

# 2026 Volunteer Handbook

## **Welcome to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium**

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium recognizes volunteers as extremely valuable members of our team. The purpose of all volunteers is to support the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's mission, purpose, vision and values. By attracting and retaining quality, committed individuals, the Zoo can help meet many of the changing needs of each department served. We choose volunteers who are best suited for each position and who possess the necessary skills, education, experience and qualifications without regard to race, color, ancestry, age, sex, religion, national origin, veteran status, non-disqualifying disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, sexual identity, transgender or any legally protected characteristic or status.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium maintains policies and procedures for use throughout the organization. These policies and procedures apply to all Zoo volunteers, adults and teens, unless stated otherwise. This handbook should not be interpreted as an expressed or implied contract between the Zoo and any volunteer. It is the volunteer's responsibility to be aware of and follow all safety procedures and guidelines and to ensure these policies are followed.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium specifically reserves the right to change, without notice, any or all its personnel policies and procedures.

### Mission

Empowering People. Saving Wildlife.

### Purpose

To make a positive impact on people, wildlife and wild places.

### Vision

To become one of the most impactful wildlife conservation institutions globally.

### Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Engagement

## **Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

Through the love of people, animals, our natural world and conservation, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is committed to the diversity of our workforce, audience and vendors.

The Columbus Zoo Family of Parks is dedicated to quality service and committed to diversity and inclusion because our team members are our most valued asset, and our community is our valued partner

Empowering People. | **COLUMBUS ZOO**    
Saving Wildlife. | **Z SAFARI**  **ZOO** 

### DEIAB Goals



**WORKPLACE EQUITY & INCLUSION**

Foster a culture where everyone belongs and feels safe.



**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Positively impact internal/ external trust around DEIAB.



**WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**

Attract, develop and retain diverse talent.

## Table of Contents

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Page 5  | Volunteer Team Staff                                     |
| Page 6  | Make It G.R.E.A.T.                                       |
| Page 7  | Columbus Zoo Family of Parks Interpretive Planning       |
| Page 8  | Volunteer Benefits                                       |
| Page 9  | Required Hours of Volunteer Service                      |
| Page 10 | Exemptions   |
| Page 11 | Emeritus Status  |
| Page 12 | Animal Wellbeing Process                                 |
| Page 12 | Human Wellbeing Process – Weather Protocols              |
| Page 13 | Human Wellbeing Process – Physical/Cognitive Limitations |
| Page 15 | Volunteer Dues   |
| Page 15 | Volunteer Training – Animal Contact Areas, Regions       |
| Page 16 | Volunteer Training – Golf Cart/Transport                 |
| Page 16 | Handbook Acknowledgement                                 |
| Page 16 | Background Check Screening                               |
| Page 17 | Electronic Communication with Minors                     |
| Page 17 | Sexual Abuse/Molestation Prevention Policy               |
| Page 19 | Volunteer Appearance Policy                              |
| Page 20 | Cellphone Policy   |
| Page 20 | Building Relationships with Zoo Staff and Communication  |
| Page 21 | Radio Etiquette  |
| Page 22 | Punctuality  |
| Page 22 | Professional Ethics                                      |
| Page 23 | Toxic Talk   |
| Page 23 | Discipline   |
| Page 28 | Reporting Perceived Harassment and Unwanted Conduct      |
| Page 29 | Workplace Violence                                       |
| Page 33 | Medical Exams, Drug Screenings and TB Tests              |
| Page 34 | Confidentiality Requirements                             |
| Page 35 | Social Media   |
| Page 39 | Emergency Response Plan                                  |
| Page 41 | Thank you!   |

## Volunteer Team Staff

Volunteer Office – (614) 724 3483

Rachel Griffiths, Visitor Engagement and Education Director

[Rachel.Griffiths@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Rachel.Griffiths@columbuszoo.org)

Ginger Earley, Volunteer Services Manager

[Ginger.Earley@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Ginger.Earley@columbuszoo.org)

Carole Bundy, Volunteer Services Coordinator

[Carole.Bundy@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Carole.Bundy@columbuszoo.org)

Mary Holben, Volunteer Services Assistant

[Mary.Holben@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Mary.Holben@columbuszoo.org)

Kathy Shank, Volunteer Services Lead

[Kathy.Shank@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Kathy.Shank@columbuszoo.org)

ZooAide Supervisor

[Zoo.Aides@columbuszoo.org](mailto:Zoo.Aides@columbuszoo.org)

Zoo Security – (614) 645-3434 or (614) 724-3434

Security Cell – (614) 582-1844

Volunteer Office - (614) 724 3483

## Make It G.R.E.A.T. Guest Services Standards

**G** – **Greet** everyone with a smile.

**R** – **Respond** to our guests: Help with directions, stop and answer questions.

**E** – **Engage** our guests: Make it fun, give guests a reason to come back.

**A** – **Access** for a diverse group of people with varied needs and backgrounds.

**T** – **Teamwork**: It takes all Team Members to deliver GREAT guest service.



## Columbus Zoo Family of Parks Interpretive Planning

The Columbus Zoo Family of Parks (CZFP) has developed an interpretive plan. This plan is a living, dynamic document meant to guide and unify messages we share with our communities. These messages are found in what we say and what we do. During brainstorming sessions, key leaders identified objectives or concepts they felt were important for our visitors to feel (attitude), learn (knowledge) and do (behavior). These objectives were aligned with the CZFP’s purpose statement, “Empowering People. Saving Wildlife.” This purpose statement is the standard which guides all our messages.

| Empowering People.<br>Feel/Learn |  | Saving Wildlife.<br>Act/Do   |            |
|----------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| <b>Feel</b>                      | Hopeful about the future for people and wildlife<br>Empowered to take action for wildlife<br>Belongin and developing a sense of community; we are in this together<br>CZFP is s safe place to be<br>Empathy for wildlife<br>Good about their experience when they leave<br>Confidence in the organizations   | Take action to help wildlife, personally and in our communities<br>Continue with their conservation journey<br>Continue visiting CZFP facilities<br>Purchase food, beverages and other items<br>Work at a CZFP facility<br>Tell family and friends about conservation and other work being done by CZFP<br>Use CZFP as a sesources | <b>Act</b> |
| <b>Learn</b>                     | They have an important role in saving wildlife<br>Anyone can participate in conservation<br>There is hope; all is not lost<br>This is a place for everyone, not just kids<br>CZFP is a conservation organization that is making a differnece<br>CZFP is a trusted authority on wildlife conservation and well-being<br>How our actions impact wildlife, poth positively and negatively |  |            |

Feel – How can we help our communities feel the same way we feel about empowering people and saving wildlife?

Learn/Think – What do we want our communities to learn or know during their visitor or interaction with us?

Act/Do – What do we want our communities to do during or after their visit or interaction with us?

## Volunteer Benefits

There are additional perks to enjoy during your volunteer service at the Zoo. For each of these discounts, you must show your volunteer badge. They include:

- Free parking at all Family of Parks establishments
- A 50% discount at all CZFP concession stands, excluding alcohol
- A 30% discount at all Zoo, Zoombezi Bay and The Wilds gift shops
- A 25% off non-sale apparel at the Safari Golf Club pro shop
- On days you are not volunteering, you and one guest will receive free admission to the Zoo and Zoombezi Bay. You can claim your tickets at any Guest Relations window.
- 1 free “Zoo More” wristband per visit; additional wristbands are \$5 off
- \$20 off up to five Zoo membership vouchers per year
- 20% off printed retail and catering prices for private events at the Zoo
- Free Zoompass for you and one guest at Zoombezi Bay
- You and one guest will receive free admission to an Open-Air Safari tour at the Wilds.
- 25% off The Wilds Nomad Ridge bookings – weekdays only
- 25% off The Wilds Lodge booking – everyday Nov-April; weekdays only May-Oct
- 25% The Wilds Straker Lake Cabin bookings – everyday Nov-April; weekdays only May-Oct
- \$20 – Wilds Horseback Tour for you and \$20 for one guest
- \$50 Sunset Safari Tour at The Wilds for you and \$50 for one guest
- \$89 Wildside Tour at The Wilds for you and \$89 for one guest
- \$59 Zipline Tour for you and \$59 for one guest
- 25% off bucket of range balls at Safari Golf Club
- \$35 for 18 holes of golf, with a cart, Monday through Thursday (no holidays) at Safari Golf Club
- \$24 for 9 holes of golf, with a cart, Monday through Thursday (no holidays) at Safari Golf Club

You will receive a family Zoo membership if you meet your previous year’s minimum hours requirement and are considered a volunteer in good standing. You may upgrade to a different membership level by paying the difference; however, this does not apply to upgrading to the Gold Membership. Volunteer memberships were processed in February 2025. If you did not fill out the membership form, you will not receive your complimentary Zoo membership.

These benefits are subject to change.

## Required Hours of Volunteer Service

Hour requirements are reviewed annually and adjusted according to the needs of the Zoo. Any volunteer or docent who does not complete the required hours will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that year will not count towards their service award. Hours are counted from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. The relationship between the volunteer and the Zoo may be severed at any time, by either party, depending upon circumstances.

### Docents

- 75 hours minimum
  - 20 hours of Continuing Education minimum
  - A minimum of 55 hours must be earned volunteering in a region, an animal contact area, guiding tours, assisting with education programs, horticulture or other public contact activities
  - **25 hours of public contact hours must be completed by or on the Labor Day holiday each year.** Continuing Education hours and training hours do not count towards these 25 hours.

### Adult Volunteers

- 60 hours minimum
  - 10 hours of Continuing Education minimum
  - A minimum of 50 hours in animal contact areas, assisting with education programs, horticulture, staff help and/or other volunteer activities
  - **25 hours of public contact hours must be completed by or on the Labor Day holiday each year.** Continuing Education hours and training hours do not count towards these 25 hours.

### Volunteer Divers

- 8 Dives minimum

## Exemptions

We recognize health, home, work, and life changes may prevent you from making your minimum hour requirement. If you find you are unable to make this commitment, you are invited to submit a completed “Request for Exemption” form to the Volunteer Manager. Requests must be submitted no later than January 15 of the following year. The “Request for Exemption” form can be found on the Volunteer Portal under the “Important Documents” tab. Exemption requests will be reviewed by the Volunteer Services Manager and volunteers will be notified by January 31 of their status. Exemptions shall not be granted for more than two consecutive years. No more than three exemptions shall be granted within a five-year period.

Docents: If an exemption is granted, the Volunteer Services Manager will determine what additional training the exempted docent must complete in order to be reinstated. This determination will be based on the volunteers’ previous year(s) of service and number of hours donated. Any docent granted exemption will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that exempted year will not count towards their yearly awards.

Adult Volunteers: If an exemption is granted for an adult volunteer, the volunteer must retrain in all animal contact areas (ACAs) where they wish to volunteer. Any adult volunteer granted exemption will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that exempted year will not count towards their yearly awards.

Divers: The Volunteer Services Manager, in conjunction with the Shores Department, will review requests for reinstatement made by divers to determine what additional training or certification is required before a diver can be reinstated to the dive program. Any diver granted exemption will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that exempted year will not count towards their yearly awards.

Provisional Docents: The Volunteer Services Manager will review requests for reinstatement made by docents who graduated earlier in the same year. Those granted exemptions will not achieve “Active Docent” status until they meet their current year’s requirements plus any unfulfilled requirements from the graduation year. Any provisional docent granted exemption will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that exempted year will not count towards their yearly awards.

Provisional Adult Volunteers: The Volunteer Services Manager will review requests for reinstatement made by first year adult volunteers. Those granted exemptions will not be eligible to volunteer in ACAs open to second year adult volunteers. Any provisional adult

volunteer granted exemption will not be eligible for their complimentary membership and that exempted year will not count towards their yearly awards.

## **Emeritus Status**

The title of “Emeritus” is given in recognition of outstanding or unique contributions benefiting the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. To be eligible for Emeritus status, the nominee must:

- Have been an active member of the volunteer program and a positive role model to their peers throughout their volunteer service
- Recognize they are unable to comfortably carry out the responsibilities of an active volunteer
- Be nominated by a volunteer in good standing or by a member of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium staff, who will submit a letter of nomination (not to exceed 500 words) to the Volunteer Services Manager

The Volunteer Services Manager will appoint a committee to evaluate the nomination and make recommendations. The committee will consider not only years of service but, more importantly, the person’s attitude, adaptability and willingness to help during their tenure.

Emeritus volunteers will:

- Receive a copy of the Volunteer Newsletter, a lifetime membership to the Zoo and an invitation to all social events and continuing education opportunities
- Be recognized with their class during the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and receive the appropriate awards lapel pin
- Not be required to pay dues
- Not participate in any on-grounds volunteering
- Will not wear volunteer uniform pieces while on Zoo grounds

## **Animal Wellbeing Policy**

The Columbus Zoo Family of Parks has an Animal Wellbeing Committee. In their continued efforts to assess the wellbeing of an animal, they include health assessments, promote behavioral diversity and animal choice, allow for lifelong care and planning and incorporate hiring and training of staff with positive attitudes. The committee always strives to be proactive rather than reactive.

Team members should know there is a proactive program in place. The Animal Wellbeing policy is available on the Volunteer Portal along with the appropriate form to report any concerns. If any team member has a question about the care of our animals, it is the responsibility of the team member to report the concern to the Volunteer Team Manager or any member of the animal health or animal care management team.

There is no single measure of wellbeing. Wellbeing can be influenced by a variety of factors and slides on a continuum from poor to excellent based on different factors. Assessing the wellbeing of an animal at any point in time is challenging at best. Today's zoo and aquarium animal wellbeing programs strive to be **proactive** rather than reactive and include health assessments, promote behavioral diversity and animal choice, allow for lifelong care and planning, and incorporate hiring and training of staff with positive attitudes.

## **Human Wellbeing Policy**

We would like to think of human wellbeing as their state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. There is no single measure of wellbeing. Wellbeing can be influenced by a variety of factors and slides on a continuum from poor to excellent based on different factors. The Volunteer Program prioritizes the wellbeing of its volunteers. The following policies are outlined to maximize your wellbeing while volunteering at the Zoo. This is a team effort, and we will work with you to try to meet your needs.

### **Weather Protocols**

Hot Weather - All volunteers will be required to undergo heat illness prevention training. Team members should pay attention to the extended weather forecast and note upcoming days when the heat index (combined heat and humidity) is forecast to be 90 degrees or higher, giving them time to prepare. Preparation could include drinking plenty of water, making sure you have proper sun protection available, eating light meals, or even cancelling your shift, if that is what is best for your situation. As you monitor the weather, if you decide it would not be in your best interest to volunteer on a particular

day, please reach out as soon as possible to let us know if you are cancelling your shift so we can adjust schedules accordingly. Our goal is to be proactive in ensuring our team members have access to shade, water, and seating, and reduce their time in direct sunlight during hot and humid days. (The source of the daily temperature will be AccuWeather - [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com).) If we cancel your shift because of weather, you will be credited for the appropriate hours. If you cancel your shift during a time when the heat index is 90 degrees or higher, you will be credited for the appropriate hours.

Cold weather - The Zoo will close when the outdoor high temperature is forecasted to be at or below 19 degrees Fahrenheit for the day. The Vice President of Operations and Guest Services, or his/her designee, is responsible for monitoring local weather forecasts daily. When the daily high temperature is expected to be at or below 19 degrees, a closure decision will be made by 4:00pm the preceding day. (The source of the daily temperature will be Accuweather ([accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com)) and be based on the Zoo's zip code – 43065.) Closure announcements will be posted on the CZFP's website, social media platforms, and local news outlets. Once the decision has been made by Zoo leadership, the Volunteer Services Team will post the closure on the Portal. It is the volunteer's responsibility to check the Portal to see if the Zoo is open before reporting for their scheduled shifts. If the Zoo is closed, do not come in and you will be credited with the appropriate hours. The Zoo will reopen once the daily high temperature is forecasted to remain above 20 F. Exceptions include Special Events or private functions, which may proceed at the discretion of Zoo leadership, provided safety protocols are met. Wildlights will not be impacted by this Policy with all programming and operations continuing as normal during this special event. Unless otherwise noted, previously scheduled tours will continue as planned. Guests with reservations or scheduled group visits will be contacted directly if the need arises.

## **Physical/Cognitive Limitations**

### Overview

This process enables Columbus Zoo and Aquarium Volunteer Services staff to decide when to open a conversation with a volunteer about their future role within the program when physical or cognitive limitations appear/worsen. This process also applies if a volunteer approaches staff with concerns about their ability to perform their duties. This is not intended to diagnose ailments or abilities, but to address safety concerns regarding the animals, guests, other team members, and yourself.

### Volunteer Requirements

Volunteer opportunities are almost entirely outdoors, require being mobile for long

periods of time, and are independent in nature. The ability to read and speak effectively is important, as is actively listening to others, asking questions to verify understanding, and using tact and consideration when communicating. The primary role of our volunteers is to provide positive guest engagement, so a friendly personality is essential for all individuals.

### Questions to Address

Can the volunteer perform their duties as specified on the Visitor Engagement Portal with or without reasonable accommodations? What limitation/s is/are interfering with the volunteer's duties, and how does it interfere with the volunteer's ability to perform to standards? What adjustments can be made to enable the volunteer to perform the essential functions of their role?

### Staff Procedures

The Volunteer Services Team will document any relevant occurrences with dates and witnesses. When applicable, the Volunteer Services Team will speak directly with the volunteer and share what has been documented. Knowing our concern is for the volunteer's well-being and safety, we will respectfully ask if the volunteer is willing to discuss the observations. Any conversations with the volunteer will also be documented. Together, we will work to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made. If safety becomes an issue, the volunteer's emergency contact will be notified.

## **Volunteer Dues**

For 2026 annual dues for experienced volunteers are \$25 and cover administrative and overhead expenses. Dues for experienced volunteers need to be paid by January 18, 2026. Dues paid between January 19 and February 18, 2026, will be an additional \$25. Dues for all first-year volunteers are \$50 and cover a background check, an ID badge and a lanyard. New volunteers have until January 30, 2026 to pay their dues. Dues paid between January 31 and February 19, 2026, will be an additional \$25. Volunteers who have not paid their dues by February 19 will be marked “inactive” and will not be eligible to volunteer. There will be no refund of any dues paid.

## **Volunteer Training**

All volunteers (Adult Volunteers, Divers, Docents and ZooAides) are required to complete Emergency Response Plan training and Zoo Policy and Procedure training to volunteer.

Animal Contact Area (ACA) training for Adult Volunteers and Docents must be completed each year for each area where the volunteer would like to be. Once a volunteer has completed their training, the corresponding assignments will be added to their profile. The areas include:

- For first year Adult Volunteers:
  - Kangaroo Walkabout
  - Lorikeet Garden
  - Tide Pool
  - Asia Quest Aviary
  - Stingray Bay
- For second year (and more) Adult Volunteers and Docents:
  - Kangaroo Walkabout
  - Lorikeet Garden
  - Tide Pool
  - Asia Quest Aviary
  - Stingray Bay
  - Adventure Cove Tunnel and Deck
  - The Barn
  - Giraffe Shamba

Docents must complete Region Refreshers each year for each region, no matter where the docent would like to volunteer. Once the volunteer has completed their region refresher trainings, the corresponding regions will be added to their profile.

## **Zoo Golf Cart/Transport Vehicle**

There may be occasions where a volunteer assignment necessitates driving a golf cart or transport vehicle. Before any volunteer can operate a golf cart or transport vehicle, they must complete the appropriate background screening and complete the appropriate training on Zoo grounds where they will drive a golf cart or transport vehicle with a designated Zoo staff person. Volunteers will need to complete cart training annually.

If you are involved in an accident while driving a golf cart or transport vehicle, you will need to report it to Security. Major accidents with severe damage to the vehicle should be reported immediately. With any accident in which a person is injured, no matter the damage to the cart, Security should be contacted immediately. Minor accidents can be reported before the cart is returned to the cart barn.

Any driver who is involved in an accident while operating a vehicle on Zoo grounds will be subject to a mandatory drug test. The Zoo has a zero-tolerance policy; if the volunteer tests positive for drugs or alcohol, their relationship with the Zoo will be terminated.

## **Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement**

All active volunteers are required to acknowledge a receipt and understanding of this handbook. Volunteers must complete and submit the Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement Form annually. This year the deadline for returning volunteers is January 18, 2026. New Adult Volunteers must complete and submit the Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement form by January 30, 2026. You will find the link to electronically acknowledge the Volunteer Handbook on page 41.

## **Background Check**

Because of our frequent, direct contact with Zoo guests and education program participants, Education Team Members (staff and volunteers) will now participate in annual background check screenings. The Zoo uses Truescreen as our third party background check company. Background screenings are done electronically, with the results coming directly to the Volunteer Services Manager. Hits that would end your relationship with the Zoo would be, but are not limited to, a conviction of a violent crime and/or a conviction of a sexual offense. Convictions of other serious crimes could also be considered.

## **Electronic Communications with Minors**

For the safety of staff and participants, Zoo team members are prohibited from following or allowing minor-aged participants to follow their social media accounts. Once participants have fully aged out of programming, Zoo team members may follow them on social media. An exception to this rule applies to a Zoo team member who has an established connection with a minor-aged participant outside of the Zoo **before** the youth begins participating in Zoo programming.

## **Sexual Abuse/Molestation Prevention Policy**

The Columbus Zoo Family of Parks does not permit or allow sexual abuse or molestation to occur in its workplace, or at any activity sponsored by or related to it. To make this zero-tolerance policy clear to all employees, contractors, volunteers and board members, we have adopted mandatory procedures that employees, volunteers, contractors, board members, individuals and victims must follow when they learn of, witness or experience sexual abuse or molestation. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, board member or other person, regardless of their title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, exploitations, molestation or injury. It does not include sexual harassment, which is another form of behavior, which is also prohibited by the Zoo.

### **Reporting Procedure**

Immediately report suspected sexual abuse or misconduct to Human Resources at (614) 724-3529. It is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of the report, question or complaint before notifying Human Resources. The Zoo will take every reasonable measure to ensure those named in complaint of misconduct or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint will not be part of the investigative team.

### **Investigation and Follow Up**

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The Zoo may utilize an outside third party to investigate. Our organization will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. To the fullest extent possible, but consistent with our legal obligation to report suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, we will endeavor to keep the identities of the alleged victims and investigation subject

confidential. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, our policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to, termination of the relationship of our organization.

### **Retaliation**

We prohibit any retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, board member, student, vendor or individual who in good faith reports sexual abuse, alleges that it is being committed or participates in the investigation. Intentionally false or malicious accusations or sexual abuse are prohibited. Anyone who improperly retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of sexual abuse, or intentionally provides false information to that effect, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

### **Reporting to Law Enforcement/Appropriate Child or Adult Protective Services**

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of the Zoo not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

## Volunteer Appearance Policy

All volunteers are expected to maintain an appearance and dress consistent with a professional environment. While no guidelines can be inclusive, the following general standards for volunteer appearance and dress should be applied consistently. The general maintenance and care of the uniform is the responsibility of the volunteer.

- When volunteering, volunteers must wear a volunteer shirt with the current Columbus Zoo logo and shirts must be properly sized.
- Pants, shorts or skirts must be a solid color in either khaki, black, olive, navy or grey in color. Jeans are permitted year-round. Stretch pants are not permitted.
- If shorts are worn, they can be no shorter than your arm length. (Fingertip length means that the shorts hem is as long as or longer than the place your fingertips reach when your hands are relaxed at your side.) Jeans must be a solid color, clean and without holes.
- Volunteer uniform shirts must be clean and in good condition.
- Camp shirts need to be buttoned.
- Outerwear (sweatshirts, jackets, raincoats, etc.) does not have to have the Zoo logo as long as the volunteer badge is visible. Volunteers can purchase sweatshirts, jackets and raincoats with the volunteer logo. You may wear other clothing items under uniform pieces.
- Items purchased from the gift shops are not considered part of your approved uniform.
- A lanyard and an identification nametag will be provided. Your nametag must always be worn in a visible location above your waist while volunteering.
- Only plain hats or visors, hats or visors with the Columbus Zoo Family of Parks logo/name, hats or visors purchased in one of the Zoo's or Wilds' gift shops or hats that support one of our conservation projects are permitted. Hats must be worn with the bill facing forward and parallel to the ground.
- Hair should be well groomed. Extreme hairstyles are unacceptable. Team members may have neatly trimmed mustaches, goatees and/or beards.
- Volunteers should practice good personal hygiene, be physically clean and take steps to prevent offensive body odors. Volunteers should avoid the use of heavy fragrances including colognes, perfumes and lotions.
- Comfortable walking shoes are a necessity! Volunteers must wear closed-toed, closed-heeled shoes.
- All jewelry must be appropriate to the environment and task being performed.
- Pierced earrings cannot exceed three earrings per ear and gauges can be no larger than size 8.
- Facial piercings are limited to three small "stud" piercings; "hoop" "bar" and "hook" piercings are not allowed on the face.
- Pants must be secured at your waist. Belts are strongly encouraged.
- Any excessive or obscene tattoos must be covered. Any buttons worn must have messages relevant to the Zoo or the Wilds. No religious, political or other controversial messages may be worn
- Any worn or unused uniforms may be turned in for the Zoo to recycle or donate.

- Volunteers should not take photographs or videos while in uniform; this includes before or after shifts and walking to or from locations. Volunteers can bring a change of clothes and take photos or videos before signing in or after signing out.
- Volunteers should not be on their phones while in uniform in public areas; this includes before or after shift and walking to or from locations.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

If it is necessary to make or receive personal calls while on volunteer duty, call from a private area. Do not make or receive calls while interacting with guests on Zoo grounds unless it is an emergency. This includes walking to or from your assigned area, even if you have not arrived to your designated place. You are not permitted to take pictures or videos while in uniform unless you are specifically asked to do so by a staff person. If you would like to take pictures, you can visit the Zoo when you are not volunteering, or you can change out of your uniform when your shift is over.

### **Building Relationships with Zoo Staff and Communication**

Volunteers are encouraged to develop positive working relationships with all Zoo staff members. However, we ask you are mindful of the staff person's daily responsibilities and time limitations. The Volunteer Services Team or Region Leaders will be the liaisons for suggestions or questions you may have for staff members. Email the Volunteer Services Team or appropriate Region Leader and your message will be forwarded to the appropriate staff person.

Volunteers will be notified with any pressing information as it is available. Please be aware, there are guidelines in place for disseminating information that we must adhere to which can delay news. Major events may be available in a press release or on social media faster than we can notify you. We will update you to breaking Zoo news as soon as possible.

## **Radio Etiquette**

Radios are available to select team members for business related communication. For routine business matters, team members are encouraged to use other means of communication, like telephone or email. It is the responsibility of supervisors to make sure team members know and understand radio etiquette.

### **Radio Procedures/Protocol**

- Be familiar with the radio and its capabilities.
- Know and understand the Zoo Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- Pause momentarily and listen before you speak on the radio so you do not conflict with another team member who may already be speaking on the radio.
- Always remember radio traffic is being monitored by others both on and off Zoo property. It is critical to remain professional when speaking on the radio.

### **Emergency/Critical Incident Radio Use**

- Know and understand Zoo Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- During critical incidents/emergencies, the Security Dispatcher will inform others to keep non-emergency radio traffic to a minimum or hold all radio traffic until the emergency or incident has been cleared.
- During critical incidents/emergencies, when contacting the Security Dispatcher, team members should consider broadcasting the following:
  1. Who is broadcasting the information? Who is calling?
  2. What is the nature of the call?
  3. Where are the people involved located?
  4. Where did the incident occur?
  5. How urgent (injuries/weapons/threat of violence-harm/hazardous)?

In many situations, team members may routinely provide most of this information to the Security Dispatcher. When it is not provided or made clear, the Dispatcher may paraphrase information received or make an effort to obtain the above information.

## Punctuality

Management recognizes circumstances beyond a volunteer's control may cause them to be late for a scheduled shift. However, unauthorized tardiness is detrimental to effective customer service and consistent productivity. You are late if you arrive after the designated start time for your shift. Please notify the Volunteer Team in advance whenever you are unable to report on time. The Volunteer Team keeps track of tardiness and absences. Excessive lateness and cancellations may lead to dismissal from the program

## Professional Ethics

Zoo operations must be conducted according to the highest standard of integrity. Team members must avoid situations which might conflict with their responsibilities on behalf of the Zoo. Team members are required to conduct themselves in a manner which reflects these standards and in a way which does not place the Zoo in a poor light. There is no substitute for personal integrity and good judgment.

The Zoo's Standards of Conduct policy contains work rules and guidelines to assist team members in performing their duties, making decisions on behalf of the Zoo and avoiding conflicts of interest. No guidelines or work rules, however, can be all-inclusive; the following are examples of the conduct required:

- **Courtesy** – Team members are required to treat the public and each other with courtesy, respect and dignity. Any team member dealing with confidential matters must protect that confidence. Do not spread misinformation, rumors or untruthful information.
- **Helpfulness** – Team members are also expected to be helpful to the visiting public. Always answer questions honestly and politely. Team members should not give an answer unless they are sure it is correct. It is acceptable to let the guest know you don't know the answer to a question. Offer to find the answer or point them to someone who can help
- **Media** - Columbus Zoo and Aquarium volunteers should be polite and helpful to the news media, however all interactions with the media must follow the Zoo's media policy and first be approved by the VP of Communications and Marketing, or her designated substitute.
- **Guest Violations** – If a Zoo guest violates Zoo protocols, team members must calmly point out the violation. If the violation is serious, Security should be summoned.
- **Socializing During Shift(s)** – Socializing during your scheduled shift with guests is prohibited.

- **Animal Collection** – Team members may not release information about any animal’s condition, diagnosis, treatment or prognosis without express prior direction to do so from an appropriate manager.
- **Gifts** – The Zoo prohibits team members from accepting any personal tip, gratuity, gifts, favors, entertainment or honorarium except where expressly provided for by Zoo rules. This applies even if the service performed is beyond the normal limits of the team member’s duty. Team members are expressly prohibited from using their Zoo affiliation for any personal gain, vendor or other Zoo relationships. Violation of this policy may lead to corrective action. All times must be reported to the Volunteer Services Manager.

### **Toxic Talk**

Discussing issues, concerns or complaints with no constructive plan to address them with the Volunteer Services Team is detrimental to Volunteer Program. This toxic talk is counterproductive, and it affects not only the people you are talking to, but anyone around you, the Volunteer Services Team and those you are talking about. We empower all team members to call out toxic talk when they hear it and to encourage more productive ways of handling dissatisfaction.

### **Discipline**

As a volunteer, you are held to a high standard of conduct while representing the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Your volunteer standing is on an at-will basis. This means there is no guarantee of your continued volunteer standing and the Zoo may dismiss a volunteer at any time. If your relationship with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is severed, either by the Zoo or by yourself, you will be asked to return your volunteer badge and your yearly dues will not be refunded. To remain a volunteer in good standing, you must complete the required hours of volunteer service by the end of the calendar year. If you do not complete your required hours, you will need to submit a Request for Exemption from by January 15 of the following year.

In most cases we adhere to the following disciplinary procedure; however, we can circumvent this procedure at any time depending on the severity of your actions:

- First Offense: Verbal Counseling: Verbal counseling from the Volunteer Manager or Volunteer Assistant means a rule has been broken and an explanation of what corrective action, if any, should be taken by the volunteer. A notation will be made and retained in the volunteer’s file.
- Second Offense: Written Warning: A written warning to the volunteer indicates that a rule has been broken or that performance is unacceptable. This

warning serves to notify the volunteer that unless improvement is made, their continued relationship with the Zoo is in jeopardy.

- Third offense: Dismissal: This means your relationship with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium has been severed. You will be required to return your name badge, lanyard and uniform.

Some examples of offenses are:

- A complaint from a Zoo visitor, staff member or volunteer
- Disrespectful behavior
- Inappropriate or obscene language
- Carelessness or neglect in performing duties
- Not adhering to the volunteer appearance policy
- Using cell phone or other electronic device for personal use
- Taking pictures while in uniform
- Excessive tardiness and/or unapproved absences

Immediate dismissal from the volunteer program will result from:

- The use of illegal substances
- Entering an animal area without permission
- Handling an animal without permission
- Bringing a weapon to the Zoo, including, but not limited to firearms and knives.
- Theft
- Behavior that creates an unsafe situation for Zoo animals, Zoo guests, other volunteers or staff
- Deliberate disobedience of Zoo policy and/or regulations

NOTE: Offenses are not limited to the above examples and are at the discretion of the Volunteer Team.

Using common sense is the best way to avoid a situation that requires discipline. If in doubt, check with the Volunteer Team first. Prior to administering disciplinary actions, where possible, the Volunteer Manager will investigate all the facts and circumstances, including holding a discussion with the volunteer. After the investigation the manager will use her best judgment in responding in a manner appropriate to the nature of the problem. The volunteer will be given an opportunity to explain their side of the story.

### **Dispute Resolution**

As with any relationship, problems may arise, and differences of opinion may occur. As part of the normal course of doing business, these issues usually may be resolved quickly

in an informal manner between volunteers. However, when the problems persist, an alternative and parallel means for a volunteer to resolve a problem will be made available. No volunteer will be penalized, discriminated against or retaliated against for using this alternative means. If a volunteer has a complaint, problem or operational issue, they should verbally discuss the matter with the Volunteer Manager.

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

No employee or volunteer may discriminate against another employee or volunteer in any terms or conditions because of race, color, ancestry, age, sex, religion, national origin, veteran status, non-disqualifying disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, sexual identity, transgender or any other legally protected characteristic or status. Discrimination in any form, including racial or ethnic slurs or jokes, is to be promptly reported to the Volunteer Manager. Any person who feels he or she has been harassed in any way should submit a complaint to the Volunteer Manager in accordance with the Zoo's non-harassment policy. All complaints will be promptly investigated. Any employee or volunteer who is found to be in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

It is the policy of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium to maintain a workplace free of harassment. Harassment is any behavior that is not welcomed by, and is offensive to, the receiving person. Harassment interferes with a volunteer's work effectiveness and his or her relationship with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Essentially, it results in an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment for the harassed person.

The "technical" definition of sexual harassment provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demands for sexual acts or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
- Submission to this conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual's continued tenure; or
  - Submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used as the basis for a "tangible employment action" (i.e., an injury such as a demotion, pay cut, failure to get a pay increase, etc.) affecting that individual; or
  - The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance **or** of creating, or resulting in, an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the recipient.

Any of the above conduct violates Zoo policy; however, less intrusive conduct can also violate this policy. Further, the conduct does not have to contain actual sexual content or be of a sexual nature. Also prohibited is conduct which harasses or inappropriately singles out another because of his/her/their gender.

Whether violation of this policy has occurred depends on the individuals involved, their relationship, the conduct in question, the circumstances under which the behavior took place, whether the conduct was welcome to the recipient, and other varied circumstances. When you are considering whether behavior (either yours or someone else's) could violate this policy, ask yourself could the behavior:

- Be construed to be offensive, uninvited, unwanted, or all of these
- Result in the recipient or observer walking away, looking hurt, annoyed or offended or demonstrating other verbal or non-verbal clues suggesting that the conduct was offensive or that the recipient or witness did not wish to be around such conduct or comments
- Interfere with job performance
- Cause discomfort, humiliation, embarrassment, hurt feelings and/or harm to an employee, seasonal team member, vendor, or guest.

If you can answer “yes” to any one of these questions, the behavior could violate this policy. There still may be doubts about behavior. Listed below are some examples of spoken, unspoken, visual, or physical behavior that would likely be considered unacceptable and violate Zoo policy. Remember, the policy prohibits all unacceptable conduct based on race, color, ancestry, age, sex, religion, national origin, veteran status, non-disqualifying disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, sexual identity, transgender or any legally protected characteristic or status.

The following are examples; this list is not conclusive or exhaustive:

- Whistling at someone, making kissing sounds or "cat" calls
- Commenting about a person's body or physical characteristics
- Attributing stereotypes or specific behaviors to a particular race, ethnic, age or religious group or to a particular individual because he/she/they is a member of a legally protected group, i.e.: race, color, ancestry, age, sex, religion, national origin, veteran status, non-disqualifying disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, sexual identity, transgender or any legally protected characteristic or status.
- Referring to an adult as *hunk*, *babe*, *honey*, *girl*, *sweetie*, *grandma*, *grandpa* or any other such potentially demeaning name or term based on the recipient's membership in a legally protected group
- Making or participating in jokes or comments which single out race, color, ancestry, age, sex, religion, national origin, veteran status, non-disqualifying disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, sexual identity, transgender or any legally protected characteristic or status.
- Suggestions, allusions, or implications
- Talking or joking about sex or other protected characteristics
- Looking or motioning at a person in a suggestive or sexual way
- Pressure for any sexual activity, no matter how subtle

- Touching a person in any way which is uninvited, unwelcome, or unwanted; uninvited kissing, hugging, rubbing, or any unconsented, uninvited body contact or touching
- Mimicking, taunting, making fun of, mocking, bullying, demeaning, belittling, or making threats
- Sabotaging the work or work efforts of another team member or worker
- Continuing any behavior when the recipient has shown any sign of discomfort, disapproval or being ill at ease
- Electronic, telephonic, mechanical or any display or transmission of suggestive or offensive material
- Shunning or deliberately ignoring or excluding a person from group interaction
- Having any potentially offensive materials displayed, open, or visible in your work area
- Blocking another's path or movement or detaining a team member, volunteer, vendor or guest against his/her/their wishes without authority to do so
- Having materials which could be offensive to others displayed on a computer screen
- Displaying cartoons, posters, bumper stickers, jokes or other written or graphic material which could be offensive to others
- Sending or forwarding potentially offensive emails or other material
- Calling another person's attention to potentially offensive materials even if not displayed or open

Whether material, actions or gestures are “offensive” is evaluated generally from the perspective of the recipient, and such evaluations are made by Zoo management.

Zoo team members want an environment where they can feel comfortable and have professional, business-like working relationships. This does not mean team members have to be robots who speak of nothing but work. It does mean that all team members must be considerate of the feelings, points of view, and sensitivities of all team members, volunteers, vendors, visitors and guests.

### **Reporting Perceived Harassment and Unwanted Conduct**

If you feel you are the recipient of unwanted conduct of the type described in this policy, you should ask the individual to stop and if it continues, you must report the behavior *immediately* to *any* of the following people: your immediate supervisor, the Zoo's Human Resources Vice President, or to any member of the Zoo's Human Resources staff. You are also required to report behavior which you feel is unwanted by or offensive to another team member, vendor, volunteer, or guest - even if you do not feel personally offended by the behavior. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure a positive work environment. Every complaint will be treated seriously and

investigated. Reporting is not optional - you must report all repeated, unwelcome, offensive behavior.

The Zoo cannot promise complete confidentiality because, by the very nature of this issue, some other people must be interviewed during an investigation. You are assured, however, that the matter will be treated sensitively and that only the information necessary to conduct the investigation will be revealed and then only to those with a need to know.

## **Non-Retaliation**

Team members are assured that there will be no retaliation for reporting truthful information regarding the suspected harassment or unwanted, offensive conduct or for participating in an investigation.

If you have any questions at all about this policy or anything related to it, please talk to your Volunteer Team Manager or to any member of the Zoo's Human Resources staff. Your signature on the Acknowledgement accompanying this Handbook verifies that you have read, understood and will abide by this policy.

## **Workplace Violence**

The Zoo strives to provide a safe environment for all. To ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence, all team members should review and understand all provisions of this workplace violence policy. Team members are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities. The Zoo, in its sole discretion, will determine what constitutes a "weapon," a "threat," "violent activities," "apprehension," "emotional distress," "concern" and/or "violence" as it applies to this policy.

This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Possession of a weapon while on Zoo or related property or while on Zoo or related business - this also extends to vehicles parked or driven on Zoo or related grounds; No team member may carry a weapon or firearm while on Zoo grounds nor may any team member have a weapon or firearm in a vehicle anywhere on Zoo or related grounds at any time
- Threatening, attempting, or causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to concern, apprehension or emotional distress
- Intentionally damaging, attempting to damage, or threatening damage to Zoo or related property or property of another team member or person associated with the Zoo
- Committing acts, attempting to commit acts, or threatening to commit acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or types of harassment or domestic violence

## **Workplace Violence Indicators**

Incidents that occur at the workplace can involve current and former team members or an acquaintance of a current or former team member. In incidents that involve current or former team members, many times indicators are displayed that should be identified to supervisors or the HR Department. These indicators may include:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance or hygiene
- Depression/withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to policies and procedures
- Increased or severe mood swings
- Noticeable unstable and emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of rage or anger without provocation
- Suicidal statements such as “putting things in order”
- Suspect paranoid behavior
- Increasing talks about problems at home
- Talk of previous incidents of violence
- Expressed empathy with individuals committing violence
- Unsolicited comments about firearms, dangerous weapons, and violent crime

If you are observing these or similar behaviors, you should advise a Volunteer Team staff person, Security or the HR Department in a timely manner.

**Workplace violence - *If you see something/hear something, say something!***

Potentially dangerous situations must be immediately reported to a Volunteer Team staff person or the Human Resources Department. The Volunteer Team staff will contact Human Resources and Human Resources will notify the Director of Safety and Security.

It is critical that if team members hear something or see something regarding suspicious behavior, actions or comments they say something and report it in a timely manner. Team members should trust their instincts that something is wrong. We spend considerable time and effort convincing ourselves that something we have seen or heard that is out of the ordinary is Ok when it isn't. Case studies of workplace violence incidents that have occurred across the country indicate that after these incidents occur individuals come forward with information that at the time just seemed “weird,” “suspicious,” “strange,” or “peculiar,” but were dismissed. Remember, even if it turns out to be nothing, at least somebody can investigate it.

Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. Violations of the workplace violence policy may warrant notification of the appropriate police authority

and will result in the appropriate level of corrective action up to and including immediate suspension or termination.

### **Safety on the Job**

The Zoo is committed to the promotion and realization of workplace safety. Safety, as practiced within the Zoo, is a proactive, preventive, on-going process. It is each team member's responsibility to avoid any accidents while volunteering and to report any unsafe or hazardous conditions to the volunteer team.

If a team member is injured in any manner or becomes ill during the performance of their duties, they are to notify Security immediately. The Zoo EMS staff will determine whether first aid can be administered on the Zoo grounds or if treatment should be handled by an emergency room or other health care provider. Injuries which result in treatment beyond first aid will be investigated by the Safety Director. Repeated and/or ongoing safety concerns will be addressed as appropriate by the volunteer team.

### **Firearms and Other Weapons**

Weapons are prohibited in public areas of Zoo grounds, except where specifically allowed by Zoo policy. This policy includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives other than those approved for work use, weapons, explosives, incendiary devices, and propulsion devices used as a weapon. A deadly weapon is “any instrument, device, or thing capable of inflicting death, and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, or possessed, carried or used as a weapon.” Firearms include any loaded or unloaded gun of any caliber or type including hunting weapons. This prohibition also includes any pistol, rifle or other device that uses air or gas propelled projectiles. Violations of this policy may warrant notification of the police, immediate suspension and/or termination. NOTE: Team member parking is excluded from this policy; concealed carry permit holders may keep firearms in their locked personal vehicle.

## **Drug-Free Workplace**

Having a drug-free workplace protects our health and safety. Volunteers who are free of alcohol and other drugs have fewer accidents, make fewer mistakes and are more productive. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and productive workplace free of drugs. Each volunteer needs to perform their duties safely and efficiently in a manner that protects their interests and those of their co-workers. In keeping with this commitment, the Zoo has a strict policy regarding the inappropriate use and possession of drugs and alcohol. This policy recognizes that volunteers' involvement with alcohol or drugs can be extremely disruptive and harmful to the workplace. Accordingly, the Zoo requires all volunteers to report for work fit to perform their jobs and prohibits the actual or attempted unauthorized use, possession, sale, transfer or distribution of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances on Zoo property or at any Zoo-related function, event or engagement, or while enroute to or from any Zoo-related function, event or engagement. We reserve the right to drug-test.

No volunteer may report for duty, or remain on duty, while under the influence of any controlled substance or alcohol. For purposes of this policy, a drug will be considered a controlled substance if its use is prohibited or restricted by law and/or if a volunteer improperly uses or possesses the drug. It is essential that all volunteers comply fully with this policy. Volunteers who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, discharge.

## **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs**

The Zoo does not prohibit team members from using prescription or over-the-counter drugs when used as prescribed (in the case of prescription drugs) or according to package directions (in the case of over-the-counter drugs) provided under the following circumstances; (a) the prescription drugs are prescribed for the team member using them for medical reasons by a licensed medical practitioner and (b) the team member's use of the prescription or OTC drugs does not affect the team member's job performance or conduct; threaten the safety, productivity, public image or property of the Zoo or its team members or guests; or result in criminal behavior or behavior which violates standards of conduct or work rules.

No team member is to perform any function or duty on behalf of the Zoo if the drugs being taken under this provision adversely affect his or her ability to perform any such function or duty safely and satisfactorily. In such situations, the team member should notify the Volunteer Services Manager. A doctor's statement is not required for over-the-counter drugs unless the team member needs to be examined to determine if they are a risk to self or others in performing their job.

## Medical Exams, Drug Screenings and TB Tests

Volunteers come into frequent contact with humans and animals during their tenure at the Zoo and must obtain required inoculations, screenings and medical examinations. After a volunteer has been accepted, before they may start volunteering, they must obtain the necessary inoculations, screenings and medical examinations pursuant to the volunteer position assigned.

Any volunteer who volunteers in a kitchen, an animal contact area, aviary or in any other capacity where the volunteer may come in contact with an animal, must submit a negative tuberculosis (TB) test result prior to beginning their volunteer service and annually thereafter (Volunteer Divers do not need to submit a TB test). TB test results for experienced adult volunteers and docents must be submitted no later than January 18, 2026. New adult volunteers must submit TB test results by January 30, 2026 for the volunteer to be deemed active for the current year.

The required TB test follows the Center for Disease Control protocols and is repeated annually. This policy is to ensure the health and safety of our animal collection, team members and guests. Volunteers can submit TB test results from their doctor (at their expense) or from any Zoo approved Ohio Health Workplace location (at the Zoo's expense). A volunteer must have a current TB test on file to volunteer in the capacity outlined above.

- **If it has been at least a year since your last negative TB test result, you will need to have completed a Two-Step non-significant Mantoux skin test.** The two-step TB test consists of two shots and two reads. The second shot must be taken no sooner than 7 days after the first shot but no later than 21 days after the first shot. Both reads must be done between 48- and 72-hours of the injection. Failure to follow this protocol will result in an invalid test and the individual will have to retest.
- **A one-step non-significant Mantoux skin test is required for any individual who can show proof of a TB skin test within the last year.** The one-step TB test consists of one shot and one read. The test needs to be read between 48- and 72-hours post injection. Failure to follow this protocol will result in an invalid test and the individual will have to retest.
- **If you have a history of false positives,** please visit a WorkHealth location and have the nurse fill out the TB Questionnaire form and Ohio Health will forward the information to the Zoo. This form can be found on the Volunteer Portal under Important Information, Other Documents. You can also have your doctor provide documentation that you have a history of false positive TB tests but do not have an active case of TB.

## **Confidentiality**

All information received or generated by the Zoo in connection with drug or alcohol testing or other provisions of this policy is considered strictly confidential and will be given out within the Zoo only on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, information will only be released based on a consent form signed by the team member or as provided by law. Your signature in acknowledgement of the requirements of this policy as well as your continued volunteering authorizes the Zoo to use such information for corrective action purposes and/or as necessary in a corrective action proceeding or any action against the Zoo.

## **Smoking Policy**

The Zoo is a smoke-free facility. This includes all areas on Zoo grounds and the parking lot. Electronic cigarettes and vaping are to be treated just like regular cigarettes – not permitted.

## **Confidentiality Requirement**

It is customary to protect the interests and properties of any business enterprise. As a volunteer of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, you have many obligations and responsibilities. Among the less familiar obligations and responsibilities are those which involve the legal aspects of your relationship with the Zoo. It is our expectation that any information you ascertain during your tenure as a volunteer will not be disclosed. If you are unsure if information you have obtained should be considered confidential, contact the volunteer team. This section explains those obligations and responsibilities as they relate to confidentiality of information.

## **Proprietary Information**

The Zoo owns and has a valuable proprietary interest in the confidential business information that it develops and maintains in its operations. As a Zoo team member, you will have access to such information which may include, among other things, written and unwritten information and trade secrets pertaining to the Zoo's business, data relating to research, breeding programs, program procedures, marketing and financial information, advertising methods and computer systems.

### **To protect the Zoo and its proprietary information, you agree as follows:**

1. I will not, during or after my volunteering with the Zoo, except as my duties with the Zoo may require, use for my benefit or for the benefit of anyone else or disclose to anyone else confidential business information which I have obtained or will obtain by reason of my volunteering with the Zoo.
2. Following the end of my volunteering, I agree that I will not take, copy or retain any notes, records, documents, manuals or other data in any tangible form without the written permission of the Vice President of Communications and Marketing.
3. During my time volunteering at the Zoo and for a reasonable time thereafter, the Zoo may use my photograph in literature and other communications distributed by the Zoo for advertising and promotional purposes.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media helps us connect, share stories, and strengthen our relationship with guests, supporters, and our community. At the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, The Wilds, Zoombezi Bay, and Safari Golf Club ("the Organization"), we understand how powerful these platforms can be—both at work and in our personal lives. This policy is here to help you use social media with confidence. When you are posting from your own account, these guidelines protect you, your teammates, and the mission we all care about. Our goal is simple: keep our voice professional, consistent, and true to our values, while supporting your freedom to express yourself responsibly. Together, we can make sure our online presence reflects the same respect, care, and pride we show every day.

### Official Social Media Management

- All official Organization social media accounts are managed by the Communications team or designated social media administrators.
- Only these authorized team members may create content, design posts, or publish on behalf of the Organization.

### Account Access and Security

- All login information, passwords, and account access are the property of the Organization.

- This information cannot be changed or shared without written approval from the senior leader responsible for the site.

#### Website Ownership

- Each of our properties—Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, The Wilds, Zoombezi Bay, and Safari Golf Club—maintains its own official website as the primary online presence.
- These sites are owned, managed, and protected by the Organization under copyright law.

#### Standards and Conduct

- All social media activities must follow the Organization’s Code of Conduct and uphold our standards for inclusivity, accessibility, and representation.

At the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media. This policy applies to all team members for Zoo and its family of parks (Zoombezi Bay, Safari Golf Club, and The Wilds).

#### **Team Members Social Media Use: Know What’s Permitted**

- Geolocation/”Check-In” to your location at the Zoo once arriving, on platforms with this feature
- Acknowledging you are a CZFP team member on your personal social media pages.
- Pictures of team members in public-facing situations, not behind-the-scenes, from what guests can visibly see from a guest’s vantage point.
- If you see a negative or false comment on the Organization’s social media channels, please contact the Communications team for awareness.

#### **Team Members Social Media Use: Know What’s NOT Permitted**

- Geolocation/“Check-In” while in behind-the-scenes locations that cannot be viewed from a ***public*** guest vantage point.
- For security and personal safety, befriending, following, and/or engaging with our Organization’s guests or members on the Organizations’ social platforms, forums (like Reddit), except for personal family and friends is not recommended.
- Sharing the Organization’s confidential or proprietary information like guest count, finances, meeting minutes, animal husbandry plans, etc.
- Posting to a social media platform while performing your operational duties, like while caring for animals or greeting the public in a guest-facing role.
- Speaking on behalf of the Organization on social platforms, both on the team member’s personal page or in the comment section of the Organization’s platform.

This includes the use of personal ‘influencer accounts,’ where the employee acts as a subject matter expert or entertainer based on their role and employment at the organization.

- Social media posts and comments that reflect negatively on the Organization and its partners or represents the Organization in an unprofessional manner, not in line with the Code of Conduct. Nothing in this policy, however, is intended to prohibit employees from online or social media posts or discussions dealing with their terms and conditions of their relationship with the Organization.
- Media posts or discussions dealing with their terms and conditions of employment with the Organization.
- Cannot post photos that include Organization guests (please refer to team member handbook under Code of Conduct).

### **Your Privacy**

Many times, things you publish can be seen or found by others, despite privacy settings. Consider everything you post online as potentially viewable by anyone. We recommend you make your social media profiles private for your personal safety.

The Communications team will not post last names of team members on any platform to protect their online privacy, with these exceptions:

- Those with their full names listed on the external website or mobile app where it is already discoverable
- Use full names already discoverable or we have permissions from team members
- If permission has been granted by the team member for their full name to be used in a social media post.
- Within our official videos, the team member’s name is displayed.
- To protect your own online privacy, do not “tag” your personal profile in an organization social media post.

### **Retaliation is prohibited**

The Organization prohibits taking negative action against any team member for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any team member who retaliates against another team member for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

### Ethics Hotline

If you don’t feel comfortable reporting violations directly, there are other ways to report. You can use the Ethics Hotline, a confidential, easy to use way to report a concern. The ethics hotline allows employees and others to report unethical, illegal, or improper conduct anonymously. Issues like harassment, fraud, bullying, favoritism, and discrimination need immediate attention.

- Mobile: [columbuszoo.mobile.ethicspoint.com](http://columbuszoo.mobile.ethicspoint.com)
- Online: [columbuszoo.ethicspoint.com](http://columbuszoo.ethicspoint.com)
- Ethics Hotline: 844-606-1747
- Direct Human Resources: 614-724-3585
- Direct Legal Affairs: 614-724-3786

### **Media Contacts**

- Only authorized spokespersons may speak to the media on behalf of the Organization.
- Direct all media inquiries to the Communications team.
- If you're unsure or need guidance, reach out to Human Resources.
- 

If you see a negative or false comment on the Organization's social media channels, please contact the Communications team for awareness.

### **Accountability**

Any team member found to have violated this policy may be subject to progressive disciplinary action, up to, and including, suspension and termination.

### **For more information**

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Volunteer Team.

## Emergency Response Plan

During your volunteer service at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, an emergency may occur. The Zoo has established policies and procedures for emergency response. You are encouraged to reference Emergency Response Plan training on Absorb frequently to remain familiar with our procedures.

If there is an emergency, your first priority is your own safety. As you are making your way to a safe location, you may assist others as you deem necessary. Once you have established yourself in a safe area, contact the Volunteer Office via radio on Channel 8 or by texting or calling 614-724-3483.

Remember: OBSERVE, REPORT, ACT

1. If you see something out of the ordinary, it is important to remain safe. Keep a visual on the situation until assistance arrives.
2. Call Security on Channel 1 or 614-724-3434 and let them know what you see. Make sure to alert the Volunteer Team as well. **For a suspicious package or gas leak, do not use the radio.**
3. Follow the Departmental Emergency Response Guide.

### Emergency Guide – Tone

- Lockdown
  - Diver Down – Assist Zoo personnel as needed.
  - Critical Animal Escape – If the animal is contained within a building, the affected side of the Zoo will be locked down; all people on the affected side of the Zoo will be escorted into buildings that are not affected. If the animal is not contained within a building, the entire Zoo will be locked down; everyone will be escorted into buildings. Be prepared to assist our guests as you get yourself to safety.
  - Human in Exhibit – If you see a human in an exhibit, notify staff in that region or Security immediately. Make sure to include the location of the exhibit, type of animal in the exhibit and if there are any injuries. Divert the public from the area and take direction from animal care staff and/or Security as needed.
  - Venomous Bite – Assist Zoo personnel as needed.
- Safety Threat
  - Approaching Tornado – All team members and guests should seek shelter immediately. It is not mandatory for guests to take shelter, but obviously it is recommended. Security will up team members via radio.
  - Active Threat – The Zoo has adopted the National Security Agency's police of Run, Hide, Fight. Attempt to get away from the threat. If you cannot safely leave the area, find a place to hide. Make sure to lock or block all entrances and windows. Silence your cell phone and radio.

Contact Security as soon as possible. Locate items you can use for defense and be prepared to defend yourself.

### **Emergency Guide – Security Alert**

- Weather – Weather is very difficult to predict. As a result, be on alert to conditions that indicate imminent severe weather and be prepared to assist our guests as you get yourself to safety.
- Power Outage – Generally during a power outage, unless it is weather-related, all outdoor activities continue as normal. If you are indoors during a power outage, emergency lighting should come on. Reassure guests and follow the instructions of Zoo Staff
- Lost/Found Child – Most lost/missing child events are resolved quickly and require a patient, calm response on the part of team members
  - Lost child – If a parent or guardian reports a missing child to a team member, the team member should immediately notify Security on Channel 1 or 614-724-3434. The team member should obtain the name, age, hair color and description of the child's clothing and where the child was last seen. Additional, helpful information would be approximate height, weight, shoe style and color. Remain with the parent or guardian until Security arrives.
  - Found Child – If a team member finds a child, remain calm, helpful and supportive. Stay with the child in the area where they were found until relieved by Security or instructed otherwise. Notify Security on Channel 1 or 614-724-3434 and relay the child's name, age, hair color, description of the child's clothing and who the child is with (parent, grandparent, school group, etc). **Because of potential health concerns, do not offer the child any food or drink.**
- Bomb Threat – Never approach any suspicious package. Remain calm. Treat any threat as real. Turn off all radios and cell phones. Notify Security immediately, either in-person or from a landline phone.
- Fire – Notify Security immediately. Direct visitors away from the area.
- Non-critical Animal Escape – Non-critical animal escapes do not affect normal, daily Zoo activity. The affected region or building may or may not be locked down, depending on the situation. Follow instructions provided by Zoo personnel.
- Gas Leak – If you are made aware a gas leak has been detected, divert guests from the area. If you think you have detected a gas leak, notify Security immediately either in-person, from a landline phone or move at least 300 feet away to use your radio or cell phone.
- Suspicious Package – Never approach any suspicious package. Turn off radios and cell phones. Notify Security immediately either in-person or from a landline phone. Use your best judgment: does the time of day and location make sense?

Does the package look normal? Are there electrical wires or unusual looking protrusions? Is it ticking?

### Severe Weather Shelters

All buildings that provide shelter from the weather and have areas away from glass should be used.

- West Zoo areas: All restrooms, Discovery Reef, Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Center by bathrooms, Nocturnal Building, Okapi basement
- East Zoo areas: All restrooms, Polar Frontier Interpretive Center, Polar Frontier classrooms, Education Building center hallways and closets, Asian Elephant Conservation Center, Asian Elephant Conservation Center basement, Animal Encounters Village indoor building, Edwards Building center hallways and closets

### **Thank you!**

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium Family of Parks team! We know there are unlimited opportunities for you to share your time, experience, money, energy, and passion; we are extremely lucky you chose us.

### **Acknowledgement**

You can click on the following link to acknowledge you have received and read your handbook: [2026 Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement Form](#) Remember, experienced volunteers have until January 18, 2026, to submit their acknowledgement. New Adult Volunteers have until January 30, 2026.