

Service Animal Policy and Procedures

Individuals who are visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically disabled visit the zoo and are sometimes also accompanied by a service animal. Though these animals are very well trained, they can represent a potential hazard to portions of the animal collection, which may perceive them as potential predators. This is particularly true in the Wisconsin Trail, Northern Trail and Children's Zoo where hoofed animals are exhibited. They are prey species, which have evolved keen senses to detect danger at a distance. They survive by running away from perceived danger. For some, the sight of a dog, even at a distance, is enough to cause a fearful reaction.

Also service animals should not come in direct contact with zoo animals, to guard against the potential for disease transmission.

The NEW Zoo & Adventure Park strikes a good and reasonable balance between safeguarding the health and well-being of the zoo resident animals, and respecting the needs and feelings of visitors that utilize service animals.

Providing safe, reasonable and comfortable accommodations for service animals and personal assistance to their owners is the best solution.

The following procedure is recommended when a group or individual enters the zoo with a service animal:

1. A Visitor Center Staff person will greet the individual or group with a service animal. The staff member will then provide the individual with a copy of our Service Animal Policy and Procedures. The staff member will explain the policy.
2. The staff member will then communicate the Zoo's reasonable alternative plan(s).
 - a. Provide a staff member for assistance to the individual in lieu of the service animal entering the zoo.
 - b. Provide an animal care staff member to accompany the individual and the service animal while visiting the zoo. The animal care staff member will accompany the individual and service animal to assess the zoo resident animal collection's response during the visit. Understanding that based on the reaction to the service animal's presence in the zoo, there may be areas of the zoo that the individual and the service animal may not visit based on the adverse reaction of the resident animal collection observed by the animal care staff member.
 - c. Service animals are required to be leashed with a six-foot leash maximum.
 - d. If any service animal presents any clinical symptoms of disease, such as coughing, ocular or nasal discharge, vomiting or diarrhea, it will be restricted from the premises.
 - e. Service animal's behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others will be excluded from visiting the zoo. For example, any service animal that displays vicious behavior towards other guests or customers may be excluded.
3. If the individual or group does not accept the reasonable alternative plan(s), the individual or group will not be able to visit the zoo with the service animal.