

**THE ASSOCIATION OF SANCTUARIES**  
**Guidelines for Captive Elephants**

A) Outside Enclosures:

- 1) Should include a variety of natural substrates
- 2) A pool of fresh circulating water, large enough for several elephants to completely submerge
- 3) Separate source of water for drinking
- 4) Shade structure
- 5) Rocks, boulders and tree trunks for scratching and conditioning the skin and feet
- 6) Ample room for the elephants to run and exercise unrestricted; minimum of 2 acres per elephant
- 7) Must be fenced in a manner suitable to contain the species:
  - a) Thick wall steel pipe (minimum 4-1/2 " thick) concreted into the ground
  - b) If horizontals are used they should be made of steel cable or thick wall steel pipe
  - c) If steel cable is used the design must be "slack wire" to deter the elephant from climbing out
  - d) Hot wire fencing is highly effective if installed properly. However hot wire fencing should never be used as primary fencing
  - e) The enclosure should be a minimum of 5 feet high
- 8) No elephant should have direct access to moats that create a safety hazard. If a moat is utilized to contain an elephant it must be designed so that the enclosure side of the moat has a gradual slope enabling the elephant to safely walk in and out of the moat unassisted. Additionally the enclosure side of the moat and bottom should be constructed of dirt, grass or other natural substrate. The enclosure side and bottom of the moat should not be constructed of any hard, unyielding material such as rock or concrete. The moat must be designed to drain so that water and debris does not collect in the bottom. The containment side of the moat (the wall) can be made of any nontoxic material that is proven nonhazardous in the event that the elephant touches, rubs on or ingests the material. Smooth finish concrete or smooth rock is suggested. Machined wood posts and planks can splinter when an elephant rubs on them and creosote used to preserve utility poles and railroad ties is toxic. The containment side of the moat should be high enough to prevent the elephant from placing his/her chin above the wall.

B) Shelters:

- 1) Elephants must have shelter from inclement weather
- 2) The structure should be constructed of materials capable of withstanding an elephant's force.
  - a) Walls should be made of concrete filled block, or solid concrete slabs

- b) Alternative materials can be used for the exterior walls if the elephants are not permitted access to the walls by an elephant proof barrier
- 3) Each elephant should have a minimum of 1000 square feet of personal indoor space.
  - a) Floors should be constructed of poured concrete, at least 6 inches thick, pitched to the back, with ample drainage
  - b) Concrete floors should be covered with solid wood platforms or rubber matting
- 4) The shelter should be designed to provide individual spaces, as well as a common space for socialization
- 5) Elephant and keeper areas should be divided. Steel pipe set on two feet centers provide a safe keeper/elephant barrier. The keeper areas should be a minimum of 15 feet wide.
- 6) Ceiling height should be a minimum of 16 feet
- 7) All light fixtures should be recessed
- 8) No electrical or plumbing fixtures may be within the immediate elephant area or an elephant's reach
- 9) No electrical or plumbing shall be routed through an elephant's area or through an area within an elephant's reach
- 10) Chains should never be used to restrain an elephant
- 11) The shelter should be equipped with a restraint chute and scale
- 12) The shelter should have ample ventilation to maintain good air quality
- 13) Windows and skylights are recommended to allow sunlight into the shelter during inclement weather
- 14) The shelter must be equipped with a heat source capable of maintaining the shelter at 65" degrees
- 15) Automatic watering devices should be available for the elephant's free choice access to drinking water
- 16) Elephants must have free choice access to the outdoors during suitable weather
- 17) No female elephant should be kept in solitary isolation except in the case of contagious disease. Any elephant infected with a contagious disease must be maintained in a facility with a separate air supply from other elephants to prevent the spread of disease. Waste from the infected animal, barn waste, soiled hay or bedding, feed, and gray water from washing the barn must not be allowed to contaminate any air supply or area occupied by other elephants. Each facility must have an inside shift stall and outside shift yard for separations. The separation stall and yard must be designed to give elephants visual and tactile access to elephants in adjacent areas. The stall/yard should be used only when necessary to ensure keeper and elephant safety, to monitor dietary intake, and as required for medical purposes.
- 18) Enclosures must be maintained free of feces and waste, washed daily, and disinfected weekly. If elephants are confined indoors they must have ample space to ensure that they do not stand or sleep in their own waste.

### C) Nutrition:

- 1) Elephants are constant eaters and must have free choice access to clean, nutritious hay or live vegetation (adult=150 pounds per day). Protein level of hay should range from 12% to 17%
- 2) Whole grains, vitamins, minerals, salt, and pro-biotics should be supplemented on a daily basis. The amount depends on the condition of the individual elephant.
- 3) Each elephant should receive 10-20 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables per day.
- 4) Trace mineral salt should be offered free choice.
- 5) Elephants should be tested for vitamin E levels. If levels are low they must be supplemented on a daily basis with a liquid form of Vitamin E.
- 6) Fresh browse should be made available every day.

### D) Enrichment:

- 1) Elephants should never be housed alone
- 2) Any herd of less than five individuals is not considered a viable social group. Every effort should be made to house elephants in groups no smaller than five.
- 3) Any object that is elephant proof can and should be considered for elephant enrichment
- 4) Nothing takes the place of freedom to roam and live vegetation to eat, but enrichment can alleviate boredom and neurotic behavior.
- 5) The key to successful enrichment is to change the enrichment objects regularly.
- 6) Logs, boulders, piles of sand, gravel, clay and substrate are enriching.
- 7) New sights, sounds, and smells are enriching.
- 8) Keeper directed activities and public exhibition are not considered enrichment.

### E) Veterinary Care:

- 1) You must have access to a veterinarian familiar with elephants. The more often a veterinarian visits the barn, the more comfortable he/she will become with the elephants. Even if the facility is protected contact, it still is important that the veterinarian and elephant are comfortable with each other.
- 2) Baths should be given daily.
- 3) Foot trimming should be done as needed.
- 4) Fecal examinations should be done twice a year.
- 5) Tuberculosis and general blood tests should be done once a year

### F) Management:

- 1) Free contact non-dominance and protected contact are considered viable forms of elephant management.
- 2) Any form of punishment is unacceptable.
- 3) No elephant should ever be struck, poked, prodded or hooked with any object or weapon.
- 4) Electricity does not prevent aggression in elephants and cannot be used for any purpose.
- 5) Chaining is an unacceptable husbandry and management tool
- 6) Food, water and companionship deprivation is unacceptable

- 7) If an elephant continues to display aggressive behavior, alternative positive management protocols must be explored
- 8) Bonded individuals must not be separated.
- 9) Bonded herds must not be separated.
- 10) Species must be conspecific.
- 11) Breeding is unacceptable.
- 12) Elephant rides and off-premises shows are unacceptable.