

# WEST VIRGINIA STRONG

## *The Comeback*



**A Guide to Safely Operating Zoos**

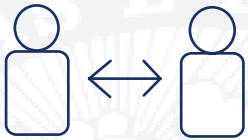
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## A Guide to Safely Operating Zoos

Under Gov. Justice's reopening plan, **West Virginia Strong – The Comeback**, all zoos, wildlife centers, or similar facilities can reopen with the limited services and usages outlined below.

To assist with the reopening, Gov. Justice has issued the following guidelines to mitigate the exposure and spread of COVID-19 among workers and guests. These guidelines, in addition to the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), will help zoo owners and managers establish proper protocols and procedures to keep all guests and workers safe. Zoos are allowed and encouraged to implement more stringent protocols as they see fit.



As your business reviews and implements these new measures, we encourage you to share and discuss them with your employees and customers. Communicating enhanced cleaning and sanitization practices will make workers and guests feel more confident in your zoo.

**Please Note:** The following guidelines are being published in advance of Governor Justice's Executive Order – currently anticipated to be effective as of the week of May 26 – that will allow for the re-opening of, among other things, zoos in a limited capacity.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in appropriate enforcement measures.

## A GUIDE TO SAFELY OPERATING ZOOS

### OPERATIONAL SAFETY

- **Limit capacity:** Limit capacity of all indoor facilities to 50%.
- **Social distancing:** Both employees and patrons should avoid congregating and should practice social distancing wherever practical. Employees should minimize contact with patrons as practical.
- **Online ticket sales:** Where practical, implement an online ticket sales system to reduce congregation at ticket window.
- **Common areas:** Close public seating areas, play areas, and any other locations at which individuals may congregate.
- **No-touch displays:** Request that guests do not touch displays or exhibits. Where practical, remove high-touch points, such as brochure racks, or place signage near animal exhibits to discourage touching of common surfaces.
- **Groups:** Cancel or restrict group visits, guided tours, public programs, and special or private events with groups of more than 25 until the Safer at Home Order is lifted. Note, however, that the 25-person limitation on purely social gatherings under the Governor's Safer-at-Home Order does not apply to group meetings, conferences, or other special events held for Essential Businesses and Operation, as defined by Executive Order 9-20, as amended; but such meetings, conferences, or other special events will need to plan for physical distancing between attendees based on CDC recommendations.
- **Traffic flows:** Establish one-way flow through zoo pathways and exhibits to facilitate social distancing.
- **Touch points:** Contact with doorknobs, switches, buttons and any point of sale equipment should be limited to the maximum extent possible and frequently cleaned and sanitized. The number of touch points throughout the zoo should be reduced and limited to the maximum extent possible. The entrance/exit doors should be sanitized routinely.
- **Restrooms:** To the maximum extent practicable, limit the number of individuals in a restroom to ensure proper social distancing and ensure that frequently touched surfaces are appropriately disinfected (e.g. doorknobs and handles that cannot be otherwise removed).
- **Cleaning:** Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection practices, according to CDC guidelines, with regular sanitization of common surfaces. Ensure that staffing and supplies available for such facilities is sufficient to enable enhanced sanitization and cleaning measures in accordance with appropriate CDC guidelines.
- **Payment:** To the greatest extent possible, encourage customers to make cashless and/or contactless payments and ensure point of sale equipment is frequently sanitized;
- **Shared resources:** Discourage workers from sharing resources or other work tools or equipment, whenever possible.

### EMPLOYEE SAFETY

- **Plan:** Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with federal, state and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices:
  - Prepare zoo for reopening;
  - Prepare employees for their return to work;
  - Control access points;
  - Reduce touch points to the maximum extent possible;
  - Increase cleaning frequency and the availability of hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes;
  - Establish an open line of communication with employees regarding safety.

## A GUIDE TO SAFELY OPERATING ZOOS

- **Screening:** Screen all employees reporting to work daily for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:
  - Temperature checks
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Sick employees:** Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/ or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **Tracing:** Develop and implement policies and procedures for employee contact tracing following employee with a positive COVID-19 test and inform the local health department of such positive test and tracing.
- **Training:** Train all employees on the importance and expectation of increased frequency of handwashing, the use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, and provide clear instruction to avoid touching hands to face.
- **Monitor:** Monitor employees for indicative symptoms and keep an open line of communication. Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns to the employer.
- **Hygiene:** Provide a place to wash hands or alcohol-based hand runs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- **PPE:** Require employees to wear PPE when appropriate, with special considerations for those employees that come into contact with the general public.
- **Phase in:** If possible, return employees to work in phases and spread out shifts to reduce excessive or unnecessary interaction.
- **Telework:** Allow teleworking to the maximum extent possible, where possible (support and accounting staff).
- **At-risk individuals:** Consider special accommodations for employees that are members of a vulnerable population, like senior citizens or immunocompromised people, including encouraging teleworking to the maximum extent possible among other measures.
- **Cooperation:** Plan for potential COVID-19 cases and work with local health department officials when needed (i.e. monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep-clean facilities).

## GUEST SAFETY & ADMISSION

- **Guest screening:** Guests are encouraged to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
  - Have you had a temperature over 100 degrees?
- **No Admission:** Any guest who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) will not be admitted, must leave the grounds immediately, and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines.
- **Face coverings:** Guests should be encouraged to wear cloth or disposable cloth face coverings.

## A GUIDE TO SAFELY OPERATING ZOOS

- **Social distancing:** Guests shall be advised to practice physical distancing by staying at least six (6) feet away from other visitors and following one-way traffic patterns.
- **Limit access:** Zoo staff should monitor guest use of popular gathering spots. Use may need to be limited to avoid overcrowding and encourage proper social distancing.
- **Bring cleaners:** Guests should be encouraged to bring disinfecting cleaners and hand sanitizers for use throughout their visit.

## COMMUNICATING WITH GUESTS

- **Online media:** Use digital systems, such as your website, social media platforms and email communication, to educate your guests of your new cleaning protocols and safety precautions.
- **Install barriers:** Where practicable, physical barriers such as partitions or plexiglass at cash registers or other areas of interaction.
- **Use technology:** Where practicable, use technological solutions to reduce person-to-person interaction for reservations, payment or customer service-related questions.
- **Signage:** Post extensive signage on health policies, including the following documents in the workplace to help educate all on COVID-19 best practices:
  - [CDC: Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
  - [CDC: COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

## AMENITIES

- **Food & Beverage Services:** Onsite restaurants must follow Gov. Justice's most recent guidelines for restaurants.
  - [Click here to review restaurant guidelines.](#)
- **Gift shops or zoo stores:** Onsite giftshops must follow Gov. Justice's most recent guidelines for retail stores.
  - [Click here to view specialty retail guidelines.](#)

In addition to the specific guidelines for West Virginia zoos above, businesses and their employees should be mindful of the more general guidance issued for small businesses, found at [governor.wv.gov](https://governor.wv.gov).