

Animal Contact

How do keepers work safely around animals whilst ensuring public safety?

Animal Care

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the session:

- ✓ All students will understand the different animal categories and reasons for these.
- ✓ Most students will understand the variety of methods used to ensure the safety of keepers, animals and the public.
- ✓ Some students will understand specific techniques used when providing care for animals that have no human contact.

Session Outline:

The session starts with an introduction of the animal categories A through F according to the level of safety, contact and experience required to work with the animal. This is followed by the requirements for public safety with meeting category F animals and handling species, but also with limited contact species. We then delve into public safety around non contact animals whilst incorporating different means of allowing the public access to view them. The issue of keeper safety is discussed which includes several aspects such as enclosure design, risk assessments and disease control using our elephants and their enclosure as an example. How keepers can manage non-contact animals is then addressed – through the use of training and crush cages. Finally, disease prevention is looked at in more detail covering health screening, vaccinations and bio-security. The talk is then summarised by looking at the pros and cons of animal contact in zoos. The second half of the session will involve a tour where the students will be able to witness some of the concepts mentioned in real-world scenarios and have the opportunity to ask questions to qualified keepers.



Key Points Covered:

- Contact vs non-contact animals
- Safety lines
- Safety gaps and cross bars
- Stand-off barriers
- Public health and safety
- Crush cages