

SECTION 4

Animal welfare minimum requirements



It is expected that all tourism businesses that keep, own or manage animals, or provide experiences involving animals (including visiting animal attractions such as hotel entertainment programmes), ensure that they meet the minimum requirements in the husbandry and care of animals. Travel providers working with these guidelines will be developing processes to assess suppliers against the minimum requirements listed below.

The minimum requirements below are subdivided into three sets depending on the animal attraction/species type:

- A. For situations where animals are managed by and/or are dependent on human beings.
- B. Specifically for businesses exhibiting whales or dolphins. These businesses should ensure that they meet the requirements in both A and B.
- C. For businesses with working animals. These businesses should meet the requirements in A and C.



Businesses working with animals should meet certain requirements.

KEY POINTS

- All tourism businesses involving animals should ensure they meet minimum requirements in animal welfare.
- Industry-wide minimum requirements cover feeding, enclosures, veterinary care, sedation/surgery, permits and records.
- Additional minimum requirements apply to whales and dolphins and working animals.
- Travel providers are committed to ensuring their suppliers can demonstrate compliance.

A. Minimum requirements for animals managed and/or dependent upon human beings

1. All animals have regular, daily access to adequate and clean drinking water in line with their species specific needs.
2. All animals are fed appropriate food (which includes necessary supplements for animals in captivity), via an appropriate feeding routine, which mentally stimulates the animal(s) and encourages natural behaviour (e.g. foraging, browsing, grazing etc.).
3. In captivity, enclosures (including pools) or methods used to contain the animals for temporary periods allow all the animals to move and exercise freely, and to maintain sufficient distance from other animals in case of conflict.
4. In captivity, enclosures are environmentally complex, including natural substrate, furniture, shelter and environmental enrichment, in order to encourage normal/natural behaviour. All animals should be able to seek shelter from extreme weather conditions and privacy from view.



Jaguar kept in an inappropriate environment.

5. In captivity, enclosures are clean, hygienic and well maintained, (e.g. devoid of excessive faeces, urine or rotting food, potentially harmful litter, not waterlogged, not infested with vermin etc.).
6. The facility employs a vet who is knowledgeable and experienced in the health and welfare of the relevant animals (either employed on site or externally contracted).
7. There is a policy not to surgically modify the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure of animals, and not to sedate animals to make them safe to handle, unless it is for the purpose of genuine medical treatment under the guidance of an appropriately trained vet.
8. Where customers are permitted to be photographed with animals, this should be free from evidence of bad practice. For more info see the guidance manual, *Unacceptable and Discouraged Practices*.
9. Complete, accurate animal stocklists, veterinary records and any appropriate licences or permits should be up-to-date and available for inspection. The required paperwork should be in place for any animals which have been acquired from the wild.
10. Where animals are involved in performances these should only involve natural behaviours and be free from bad practice. Training methods should be based on positive reinforcement only.

B. Additional minimum requirements for captive whales and dolphins

1. All water systems have an efficient, continuous filtration system, or sufficient water exchange, which has a back-up system in case of failure. This should maintain appropriate water temperature and quality for the animal/s. The water should not be polluted.
2. Pool ozone/redox and halogen ion content are monitored daily. Total free and combined chlorine should not exceed 1.8mg/l and levels should be tested twice daily for concentration of chlorine and/or oxidising agents.
3. Pool temperature is consistently maintained at a temperature appropriate for the species contained and is monitored daily. Appropriate pool temperatures range between 8°C and 32°C for cetacean, depending on the specific species (EAAM, 2003)*.
4. The pool's pH is consistently maintained between 7.4 and 8.2 and is monitored daily.
5. Pool salinity should not fall below 22 PPT**.
6. Pool coliform bacterial levels should not exceed 1,000 colonies/100ml of water and should be monitored at least weekly.
7. Where contact sessions are permitted, they are limited to 30 minutes, with a maximum of four sessions per day per animal with at least one hour rest period between each session. Keepers should ensure the animals are kept mentally stimulated between interaction sessions.
8. Customers entering pools are required to remove jewellery and shower both before and after these sessions to safeguard the welfare of the animals as well as the health and safety of customers.

C. Additional minimum requirements for businesses with working animals

1. Tethering and hobbling should be discouraged and where unavoidable should only be conducted using appropriate materials and methods that do not cause risk to the animal's welfare. Tethering should be for a limited time of no more than a few hours per day. The animals should be able to walk, lie down and stand up without putting tension on the tether, and reach basic resources like food, water and shade. Tethered animals should be regularly monitored.
2. Young, pregnant, nursing, injured, ill, distressed or elderly animals should not be ridden, or be required to carry/pull loads. Equids (hoofed mammals) should not be worked before they are three years old; camels should not be ridden before four years. Weaning should not be conducted for horses, donkey and mules before six months; preferably it should be allowed to occur naturally. Weaning for camels should not be conducted before four months; preferably, it should be allowed to occur naturally.
3. Equipment should fit, not causing injury, and should be cleaned and dried after use. Equipment should be removed during rest periods and ideally when eating/drinking.
4. Animals should train and work within their physical capabilities. Loads should be equivalent to the animal's size and ability (e.g. not more than one person on an equine or camel), work should not be in the hottest part of the day and animals should have regular rest periods each day of at least an hour between working periods.

* For example bottlenose dolphins require water temperatures of no lower than 10°C and no more than 32°C

** PPT = Parts per trillion