

Adventure Cove Deck and Tunnel: Protocols and Messaging

Mission in Action

When guests visit Adventure Cove Deck or Tunnel, they will:

Feel:	Safe while visiting our parks
	A sense of belonging - developing a sense of community
	An emotional connection and empathy for wildlife
Learn:	The stories of individual animals in our care (e.g., name, age, personality, etc.)
	Excellent animal wellbeing is a top priority
Act:	Connect with, and appreciate nature – be a respectful wildlife observer

We will meet these outcomes by:

- Welcoming guests to Adventure Cove Deck or Tunnel (**Belonging**) and setting up expectations using positive language, so guests know what to expect during their visit and what is expected of them (**Safe and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Keeping watch throughout the seal and sea lion habitat to ensure guests are behaving appropriately and the seals and sea lions are safe (**Safety and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Learning about the guests through observation and asking them questions. Sharing stories of our animals that are likely to be relevant or of interest to them (**Belonging and Empathy**).
- Thank the guests for visiting and for respecting the seals and sea lions and their habitat (**Belonging and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).

Meeting these objectives supports our mission: **Empowering People. Saving Wildlife.**

Hours of Operation

Intended hours of operation are below and are subject to change.

Adventure Cove Deck:

- March 14 – November 18 – Opens at same time as Zoo and closes 30 minutes before Zoo closing
- During Wildlights (Nov 19-Dec 31)– Opens at same time as Zoo and closes at 4:30pm.
- Closed in January, February, through mid March.

Adventure Cove Tunnel:

- The Adventure Cove Tunnel is open anytime the Zoo is open.

Adventure Cove Presentations:

- Weekends only 11am and 12pm
 - May 2-22
 - August 17- October 25 (including Labor Day)
- Daily 11am and 12pm
 - May 23 – August 16
- 11am presentations: Training Tales (Pinnipeds)
- 12pm presentations: Encounter the Wild (Animal Encounters Village)

Procedures and Protocols

General Protocols:

- Stay in the public spaces.
- Be a respectful wildlife observer: move slowly, use a quiet voice.
- Keep loose items from hanging over the railing, so nothing drops into the pools.

Protocols for Education Volunteers and Staff:

- The Adventure Cove Deck requires a minimum of 1 Education volunteer or interpreter when the zoo is open.
 - The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires that we protect marine mammals from public harassment by providing sufficient visible staff or physical barriers, such as fences or glass. Our role is to ensure safe interactions between guests and animals.
- A radio, picked up in the Education Building lobby, is provided for the Education Team members on the Adventure Cove Deck and should be kept on channel 8. If assistance is needed regarding the animals, please utilize this radio- the Pinnipeds Animal Care Team can be reached on channel 5.
- The Adventure Cove Tunnel is not required to be staffed when the zoo is open. There is no radio designated for the Adventure Cove Tunnel. If a team member working in the Tunnel needs a radio, they can walk upstairs to the Deck or call the Education office from their phone.
- Opening the Deck:
 - First shift of the day should get the designated radio and bag from the Education lobby.
 - Radio Security on channel 1 when you arrive at the Deck. If the shade is up, then let Security know that you have arrived. If the shade cloth is closed, ask Security to please come open it.
 - Remove the chains from the bottom of the stairs (if needed) and the ramp. Put the chains in the provided containers.
- Closing the Deck:
 - Security will arrive at the designated time (usually 30 minutes before Zoo close or at 4:30pm during Wildlights).
 - When Security arrives, let the guests know that the Deck is closing for the day and that guests can use the Tunnel to view the Sea Lions.
 - If the heater is on, turn off the heater.
 - Security will close the shade cloth. You will close the chain at the bottom of the ramp.
 - Bring the radio and bag back to the Education building.

Contact Pinnipeds on Channel 5 in the following situations:

- There is something in one of the pools that shouldn't be there.
- There is a spill in the Tunnel that needs to be cleaned.
- There is a concern with a seal or sea lion that hasn't already been reported.
- In these instances, please stay on channel 5 until the Pinniped team has responded to communicate any necessary follow up information that they request.

Cold Weather Policy

- For the wellbeing of our team members, the Adventure Cove Deck will not be open if the 'feels like' temperature is below 32 degrees.
- Closures of Adventure Cove Deck will be communicated on the Visitor Engagement Portal.
- The Tunnel does not close due to cold temperatures as it is in indoor area.

Hot Weather Policy:

- The Adventure Cove Deck will be open during hot weather with accommodations including a mounted fan and more than one team member assigned to the area so they can rotate into cooler spaces.
- If these accommodations do not meet your needs, or you have health concerns regarding the heat, please contact us to cancel your shift as early as possible.

Emergency Weather Response:

If potentially dangerous weather conditions are imminent, a Level 2 weather emergency will be announced on all radio channels as a Security Alert, and the Adventure Cove Deck will close until the alert is cleared. The Security Alert may also include the phrase 'all Rides are temporarily closed'.

ZooAides:

- For thunder and lightning: seek shelter inside the Adventure Cove Tunnel or return to the Education Building
- For tornadoes or severe weather: immediately seek shelter in the Education Building or Entry Plaza bathrooms.
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3420 to let the ZooAide Supervisor know your location.

Adults (volunteers or interpreters):

- Clear the Deck of guests and encourage them to seek shelter, if appropriate.
- Put the chains across the bottom of the ramp and the bottom of the stairs. The shade is not closed in severe weather.
- Call Security on Channel 1 and Pinnipeds on Channel 5 and let them know that the Deck will be closing until the weather is clear.
- Seek shelter inside the Tunnel for thunder and lightning, or the Entry Plaza bathrooms or Education Building for tornadoes or severe weather.
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3483 (or radio on channel 8) to alert the Daily Contact of your location and the team members who are with you.

Emergency Response: Refer to Safety and Security Training

Service Animal Policy:

- Service animals are permitted anywhere that guests have access to in Adventure Cove public areas.
- If you notice a concerning response from the seals or sea lions, contact the Pinnipeds Animal Care staff.

Volunteer and Staff Roles

Education Team Members:

- Welcome guests and communicate any expectations and guidelines, as needed.
- Engage and educate guests by introducing the animals and providing interpretive messaging. Let the moment guide the message and gauge the interest of the guest.

- Thank the guests for visiting.

Animal Care:

- Respond in the event of an emergency.
- Monitor pinnipeds in habitats throughout the day.
- Provide training and enrichment opportunities for the seals and sea lions at unspecified times throughout the day. This may include opportunities for guest learning and engagement.
- Respond to spills and other maintenance issues in the public areas.

Team Member Training

Education Team Members: An online training session is required yearly. Volunteers must be at least in their second year to work a shift at Adventure Cove. Team Members who are new to working in this area will complete shadow shifts where they work alongside an experienced team member before working on their own. The operations protocol is discussed in detail during training.

Animal Care Staff Members: The Pinniped Specialists are trained in all aspects of seals and sea lions, husbandry of animals, and animal wellbeing. Each new hire on the Pinniped team goes through a detailed orientation and learning process to ensure they have full knowledge of the animals that are in this area.

Animal Wellbeing: Choice and Control

Seals and Sea Lions have the choice to spend time in any area of their habitat. Some of the pinnipeds in Adventure Cove enjoy interacting with guests through the acrylic in the tunnel. It is the animal's choice to engage with guests. The Pinniped Animal Care team views these interactions as enrichment, but this is not the case in other areas of the Zoo (i.e., gorillas, polar bears, etc.). This should be communicated to guests.

Guest Engagement Examples

Medical Care

Mission-based Outcome: Learn that the CZFP is a trusted authority on animal wellbeing.

- For humans, going to the doctor or the dentist is usually a routine task that involves minimal preparation. For large mammals, like pinnipeds (seals and sea lions), a great deal of time, training, and planning are necessary to make sure the animals are comfortable and confident when it's time for a medical visit. Regular check-ups and preventative care are essential for maintaining the health of our seals and sea lions. Through dedicated training and the establishment of strong relationships with their care team, the Animal Care staff Zoo can promptly address health conditions.
 - Sea lions are particularly predisposed to various eye diseases, so scheduled exams are a key component of their health routine. All the sea lions in the Zoo's care are trained to participate in voluntary eye exams, which are conducted twice a year by specialists. We partner with MedVet to ensure that every animal's eye health is closely monitored. Three of our sea lions, Qizai, Nana, of our sea lions, Qizai, Nana and Ayla, have even had cataract surgery.
 - Links to learn more:

- ♣ <https://www.columbuszoo.org/blog/flipping-health-how-columbus-zoos-adventure-cove-team-keeps-pinnipeds-prime-condition>

Enrichment

Mission-based Outcome: Learn that excellent animal wellbeing is a top priority.

- By nature, sea lions and seals are very curious and are observant of their surroundings. Here at the Zoo, we love making their habitat exciting by adding all sorts of enrichment—things that keep their minds and bodies busy. The Animal Care team provides all the animals in their care with various forms of enrichment, including objects in the pools, training, and interactions with the public through the acrylic tunnel.
 - As you look around the pools today, can you spot some of the enrichment provided for them? How are they interacting with it? How would you interact with it?
 - Link to learn more: <https://www.columbuszoo.org/blog/ray-sunshine-one-sea-lions-story-columbus-zoo>