rehabilitators have appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure the welfare of koalas in their care.

Standards

11.1.1 New wildlife rehabilitators must undertake an introductory training course.

11.1.2 Before undertaking reptile and amphibian rehabilitation, a person must undertake specialist training.

11.1.3 A specialist training course must:

- teach the standards and guidelines described in this code
- focus on what a person will be able to do as a result of completing the course (i.e. be competency-based)
- teach health and safety issues associated with reptile and amphibian rehabilitation (e.g. disease transmission, envenomation and operating in hazardous locations)
- have a written assessment component
- teach how to keep accurate records.

11.1.4 Training for snakes must cover all snakes (both venomous and non-venomous) to reduce the risk of misidentification.

11.1.5 Venomous snakes must only be handled by wildlife rehabilitators who have undertaken a venomous snake handling course which includes training in venomous snake bite first aid. This must be refreshed every three years.

11.1.6 Wildlife rehabilitators must have an understanding of:

- the objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation
- wildlife ecology (e.g. population dynamics, habitat selection, competition, distribution and predator–prey interactions)
- reptile and amphibian behaviour (e.g. feeding, predator avoidance, age appropriate behaviour and social interactions).

11.1.7 Wildlife rehabilitators must be proficient in:

- species identification
- reptile and amphibian handling techniques
- first aid for injured reptiles and amphibians
- recognising the signs of disease, pain and stress
- animal husbandry
- reptile and amphibian anatomy and physiology.

11.1.8 Wildlife rehabilitators must be assessed as competent in the relevant areas before undertaking rescue, rehabilitation or release of reptiles and amphibians.

11.1.9 Training must be accompanied by ongoing in-field support from experienced reptile and amphibian rehabilitators.

11.1.10 All wildlife rehabilitators must undertake professional development and refresh their training for reptiles and amphibians every three years e.g. refresher or advanced training course, attendance at reptile or amphibian conferences or seminars.

Guidelines

11.1.11 Wildlife rehabilitators should continue their professional development by keeping up to date with the latest findings from scientific papers on reptiles and amphibians and developing a relationship with their local veterinary hospital.

11.1.12 Wildlife rehabilitators should undertake nationally accredited microchip training (e.g. an RSPCA training course) before microchipping a reptile.

Notes

- The Department has prepared Reptile and Amphibian Rehabilitation Training Standards for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector including a trainer's guide to ensure volunteers are trained to be competent in the implementation of this Code.
- Attendance at reptile and amphibian conferences or seminars may require pre-approval from a wildlife rehabilitator's group training coordinator to be eligible for consideration.

Reptile and amphibian rehabilitation courses **must** teach these things and ensure that training is competency-based.

The objectives explain the overall purpose of the rehabilitation training, which is to ensure the welfare of reptiles and amphibians undergoing rehabilitation.

The standards set out the mandatory requirements under the code. This standard is saying there **must** be formal induction training.

There **must** be an assessment completed in writing for anyone undertaking reptile and amphibian rehabilitation training.

Content to be included in training.

Coordinators, mentors or experienced reptile and amphibian rehabilitators **must** be available to help new members.

Refresher training **must** be completed within 3 years from the time your last course was completed. Refresher training should include topics and developments in rehabilitation practices and scientific research.

The guidelines describe best practice and provide advice that **should** be followed.

Figure 1 **Training requirements in the code**

Designing training

Whether you are designing a new course or updating an existing course, there are several questions to ask to determine what your new training should look like. The best way to answer these questions is to organise them into a learning plan before jumping into the content of your training. To help you get started with designing your course, this section discusses what you might consider and how you might answer the broad questions: what, who, how and when.

What is the purpose of the course?

Are you designing a course that will combine all the training standards and look at reptile and amphibian rehabilitation holistically, or will it be individual or multiple standards aimed at certain topics – for example, reptile rescue or amphibian rehabilitation?

The 11 training standards have been grouped into 3 core areas:

Foundations – **Standards 1 to 5** are mostly theoretical or cover multiple aspects of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation. These standards are foundational for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation training.

Rescue – **Standards 6 to 8** address reptile and amphibian rescue, transport and assessment.

Rehabilitation and release – **Standards 9 to 10** cover the rehabilitation and release of reptiles and amphibians.

While you do not have to design your training according to these areas, you may want to consider whether they fit with the purpose of your training.

If you are updating training that already exists, consider whether all areas of the training standards are covered. Do you have assessments in place to determine competency and achieve the learning outcomes? If not, identify the gaps in your current program to work out what to include in your updated version to ensure it is meeting the standards. Appendix A is a mapping tool to assist you with this exercise.

By understanding the reasons behind your training, you can also be clear on the pathways learners can take throughout the learning process. These pathways can then be clearly communicated to the learners, so they understand their responsibilities and you can manage their expectations.

Questions to ask include:

- Will there be prerequisites and what are they?
- What will the learner be able to do upon completion of this training?
- What, if any, further training will be required?

Once you understand the purpose of the training you can start to incorporate other elements of training design into your plan.

Who is the training designed for?

Understanding the 'who' is very important to developing successful training.

The audience for a program aimed at reptile and amphibian rehabilitation can be diverse and includes people across genders, age groups, ethnicities and education levels. Consider what you can put in place to account for this diversity and help learners who may have special learning requirements. One way to do this is to understand what skills are required for the role the learner is undertaking training for, and ensure the content and assessments are compatible with this skill level – that is, don't make the training harder than it needs to be.

Some other ways to help learners include:

- Include some questions or an interview as part of the enrolment process, so you can determine whether a learner will require additional or alternative help throughout the training.
- Use simple and succinct language. For written materials, use short, concise sentences.
- Use visuals such as pictures, diagrams and graphs.
- Factor in time for asking questions and evaluating information.
- Where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to the assessment. For example, if a learner struggles with reading you could change a written test to a verbal one to determine competency.

Adult learning

One thing we do know about our learners is that they are all adults.

There are several theories surrounding adult learning, with one of the best known being andragogy, which was popularised by Malcolm Knowles in the 1970s. Andragogy refers to adult learning, in contrast to pedagogy, which is child learning. What the theory of andragogy tells us is that adults:

- are self-directed learners
- need to know why they are learning something
- have a problem-centred approach to learning
- bring life and work experiences, skills and biases to learning
- are more willing to learn when they think it will provide skills to develop their life situations (it is relevant to them).

Adults learn best by being involved in their learning process, feeling respected, and through a hands-on approach to learning. The trainer is a facilitator of learning rather than a director, providing guidance while allowing the learner greater ownership of the learning experience.

Understanding these concepts is important for developing effective and engaging adult learning programs.

Learning styles

Another important thing to know about your learners is their learning style. While it may not be possible to always know and account for every participant's learning style, understanding the styles and incorporating them into your training will allow you to be a more effective trainer.

The VARK model separates learning styles into 4 types (Figure 2), although learners may not be restricted to just one learning type.

For more information about the VARK model, including a quiz for you to find out your preferred learning styles, see 'The VARK modalities' under 'Further information'.

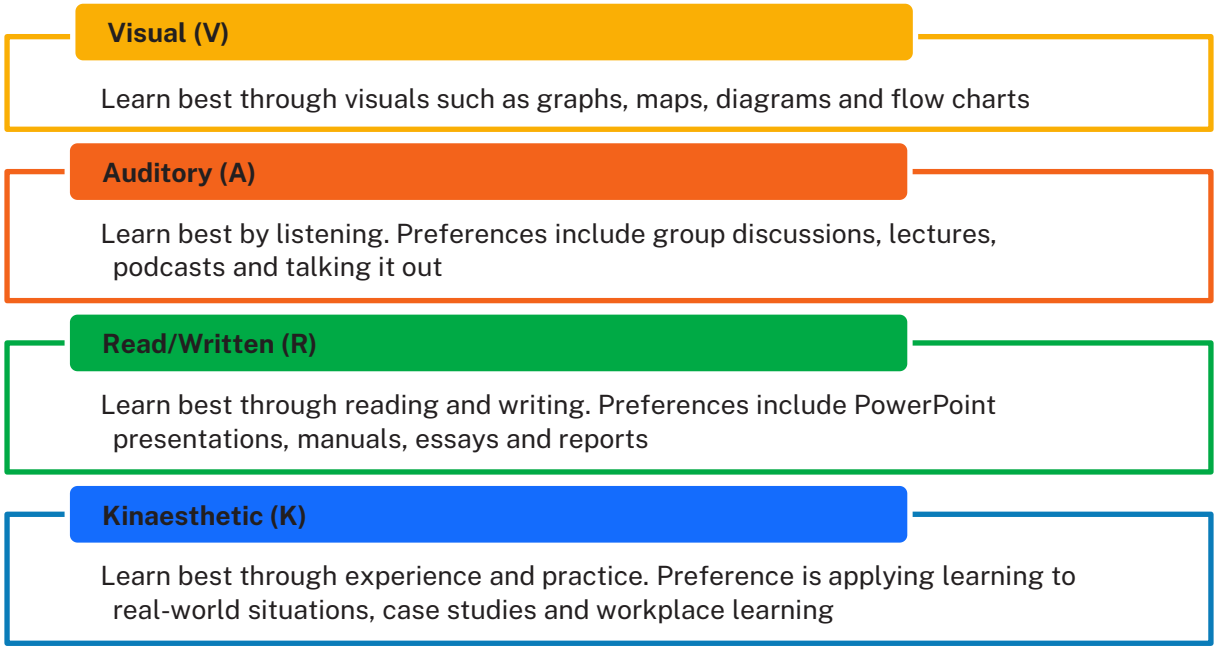


Figure 2 **The 4 different learning styles of the VARK model**

How will training be delivered?

The 3 most common delivery methods are face-to-face, online or one-on-one training. The different methods of delivery suit different learning styles and no one method is better than the others. When designing your program, you need to consider what resources are available and the methods that best suit your trainers' and learners' needs.

Face-to-face delivery

Face-to-face learning is the more traditional method for delivering training and includes presentations, lectures and demonstrations.

Pros	Cons
• Traditional, well-known to most learners • Can be completed at a faster rate than other methods	• Can remind adult learners of school classrooms and create disinterest • Must be completed at a certain pace, which can leave some learners behind

• Additional learning can occur through interactions and exchanges between learners • Easier to adapt based on learner needs • Can be activity-based and increase learning by doing • Can build personal relationships and networks that continue to facilitate learning outside the structured training • Can be easier to ask questions and seek clarification from the trainer.	• Not very flexible – courses must happen at certain times with specific agendas • Can be expensive to attend and to run • Certain learners can monopolise conversations and more timid learners may be unable to engage well with the content.

Online delivery

Online or eLearning is broadly defined as learning that takes place using a computer or electronic resource. eLearning has grown in popularity in recent years and has both advantages and disadvantages.

Pros	Cons
• Can be completed in the comfort of your own home or other convenient location • Flexible – can be accessed at any time and fit with learners' schedules • There is consistency in what is learnt as the content is the same for every learner • Can be easy to pull statistics and provide feedback • Can be more cost-effective than other types of delivery • Learning is self-paced • Can improve the learner's electronic and technical skills.	• Little opportunity to engage with the trainer or other learners • Can be too flexible, leading to a lack of motivation, commitment and ultimately lack of course completion • Can require more of the student – for example, more reading requirements or additional assessments • Can be discouraging for people who are not confident with computers • Lacks opportunities for hands-on learning • Can be impacted by poor internet connection or technical issues • Can require more instructions and detailed explanations than other methods where a trainer is present.

One option used by training providers is 'blended delivery', which combines online learning with face-to-face learning to obtain the advantages of both delivery methods.

One-on-one delivery

One-on-one delivery is also known as mentoring and usually occurs in the workplace. It involves a more experienced person sharing knowledge, skills and expertise with the learner.

Pros	Cons
• Sole focus is on the learner, allowing learning to be tailored to their strengths and weaknesses	• Can be difficult to incorporate training into day-to-day tasks

• Usually practical in nature • Feedback between mentor and learner can be instant • Self-directed learning • Can broaden the learner's network quickly • Can be flexible to allow for personal circumstances.	• May not allow for diversity of opinions or the ability for the learner to engage with other learners • Providing feedback can be awkward and taken more personally • Appropriate mentors can be difficult to find • Can take longer to complete training because of both learner and mentor schedules.

Tips for delivery

When designing your learning plan, it can be helpful to consider these tips:

- Effective communication is key to effective training.
- Write for your learner – don't use jargon or big words without explaining them. Remember to consider your audience – for example, is it a refresher course where learners will be familiar with the terminology or is it an introductory course where learners have no experience with rehabilitation and will need the terminology explained?
- Manage learner expectations by being clear at the beginning of the training what their responsibilities are and what they will be able to do upon completion of the course.
- Design training to be accessible to all learning types to make the information more engaging and likely increase the success of the program.
- Think about your own experiences as a learner. What did you like? What didn't you like?

More information on delivery can be found in the training section of this document.

What content will be included in the training?

Organising training content can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of designing your training plan. It is also crucial to ensuring you are creating relevant, engaging and accurate training.

When deciding what will go into your training, the first thing you should do is consider existing materials. This can include:

- regulatory documents for the sector, including the *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians* and *Reptile and amphibian rehabilitation: training standards for the wildlife rehabilitation sector*
- relevant and useful organisational policies and procedures, including standard operating procedures, constitutions, codes of ethics, work health and safety policies, role descriptions and risk management plans
- legislative requirements, including the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*

- existing materials – manuals, fact sheets, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and research papers; consider if these are still relevant or if they need updating, and who needs to be involved in this process
- previous feedback – have you received feedback about previous courses that you could incorporate into an update of training materials?

Using the training standards will be vital to ensuring your content is compliant and assesses competency at the required level. A way of confirming that your content matches the standards is by using the standards as headings during your planning phase, putting existing content under these headings. From here you can see which areas require additional information.

When developing resources, you need to determine what the learners will need in order to complete their training and become competent, and whether any further materials could assist them in their role. For example, home-based rehabilitators might require more take-home reference material than facility-based rehabilitators, who are supervised and have access to materials at their facility. The method of delivery will also affect the type of resources required. For example, online training will require more instructional and detailed information than face-to face or one-on-one learning, where a trainer is present to discuss content, answer questions and provide clarification.

When will training occur?

This is largely up to you and your organisation's needs. You should consider whether the training is ongoing, requires regular attendance, and its frequency. You also need to consult with your trainers on their availability.

If the training has prerequisites, is there enough time to complete them first?

Providing training

As a trainer your role is to provide a productive, safe and supportive learning environment. As discussed in the previous section, with adult learning trainers take on less of a director or teacher role and become more a facilitator of learning. A facilitator is a trainer who encourages participation and takes a learner-centred approach.

The table below lists some common actions that trainers should and should not do.

Do	Don't
• Know your subject matter. • Be organised. • Communicate clearly. • Apply active listening skills and use positive non-verbal communication – for example, maintaining eye contact, using gestures, nodding, paraphrasing. • Encourage questions and ensure enough time has been set aside for discussion. • Take feedback on board and adjust accordingly.	• Be unprepared. • Use unnecessarily difficult words or jargon. • Use negative non-verbal communication – for example, stare, roll your eyes, cross your arms, stand too close. • Be dismissive and discourage interaction. • Get defensive if feedback is provided.

In addition to these behaviours, it is also important to think about the environment the training will occur in and how you can maximise its advantages and minimise its disadvantages. For example, if you are doing one-on-one training in a facility, you will have access to reptiles and amphibians and the ability to reinforce learning by having the learner complete tasks in a practical setting. Conversely, there may be emergencies that require attention or frequent interruptions from other people.

In a venue designed for face-to-face training, you can encourage ideas and discussions between learners but you will not have access to real-life situations and may need to simulate these environments to keep the learners engaged in the topic.

Ways to engage learners

Presentations are great for face-to-face training; however, an extended time without engaging the learners can create disinterest and learners may tune out altogether. Integrating activities and engaging learners in other ways can incorporate different learning styles and enhance overall learning.

Some additional methods for encouraging learner participation include:

- demonstrations
- group activities
- case studies and scenarios
- group discussions
- brainstorming sessions
- blended delivery (combination of online, face-to-face and mentor training)
- videos, graphs, images and other visual aids.

The following advice is based predominantly on face-to-face training but could be adapted to fit other methods of delivery as required.

Preparation

Being prepared is vital to creating an effective and engaging learning environment. Develop a checklist for yourself that includes all the resources you need on the day and who is responsible for them: electronics (laptops, projectors, USB drives), training materials (presentations, handouts, manuals, reference materials), keys to the venue, catering, pens, notepads, power cords, backup presentations, equipment for any activities and so on. The list can be long and will be specific to your training but having a checklist can ensure the day starts in a positive and organised manner.

Another aspect of being prepared is ensuring you are familiar with all the technology needed to get started. If you don't have access to this before the course, ensure you arrive early enough to give yourself plenty of time to work it out.

On the day

Setting up

It is important you arrive before the learners and with adequate time to prepare yourself and the venue. As the trainer, you are responsible for providing a safe learning environment. You should identify and minimise any risks as they arise or, where this is not possible, bring them to the attention of your learners. For example, if there is an extension cord that could be a tripping hazard, tape it to the floor and ask learners to avoid the area (Figure 3).

Other hazards to be mindful of include slippery or uneven surfaces, poor lighting, inadequate ventilation and excess or broken furniture in the room. Locate the emergency exists, notify learners of their location and keep access to them clear.

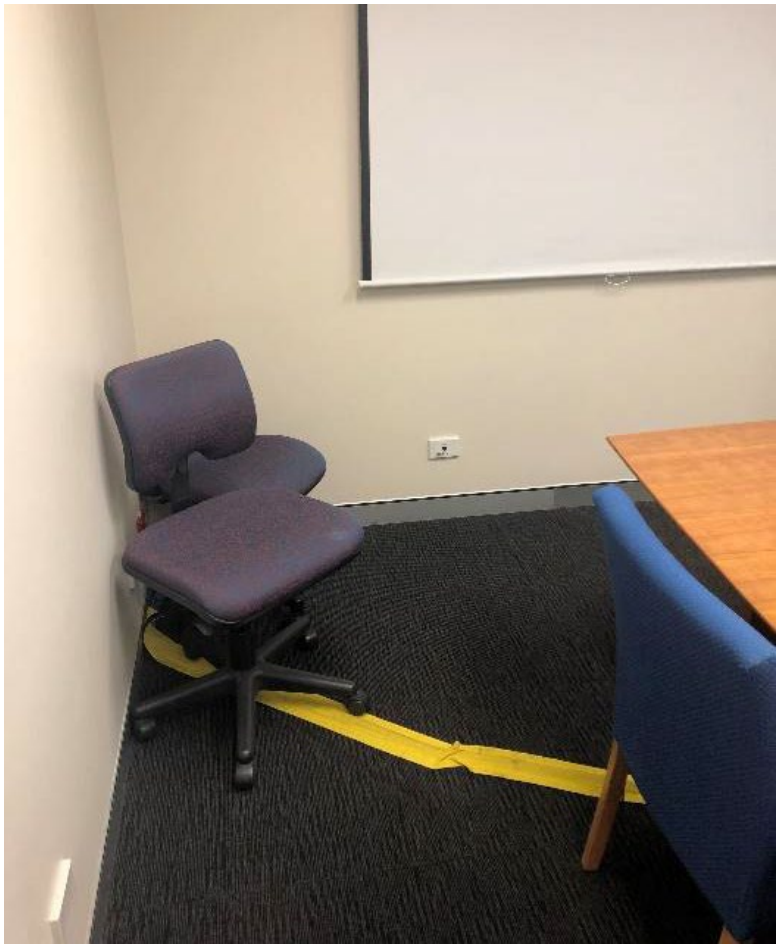
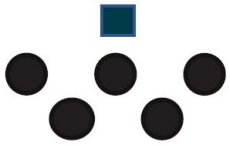


Figure 3 **Reducing hazards in the training environment (Photo: Hannah Ryan)**

Arriving early also gives you an opportunity to set up the room. Consider how you want the tables to be arranged. See the table below for some examples.

	Typical classroom layout with tables set out in rows facing the trainer	Best suited to presentation or lecture-based training
	Tables are set up in a u-shape or semicircle shape	Best suited to training that has a lot of discussion and learner interaction
	Tables are clustered into groups	Best suited to training that has a lot of group discussion and activities

Agendas

Agendas are useful tools for organising a session. An agenda should include the day's goal and a breakdown of what participants can expect. Be sure to allow enough time for questions and incorporate this into your agenda. No one minds their training finishing early, but many learners become frustrated and distracted when the day diverges from the agenda.

Icebreakers

An icebreaker is a good way of starting any training program because it allows participants to relax, feel motivated and connect with other learners. The possibilities for icebreakers are endless. You can be specific to the topic and ask, 'Which is your favourite reptile or amphibian?', 'Why have you decided to come today?' or 'What are you hoping to get out of today?'. Alternatively, icebreakers don't have to be about the course at all. Some other common icebreakers include 'What is your favourite colour and why?', 'List 2 truths and one lie' and 'What would be your ideal holiday destination and why?'. There are many online resources with icebreaker suggestions. For example, to get started and work out which icebreakers work for you, see 'The best ice breakers for meetings and training classes' under 'Further information'.

Presenting

Presenting training requires skill, enthusiasm and continual practice. Your presentation will be vital to the learner feeling engaged and energised by the content. Tips to deliver an engaging presentation:

- If you are using PowerPoint, don't just read from your presentation, use it as a guide only. You can use the 'Notes' feature to remind you of your points without overloading your slide. Don't put too much text on your slides. Use brief dot points

and pictures to make slides more interesting. (See Figure 4: which one do you find easier to read?)

- Summarise and question learners on key points.
- Ensure technology is working – double-check embedded videos before beginning the presentation.
- Look for visual cues from the audience – are learners reciprocating eye contact, are they interested in the content or are they looking bored or distracted? Adapt your approach accordingly.
- Go at an appropriate pace. If you feel nervous, breathe and slow down.
- Ensure all learners can hear you. Project your voice and adjust your tone.
- Be honest – if you don't know the answer to someone's question tell them, don't try to fumble your way through. If you offer to find something out for them, make sure you do.
- Be positive. Smile and make eye contact.
- Be passionate. Share your experiences and anecdotes to reinforce learning.

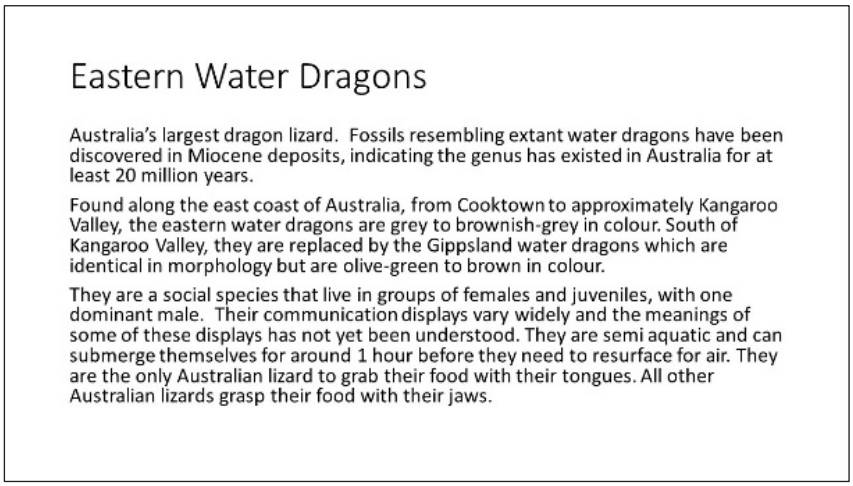


Figure 4 **The second slide uses pictures and dot points to illustrate key messages on a PowerPoint slide**

Dealing with difficult behaviour from learners

There are many types of difficult behaviours that can crop up during training, and they can range from a one-off incident to disrupting the whole day. Some of the common difficult behaviours encountered during training sessions include:

- repeatedly disrupting the trainer to contradict points
- talking to other learners during a presentation
- one person monopolising the discussion and not giving other learners an opportunity to speak
- not paying attention to the training – for example, appearing bored, playing on their phone
- a learner who is pushing an agenda and brings up the same argument repeatedly.

These behaviours can be addressed using different strategies and it can be useful to ascertain what's causing the behaviour. For example, does the learner know the subject matter to a more advanced level, are they shy and afraid to speak to the entire group or are they just passionate about a particular topic?

Setting out the ground rules at the start of the day can assist in mitigating some of these behaviours. Ground rules can include everyone showing respect for others' opinions, or clarifying whether questions are allowed during the presentation or at the end of each section. What do you expect from the learners and what can they expect from you?

Other methods you can use to manage difficult behaviours include:

- Ask the learner to hold their opinion until the end of the section.
- Address the learner who is talking to other learners by asking them their opinion on the topic – 'What do you think, Karen?'
- Thank the learner for their opinion and ask other learners their thoughts – 'Thank you for your opinion, what does everyone else think about this?'
- If there is a point that cannot be agreed upon, or that keeps getting brought up, you could say 'We have spent enough time on this topic and have to move on. If we have time at the end of the day, we can discuss it further.'
- If the behaviour is repeated, direct the learner to stop – 'You are interrupting a lot, so I am going to have to stop you there and give others a chance to speak.'
- If the behaviour continues, pull the learner aside during a break and ask them why they continue to do it and request that they stop.
- If the behaviour continues and you feel it's appropriate, ask the learner to leave the training session.

Getting feedback

Feedback is a valuable tool to evaluate your entire training program and your skills as a trainer. Don't take feedback too personally; instead, see it as an opportunity to learn, grow and improve your training.

There are numerous ways to obtain feedback. One way to evaluate the overall effectiveness of your training and determine if your learners have obtained the relevant information is to quiz learners on the content, based on the intended learning outcomes. Provide the quiz to the participants at the start of the day and then again at the end. This can be self-assessed by students, as a group or by the trainer alone. A consistent increase in scores indicates the training has been successful.

Feedback can also be based on informal or formal discussion throughout the day or at the end of the training. Ask learners what parts of the training they enjoyed and what could be done better. If using this method, be sure to ask specific questions and not just ones with yes or no answers. Find out why and how things can be improved.

A common type of feedback is asking people to complete a written questionnaire. When written well, this can be very useful for evaluating training programs. It can also be a good resource to refer back to when updating a training program, to see what worked well and what could be done better. Some tips for writing questionnaire-style feedback forms include:

- Use a sliding scale (such as numbered 1–5: strongly agree–strongly disagree).
- Ask questions you want to know the answer to and that are relevant to the training.
- Don't use language that is vague or unclear.
- Don't rely on people writing their own answers or responses; many learners will leave this section blank.
- Keep it simple – don't have too many questions or a busy format.

Some questions to consider adding to your feedback form include:

- Do you feel like you achieved the learning objectives of this training?
- Were the instructions clear and easy to follow?
- Were the course materials helpful to your learning?
- Was the facility appropriate for the training?
- Did the trainer demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter?
- Did the trainer communicate clearly?
- What did you like most about the training?
- What could be improved on?
- Would you recommend this course to a friend?
- Please provide any additional feedback in the space below.

Be sure to make use of your feedback. Unused feedback benefits no one.

Assessment

What is competency-based assessment?

Competency-based assessment assesses a learner based on whether they can perform a task or have acquired the knowledge required for their workplace – that

is, do learners have the knowledge and skills required for their role in reptile and amphibian rehabilitation? There is no grade in competency-based assessment; rather, the learner is assessed as either competent or not yet competent.

In accordance with the *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*, all reptile and amphibian rehabilitation training requires an assessment of competency and at least one written assessment component.

Assessment is required to collect evidence that shows a learner is competent in an area and can perform the relevant tasks required of their role. For example, if you were running a training course on reptile and amphibian rescue, without assessing the learner you have no way of knowing if they can apply the knowledge to reptile and amphibian rescue or use the skills learnt to safely rescue a reptile or amphibian according to the learning outcomes in the standards.

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 include principles of assessment and rules of evidence that are required of the vocational education and training (VET) sector. While your training may not be a VET-accredited course, these 2 tools are useful for ensuring your assessment methods are effective and ethical. These are summarised below.

Principles of assessment

There are 4 principles of assessment:

- **Fairness** – individual needs of the learners are taken into account and an assessment method must not discriminate against specific learners or groups.
- **Flexibility** – assessments are flexible to accommodate individual learners through reflecting their needs, applying reasonable adjustments where appropriate and using multiple assessment methods.
- **Validity** – assessment is based on and assesses to the required benchmark, that is, assessments meet the requirements in the standards. Assessment must also be based on evidence that demonstrates the learner can apply the skills and knowledge required of their role.
- **Reliability** – evidence is interpreted consistently and accurately regardless of who the trainer or assessor is.

Rules of evidence

When assessing the competency of a learner you must consider the following 4 rules of evidence:

- **Validity** – you are confident the learner has the skills and knowledge outlined in the standards.
- **Sufficiency** – there is enough quality evidence to assess competency.
- **Authenticity** – You are confident the work submitted is that of the learner and no-one else.

- **Currency** – the assessment evidence has been compiled within a suitable timeframe and reflects the learner's current level of skill and knowledge. This could be applied to the refresher timeframe where further training is required to be completed every 3 years.

Types of assessment methods

- **Questioning** – written or oral, for example, conducting interviews, multiple choice quizzes, written short answer questions.
- **Direct observation** – observing performance during simulated or real-world tasks.
- **Product-based methods** – structured activities, for example, presentations, role plays, reports and work-based projects.
- **Third-party evidence** – having a supervisor, manager or equivalent attest to the competency of your learner or providing a supporting statement or letter.
- **Portfolio** – a collection of evidence compiled by the learner to demonstrate competency, for example, a logbook, photographs or videos.

Use a variety of methods to ensure the assessment is valid and allows the learner to demonstrate competency in different ways. This also makes the assessment process more interesting and engaging for the learner.

Some methods, such as questioning and product-based methods, are more suited to assessing competency of knowledge, whereas others, such as direct observation and third-party evidence, can be used to assess competency in skill or practical application.

Record keeping

Record keeping is an important aspect of training. Having accurate records that are easily available to authorised people will go a long way to ensuring you have a smooth process in place for knowing who is trained in your organisation. As a minimum, you should keep a signed attendance register and a record of whether competency was achieved by the learner for each training session. In addition to this, you should keep records of each assessment event and whether competency was achieved.

Having these records will assist your organisation in knowing who is trained, who is due for refresher training and when training was last held. It is also useful information to maintain in the event your organisation is audited and needs to demonstrate compliance with the codes of practice and training standards.

Also consider what record you might provide to the learner so they can demonstrate competency and completion of a particular training session. A certificate of competency is a useful record for the learner as they can keep it in their personal files and provide it as evidence of training completed if needed.

Part 2: Understanding the reptile and amphibian rehabilitation training standards

Introduction

This section looks at the reptile and amphibian rehabilitation training standards in more detail.

This includes possible topics that could be included in the training courses (listed under ‘Training areas’ for each standard). Not all these topics will need to be covered, as your training may be specific to a type of role and certain areas may not be applicable. The suggested training areas are listed to guide you in thinking about what may be considered in the context of each standard.

There are also recommendations for the types of assessments. Each standard is accompanied by 2 examples of assessments that could be used to assess competency. The assessments are examples only and do not have to be used. You may want to use them as ideas to create your own assessments. If you do use these assessments, you must have covered the topics in your content to ensure your assessment process is fair and accurate.

Understanding the format of the training standards

Standard 1: The framework for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation in NSW

Each standard has a heading that describes the overall topic of the standard.

Objective: Familiarise learners with the relevant policies and procedures of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation and provide them with an understanding of the framework that exists to support and regulate reptile and amphibian rehabilitation in New South Wales. Learners must be aware of and understand the reptile and amphibian code.

The objective of a standard explains what the standard is trying to achieve – that is, its aim.

To be compliant with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

1.1 Discuss the reptile and amphibian code.

1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.

1.3 Ensure objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are understood by learners.

These points explain what must be included within training for it to be compliant with the training standards. The organisation or trainer is responsible for ensuring this information is included in training.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: • identify and demonstrate understanding of the reptile and amphibian code • identify organisational policies and procedures on reptile and amphibian rehabilitation • recognise the objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.	All

Learning outcomes describe what a learner will be able to do upon completion of a standard. A learner is deemed competent when they can demonstrate the learning outcomes.

Standard 1: The framework for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation in New South Wales

Objective

Familiarise learners with the relevant policies and procedures of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation and provide them with an understanding of the framework that exists to support and regulate this practice in New South Wales.

Learners must be aware of and understand the NSW *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians* (the reptile and amphibian code).

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

1.1 Discuss the reptile and amphibian code.

1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.

1.3 Ensure objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are understood by learners.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 1, learners will be able to: • identify and demonstrate understanding of the reptile and amphibian code • identify organisational policies and procedures for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation • recognise the objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.	All

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Organisational policies and procedures relevant to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation could include:
  - standard operating procedures
  - organisational overview
  - work health and safety policies
  - role descriptions
  - constitution
  - code of ethics
  - code of conduct
  - conflict resolution
  - reimbursement
  - working with veterinarians and building strong relationships
  - reporting requirements and reporting chain of command

- protocols for contacting veterinarians and more experienced wildlife rehabilitators
- protocols for suspected or confirmed escaped or abandoned pets, seized animals or exotic species (for example, red-eared slider turtle, corn snake, red-tailed boa constrictor)
- protocols for displaced reptiles or amphibians (for example, banana box frogs)
- protocols for species listed as endangered or critically endangered in Schedule 1 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- no rehabilitation of tadpoles or incubation of frog eggs
- release procedures.

Suggested assessments

The information covered in this standard is largely theory and so would be best suited to written or verbal assessment.

Standard 1: Assessment 1 – The reptile and amphibian code

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 1.

Learner instructions

Use the reptile and amphibian code to complete the following multiple choice questions.

1. The development of the reptile and amphibian code was guided by 4 key principles. From the list below, select the 4 key principles which apply to all aspects of reptile and amphibian rescue, rehabilitation and release.
    A. Prioritise the welfare of reptiles and amphibians.
    B. Avoid harm to wild reptile and amphibian populations and other wildlife communities.
    C. Contribute to research on reptile and amphibian behaviour.
    D. Minimise the risks to human health and safety.
    E. Optimise capacity to care.

Answer: A, B, D and E.

2. Who was the reptile and amphibian code developed for?
    A. People who have pet snakes and lizards.
    B. Everyone who feeds reptiles and amphibians in their garden.
    C. Those authorised to rescue, rehabilitate and release reptile and amphibians.
    D. All of the above.

Answer: C. Those authorised to rescue, rehabilitate and release reptiles and amphibians.

3. Which of the following describes the mandatory specific actions for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation, as described by the code?
    A. Guidelines
    B. Standards
    C. Notes
    D. Objectives

Answer: B. Standards.

4. What 2 steps must be taken when rescuing an eastern snake-necked turtle with a carapace injury after being hit by a motor vehicle?
    A. Tying a self-adhesive bandage around the shell to stabilise the injury before moving the turtle.
    B. Holding the turtle on either side of the body with your thumbs on top of the carapace and your fingers under the plastron.
    C. Placing a solid object, such as a mat or a stretcher, under the turtle.
    D. Holding the turtle by the front and back of the carapace.

Answer: A and C. Freshwater turtles with an injury to their carapace, bridge or plastron may need to have the injury stabilised before transport. Turtles with this type of injury must be lifted on a solid object to limit movement and further injury to the carapace.

5. What equipment is suitable to use when attempting to rescue a snake?
    A. Bag and snap trap.
    B. Snake hook, bag, tube.
    C. Tongs and net.
    D. Bag, tongs, snake hook.

Answer: B

6. Which of the following is the objective of Section 6.1 Assessment in the reptile and amphibian code?
    A. Prevent the spread of diseases among reptiles and amphibians undergoing rehabilitation.
    B. Maintain clean rehabilitation facilities so diseases are prevented or contained.
    C. Identify the severity of wounds, injuries or disease to determine the best course of action for a reptile or amphibian undergoing rehabilitation.
    D. Check the health of a reptile or amphibian undergoing rehabilitation so concerns can be promptly identified and managed.

Answer: C. To identify the severity of wounds, injuries or disease to determine the best course of action for a reptile or amphibian undergoing rehabilitation.

7. What action is a priority when a rescued reptile is admitted for assessment?
    A. Providing fluids.

B. Providing a dark environment.
C. Feeding the reptile.
D. Providing warmth.

Answer: D. As all the reptile's metabolic processes are intrinsically linked with body temperature, the administration of fluid and medications is likely to have minimal benefit until the animal is adequately heated.

8. How should fresh water be provided to a shingleback?
    A. In an appropriately sized container available at all times.
    B. Misted into the enclosure once a day.
    C. Once a week in an appropriately sized container.
    D. Provided 2 to 3 hours per day.

Answer: D. Drinking water for shinglebacks must be only available for a limited timeframe of 2 to 3 hours each day

9. How often should a jacky lizard in intensive care be weighed?
    A. Daily
    B. Once a week.
    C. They do not require weighing as their weight varies dramatically.
    D. Four times a day.

Answer: A. Small lizards must be weighed daily.

10. During transport, a Stimson's python requires a container with:
    A. Thick damp substrate to allow them to burrow and keep damp.
    B. A lockable cage with a sign that says 'DANGER – VENOMOUS LIVE SNAKE'.
    C. A raised branch to rest on.
    D. Live food it would find in the wild.

Answer: B. During transport, containers holding snakes must have a clearly visible warning label that says 'DANGER – VENOMOUS LIVE SNAKE'. Reptiles must not be fed during transport.

11. Dedicated cleaning equipment must be used for enclosures housing reptiles and amphibians with a suspected or confirmed infectious disease. This equipment must not be shared.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: True. To prevent disease transmission, equipment must not be shared.

12. When can multiple reptiles be housed together in the same enclosure?
    A. In a pre-release enclosure.
    B. For a short time while they are being transported to use space efficiently.
    C. When there are hatchlings of the same clutch.

D. During cleaning of enclosures.

Answer: C. Only reptile hatchlings and juveniles from the same clutch can be housed together and they must be closely monitored for signs of aggression.

13. What is the correct technique when releasing a red-bellied black snake that was found in a playground?
    A. Releasing within a week of feeding.
    B. Releasing back at the playground that it was found in.
    C. Releasing a few days before it is due to be fed.
    D. Releasing back into the bush half a kilometre away from the playground and out of sight of the public.

Answer: A and D. Wildlife rehabilitators must release a snake within a week of feeding to ensure the snake focuses on finding a place to hide and not attempting to feed. Venomous snakes should not be released near places of human occupation.

14. All wildlife rehabilitators must undertake professional development and refresh their training for reptiles and amphibians every 3 years.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: True. Wildlife rehabilitators must undertake professional development and refresh their training every 3 years.

15. A member of the public called your organisation about a frog. Upon arrival, you identify the animal as a cane toad. As a rescuer, what is your next step?
    A. Bring the toad into care to ensure ID is accurate before euthanasia.
    B. Take it to the nearest veterinary practice to be euthanased.
    C. Relocate the toad away from the property.
    D. Euthanase the toad immediately before leaving the property.

Answer: A. Cane toads are an introduced pest species and an accurate ID is required to ensure it is not a native frog. Once ID is confirmed then euthanasia and notification to NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is required.

Standard 1: Assessment 2 – Organisational policies on reptile and amphibian rehabilitation

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 1. The answers provided for each question are examples only, and answers provided by learners must be specific to their organisation.

Learner instructions

Provide answers to each of the questions below.

1. What is the mission statement, or what are the guiding principles and objectives of rehabilitation for your group?

Answers could include:

- to rescue, rehabilitate and release reptile and amphibians
- to conserve reptiles and amphibians and preserve and enhance their habitat
- to provide best practice standards of care to sick and injured reptiles and amphibians
- the main objective is to return all native fauna back to its wildlife habitat when fit to fend for itself (Native Animal Trust Fund)
- to actively rehabilitate and preserve Australian wildlife and inspire others to do the same (WIRES).

2. List 3 policies or documents you need to be familiar with to rehabilitate reptile and amphibians.

Answers could include:

- *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*
- *Rehabilitation of protected animals policy*
- organisation's standard operating procedures including:
    - zoonotic disease policy
    - work health and safety policies
    - food bank policy
    - petrol reimbursement policy

3. Within your organisation, who do you need to report a reptile or amphibian rescue to?

Answers could include:

- operations manager
- supervisor
- reptile and amphibian coordinator – oversees rescues and animals brought into care.

4. What are your organisation's protocols for seeking veterinary assistance?

Answers could include:

- calling first to make an appointment
- contacting the reptile and amphibian coordinator for approval to make a veterinary appointment
- any expensive procedures or medications must be approved by the coordinator
- it's required for specific reptile and amphibian groups (for example, critically endangered or endangered species).

5. List 2 positions within the organisation and explain their role in reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.

Answers could include:

- reptile and amphibian coordinator – oversees rescues and animals brought into care
- mentor – assists new volunteers with rehabilitation, providing advice and support
- rescue coordinator – coordinates roster and rescues from the hotline
- training officer – updates training materials and informs existing and potential members of when training is available.

Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation

Objective

Ensure learners can prioritise their safety and that of the people around them when undertaking reptile and amphibian rescue and rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

2.1 Explain the work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the site, equipment or activity and how they can be minimised.

2.2 Explain the WHS risks associated with approaching, handling and restraining reptiles and amphibians and how they can be minimised.

2.3 Discuss the WHS risks associated with zoonotic diseases relevant to reptiles and amphibians and how they can be minimised.

2.4 Discuss rehabilitator wellbeing and potential mental health impacts of wildlife rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 2, learners will be able to: • identify WHS risks associated with reptile and amphibian rehabilitation • employ techniques to minimise the WHS risks to themselves and other people.	3. Rescue 4. Transport 6. Care procedures 7. Rehabilitation care 8. Housing 10. Release considerations

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Work health and safety risks of the site, equipment or activity could include:
  - uneven surfaces
  - falling branches
  - traffic
  - working in low light
  - working with heights
  - weather and extremes of temperature
  - broken equipment
  - slippery rocks and waves
  - sharp edges
  - chemicals and other hazardous agents.

- Work health and safety risks associated with handling and restraining reptile and amphibians could include:
  - zoonoses
  - fatal envenomation
  - bites and scratches
  - injury from heavy lifting.
- Work health and safety risks associated with zoonotic diseases could include:
  - zoonoses associated with reptile and amphibians (for example, salmonella)
  - personnel safety (hygiene and disinfection practices, personal protective equipment).
- Minimising work health and safety risks could include:
  - ensuring correct training has been completed before undertaking a task, particularly venomous snake handling
  - wearing correct personal protective equipment
  - using correct equipment
  - using the correct technique to restrain a reptile or amphibian
  - minimising handling.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to written or verbal assessment methods, practical assessment or a combination of these.

Standard 2: Assessment 1 – Work health and safety requirements of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 2.

Learner instructions

For each of the 3 activities listed below, identify 3 work health and safety risks and explain how you could minimise these risks.

1. A common death adder in intensive care.

Figure 5 **Death adder in intensive care (Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC)**

Work health and safety risks	How will you minimise these risks?

2. Rescuing a Peron's tree frog that has remained in the same place for a number of days.

Figure 6 **Peron's tree frog (Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC)**

Work health and safety risks	How will you minimise these risks?

3. Rescuing a lace monitor.

Figure 7 **Lace monitor (Photo: Shona Lorigan/DCCEEW)**

Work health and safety risks	How will you minimise these risks?

Standard 2: Assessment 2 – Rehabilitator wellbeing

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 2. Split the learners into smaller groups with fewer than 10 learners to a group and get them to discuss and answer the questions below. When the groups have completed their discussions, come together and discuss what each group came up with.

Learner instructions

In your group, discuss and answer the questions below. Once this has been completed, choose a representative to speak on behalf of your group to explain your findings.

1. What is wellbeing?
2. What are some of the potential impacts on wellbeing for rehabilitators?
3. What are the signs of these impacts?
4. How can you minimise these impacts?
5. Who should you talk to in these situations?
6. What processes does your organisation have in place to support rehabilitator wellbeing?

Standard 3: Record keeping

Objective

Explain the record keeping requirements for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

3.1 Explain the National Parks and Wildlife Service reporting requirements.

3.2 Explain organisational reporting requirements.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 3, learners will be able to: • keep records in accordance with both National Parks and Wildlife Service and organisational requirements.	12. Record keeping

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service reporting requirements could include:
  - notifying the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development upon receiving knowledge of the location or capture of a non-native reptile or amphibian listed in Schedule 3 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*
  - notifying National Parks and Wildlife Service for all rescues of reptiles or amphibians listed as critically endangered on Schedule 1 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act
  - detailed record report
  - combined report
  - licence conditions
  - discussing the benefits of collecting robust data
  - methods to collect accurate rescue and release location data (such as GPS)
  - an overview of where the data is being used and why it is important
  - annual reports and the NSW wildlife rehabilitation dashboard.
- Organisational reporting requirements could include:
  - rehabilitation care plans
  - body weight
  - details of reptile or amphibians' mobility and behaviour
  - veterinary-prescribed medications and treatment plans
  - copy of records when transferring a reptile or amphibian between facilities
  - reporting disease outbreaks to the relevant authorities
  - feeding charts
  - rescue details

- release details.

Suggested assessments

The information covered in this standard is largely theory and so would be best suited to written or verbal assessment.

Standard 3: Assessment 1 – Record keeping

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 3.

Learner instructions

Complete the following quiz by providing a written response for the short answer questions and selecting the correct choice for multiple choice questions.

1. Why is it important to submit accurate records to the National Parks and Wildlife Service?

2. List 3 types of information your organisation records for reptiles and amphibians in care.

3. Lizard eggs from an unknown species have been handed in to a local vet by a member of the public after they found them while gardening. What is the correct rescue encounter type?
    A. Orphaned
    B. Human impact – interference
    C. Abandoned

Answer: B.

4. A Stimson's python has been found inside a car engine when it was observed moving underneath a parked vehicle but not seen leaving the area of the car. What is the correct rescue encounter type?
    A. Unsuitable environment
    B. Negative interaction
    C. Collision – motor vehicle

Answer: A.

5. A lethargic diamond python has visible ticks on its body. What is the correct rescue encounter type?
    A. Entanglement – other
    B. Poisoned
    C. Disease – external parasites

Answer: C.

6. A lace monitor is moving through a backyard and takes an interest in a member of the public's house. The person is cooking dinner and the monitor begins climbing the kitchen window and wall of the house.
    A. Unsuitable environment
    B. Negative interaction
    C. Attack – other

Answer: B.

7. Two striped marsh frogs have been found by a member of the public resting inside the rim of a toilet bowl in the bathroom.
    A. Unsuitable environment
    B. Fouled by substance
    C. Negative interaction

Answer: A.

8. An adult highlands copperhead snake was called in on the rescue line when a member of the public heard a disturbance in their chicken coop. The snake was being attacked by the chickens.
    A. Attack – other
    B. Unsuitable environment
    C. Negative interaction

Answer: C.

9. Fifteen eastern carpet python eggs have been brought into care after the mother was killed during a dog attack.
    A. Attack – dog
    B. Orphaned
    C. Human impact – interference

Answer: B.

10. A Burmese python is found and determined to be a domestic pet, based on the distribution of this species.
    A. Domestic pet – escaped
    B. Human impact – interference

C. Unsuitable environment

Answer: A.

11. A red-bellied black snake has been seen over a week in the playground of the local primary school. Students are not able to be outside during recess or lunch as the whereabouts of the snake is unknown at these times.
    A. Unsuitable environment
    B. Human impact – habitat alteration
    C. Negative interaction

Answer: C.

12. A broad-headed snake was brought into a vet clinic severely emaciated. When questioned about the history of the snake, the member of the public confessed to taking the snake from the wild and keeping it as a pet. After veterinary treatment, the snake entered care with a wildlife rehabilitator.
    A. Human impact – interference
    B. Domestic pet – seized
    C. Disease – other

Answer: A.

13. A juvenile eastern blue-tongue lizard (ID number: WD123456) was found on Saturday 15 September 2024 at 122 Eucalypt Way, Anonville, 4717. The householder found the lizard in their pet dog's mouth and it had sustained bruising and superficial grazes and cuts. After veterinary assessment and treatment, you have rehabilitated the lizard and released it 10 days later. The release site was very close but without a pet dog, at 124 Eucalypt Way, Anonville, 4717. Before release, the eastern blue-tongue lizard was microchipped with the number K0098787. Complete the National Parks and Wildlife Service reporting sheet below.

National Parks and Wildlife Service report sheet:

Animal reporting sheet	
Species	ID number
Date of encounter	Encounter type
Location address	Location suburb/town
Location postcode	Animal condition
Sex	Life stage
Initial weight	Rehabilitator name
Date of fate	Fate
Release location address	Release location suburb

Release location postcode	
Tag/band colour and number	Microchip number

Standard 3: Assessment 2 – Record keeping

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 3.

Learner instructions

Split the learners into small groups with fewer than 5 learners to a group and have each group discuss a case study and answer the questions below. When the groups have completed their discussions, come together and discuss what each group came up with.

Case study 1:

A member of the public, Jane Doe, called your organisation about a frog found on her porch at a remote farmhouse near Armidale on 6 May 2020 at 10 am.

1. What information is important to gain from this phone call?

Upon arrival, you find a frog at the location. The frog has yellow spots on its thigh, looks thin and is lethargic. You identify it as a yellow-spotted tree frog.

2. What information would you need to record regarding this situation?

3. Who should you notify about the frog rescue and why is this communication important?

4. The animal is ready to be released 4 weeks later. What information would you need to record regarding the release?

Case study 2:

A member of the public, John Smith, called your organisation about a large lace monitor on 8 February 2022 at 4 pm.

1. What information is important to gain from this phone call?
2. Upon arrival, you can see a metal arrow lodged deep inside the upper body of the monitor. It is alive but its mobility is limited. What information would you need to record regarding this situation?
3. Who should you notify about the lace monitor rescue and why is this communication important?

Case study 3:

A member of the public, Richard Roe, called your organisation about a large snake on 26 September 2023 at 12 pm.

1. What information is important to gain from this phone call?

2. Upon arrival, you identify a boa constrictor in Kurnell, in the roof of a house. The snake appears to be in good health. What information would you need to record regarding this situation?

3. Who should you notify about the snake rescue and why is this communication important?

Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Ensure detailed knowledge of reptiles and amphibians is taught to learners. This is done by providing learners with the foundational tools to understand reptile and amphibian biology and behaviour and how these aspects inform interactions with these animals undergoing rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

4.1 Explain features of reptile and amphibian biology including anatomy, physiology, social structure, stages of development and habitat, and relate them to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.

4.2 Provide a basic understanding of reptile and amphibian ecology including population dynamics, habitat selection, competition and predator–prey interactions.

4.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify different species of reptiles and amphibians recorded in New South Wales.

4.4 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify normal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.

4.5 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 4, learners will be able to: • relate reptile and amphibian biology, ecology and behaviour to their rehabilitation • understand how to use the different tools to identify different species of reptiles and amphibians • recognise signs of normal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians • recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.	All

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians.*
- Features of reptile and amphibian biology could include:
  - gastrointestinal anatomy and physiology in relation to diet
  - musculoskeletal anatomy and physiology
  - variation in anatomy between species
  - skin sloughing
  - metabolism and thermoregulation including preferred optimal temperature zone (POTZ)

  - life cycle
  - reproduction
  - social behaviour and home range.
- Basic understanding of reptile and amphibian ecology could include:
  - habitat and species preferences
  - breeding and life cycle
  - diet and competition.
- Tools and understanding required to identify species could include:
  - how to use a reptile field guide
  - distinguishing features of different species
  - identifying species in early development (hatchlings and juveniles)
  - species that are known to occur in the local area.
- Normal behaviours for reptiles and amphibians could include:
  - nocturnal and diurnal species
  - solitary (most reptiles) and social species (such as Cunningham's skinks)
  - territorial behaviour (for example, vocalisation and fighting)
  - breeding behaviour
  - thermoregulatory behaviours
  - skin sloughing
  - nest construction.
- Abnormal behaviours for reptiles and amphibians could include:
  - not fleeing when approached
  - sitting out in the open during the day (amphibians)
  - lethargy
  - abnormal righting reflexes
  - abnormal movements of the head, body or legs for amphibians
  - humanisation.

Suggested assessments

The information covered in this standard is largely theory so would be best suited to written or verbal assessment.

Standard 4: Assessment 1 – Reptile and amphibian species identification

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 4.

Learner instructions

Try to identify each animal in the table below. If you don't know the exact species, then nominate the type of reptile or amphibian (for example – skink, venomous snake, tree frog). Also list what they eat and their habitat. The first example has been completed.

 Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC	 Photo: Margaret Woods/Sydney Wildlife Rescue	 Photo: Lynleigh Greig/Sydney Wildlife Rescue
Species: death adder	Species	Species
Diet: carnivore	Diet	Diet
Habitat: leaf litter	Habitat	Habitat
 Photo: Shona Lorigan/ DCCEEW	 Photo: Margaret Woods/ Sydney Wildllife	 Photo: Sam Chatfield/ Wildlife ARC
Species	Species	Species
Diet	Diet	Diet
Habitat	Habitat	Habitat
 Photo: Margaret Woods/Sydney Wildlife Rescue	 Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC	 Photo: Tim Johnson/DCCEEW
Species	Species	Species
Diet	Diet	Diet
Habitat	Habitat	Habitat

 Photo: Margaret Woods/Sydney Wildlife Rescue	 Photo: Margaret Woods/Sydney Wildlife Rescue	 Photo: Shona Lorigan/DCCEEW
Species	Species	Species
Diet	Diet	Diet
Habitat	Habitat	Habitat

Standard 4: Assessment 2 – Reptile and amphibian biology and behaviour

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 4.

Learner instructions

Complete the following quiz by selecting the correct choice for multiple choice questions and providing a written response for the short answer questions.

1. An adult eastern water dragon is an omnivore and eats insects and vegetables.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: True.

2. Which 2 of the following statements about turtle shells are true?
    A. The shell is an exoskeleton and shows the evolutionary link between invertebrates and vertebrates.
    B. The shell is formed from modified ribs and is fused with the spinal column and pelvis.
    C. A turtle's shell should be soft and flexible.
    D. Scutes protect the turtle's shell and are made of keratin.

Answer: B and D. The shell is not an exoskeleton and should never be soft.

3. There are only 10 species of amphibian on threatened species lists in New South Wales.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: False. There are 5 species of amphibians listed as critically endangered, 13 species of amphibians listed as endangered, 10 species listed as vulnerable and one endangered population listed in New South Wales.

4. Brumation is a natural occurrence and a reptile needs no intervention if it occurs while in care.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: B False. While brumation is a natural occurrence, in some cases steps need to be taken (based on veterinary advice) to prevent brumation while animals are undergoing rehabilitation, as it will hinder healing.

5. Which of the following is a natural behaviour in snakes and will not need intervention unless the animal is at immediate risk of injury?
    A. A snake that is thin and that has several skin lesions.
    B. A snake entangled in netting.
    C. A sluggish snake with a big bulge.
    D. A snake that is on the side of the road with a laceration.

Answer: C: This snake needs to be monitored; it has most likely eaten recently and is digesting its prey. Disturbing the snake may cause regurgitation.

6. What is the Jacobsen's organ? Explain how it assists a snake to catch prey.

7. Name 5 different behaviours seen in reptiles and amphibians when feeling threatened and give a species example for each type of behaviour.

Behaviour	Species example
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Answers could include:

- rearing up
- spitting
- retreating into shell
- distress vocalisations
- fleeing

- open-mouth display.

8. Briefly describe a situation where a rescuer identifies that a snake is undertaking a natural behaviour and does not require intervention.

Answers could include:

- shedding its skin
- digesting its prey
- part of a breeding ball (male snakes fighting to determine who will breed with the female).

9. Explain why it is important to provide a heat source and a light source in a reptile enclosure.

Standard 5: Stress management in reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Communicate the importance of managing stress in reptiles and amphibians and provide mechanisms for minimising this stress.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

5.1 Explain the effects of stress on reptiles and amphibians at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

5.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of stress in reptiles and amphibians.

5.3 Discuss methods for minimising stress on reptiles and amphibians at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 5, learners will be able to: • recognise signs of stress in reptiles and amphibians and its impact • apply methods for minimising stress to a reptile or amphibian.	3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Rehabilitation care 8. Housing 10. Release considerations

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Effects of stress could include:
  - death
  - poor body condition
  - decreased immune function
  - physiological impacts.
- Signs of distress could include:
  - lack of appetite
  - repetitive behaviours
  - vocalisations
  - increased heart and respiratory rate.
- Methods for minimising stress could include:
  - minimising handling
  - correct handling techniques
  - providing a warm, dark and quiet environment

- pain relief
- limiting exposure to stressors such as domestic animals, loud noises, noxious smells
- driving carefully.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to written or verbal assessment methods, practical assessment or a combination of these.

Standard 5: Assessment 1 – Signs of stress

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 5.

Learner instructions

Use the space provided to explain the effects of stress on a reptile or amphibian. In your answer include examples of the effect stress has on the body of a reptile or amphibian, what indications you would be looking for to determine if a reptile or amphibian is stressed, and what you would do to minimise this stress.

Standard 5: Assessment 2 – Minimising stress

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 5. This assessment tool can be provided as a written or verbal activity.

Learner instructions

For each of the scenarios below explain how you would minimise stress for a reptile or amphibian.

1. Rescuing an eastern snake-necked turtle from a dog park, there are many people letting their dogs sniff and interact with the turtle when you arrive.

2. An eastern blue-tongue lizard has been accidentally cut with a shovel in a front yard while the homeowner was gardening. The lizard has an enlarged abdomen and is suspected to be pregnant.

3. A carpet python has been found in the living room of a house in autumn as the weather is warming up. The python looks to be in poor health, with visible ribs and spine, and appears to be shedding its skin.

Standard 6: Rescue of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Ensure learners have the skills to rescue a reptile or amphibian safely, efficiently and humanely.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

6.1 Outline common reasons for reptile and amphibian rescue.

6.2 Detail how to perform a situational assessment, including the use of the decision tree in the Reptile and amphibian code, to establish the appropriate course of action.

6.3 Detail the correct method and equipment required to capture, handle and rescue a reptile or amphibian, as suitable to common rescue situations, conditions and stages of development of a reptile or amphibian.

6.4 Detail how to rescue a reptile or amphibian to humanely minimise pain, stress and potential injury.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 6, learners will be able to: • list the common reasons why reptiles and amphibians require rescue • assess a rescue situation and plan the rescue of a reptile or amphibian • safely rescue a reptile or amphibian using correct equipment • determine the type of intervention required at a rescue site.	2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Common reasons reptiles and amphibians need to be rescued include:
  - motor vehicle accidents
  - entanglement
  - disease
  - predator attack
  - extreme weather conditions
  - buoyancy abnormalities (freshwater turtle)
  - negative interaction (inside a dwelling or vehicle)
  - escaped or abandoned domestic pet.
- Performing a situational assessment could include
  - assessing the situation – is it safe?
  - ensuring correct equipment is used

  - ensuring appropriate training has been completed (such as venomous snake handling)
  - ensuring the correct number of trained people are available to conduct the rescue
  - identifying obstacles and work health and safety risks
  - identifying escape routes and risks to the reptile or amphibian
  - performing a distance examination before approaching the animal
  - explaining the types of intervention required for snakes at a rescue site.
- Methods for rescuing the reptile or amphibian could include:
  - enveloping the animal in a towel or blanket
  - using a snake hook and snake bag
  - using a clear plastic tube for venomous snakes
  - having 2 rescuers when dealing with complex entanglements.
- Equipment to rescue a reptile or amphibian could include:
  - towels
  - snake hook
  - snake bag with sewn corners to provide safe grips
  - heat source
  - personal protective equipment (for example, gloves)
  - scissors
  - pliers
  - secure, well-ventilated transport container appropriate to the species
  - lockable containers for snakes
  - net
  - torch.
- Minimising stress and further injury could include:
  - ensuring correct training has been completed before undertaking a task
  - performing correct rescue and handling techniques for the condition of the animal
  - using the correct transport container with a securable lid
  - placing the animal in a pillowcase or cloth bag
  - removing onlookers and domestic pets
  - reducing auditory and visual stimuli.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to practical assessment in a simulated environment that accurately represents rescue conditions.

Standard 6: Assessment 1 – Reptile and Amphibian rescue

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 6.

Learner instructions

Read each of the rescue case studies and complete the corresponding questions.

Case study 1:

You have been called out to rescue an eastern brown snake that has become entangled in netting next to a private pool. As the snake is in distress it is moving a lot, which is causing it to become further trapped in the net.

Figure 8 **Entangled eastern brown snake (Photo: John Marshall/Wildlife Carers Network Central West)**

1. What work health and safety risks have you identified for the rescue site?

2. What work health and safety risks have you identified for handling the snake?

3. What will you do to minimise the work health and safety risks associated with this rescue scenario?

4. What information do you obtain from your visual assessment of the animal?

5. What outcome do you get when using the decision tree in the reptile and amphibian code?

6. Describe how you will rescue the snake.

7. What equipment will you use?

8. How do you intend to minimise further stress or injury to the snake?

Case study 2:

You have been called to rescue a freshwater turtle on a busy motorway. Upon arrival, you note that there are several deep cracks on the turtle's carapace.

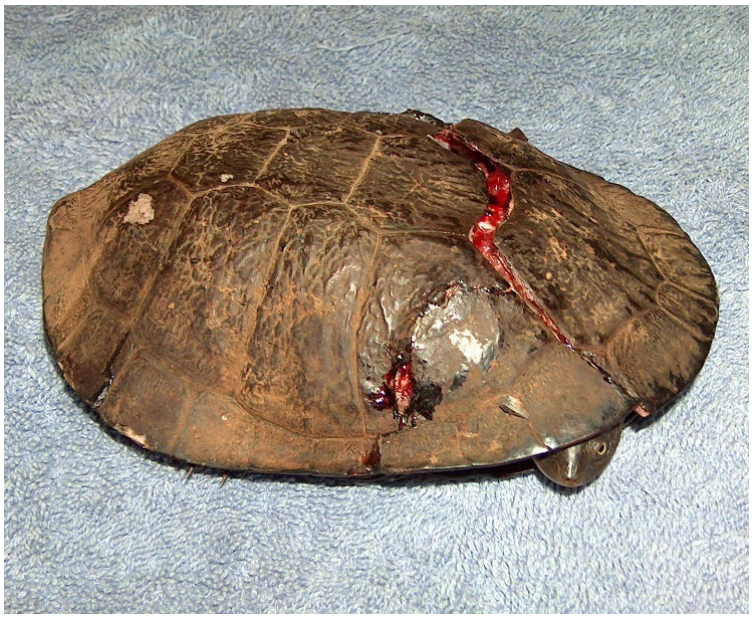


Figure 9 Freshwater turtle with carapace injuries (Photo: Robert Johnson)

1. What work health and safety risks have you identified for the rescue site?

2. What work health and safety risks have you identified for handling the turtle?

3. What will you do to minimise the work health and safety risks associated with this rescue scenario?

4. What information do you obtain from your visual assessment of the animal?

5. What outcome do you get when using the decision tree in the Reptile and amphibian code?

6. Describe how you will rescue the turtle.

7. What equipment will you use?

8. How do you intend to minimise further stress or injury to the turtle?

Standard 6: Assessment 2 – Reptile and amphibian rescue practical assessment

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 6.

Learner instructions

To complete this assessment learners must:

- complete a minimum of 3 reptile or amphibian rescues under the supervision of an appropriately qualified member of a wildlife rehabilitation organisation
- demonstrate competency in the required rescue skills
- complete the relevant section of the logbook for each rescue event and ensure the supervising member has signed and completed the relevant section for each rescue event
- return the completed logbook to the training officer.

Name:	Signature:
Supervisor name:	Supervisor signature:
Date completed:	

Rescue 1 – reporting form			
Date	**Unique ID number**	**Rescue/call log number**	
Location			
Rescue skill	**Learner details/observation** Learner to list rescue skills and explain what was done for each skill set.	**Competency achieved**	**Supervisor initial and comment**
Risks associated with the rescue situation are assessed and options to minimise risks are evaluated and employed as appropriate.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Appropriate equipment is selected for the rescue.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Appropriate rescue method is chosen for the rescue situation.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Options for assisting the animal are evaluated in accordance with the decision tree in the reptile and amphibian code.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Reptile/Amphibian is safely rescued, and action is taken to minimise stress and the potential for further injury to the animal.		Yes ☐ No ☐	

Rescue 2 – reporting form			
Date	**Unique ID number**	**Rescue/call log number**	
Location			
Rescue skill	**Learner details/observation** Learner to list rescue skills and explain what was done for each skill set.	**Competency achieved**	**Supervisor initial and comment**
Risks associated with the rescue situation are assessed and options to minimise risks are evaluated and employed as appropriate.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Appropriate equipment is selected for the rescue.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Appropriate rescue method is chosen for the rescue situation.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Options for assisting the animal are evaluated in accordance with the decision tree in the reptile and amphibian code.		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Reptile/Amphibian is safely rescued, and action is taken to minimise stress and the potential for further injury to the animal.		Yes ☐ No ☐	

Rescue 3 – reporting form			
Date	**Unique ID number**	**Rescue/call log number**	
Location			
Rescue skill	**Learner details/observation** Learner to list rescue skills and explain what was done for each skill set.	**Competency achieved**	**Supervisor initial and comment**
Risks associated with the rescue situation are and options to minimise risks are evaluated an as appropriate.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Appropriate equipment is selected for the rescue.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Appropriate rescue method is chosen for the rescue situation.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Options for assisting the animal are evaluated in accordance with the decision tree in the reptile and amphibian code.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Reptile/Amphibian is safely rescued, and action is taken to minimise stress and the potential for further injury to the animal.	Yes ☐	No ☐	

Standard 7: Transport of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Ensure learners have the skills to transport a reptile or amphibian safely, efficiently and humanely.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

7.1 Demonstrate how to appropriately contain a reptile or amphibian for transport based on different sizes, stages of development and conditions.

7.2 Outline how to secure the transport container to prevent escape and further injury.

7.3 Detail suitable transport conditions, including ambient temperature, to safely transport a reptile or amphibian.

7.4 Discuss the most suitable person or location that a reptile or amphibian should be transported to, based on different stages of development, animal condition and organisational policies.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 7, learners will be able to: • prepare a carrier for transport • outline the transport conditions required to safely transport a reptile or amphibian • understand the appropriate person or location to transport a reptile or amphibian to, based on different stages of development, animal condition and organisational policies.	2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia 10. Release considerations

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Containing a reptile or amphibian for transport could include:
  - using towels
  - using secure, well-ventilated transport containers
  - using a lockable container with a clearly visible warning label for a snake
  - snake bag design (for example, dark colour and sewn corners for safety)
  - covering the container
  - using a substrate
  - limiting movement for animals with spinal injuries
  - marking and placement when transporting eggs
  - using a damp sponge or paper towel for amphibians to grip.
- Transport conditions could include:
  - avoiding noise disturbance

  - maintaining and monitoring ambient temperature
  - securing the transport container.
- Transporting to the most suitable person or location would depend on the animal's species and condition and could include:
  - a veterinary practice
  - an experienced wildlife rehabilitator
  - a rehabilitation facility.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to practical assessment or in a simulated environment that accurately represents rescue conditions.

Standard 7: Assessment 1 – Scenarios for transporting reptiles and amphibians

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 7. Ensure there is enough equipment available to complete this assessment.

Learner instructions

Select one of the scenarios below. Once you have chosen your scenario you will be asked to prepare a carrier for transport using the available equipment. Once you have your carrier set up you will be asked to explain why you have set the carrier up the way you have, and where you will be transporting the reptile or amphibian to.

1. A Blue Mountains water skink has been attacked by a cat. It is alive but does not respond when approached.
2. An eastern dwarf tree frog has been found in the filter of a saltwater pool.
3. A highland copperhead with a laceration has been found in a site undergoing land clearing.

Standard 7: Assessment 2 – Transporting a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 7. This can be completed verbally or as a written assessment.

Learner instructions

Complete the questions below.

1. List the equipment you might need to transport an adult eastern brown snake.

2. What steps need to be taken when transporting a Manning River helmeted turtle with a carapace injury?

3. What steps need to be taken when transporting some unidentified reptile eggs that require incubation?

Standard 8: Assessment of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Equip learners with the skills necessary to assess the health status of a reptile or amphibian.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

8.1 Explain how to conduct an initial assessment of a reptile or amphibian.

8.2 Explain the requirements of a thorough assessment of a reptile or amphibian.

8.3 Emphasise the need to seek prompt advice and assistance for a reptile or amphibian from a coordinator, veterinarian or other relevant person, as appropriate to its condition.

8.4 Distinguish signs of and ways to determine common diseases and injuries affecting reptiles and amphibians.

8.5 Explain how to manage an injured or diseased reptile or amphibian based on the severity of its condition.

8.6 Outline criteria and approved methods for humane euthanasia.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 8, learners will be able to: • conduct an initial assessment of a reptile or amphibian • assess the health status of a reptile or amphibian and recognise stages, symptoms and severity of common diseases and injuries • determine the appropriate course of action for a reptile or amphibian based on its condition • outline the criteria for and approved methods of euthanasia.	5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Rehabilitation care 8. Housing

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Access online: *Initial treatment and care guidelines for rescued reptiles*.
- Initial assessment of a reptile or amphibian could include:
  - distance examination
  - species identification
  - demeanour
  - looking for signs of blood and injury
  - entanglement
  - handling and restraining for assessment
  - signs of stress during handling
  - body weight and body condition
  - eyes, mouth, cloaca

  - external wounds or injury
  - hydration status
  - respiratory rate
  - palpation of limbs
  - carapace, plastron and bridge condition
  - signs of disease.
- Thorough assessment could include:
  - veterinary assessment
  - pain relief, sedation or anaesthesia prescribed by a veterinarian for a thorough physical examination.
  - radiographs, blood tests, faecal examination.
- Advice and assistance could include:
  - relevant species coordinator
  - veterinarian
  - experienced reptile and amphibian rehabilitator.
- Symptoms of common diseases and injuries could include:
  - bleeding
  - lameness
  - splayed limbs
  - swelling, fluid retention
  - demeanour
  - dehydration
  - oral plaques
  - increased respiratory rate, open-mouth breathing
  - fixed, dilated pupils
  - skin lesions
  - odours
  - fishing lines or debris embedded in the scales or around limbs
  - foreign materials extending from the mouth or cloaca
  - cracked carapace
  - reduced keratin on the scutes of the carapace
  - translucency of the plastron.
- Common conditions, injuries and diseases could include:
  - physical trauma such as puncture wounds or fractures
  - entanglements
  - infectious disease (for example, chytridiomycosis)
  - ingestion of debris
  - dehydration

  - hypothermia
  - poor body condition.
- Managing a reptile or amphibian based on the severity of its condition could include:
  - initial stabilisation
  - managing bleeding
  - providing warmth
  - minimising movement
  - veterinary assistance for fluid therapy and medication
  - reducing stress.
- Criteria for euthanasia are provided in Section 5 of the reptile and amphibian code. Further training would be provided by groups on:
  - the role of the species coordinator in euthanasia decisions
  - seeking assistance when making this decision, to ensure rehabilitators can find support and don't have to make this decision in isolation.

Suggested assessments

Standard 8: Assessment 1 – Assessment of a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 8. This assessment tool assesses competency in relation to all criteria in Standard 8. This could also be completed verbally while observing a live native reptile or amphibian.

Learner instructions

In groups of 3 to 5 people, discuss the images on the following pages (Figures 10 to 14) and answer the questions below. Each group will need to present its findings for one image.

1. What signs of injury or disease can you see?
2. What level of severity is it at?
3. What internal issues might you suspect in relation to this injury or disease?
4. What is the likely prognosis for this animal?
5. If you had just rescued this animal, what would be your next steps?

Figure 10 Blue tongue skink with shovel injury

Figure 11 Rescued red-bellied black snake

Figure 11 Carpet python

Figure 12 **Eastern long-necked turtle hit by a lawnmower**

Figure 13 **Red-bellied black snake sloughing skin (Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC)**

Standard 8: Assessment 2 – Assessment of a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

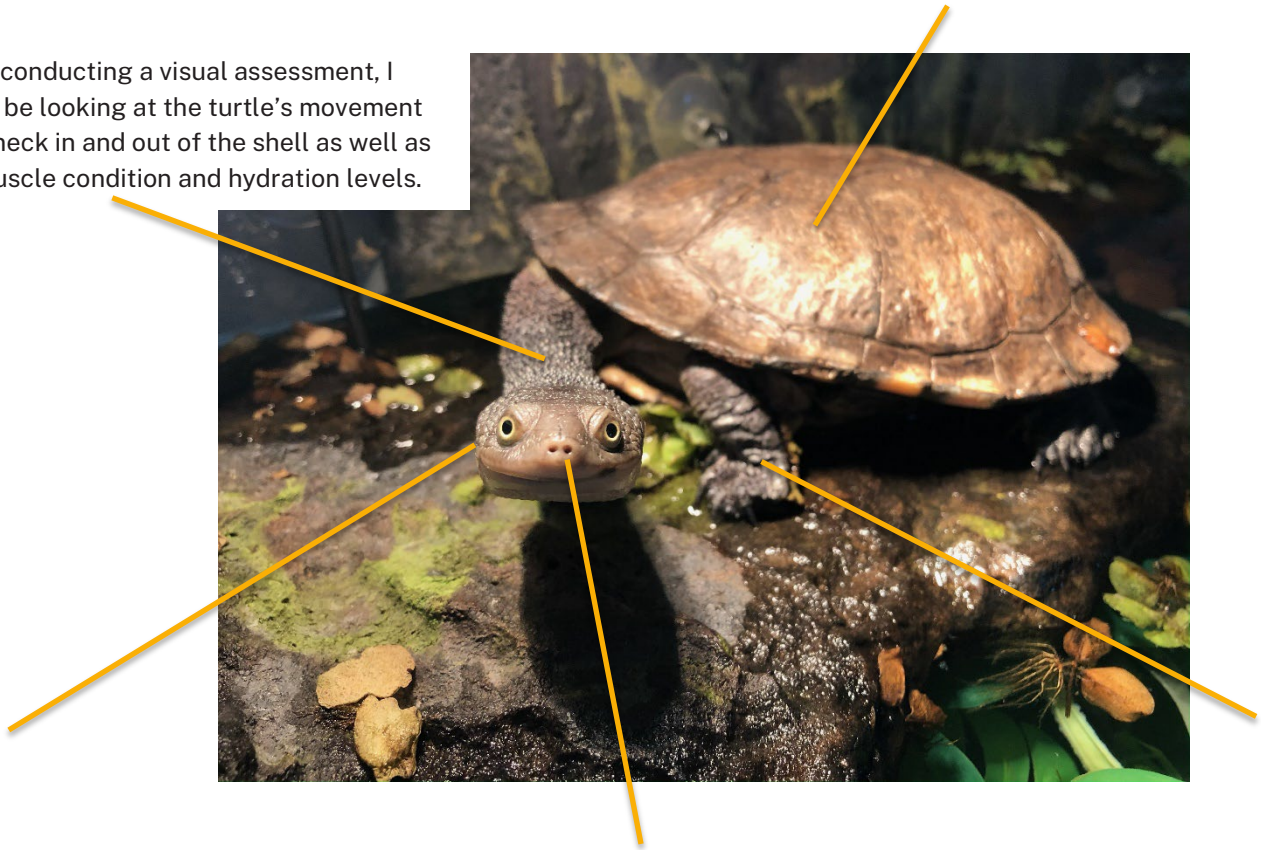
This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 8. This assessment tool assesses competency in relation to all criteria in Standard 8. This could be completed verbally while observing a live native reptile or amphibian.

Learner instructions

Look at the following image of an eastern snake-necked turtle. Identify what each line is pointing to and explain what this might tell you about the reptile or what you may be looking for in this region when conducting a visual assessment. The neck has already been completed as an example.

Neck

When conducting a visual assessment, I would be looking at the turtle's movement of its neck in and out of the shell as well as the muscle condition and hydration levels.



Standard 9: Rehabilitation of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Provide learners with an understanding of the requirements for the rehabilitation of reptiles and amphibians. Equip learners with the skills to provide quality rehabilitative care at the relevant stages of rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

9.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining individual reptiles and amphibians entering rehabilitation.

9.2 Detail the facilities required to safely rehabilitate reptiles and amphibians, relevant to stages of housing (intensive and pre-release).

9.3 Describe appropriate equipment and furniture for each stage of housing (intensive care and pre-release).

9.4 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of rehabilitation.

9.5 Explain how to appropriately provide food and water based on the species-specific dietary requirements and condition of the reptile or amphibian.

9.6 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect reptiles and amphibians.

9.7 Discuss how to monitor a reptile or amphibian based on species, its condition and stage of housing.

9.8 Demonstrate how to complete a rehabilitation care plan.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 9, learners will be able to: • outline the requirements for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation • demonstrate correct set-up for housing reptiles and amphibians • provide food and water appropriate to species and condition of a reptile or amphibian • monitor a reptile or amphibian undergoing rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation • complete a rehabilitation care plan for a reptile or amphibian.	2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Rehabilitation care 8. Housing

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Access online: *Initial treatment and care guidelines for rescued reptiles*.
- Importance of and process for quarantining reptiles and amphibians could include:
  - principles of quarantine
  - monitoring for signs of infectious diseases

  - disease transmission between animals.
- Facilities to safely rehabilitate a reptile or amphibian undergoing intensive care could include:
  - sufficient room to stretch out and turn around
  - mitigating stress (noise, visual barriers)
  - mimicking the natural environment where possible
  - privacy
  - thermal control
  - natural light–dark cycles
  - access for capture if required
  - measures for reptile egg incubation.
- Facilities to safely rehabilitate a reptile or amphibian undergoing pre-release care could include:
  - sufficient room to demonstrate natural behaviours
  - exposure to prevailing weather conditions
  - conditions to encourage natural behaviours
  - reduced exposure to humans
  - recognising signs of humanisation.
- Appropriate equipment and furniture could include:
  - thermostat, thermometer
  - substrate
  - predator-proof enclosures
  - hides and shelters
  - visual barriers
  - submerged feeding structures
  - egg incubator.
- Access to water and appropriate food could include:
  - water containers of appropriate sizes for drinking and bathing
  - measures for species requiring lower humidity
  - species-specific diet
  - frequency and volume of feeds
  - supplementary feeding
  - feeding techniques
  - storage of food
  - visual barriers when feeding.
- Monitoring a reptile or amphibian could include:
  - progression of disease or injury
  - frequency (too much or too little monitoring)

  - weight
  - body scores
  - behaviour
  - eye position
  - indications of activity
  - eating patterns and food intake
  - faecal output
  - aggression or dominance behaviours for reptiles in same enclosure
  - removal of young for adult reptiles incubating eggs or gravid females (excluding Cunningham's skink) in care.
- A rehabilitation care plan could include:
  - consultation with vets
  - medications
  - consultation with coordinators and mentors
  - enrichment
  - timeline for release
  - release site selection.
- Disease control and hygiene practices could include:
  - washing hands thoroughly and between animals
  - wearing powder-free nitrile or latex gloves for all amphibians
  - changing gloves between each animal
  - quarantining animals
  - removing faeces as soon as observed
  - removing uneaten food stuffs
  - cleaning and replacing the enclosure substrate regularly
  - water changes in pools
  - clean food preparation area
  - disinfection of all equipment between each reptile and amphibian.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to written or verbal assessment methods, practical assessment or a combination of these.

Standard 9: Assessment 1 – Housing a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 9.

Learner instructions

Complete this activity in groups. Using one of the case studies below and the available equipment, set up housing appropriate for your reptile or amphibian. Upon completion of the set-up, each group will be asked to:

- explain its housing set-up
- outline what hygiene and disease control procedures it would implement
- explain how its housing set-up enables it to monitor the reptile or amphibian and what it would be monitoring the animal for.

Case study 1:

- A juvenile bearded dragon has been in care for 3 months and is being prepared for release.

Case study 2:

- A green tree frog has been rescued; it is thin and listless. You have another 2 green tree frogs just rescued in the past week from neighbouring suburbs.

Case study 3:

- After a cold snap, 3 post-hatchling copper-tailed skinks are found not too far from their nest. They are alive but barely moving.

Case Study 4:

- A coastal carpet python has been attacked by a cat. It has been assessed by a veterinarian who prescribed antibiotics and pain relief. The python has good body condition, 4 puncture wounds and is behaving normally.

Standard 9: Assessment 2 – Rehabilitate reptiles and amphibians

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 9.

Learner instructions

Complete the following quiz by selecting the correct answer for the multiple choice questions or completing the question.

1. Which of the following scenarios would require a reptile to be housed in intensive care?
    A. A Rosenberg's monitor recovering from a motor vehicle injury with limited movement in its back left limb
    B. An eastern long-necked turtle that is recovering from a crack in its carapace and is now self-feeding and able to walk
    C. A bleating tree frog being fitness tested for release
    D. None of the above.

Answer: A.

2. An eastern brown snake in intensive care is prone to stress. Which statement below best reflects the correct action to minimise stress?
    A. Monitoring at a separate time to providing treatment to ensure frequent but short timeframes for handling
    B. Keeping one part of the enclosure uncovered so the animal will not be surprised when you approach to treat it
    C. Using a large enclosure with lots of areas for the animal to hide so it feels safe
    D. Monitoring at the same time as handling for treatment to reduce the disturbance

Answer. D. Limiting the disturbance by monitoring when treating the animal.

3. An injured carpet python (Figure 15) was brought into care while incubating eggs. Describe the monitoring required for both the adult python and the eggs.

Figure 14 **Injured diamond python incubating eggs (Photo: Sam Chatfield/Wildlife ARC)**

4. Which design feature is not helpful for a reptile in intensive care housing with bandaging?
    A. Uninhibited access to water
    B. Thermal control

C. Soft, absorbent, non-slip substrate that can be easily cleaned and replaced
D. Keeping the enclosure at an ambient temperature appropriate for the species

Answer: A. Limit access to water for reptiles with bandages to prevent the bandages getting wet.

5. Look at the photo (Figure 16) of a pre-release enclosure for a bearded dragon. List 5 features that comply with the reptile and amphibian code.

Figure 15 Pre-release enclosure bearded dragon (Photo: Margaret Woods/Sydney Wildlife Rescue)

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

6. Which elements must be provided in pre-release housing for a Macquarie River turtle?
    A. A shelter that facilitates natural hiding behaviours
    B. A place to bask
    C. Swimming opportunities with sufficient depth for diving
    D. All of the above

Answer: D. All of the above

7. Which of the following statements demonstrate good practice in hygiene and disease control?
    A. Quarantining new reptiles or amphibians in a separate enclosure
    B. Cleaning and disinfecting weighing equipment between each reptile or amphibian
    C. Refreezing any thawed or uneaten food
    D. Ensuring the residue from disinfectants is thoroughly rinsed off amphibian enclosures

Answer: A, B and D.

8. Each individual reptile or amphibian must have a rehabilitation care plan.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: True.

9. List 2 examples of housing design features to protect a reptile or amphibian from harm, and why they are needed.

Housing features	Why they are needed

Standard 10: Release of reptiles and amphibians

Objective

Ensure learners understand suitability for release and criteria for releasing reptiles and amphibians.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

10.1 Discuss release considerations for reptiles and amphibians, including timing and site selection.

10.2 Explain how to determine a reptile or amphibian's suitability for release.

10.3 Detail the correct techniques and equipment for releasing reptiles and amphibians.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the code
Upon completion of Standard 10, learners will be able to: • assess a reptile or amphibian for release suitability • competently release a reptile or amphibian.	9. Suitability for release 10. Release considerations

Training areas

- Access the reptile and amphibian code online: *Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians*.
- Release considerations could include:
  - timing including time of day and time of year
  - weather conditions
  - developmental stage
  - whether a female is gravid
  - time of last shed cycle
  - time of last feed
  - release site selection
  - presence of the public.
- Suitability for release could include:
  - physical fitness
  - developmental stage
  - behaviour
  - body condition
  - acclimatisation to prevailing climate conditions
  - when consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service and a veterinarian experienced in reptile or amphibian species is required.
- Appropriate methods and equipment could include:
  - not releasing large numbers of individuals at a single location

- holding the front and back of the carapace of a large freshwater turtle and gently lowering it onto the ground or into the water
- releasing a social species near its family group (Cunningham's skink)
- releasing a venomous snake out of view of the public and away from playgrounds and high human occupation areas
- venomous snakes must only be released by wildlife rehabilitators who have undertaken a venomous snake handling course and are carrying a first aid kit including a snake bite compression bandage
- tagging, microchipping
- post-release monitoring.

Suggested assessments

This standard would be best suited to written or verbal assessment methods, practical assessment or a combination of these.

Standard 10: Assessment 1 – Releasing a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 10. This can be completed verbally or in writing.

Learner instructions

Read each of the rescue case studies below and complete the corresponding questions.

Case study 1:

An adult tiger snake was rescued from a suburban back yard with a deep cut on her body which required stitches. She has completed veterinary treatment and is now in a pre-release enclosure.

1. Explain how you will release the snake.

2. What are the release considerations for this snake?

3. Where will you release the snake?

4. How will you minimise work health and safety risks associated with the release site?

Case study 2:

In early June, a bearded dragon was brought into a veterinary surgeon after being attacked by a dog. The exact address where the dragon was found is not known as only the general location was passed on by the member of the public who brought it in. Following rehabilitation, the dragon is now ready for release.

1. Explain the criteria for assessing release suitability for this bearded dragon.

2. What are the release considerations for the bearded dragon?

3. Where will you release the bearded dragon?

4. Explain how you will release the bearded dragon.

5. How will you minimise work health and safety risks associated with the release site?

Case study 3:

A post-hatchling snake-necked turtle was taken in by a member of the public during a flash flood event. After being held by the member of the public for 2 days as the weather cleared, the turtle was handed to a licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation for care. Following rehabilitation, the turtle is now ready for release.

1. Explain the criteria for assessing release suitability for this post-hatchling.

2. What are the release considerations for the post-hatchling?

3. Where will you release the post-hatchling?

4. Explain how you will release the post-hatchling.

5. How will you minimise work health and safety risks associated with the release site?

Standard 11: Assessment 2 – Releasing a reptile or amphibian

Trainer/Assessor instructions

This is an example of the type of assessment tool that could be used to assess competency in relation to Standard 11.

Learner instructions

Complete the following multiple choice quiz by selecting the correct answer for each question.

1. How many mature male eastern water dragons can be released per site per year?
    A. Three
    B. Two
    C. One
    D. There is no limit

Answer: C

2. Juvenile reptiles from the same clutch can be released together.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: A. True

3. Which of the following statements indicates that a reptile or amphibian is **not** behaviourally ready to be released?
    A. It can recognise, catch and consume appropriate, naturally available food.
    B. It can recognise and avoid predators, including pets.
    C. It is attracted to sights, sounds and smells that are specific to captivity.
    D. It can navigate effectively through its natural environment.

Answer: C. If a reptile or amphibian has imprinted or is habituated to captivity, it is not fit to release.

4. If a rescued eastern brown snake was found in a suburban garage, it needs to be released back to:
    A. The garage it was rescued from.
    B. The nearest national park in the next suburb.
    C. A suitable environment as close to the backyard as possible.
    D. It cannot be released as the environment is unsuitable.

Answer: C. A suitable environment as close to the backyard as possible and no further than 2 km.

5. Wildlife rehabilitators should undertake nationally accredited microchip training before microchipping a reptile or amphibian.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: True. Wildlife rehabilitators should undertake a nationally accredited microchip training, such as an RSCPA training course, before microchipping a reptile or amphibian.

6. Which of the following is not an option for an un-releasable Cunningham's skink?
    A. Keeping it as a pet
    B. Applying to the department to have it placed in permanent care
    C. Euthanasia
    D. Notifying the department to arrange placement with an authorised animal exhibitor licensed by NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Answer: A. Keeping it as a pet.

7. If there is no information about where the reptile or amphibian was found, it can be released anywhere as long as there is suitable habitat and food sources.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: False. If there is no information about where the reptile or amphibian was found, it must not be released.

8. A reptile or amphibian can be released in a national park without written consent from the relevant National Parks and Wildlife Service area manager if it was originally encountered in the park.
    A. True
    B. False

Answer: False. Written consent must be provided by the relevant National Parks and Wildlife Service Area Manager for a reptile or amphibian to be released in the park.

9. Amphibians that have tested positive for chytridiomycosis (chytrid fungus disease) can be released when they have completed treatment.
    A. True

B. False

Answer: False. Amphibians that have tested positive for chytridiomycosis (chytrid fungus disease) must not be released unless they have completed treatment and returned 3 negative PCR tests at least a week apart starting the week after the last treatment.

10. A bucket with lots of tadpoles has been handed in to the rehabilitation group; they have been looked after by a local family for a few weeks. The rescue group has identified them as Peron's tree frogs. What are the release considerations for the tadpoles?
    A. Take them to the local creek for release
    B. Euthanase them all as tadpoles cannot be rehabilitated and released
    C. Contact National Parks and Wildlife Service immediately to confirm species ID and next steps
    D. Give them to a person who already keeps amphibians as pets as they cannot be released.

Answer: B: Tadpoles cannot be rescued, rehabilitated and released.

Further information

- Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
- Code of practice for injured and sick reptiles and amphibians
- Data reporting instructions for the volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector (PDF, 694KB)
- Initial treatment and care guidelines for rescued reptiles
- Malcolm Knowles: informal adult education, self-direction and andragogy
- NSW wildlife rehabilitation dashboard
- Best ice breakers for meetings and training classes
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- VARK modalities
- Wildlife rehabilitation reporting
- Data reporting instructions for the volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector 2024

Appendix A: Training and assessment mapping tool

The table below is a tool you can use to determine if there are any gaps in your training. You can map your existing training materials to the standards to see if there are any parts of a standard you have omitted or may need to add further information to. For the learning outcomes, you can match these to an assessment instrument so you can see exactly where you are determining competency of your learner against each outcome. You can change or include additional training or assessment tools if the ones listed do not match what is provided in your training.

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
Standard 1: The framework for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation in New South Wales								
1.1 Discuss the Reptile and amphibian code.				Identify and demonstrate understanding of the Reptile and amphibian code.				
1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.				Identify organisational policies and procedures for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
1.3 Ensure objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation are understood by learners.				Recognise the objectives of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				
Standard 2: Work, health and safety (WHS) requirements of reptile and amphibian rehabilitation								
2.1 Explain the work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the site, equipment or activity and how they can be minimised.				Identify WHS risks associated with reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				
2.2 Explain the WHS risks associated with approaching, handling and restraining reptiles and amphibians and how they can be minimised.				Employ techniques to minimise the WHS risks to themselves and other people.				
2.3 Discuss the WHS risks associated with zoonotic diseases relevant to reptiles and amphibians and how they can be minimised.				–				
2.4 Discuss rehabilitator wellbeing and the				–				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
potential mental health impacts of wildlife rehabilitation.								
Standard 3: Record keeping								
3.1 Explain the National Parks and Wildlife Service reporting requirements.				Keep records in accordance with both National Parks and Wildlife Service and organisational requirements.				
3.2 Explain organisational reporting requirements.				–				
Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of reptiles and amphibians								
4.1 Explain features of reptile and amphibian biology including anatomy, physiology, social structure, stages of development, and habitat, and relate them to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				Relate reptile and amphibian biology, ecology and behaviour to their rehabilitation.				
4.2 Provide a basic understanding of reptile and amphibian ecology including population dynamics,				–				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
habitat selection, migratory behaviour, competition and predator–prey interactions.								
4.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify different species of reptiles and amphibians recorded in NSW.				Understand how to use the different tools to identify different species of reptiles and amphibians.				
4.4 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify normal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.				Recognise signs of normal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.				
4.5 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.				Recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in reptiles and amphibians.				
Standard 5: Rescue of reptiles and amphibians								
5.1 Explain the effects of stress on a reptile or amphibian at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.				Recognise signs of stress in reptiles and amphibians and its impact.				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
5.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of stress in a reptile or amphibian.				–				
5.3 Discuss methods for minimising stress to a reptile or amphibian at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.				Apply methods for minimising stress to a reptile or amphibian.				
Standard 6: Rescue of reptiles and amphibians								
6.1 Outline common reasons for reptile and amphibian rescue.				List the common reasons why reptiles and amphibians require rescue.				
6.2 Detail how to perform a situational assessment, including the use of the decision tree in the Reptile and amphibian code, to establish the appropriate course of action.				Assess a rescue situation and plan the rescue of a reptile or amphibian.				
6.3 Detail the correct method and equipment required to capture, handle and rescue a reptile or amphibian, as				Safely rescue a reptile or amphibian using correct equipment.				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
suitable to common rescue situations, conditions and stages of development.								
6.4 Detail how to rescue a reptile or amphibian to humanely minimise pain, stress and potential injury.				Determine the type of intervention required at a rescue site.				
Standard 7: Transport of reptiles and amphibians								
7.1 Demonstrate how to appropriately contain a reptile or amphibian for transport based on different sizes, stages of development and conditions.				Prepare a carrier for transport.				
7.2 Outline how to secure the transport container to prevent escape and further injury.				Outline the transport conditions required to safely transport a reptile or amphibian.				
7.3 Detail suitable transport conditions, including ambient temperature, to safely transport a reptile or amphibian.				–				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
7.4 Discuss the most suitable person or location that a reptile or amphibian should be transported to, based on different stages of development, animal condition and organisational policies.				Understand the appropriate person or location to transport a reptile or amphibian to, based on different stages of development, animal condition and organisational policies.				
Standard 8: Assessment of reptiles and amphibians								
8.1 Explain how to conduct an initial assessment of a reptile or amphibian.				Conduct an initial assessment of a reptile or amphibian.				
8.2 Explain the requirements of a thorough physical assessment of a reptile or amphibian.				Assess the health status of a reptile or amphibian and recognise stages, symptoms and severity of common diseases and injuries.				
8.3 Emphasise the need to seek prompt advice and assistance for a reptile or amphibian from a coordinator, veterinarian or other relevant person, as				Determine the appropriate course of action for a reptile or amphibian based on its condition.				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
appropriate to its condition.								
8.4 Distinguish signs of and ways to determine common diseases and injuries affecting reptiles and amphibians.				–				
8.5 Explain how to manage an injured or diseased reptile or amphibian based on the severity of its condition.				–				
8.6 Outline criteria and approved methods for humane euthanasia.				Outline criteria for and approved methods of euthanasia.				
Standard 9: Rehabilitation of reptiles and amphibians								
9.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining individual reptiles and amphibians entering rehabilitation.				Outline the requirements for reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				
9.2 Detail the facilities required to safely rehabilitate reptiles and				Demonstrate correct set-up for housing reptiles and amphibians.				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
amphibians relevant to stages of housing (intensive care and pre-release).								
9.3 Describe appropriate equipment and furniture for each stage of housing (intensive care and pre-release).				–				
9.4 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of rehabilitation.				Apply hygiene and disease control processes to reptile and amphibian rehabilitation.				
9.5 Explain how to appropriately provide food and water based on the species-specific dietary requirements and condition of the reptile or amphibian.				Provide food and water appropriate to the species and condition of a reptile or amphibian.				
9.6 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect reptiles and amphibians				–				
9.7 Discuss how to monitor a reptile or amphibian based on				Monitor a reptile or amphibian				

Standard	Training tools			Learning outcomes	Assessment tools			
	PowerPoint slides	Pages in manual	Other resources		Multiple choice or short answer questions	Demonstration (real or scenario-based)	Verbal questioning and answering	Assessor checklist
species, its condition and stage of housing.				undergoing rehabilitation.				
9.8 Demonstrate how to complete a rehabilitation care plan.				Complete a rehabilitation care plan for a reptile or amphibian.				
Standard 10: Release of reptiles and amphibians								
10.1 Discuss release considerations for reptiles and amphibians including timing and site selection.				Assess a reptile or amphibian for release suitability.				
10.2 Explain how to determine a reptile or amphibian's suitability for release.				Competently release a reptile or amphibian.				
10.3 Detail the correct techniques and equipment for releasing reptiles and amphibians.				–				