

Information for Petting Zoo, Farm Visits and Animal Attraction Special Event Operators

Getting Started

This information is intended for operators of permanent (e.g., farms) and temporary (e.g., travelling petting zoos) animal attractions. These attractions must be operated and maintained in a safe manner to protect visitors from injury and illness. Animals can carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans and resulting in serious illness. Infants, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with weak immune systems are more likely to contract a severe infection if exposed to an animal with a communicable disease. Animals may also cause injuries due to bites and scratches.

Post Signs

Post signs at entrances, exits and eating areas that remind visitors of the risks associated with animal contact as well as sensible precautions they can take to reduce the health risks. See Additional Material sample signs below.

Hand Washing Stations

There should always be at least one handwashing station situated at the exit of the animal area with running water, soap, and single-use paper towels available at all times. The hand washing station should be easily accessible for children to use. Larger events will require more hand washing stations (refer to calculation below). If there are no permanent sinks or they are not near the animal and eating area, temporary sinks recommended to be set up for the public.

To work out the number of hand wash stations you need, estimate the number of visitors per hour that leave the facility at the busiest time. It takes about 1 minute to wash and dry hands. The following formula can be used to determine the number of hand wash stations that should be available:

of visitors in one hour ____ x 1 min ÷ 60 = _____

Example: Approximately 120 people leave the animal area in 1 hour. $120 \times 1 \div 60 = 2$ hand wash stations should be made available.

Animals

- Dangerous animals* should be prohibited from direct contact with patrons.
- Communicable disease risks due to bites or highly contagious diseases during birth of animals should be carefully considered as the degree of contact with animals is allowed;

*Dangerous animals include primates (e.g., monkeys and apes) and certain carnivores (e.g., lions, tigers, ocelots, wolves and wolf hybrids, and bears).

Garbage, Feed and Waste

- Ensure that regular animal feed and water are not accessible to the public.
- Remove manure and soiled animal bedding from the animal area right away. Store animal waste and the tools used to remove the waste in an area that the public can't access.
- Discharge liquid waste in a sanitary sewer or store it in an enclosed wastewater holding tank. Liquid waste holding tanks and garbage cans should be emptied as often as needed.

Demonstrations

- **Do not serve** unpasteurized products (such as milk, cheese, and juice) or other processed foods from unapproved facilities to the public.
- Make sure that visitors wash their hands if they are involved with hands-on demonstrations.

Surface Cleaning and Disinfection

- Ensure that soap solutions and sanitizer solutions are always available. Information on sanitizer solutions is available at the link below. Consult your local public health inspector for any further questions about cleaning and sanitizing.

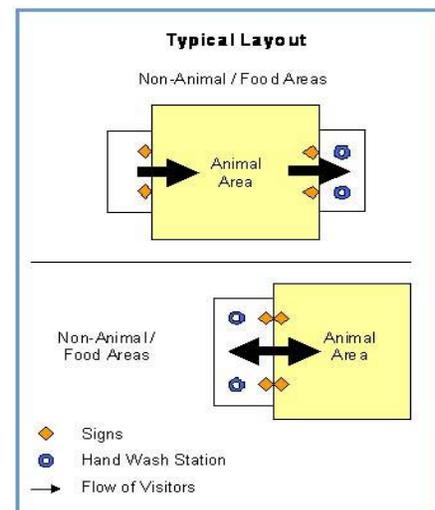
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-how-mix-an-approved-sanitizing-solution.pdf>

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- High touch areas in public spaces (i.e., spigots on hand wash station water jugs, door knobs and handles accessing the animal areas, guard rails inside pens, etc.) should be cleaned and sanitized regularly—daily if possible. Equipment or surfaces contaminated.
- with manure should first be cleaned by removing any visible contamination with a wet, clean cloth and then sanitized.
- If safety equipment is required (e.g., helmet for riding horses):
 - check the equipment regularly to ensure it remains in good condition, and
 - clean and sanitize the equipment between use.

Suggested Site Layout

- Ensure appropriate barriers are set up. The animal, non-animal, food handling, and transition areas should be clearly laid out.
- Set up should decrease health risks associated with animal contact and animal manure.
- The layout should encourage hand washing by making stations easy to see and get to.
- Ensure signs are posted in prominent areas.
- If indoors, the flooring should be durable, smooth, and easily cleanable (e.g., a tarp).
- There should be a pen for animals that may not be on display.
- The site should be in place that won't allow run-off from animal waste to contaminate water pathways or groundwater. The location should be appropriate and not be a nuisance to nearby attractions.



Incident Reporting

- If an animal at the facility injures a patron:
 - Advise the injured patron to see a physician or call Health Link Alberta (811) as needed
 - Note the date, time and circumstances along with the animal(s) vaccination status.
 - Contact your local AHS Environmental Public Health office by [submitting a request online](#).
- Ensure signs are posted that advise patrons to report any diarrhea or vomiting illness within the two weeks of the visit to the local AHS Environmental Public Health Office.

Additional Material

- [Temporary Handwashing Stations](#)
- [Handwashing Poster for Animal Areas](#)
- [Handwashing Poster for Kids Visiting Animal Areas](#).

References:

- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians Animal Contact Compendium Committee 2013. Compendium of measures to prevent disease associated with animals in public settings, 2013.
- J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2013;243:1270-88. Available at: <http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/AnimalContactCompendium2013.pdf>
- BC Centre for Disease Control
- Manitoba- Health Protection Unit

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at ahs.ca/eph.

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