

Industry COVID Safe Plan – Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA)

This Industry COVID-SAFE Plan has been developed in consultation with the Australian zoos and aquariums, Australian health advisors and global zoo and aquarium regional associations.

ZAA recognises there are a variety of zoo and aquarium businesses in Queensland and as such, these guidelines include essential health measures relevant to this State as well as additional guidance for your operation during this period of re-opening. Some suggestions may not be applicable for all businesses and these guidelines are also subject to change.

If an event is to occur at a zoo, aquarium, wildlife or reptile park that is outside the scope of this Industry COVID-SAFE Plan, the event must be operated under a site specific plan or checklist as required under the Industry Framework for Safe Events in Queensland. Further information about this Event Framework may be found at <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses>

This Plan is subject to all regulations, guidelines and directions of government and public health authorities and will be updated in accordance with any changes to public health directions.

This Industry COVID-SAFE Plan will be distributed directly to QLD Zoo and Aquarium members and made available on the ZAA website for industry and public reference. <https://www.zooaquarium.org.au> .

Visitation Volumes

Zoos and aquariums to open to visitors without patron restriction providing there is alignment to the government mandated requirements for social distancing, initially set as 1 person per 4m² of usable space that is accessible to the public, and the essential health measures as listed below can be maintained.

For smaller venues below 200 square metres, businesses can have one person per 2m² up to 50 persons at a time.

Essential health measures^{1 2}

- Zoos, aquariums and wildlife and reptile parks in Qld to develop a business specific site **COVID WHS management plan** that covers all aspects of operations including:
 - Infection prevention and control policies and procedures;
 - Safe systems of work, how workers and their HSRs will be consulted;

¹ <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/covid-19-restrictions/easing>

² <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/workplace-risk-management-b/preventing-the-spread-of-infection-at-work>

- Processes to monitor and update your plan as public health information changes, as per www.covid19.qld.gov.au and <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status>
- Site plans should include communication, consultation, instruction, training and supervision of workers and their representatives (e.g. HSRs, union representatives), as per pages 1 - 3 of OIR COVID Guide: https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/191678/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf
- Site plans should include the risk management framework as outlined in pg. 2 of the OIR COVID Guide under 'Duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011'.
- Site plan to include details of record keeping of the risk management process. The detail and extent of recording will depend on the size of workplace. It is useful to keep information on:
 - the identified hazards, assessed risks and chosen control measures (including any hazard checklists, worksheets and assessment tools used in working through the risk management process)
 - how and when the control measures were implemented, monitored and reviewed
 - who you consulted with
 - relevant training records
 - any plans for changes
- WHS risk management processes will need to be revisited regularly to identify and manage any new or changed hazards that may have arisen as a result of the Industry COVID Safe Plan
- Appendix A provides a Checklist COVID-Safety Plans for zoos, reptile parks and aquariums in QLD
- Maintain strict **physical distancing** by
 - Refer to SafeWork Australia physical distancing guidelines. <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/physical?tab=tab-toc-employer>
 - restricting visitor numbers to allow a minimum of 4 square metres of space for social distancing, or in the instance of a smaller venue below 200 square metres, one person per 2 square metres up to 50 persons at a time.
 - monitoring visitor behaviour to ensure compliance with government distancing requirements between individuals or family units.
- Have a **regular and thorough cleaning** schedule in place, paying extra attention to high contact areas (door handles, counters, railings, locks, taps, food prep areas etc.) Ensure adequate cleaning supplies are available.
- Hand hygiene is to be encouraged. Ensure **hand sanitiser and hand washing** facilities are readily available and maintained around the site for visitors and staff. Promote good hygiene practices to visitors and ensure they are followed by staff. Respiratory hygiene to also be encouraged if possible. More detail on hygiene requirements in Appendix A. Communication materials are available [here](#).

- Clearly **communicate expectations** around physical distancing requirements, hand hygiene, cough/sneeze behaviour and staying home if someone (visitor or staff) is unwell. Communication materials are available [here](#). Consider if you need to display these in different languages.
- Ensure cafes and restaurants on site follow current government health restrictions.
If a worker or visitor is suspected to have COVID-19, follow procedure for ‘suspected cases on-site’

Suggested health measures

Managing people and space

- Physical distancing is to be maintained by all staff, zoo/aquarium volunteers, participants and visitors
- Consider selling tickets online and having zoo/aquarium members book online to pre-plan and manage visitor numbers each day and avoid queuing at ticket sale counters.
- Sell tickets for specific time slots and ask visitors (when confirming booking) to wait in their cars until their timeslot or arrange their public transport so they are not too early.
- Use floor markings, clear signage and other systems to help linear flow of visitors and staff and for visitors to maintain appropriate distancing anywhere people may linger or queue (zoo store, toilets, in front of animal exhibits etc.). Signage materials are available here:
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>
- Refer to your relevant health authority’s advice on kids’ playgrounds, play equipment and other tactile learning equipment (i.e. interactive interp) – to reduce risk, you may decide to keep them closed during initial stages of reopening.
- Do not run activities such as keeper talks and guided tours unless they can comply with physical distancing requirements.
- Consider whether indoor venues (nocturnal houses, reptile houses etc.) can operate within the physical distancing requirements of 4m² rule, or for venues below 200 square metres, one person per 2m² up to 50 persons at a time. If not, keep these types of locations closed to visitors.
- Consider using a one-way system where path or corridor space doesn’t allow visitors to pass each other with 1.5m distance.
- Consider maintaining split shifts for staff teams and reducing use of communal kitchens or lunch- rooms where possible, implementing cleaning procedures for staff common spaces between shifts eg sanitising surfaces etc.

Animal visitor interactions

Where possible, aim to practice the same physical distancing protocols between people and animals as currently recommended among humans. Carefully evaluate all visitor animal interactions to assess whether physical distancing can be complied with. Other than the direct transfer of an animal to visitors for interactions, operators must where possible maintain 1.5 meters from visitors to ensure social distancing guidelines.

Contact tracing

- Encourage staff and visitors to download the Australian Government's COVIDsafe app.
- Contact information must be kept for all staff, and full name, email address, phone number, date and time of patronage for all zoo/aquarium volunteers and visitors for contact tracing purposes. This information must be stored for at least 56 days. The COVIDsafe app is not an alternative to collecting and retaining contact information.
- In QLD you are required to gather contact details from each visitor (or responsible representative of a group) for government contact tracing as required. Contact details to include full name, phone number and residential address or postcode. If a visitor is a minor, this should be noted also. The COVIDsafe app is not an alternative to collecting and retaining contact information.
- Consider updating ticket sale terms and conditions and your privacy policy so you can request contact details to aid government contact tracing should it be necessary.

Hygiene

- Hand hygiene is to be encouraged for staff and visitors and environmental cleaning and disinfection must be increased and maintained.
- Follow all essential hygiene measures as outlined above.
- For animal care staff, launder work clothes daily where possible and leave non-essential items at work.
- Ideally, staff should have dedicated use of necessary work equipment where possible without sharing (computer workstations, zoo radios, phones etc.), with regular sanitisation, especially in instances where they need to be shared.
- Consider taking card payments only (preferably contactless payment) for sales of tickets, gifts, food etc

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

In workplaces where people can maintain 1.5 metres distance from people with potential COVID-19 facemasks and gloves are not recommended. However, all staff are required to practice physical distancing and good hygiene practices. Refer to the following link for more detail:

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/191678/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf

Suspected cases on site

There may be circumstances where a person (staff or visitor) is displaying COVID-like symptoms or shares information that causes you to have concerns about their health and the health of others. The following steps have been advised by [WorkSafe Australia](#).

1. Isolate the person
2. Seek government health advice* (as per the detailed actions below)
3. Any visitor who is sick or displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 must be asked to leave, and any staff member who is sick, becomes sick or displays any symptoms of COVID-19 must be directed to go home
4. Ensure the person has transport home, to a location they can isolate or to a medical facility if necessary. If necessary, call an ambulance.
5. Close off affected areas, clean and disinfect thoroughly before allowing others into the area
6. Consider who the affected person may have had contact with so you can provide this information (visitor names, phone numbers and residential postcodes) if asked by health officials

7. Review risk management controls and first aid protocols, ensuring first aid staff are up to speed with COVID-19 precautions.
8. If there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 infection at a workplace, Queensland Health will be notified by the medical professional who confirms the diagnosis and the relevant testing laboratory.
9. Upon being informed, a person in control of the business or undertaking must notify Workplace Health and Safety Queensland that the case has been confirmed.
10. Keep a record of each notifiable incident for at least 5 years from the day that notice of the incident is given to the regulator.

* Seek government health advice by calling your state helpline on 13 Health (13 43 25 84). Follow the advice of your state public health unit. You can also contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The National Helpline can provide advice on when and how to seek medical help or about how to get tested for COVID-19.

Ensure that you have current contact details for the person and make a note about the areas they have been in the workplace, who they have been in close contact within the workplace and for how long. This will inform you about risks to others and areas to clean and disinfect. This information may also assist your state and territory public health unit if they need to follow up with you at a later time. Your state WHS regulator may also be able to provide specific WHS advice on your situation.

Managing transmission risk from people to animals

- Ensure your vet is a member of the ZAA Vet SAG (contact admin@zooaquarium.org.au) so they have access to the latest technical information and can seek advice from other zoo vets if required.
- Ensure your general biosecurity practices are of the highest standards possible (see the **National Zoo Biosecurity Manual** for more information).
- Consider physical distancing protocols between people and animals to minimise contact unless necessary for animal care, health or welfare reasons.
- Minimise the number of people working with animals, or inside enclosed spaces housing animals, or where food is prepared, to the minimum necessary for safety and welfare.
- Contact your vet as soon as possible if you notice any signs of disease in your animals.

Managing animal welfare during opening

During the COVID-19 closures, many animals may have become used to a new environment and experience change as routines return to normal operations.

1. Consider the potential changes to the animal's environment and their routine and implement a plan to allow the animal to gradually accustom to any significant changes. ZAA's *Welfare Management Tool* may assist with formulating such a plan.
2. Consider implementing a monitoring program to observe the animals' behaviour during reopening. If a member of staff or zoo/aquarium volunteer is monitoring the animals, they may also assist with supervising social distancing requirements of visitors (with each other, and with animals).
3. It is plausible that some animals may find increased visitation more rewarding compared to their experiences over that last few months. Be aware where this may be the case and support this opportunity where appropriate and physically distanced.

APPENDIX A:

Checklist for COVID-19 Safety in QLD Zoos, Wildlife and Reptile Parks and Aquariums

Businesses have an obligation to comply with the current Public Health Orders in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic but must also manage risks (including COVID-19) to staff and other people. Zoos, aquariums, wildlife and reptile parks in QLD should develop a COVID Safe Plan specific to their site based on this checklist that sets out the specific, tailored measures that will be applied at that their premises or workplace. Note: this does not limit an employer's work, health and safety obligations.

The COVID Safe Plan should address the following matters relating to process:

- **Audits and compliance.** Zoos, wildlife and reptile parks and aquariums should have a policy and procedures for conducting regular audit and compliance checks on COVID safety requirements
- **Complaints procedures.** Have documented complaints management process for visitor complaints to be escalated and managed.
- **COVID-Safe Plan updates.** Have a documented process to maintain your COVID Safe Plan with the most recent updates from QLD Health. This plan should include communication processes for staff to ensure they are aware of all changes.
- **COVID-Safe management of deliveries and contractors.** Deliveries and the presence of contractors and visitors on site to be managed in accordance with SafeWork Australia Guidelines:
<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information/workplaces/industry-information/general-industryinformation/physical?tab=tab-toc-employer>
 - Non-essential visits to the workplace should be cancelled or postponed.
 - Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible.
 - Delivery drivers and other contractors who need to attend the workplace, to provide maintenance or repair services or perform other essential activities, should be given clear instructions of your requirements while they are on site.
 - Ensure handwashing facilities, or if not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitiser, is readily available for workers after physically handling deliveries.
 - Direct visiting delivery drivers and contractors to use contactless methods such as mobile phones to communicate with your workers wherever possible, keeping contact to a minimum.

- Direct visiting delivery drivers and contractors to use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before handling products being delivered.
- Use, and ask delivery drivers and contractors to use, electronic paperwork where possible, to minimise physical interaction. Where possible, set up alternatives to requiring signatures. For instance, see whether a confirmation email or a photo of the loaded or unloaded goods can be accepted as proof of delivery or collection (as applicable). If a pen or other utensil is required for signature you can ask that the pen or utensil is cleaned before use. For pens, you may wish to use your own.

The COVID Safe Plan should address the following matters relating to well-being of staff and visitors:

- **Exclusion.** Zoos, aquariums, wildlife and reptile parks should have a policy for the exclusion of staff and visitors who are unwell, even if they only have mild symptoms.
 - Anyone failing symptom screening should be excluded.
 - Any patron who is sick or displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 must be asked to leave.
 - Any staff member who is sick, becomes sick or displays any symptoms of COVID-19 must be directed to go home.
 - Any patron who has been to a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days can be refused entry. The list of declared hotspots may be found at <https://qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/hotspots-covid-19>
- **Advice.** Advise staff who have respiratory symptoms or fever to be immediately tested for COVID-19 and remain in isolation at home until they have received their result. Consider putting in place mechanisms or a process to ensure staff can access testing easily. Ensure staff are aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self-quarantine.
- **Conditions on entry.** Have a mechanism in place to ensure the clear display the conditions of entry ie the requirement for physical distancing, hygiene and exclusion of visitors who are unwell etc, on public platforms, including website, online ticketing services, social media platforms and at the venue entrance. Resource material for display can be accessed at:
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-campaign-resources>
- **Staff training.** Ensure the provision of appropriate staff training in relation to staying away from work when sick, physical distancing, cleaning requirements and managing sick visitors. Provide staff with pre-opening training to ensure they are able manage COVID related measures and undertake periodic staff briefings and / or training in line with QLD Health COVID Safe updates. All staff briefings and training sessions should be documented with records maintained for future referencing if required. Resources for training material area available here: <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses>

- **Emergency evacuation procedures.** Consider COVID-19 restrictions in your site emergency evacuation procedures.
- **Visitor behaviour management.** Train staff on what to do during a violent or aggressive incident in accordance with Safe Work Australia’s guidance on managing the risks of work-related violence. Refer Page 8 of OIR COVID Guide: https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/191678/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf

The COVID Safe Plan should address the following matters relating to physical distancing:

Physical distancing to be maintained by all staff, zoo/aquarium volunteers, participants, and visitors.

- **Capacity.** The measures in place should ensure the number of staff, volunteers and visitors does not exceed the capacity limit for the premises. An area of 4 square meters per person is to be maintained. The capacity limit should reflect the floor/meter space available for public access.
- **Staff responsibility.** Have staff members who are responsible for managing numbers entering the zoo or aquarium, and ensuring people are physically distancing across the premises.
- **Contained areas.** Calculate the area of floor in any contained areas or zones to determine the upper limit of people who can safely occupy the space taking into account staff, volunteers and visitors (one person per 4 square metres). Use signage at entrances to communicate the maximum safe capacity to support the staff members managing numbers.
- **Bookings.** Consider implementing a time-based booking or ticketing system to limit the number of people in the venue at any one time. Consider electronic ticketing to further reduce contact.
- **Communication.** Put up posters to remind staff and visitors to keep at least 1.5 metres distance from others. Consider displaying signage with arrows to direct the flow of visitors.
- **Seating.** Move or remove tables and seating as required to comply with 1.5 metres of physical distance.
- **Physical environment.** Reduce crowding wherever possible and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor in areas where people are asked to queue. Use separate doors for entry and exit wherever practical.
- **Crowding.** Temporarily suspend tours and group activities where physical distancing requirements cannot be met. Ensure any events that may attract crowding, such as animal shows or public animal feeding, have arrangements in place to support physical distancing. Any indoor space must comply with Stage 3 requirements and any subsequent Stage requirements.
- **Meetings.** Cancel or defer non-essential face-to-face meetings and training for staff and volunteers, using telephone or video instead where practical.

- **Staff.** Where reasonably practicable, ensure staff maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing at all times including meal breaks. Where reasonably practicable, stagger start times and breaks for staff members to minimise the risk of close contact.
- **Deliveries.** Review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical.
- **Crowd control.** Have strategies in place to manage gatherings that may occur immediately outside the premises.
- **Public transport.** Coordinate with public transport around strategies to minimise COVID-19 risks associated with transportation to and from the venue.
- **Cafes and restaurants.** Ensure, where reasonably practical, any food and drink premises on site have measures in place in accordance with QLD Government COVID SAFE requirements for restaurants and cafes.

The COVID Safe Plan should address the following matters relating to hygiene and cleaning:

Environmental cleaning and disinfection must be increased and maintained. Workplace cleaning as per:

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/191678/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf

- **Hygiene facilities.** Hand hygiene is to be encouraged. Ensure good hand hygiene facilities are available, including at venue entry and exit and around the premises, and promote excellent hand hygiene by staff.
- **Bathrooms.** Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels and have posters with instructions on how to wash hands.
- **Cleaning.** Environmental cleaning and disinfection must be increased and maintained. Ensure any areas frequented by staff or visitors are cleaned at least daily with detergent or disinfectant. Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day with a detergent or disinfectant solution or wipe. This includes viewing glass, handrails and other safety rails, tables, countertops, doorknobs, sinks, EFTPOS equipment, elevator buttons and staff-room facilities. WorkSafe Australia provides a cleaning guide: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning>
- **Gloves.** Workers should wear gloves when cleaning and wash hands thoroughly before and after with soap.
- **Interactive exhibits and presentations.** Carefully consider whether interactive exhibits and presentations should be open, only opening the space if there is sufficient ability to maintain social distance:
 - 4m² rule, or for venues below 200 square metres, one person per 2m² up to 50 persons at a time
 - manage the capacity of all show venues to allow for physical distancing in seating areas. Families/people living in the same house can sit closer together. All individuals to be physically distanced. Presentation team to reinforce physical distancing guidelines for guests both pre and post show.

If open, ensure a staff member or volunteer routinely monitors the exhibit, that hand sanitiser is available for visitors before and after entry, and that interactive components are regularly cleaned.

Pamphlets. Remove printed guides and pamphlets. Consider replacing with downloadable guides or audio guides that can be accessed via a visitor's personal device.

The COVID Safe Plan will address the following matters relating to record keeping:

Records of staff and visitors. Have processes in place to keep a record of name, address or postcode and a mobile number for all staff and record the following information for all volunteers, contractors, and visitors:

- Full name
- Email address
- Phone number
- Date of patronage
- Time of patronage

Ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely for a period of at least 56 days.

COVIDSafe app. Employers should make staff and visitors aware of the COVIDSafe app and the benefits of the app to support contact tracing if required. The Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 must be complied with in relation to the COVIDSafe app. The COVIDsafe app must not be promoted as an alternative to keeping record information.