

REOPENING A ZOO OR AQUARIUM AFTER LOCKDOWN

Good practice guidance, 28 April 2020

The aim of this document is to assist Members and Candidates in the reopening of their institutions after the coronavirus lockdown. It serves for information only and does not serve as legal advice.

It was compiled by the EAZA Executive Office in consultation with representatives of 21 countries in the EAZA National Associations Committee.



1. Compliance with local regulations and advice

In any case, a zoo (a 'zoo' in this document refers to all types of EAZA zoological institutions) should only reopen when it is safe to do so.

You should follow all regulations and government advice concerning health, safety, distancing, business operations, events etc.

It is advisable to align the restrictions within the zoo with restrictions that apply in the surrounding municipality/region.

If you are a member of a national zoo association, please check whether the association has further guidance or reopening protocols that are adapted to your country's regulations.

2. Date of reopening

Please consider:

- reopening on a weekday rather than a weekend, to limit the pressure on staff and allow time to test the safety measures and fine-tune them;
- coordinating the date of reopening among zoos in your country or region, in order to maximize everyone's safety and ensure fair access to all institutions.

3. Visitors' responsibility

Please consider:

- reminding your visitors (at the entrance, on social media etc.) that it is their responsibility to follow the official national or local regulations and advice related to coronavirus;
- informing the public (on your website, social media, entrance) about the full measures and rules you have in place at your institution.

4. Limiting visitor numbers

Please consider:

- limiting the maximum number of visitors per day, according to the official restrictions and to the size of the zoo (existing examples: a maximum of 150 guests per hectare; minimum of 10 square meters per guest);
- introducing e-ticketing for specific timeslots instead of ticket sales at physical ticket counters;
- informing potential visitors in advance about the limit and about the number of visitors currently in the zoo (e.g. by posting hourly updates on your Facebook page or directing your webcam to a counter) to prevent all unnecessary travel and queuing;
- preventing queues in front of the zoo, where you do not have the right to intervene;
- in countries with travel restrictions, consider limiting access to visitors only from your region/state/province.

5. Social distancing between visitors and between staff and visitors

Please consider:

- not reopening the sections where keeping a safe distance would not be possible (restaurants, children playground, animal houses or their sections with tight visitor flow, animal demonstration grounds, keeper talks, gift shops);
- clearly marking spaces on the ground to indicate safe distance where queues might form e.g. food access, bathroom access, tight flow areas in the park;
- blocking out seats or rows of seats to give visitors further guidance in how to keep distance correctly;
- separating essential animal care staff from other staff and visitors;
- making sure that the rules are clearly communicated, that you can enforce them, and that you have the right to intervene if the rules are not complied with.

6. Health precautions

In coronavirus regions in which other SARS virus outbreaks have occurred in the past (Asia), Members have found temperature checking of visitors at entrance is beneficial. They also carry out body temperature checks of staff.

7. Strengthened hygiene

Please consider:

- additional cleaning and disinfecting of all facilities, especially elements that are touched frequently;
- additional opportunities to wash hands;
- promoting cashless and contactless payments;
- educating your visitors about best practice in prevention (hygiene of the hands, coughing into the elbow, social distancing);
- if wearing of masks is officially required or recommended in your country: consider promoting a culture of wearing masks, in a way that doesn't limit their availability to healthcare personnel.

8. Zoonotic spreading of the virus

Please consider applying social distancing between humans and animals in the same way as between humans. Please continue to follow EAZA/EAZVW guidance on human-animal transmission of the virus.

9. Public relations and media relations

Many Members are asked by the media about the date and conditions of reopening. Please consider preparing clear arguments to explain why you are / are not reopening, especially if the reopening date is not the same for all zoos in your country or region. We would encourage you to coordinate this within your National Association where applicable.