

2018

Overnight Handbook



Table of Contents

Welcome!.....	3
History of the Houston Zoo.....	4
Overview of Overnight Programs.....	5
Overnight Schedule.....	6
Program Checklists.....	9
Job Descriptions and Evaluations.....	10
Working with Volunteers.....	17
Tips for working with volunteers.....	18
Overnight Expectations.....	18
Parents & Chaperones.....	19
Staff.....	20
Overnight Supplemental Policies.....	21
Group Management.....	24
The positive approach.....	24
If that doesn't work.....	25
Behavior Management.....	25
Safety.....	26
Personal Safety.....	26
Guest Supervision.....	26
Radio Protocols.....	27
Radio Codes and Expectations.....	28
Other Radio Calls.....	29
Feral Animals, including Bats.....	31
Additional Information.....	31
Zoo Operations.....	31
Zoo conservation definitions.....	33
Zoo Locations.....	34
Education staff contact information.....	36

Welcome!

Welcome to the Overnight Programs team at the Houston Zoo! You are joining an exceptional group of people who share their talents to reach over 3000 guests per year and help them explore the Zoo after dark. Your personal success and that of our institution will be achieved by staying focused on our vision, mission, and guiding principles. The Zoo is a unique place, doing important work for conservation around the world. We hope you take immense pride in being a part of our family.

This handbook contains information, policies, and procedures affecting Overnight Programs Guides and Lead Guides. It is the responsibility of every employee to keep up-to-date with new or revised statements as they are distributed. Any questions involving policy changes or implementation should be referred to the Senior Overnight Coordinator.

Please use these statements as guidelines in your day-to-day activities and interactions with employees, guests and volunteers. It is important for you to be able to refer to established policy whenever questions arise. Please do not hesitate to ask if anything in these statements is unclear. We are excited that you have joined our team and look forward to working with you!

In 2016, a team of employees and board members created a set of comprehensive Strategic, Business, and Facilities plans outlining the future trajectory of the Zoo for guests, animals in our care, and communities we serve. Included were the new mission, vision and guiding principles.

Houston Zoo Vision, Mission and Principles

Vision

Be a leader in the global movement to save wildlife.

Mission

Connect communities with animals, inspiring action to save wildlife.

Guiding Principles to achieve our mission:

- Be a zoo for all
- Practice exemplary animal care
- Deliver a smart, fun, inspiring guest experience
- Be the leading environmental education resource in Texas
- Inspire broad community support and collaborations.
- Change behaviors to help protect wildlife.
- Create a workplace culture that embodies respect, empowerment, teamwork, and personal development.
- Employ best business practices and sound financial management.
- Ensure safety for guests, staff and the animals in our care.
- Operate sustainably; set an example for others.

History of the Houston Zoo

The Houston Zoo started in Sam Houston Park when local schoolchildren purchased a pair of ostriches for the city in 1914. Additional small animals gradually increased the collection, including geese, swans, ducks, pigeons and a fox.

In 1922, the Zoo's official start in Hermann Park began with the acquisition of about 40 animals, including a bison named Earl (given to the city by the US government from the thinning of bison herds in national parks). Animal trainer Hans Nagel was hired as Zoo Superintendent—the first Zoo employee.

By 1925, the Zoo had grown to 30 acres and included 400 animals. In the 1930s, Houston's population was nearly 300,000 and the Zoo's population included nearly 1,000 birds plus 200 other animals. The Zoo budget was approximately \$30,000 a year.

The number of animals housed at the Houston Zoo has continued to grow and today includes over 6,000 animal residents. In addition to growing in the number of animals, the Zoo has grown in physical size. Currently, the Zoo spans 55 beautifully landscaped acres, including numerous trees close to a century old.

Today over 400 employees and hundreds of volunteers give their energy to maintain high standards of animal care and quality guest experiences. Whether working with the public or behind the scenes, these individuals play a vital role in the overall success of the Zoo and the more than 2.5 million guests who visit each year.

The Zoo became a not-for-profit organization in 2002, overseen by a Board of Directors. Funding for the Zoo comes from a variety of sources, including admission fees, management fees from the City of Houston, food and gift concession sales, memberships and substantial support from private donors and supporters.

Conservation Education Department

Overnight programs are managed as a part of the Interpretive Programs Team within the Conservation Education Department. Our department includes Volunteers, Community Programs and Interpretive Programs. Interpretive Programs include Camp Zoofari, Overnights, Zoo Crew (teen programs) and on-grounds SPARK Team.

All programming in Conservation Education is developed with a focus on our Strategic Priority and 5 Goals.

Our Strategic Priority is to be a leader in conservation education offering experiential programs delivered in the Zoo and in the community.

Goal 1: Provide a continuum of learning from birth through adulthood to engage all program participants in educational programming to inspire saving animals in the wild.

Goal 2: Cultivate the next generation of conservation heroes.

Goal 3: Inspire our school group audiences to partner with us to save wildlife.

Goal 4: Share our conservation messages effectively and creatively so that our Zoo guests change their behaviors to save animals in the wild.

Goal 5: Create a culture of evaluation-based decision-making to increase effectiveness in order to change participant's behavior toward actions that save wildlife.

Overview of Overnight Programs

Since their inception, our overnight programs (formerly Wild Winks) have grown and developed to serve the ever-changing needs of our guests. In addition to opportunities for Boy and Girl Scouts, we have continued to expand the number of programs we offer to community groups, schools, and families. The overnight program has grown from serving an audience of approximately 1,200 participants in its beginnings to over 3000 guests in 2017.

During overnights, participants experience the Zoo after dark, get up close to the animals that call the Houston Zoo home, and discover ways they can help save animals in the wild. Our overnight team is integral in ensuring the best possible experience for all participants, young and old.

Overnight Program Schedule

Shifts for overnight staff will vary, depending on whether you are working the half-night or overnight shift. Regardless of the shift for which you are assigned, the program schedule will remain the same for all groups. To ensure all programs are consistent and run smoothly, staff must operate in a timely manner, abiding by all designated times.

- 6:15 pm Start-up Meeting** – Volunteer Lounge in BEC
This meeting should be attended by all overnight program staff and led by the Sr. Overnight Coordinator and scheduled lead guide. Sr. Overnight Coordinator will update team on pertinent program logistics and then turn it over to the lead guide to discuss tour schedule assignments and other tasks that should be completed before the participants arrives. Absences and tardiness to this meeting are not tolerated will be noted.
- 6:30 pm Overnight Preparation** – BEC
- 7:00 pm Participant Arrival** – Employee Parking lot/Stroller Gate
Lead Guides greet arriving participants, verifying their names on the roster and number of participants before entry. Volunteers and Overnight Guides escort groups to the BEC once vehicles have been parked and gear unloaded. Overnight gear and belongings should be stored in the designated location in the Hall, and the group seated together in the auditorium by color. Guides should facilitate

Kahoot trivia game until all participants have arrived. During this time, everyone should be interacting with the guests, not socializing with each other staff or volunteers. It is also ideal to encourage restroom use since groups will be heading into the Zoo as soon as the welcome is over.

7:15 pm

Welcome – BEC Auditorium

Gate 1 should be closed by Rangers by 7:20 p.m. and all Overnight staff back in the BEC. No exceptions to late arrival or refunds will be made. Guides will provide a welcome and overview of itinerary, expectations, and rules plus introductions of the rest of the team and any volunteers. Rules are as follows:

1. Participate!
 - Play games, ask questions, and do all the activities (parents included).
2. Respect others and property.
 - Raise your hand to ask and answer questions.
 - Silence cell phones and connect to nature.
 - Turn down the volume while on Zoo grounds.
3. Don't blind the animals.
 - No flashlights or flash photography is permitted during overnights.
We have a zero-tolerance policy.
4. Follow the leader.
 - Stay with your leader while on Zoo grounds.
5. Have fun!

7:30 pm

Evening Tour, Group Activity & Animal Demonstrations – Zoo Grounds/BEC

During this time, all groups should gather with their assigned group. A very brief overview of the rules should be conducted (ask the participants to tell you the rules) after which the evening tour should begin. Talk and interact with your group en route to each habitat, stopping at each designated tour stop on your route. Conduct all indoor or outdoor activities according to the curriculum so that all groups receive a consistent experience. Pay close attention to your scheduled times; even small deviations can result in a large difference in the guest experience.

Groups will be pre-scheduled for 20-30-minute animal demonstration slots in the BEC, beginning at 7:30 p.m. It is staff responsibility to ensure they are on time for this experience and wrap up for the next group to arrive in the rotation. If scheduled, a PM animal handler will be available to assist with presentations. **Animals must be returned no later than 9:45 p.m.** typically.

Note: Staff members and program participants are not permitted to visit the elephant barn (or giraffe barn) during the evening hours of an overnight program. Shining of flashlights and excessive noise upset elephants within the barn and can cause aggressive behavior. The elephant barn is monitored by cameras 24 hours a day and the film is reviewed regularly. Disciplinary action up to and including termination will be taken with staff not adhering to this policy.

10:15 pm Evening Rules –BEC Auditorium

Lead guide will facilitate bedtime expectations for adults and children. Half night staff will say goodnight before everyone starts cleanup and participants prepare for sleep.

Note: Snack will typically be incorporated into evening rotations or take place at the end of the night as a large group. If snack is last, please make sure to allow ample time for your group to get back to the building and eat snack before evening rules.

10:30 pm Prepare for Sleep – BEC Hall

All materials and snacks should be put away and cleaned up. Participants, including parents, may begin getting ready for sleep. No showers are available, but participants may use the public restrooms in the BEC Hall. For groups over 80 participants, staff assistance may be needed to help direct the group regarding the position of sleeping bags and air mattresses so as to accommodate everyone in the group in a comfortable manner. Staff should be cleaning up materials and assisting members of their group with setting up their bedding materials.

11:00 pm Lights Out – BEC Hall

All participants should be settled for the night. Guides working the PM shift should leave promptly at 10:30 PM once all materials and the guide report has been completed. Staff working the overnight shift can prepare for bed once the lights are out for guests.

6:00 am* Wake Up – BEC Hall

All participants should pack up their belongings and prepare for activities out on Zoo grounds. Guides should help their group members pack up items while the lead guide coordinates the movement of cars back to the front lot.

Move Cars – Gates 1 & 8

Due to restricted staff parking, all cars should be moved from the employee parking lot back to the Zoo's public lot. The lead guide should gather all parents who drove vehicles and provide directions to Gate 8. Once all cars are parked in the public lot, the parents and Zoo staff should return to the BEC through Gate 8. All overnight materials belonging to participants should be loaded into cars prior

to walking to breakfast unless previous arrangements were made by Sr. Overnight Coordinator.

7:15 am Breakfast – Macaw Café

The menu for breakfast includes assorted fresh fruit, granola and yogurt, bagels, cream cheese and jam served with coffee, water and juice. Coffee is provided for parents only. Overnight staff can partake in breakfast with the group.

Groups arriving at Macaw Café will be staggered by 5-10 minutes to allow SSA staff to refresh food items.

7:30 am Early morning Zoo stroll – Zoo Grounds

Once everyone has finished their breakfast, all participants should gather with their overnight guide. Morning activities may be sprinkled in with visits to animal habitats. In general, morning tour areas include: Bird Garden, Birds of the World, Children’s Zoo (CZ), Sea Lions, and Red Pandas. Depending on time and interest, guides are welcome to revisit areas where animals were not seen the night before or encourage unstructured play in Explore the Wild, our nature play area next to the BEC. Pay close attention to your scheduled times; even small deviations can result in a significant difference in the guest experience.

9:00 am Departure

All groups should meet in the front Zoo plaza by 9 o’clock. Staff will say farewell and encourage guests to visit the gift shop on their way out or to continue exploring the Zoo for the day. Admission to the Zoo is now included in the overnight program; direct guests to the plan-your-day kiosk for the latest on keeper chats and additional festivities occurring on grounds. All materials should be cleaned up and staff should depart by no later than 9:15 AM after submitting Guide Shift Report (link on Overnight Educators webpage).

Evening: Pre-program Checklist

- Roster, logistics, staff schedules and other materials collected
- Start-up meeting for staff and volunteers
- Program materials prepared
- Safety materials collected (First Aid bag, pepper spray, flashlights, radio, education cell phone)
- Prepare snack items for group
- Prepare t-shirts to pass out during check-in

Evening: Lights Out Checklist

- Pick up all trash. Dispose of items in the trash or recycling bins.
- Return **all** supplies to their appropriate storage area.
- Wipe down all tables, chairs, and other surfaces.

- Put away extra snacks. Throw away any opened snacks.
- Turn out lights once classrooms are cleaned.
- Ensure animals have been returned for the evening and properly signed back in.
- Contact Rangers to lock buildings used in program
- Complete attendance and lead reports appropriately.
- Ensure everyone has clocked out

Morning Checklist

- NEATLY return all curriculum materials to the overnight binder.
- Tidy up the kitchen, overnight area, and ensure all flashlights or technology have been returned to appropriate storage.
- Put left-over guest belongings in lost and found at the Information Desk.
- Double check that all staff have clocked out for their shift before leaving.

Lead Overnight Programs Guide Job Description

Regular, Part-Time January-November

POSITION SUMMARY:

The Lead Overnight Programs Guide is responsible for coordinating and implementing scheduled activities, events, meals and volunteers to provide an exciting and fun recreational and educational overnight program regarding natural sciences (zoology, ecology, conservation and animal husbandry) with purpose of igniting passion for learning and conservation in all people. This is a part time position at 16-29 hours per week. Schedules are created 2-4 weeks in advance. A Lead Overnight Programs Guide maintains a high level of energy and enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to work with groups of all ages in both in and outdoor settings. The opportunity to serve as a Camp Lead Guide is available if Annual Camp training in the spring is completed.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensures team completes the preparation, break down, and clean-up of classroom, facilities and materials for overnight programs and activities. (Overnight Lead Guide may be required to perform these tasks).
- Responsible for communicating with staff and volunteers during the overnight program and coordinating activities, including distribution of roster, tour route, assigning of groups and ensuring that the program runs smoothly and stays on schedule.
- Play an active role in the facilitation of activities as written in the curriculum to promote an understanding of and appreciation for the Zoo and the natural world in a fun and exciting manner
- Responsible for ensuring policies and procedures are adhered to and all paperwork is collected and correctly submitted.
- Establish and maintain a positive atmosphere to ensure the highest level of performance and guest service while enforcing and complying with safety procedures and guidelines.
- Assist in organizing and reporting inventory of all overnight program supplies, and equipment used in presentations and activities.
- Greet and assist overnight participants during check-in and out.
- May handle live animals for programs and activities. (Training provided). Must adhere to all handling protocols and safety rules when handling all program animals.
- Responsible for distributed food items during the overnight – i.e. evening snack and keeping the areas clean.
- Required to work weekends, which may include holidays and overnight shifts

- Ability to work a minimum of 3 overnight or evening shifts per week
- Must be able to obtain and retain updated CPR/First Aide certification (Training can be provided)
- Abide by all Houston Zoo's policies and procedures, including safety protocol and wearing the appropriate uniform or attire for the duration of the overnight.
- Contributes to saving animals in the wild through: reduction of waste, water and energy use and inspiring guests and staff to take wildlife protecting actions
- Performs other duties as assigned

SUPERVISION:

Receives guidance with respect to general objectives, assignments, methods, and scheduling; operates within department policy guidelines using independent judgement to facilitate and achieve assigned work.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

- Associate's Degree (AA) or equivalent from a two-year college or technical school
- Minimum of 6 months to one (1) year relevant work experience
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision
- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Strong interpersonal and facilitation skills
- Ability to partner across teams and with all levels of staff

LANGUAGE/REASONING ABILITY:

- Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions and procedural manuals
- Ability to write routine reports and correspondence
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from supervisors, customers, and the general public
- Ability to solve practical problems and respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers and the general public
- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
- Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals. Ability to compute rate, ratio, and percent and to draw and interpret bar graphs.

COMPUTER SKILLS:

- Proficient computer skills including electronic mail, record keeping, routine database activity, word processing, spreadsheets, graphics, etc.

COMPETENCIES:

- **Professional maturity:** The ability to separate emotions from the real issues at hand. The ability to legitimately and objectively challenge the substance of our beliefs and biases of our observations. Remains calm under pressure and in stressful situations
- **Responsibility:** The ability to meet commitments made to yourself and others, keeping the promises you make, and acknowledging and accepting the choices you have made, the actions you have taken, and the results they have led to.
- **Communication:** The ability to write and speak effectively using appropriate convention based on the situation; actively listens to others, asks questions to verify understanding, and uses tact and consideration when delivering feedback to others.
- **Flexibility:** Demonstrate responsiveness and adaptability following change initiatives, and demonstrates ongoing support for change efforts.
- **Intelligence:** Understand and comprehend information, as well as find application and value from new knowledge.
- **Employee Service:** The ability to address employee concerns/issues in an appropriate and timely manner
- **Job Knowledge/Technical Knowledge:** Demonstrates a sound working knowledge of current role and the technical systems and applications used in performing this role, and understands the impact this role has on other business functions within the organization
- **Interpersonal Communication:** Writes and speaks effectively based on the psychological, relational, situation, environmental and cultural dynamics within the situation
- **Manages Change:** Demonstrates effectiveness and flexibility with changing environments, responsibilities, tasks, and people.
- **Problem Solving:** Identifies and resolves issues timely by gathering and analyzing information skillfully.
- **Attention to Detail:** Follows detailed procedures to ensure accuracy in the entry and reporting of data/information
- **Organization:** Uses time efficiently by prioritizing and planning work activities. Methodical and efficient in structuring tasks to be accomplished.
- **Integrity and Respect:** Demonstrates upmost level of integrity in all instances, and shows respect towards others and towards company principles.
- **Judgment:** Demonstrates ability to make independent and sound decisions in all situations.
- **Teamwork:** Shares key information with others involved in a project or effort, works in harmony to accomplish objectives, responds with enthusiasm to directives, and shows support for departmental and organizational decisions.
- **Quality:** Sets high standards and measures of excellence to ensure quality assurance in every aspect of work performed.
- **Accountability:** Takes personal responsibility and ownership for adhering to all company policies and procedures while also completing work timely and in accordance with performance expectations.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

- Perceiving the nature of sounds with or without correction, to receive detailed information through oral communication.
- Activities in which you must convey by spoken, detailed word or important spoken instructions to others accurately, loudly, or quickly.
- Substantial movements (motion) of the wrist, hands, and/or fingers in a repetitive manner
- Ascending or descending stairs, ramps and the like, using feet and legs and/or hands and arms.
- Raising objects from a lower to higher position or moving object horizontally from position to position.
- Close and distance vision
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds.
- Ability to adjust focus (ability to adjust the eye to bring an object into sharp focus)
- Manual dexterity sufficient to reach/handle items, works with the fingers, and perceives attributes of objects and materials.
- Moderate physical activity performing somewhat strenuous daily activities of a primarily production/technical nature.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

- Exposure to outdoor conditions and changing weather such as heat, humidity, and rain; position requires work outside in the zoo for special events, tours and presentations
- Moderate noise (business office with computers and printers, light traffic)

PUBLIC CONTACT:

Requires heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal skill, extensive interaction with the public, donors, and members requiring a high degree of customer service skills

WORK HOURS:

Normal schedule –Part Time, varied evenings and overnights throughout the week. Hours and days for each week will fluctuate and are dependent on guest registration. Schedules are created 2-4 weeks in advance.

Overnight Programs Guide Job Description

Regular, Part-Time January-November

POSITION SUMMARY:

The Overnight Programs Guide is responsible for implementing and leading an exciting and fun recreational and educational overnight program regarding natural sciences (zoology, ecology, conservation and animal husbandry) with the goal of increasing an understanding and appreciation of the natural world. This is a part time position at 16-29 hours per week. Schedules are created 2-4 weeks in advance. An Overnight Programs Guide maintains a high level of energy and enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility, and consistent proven ability to work with groups of all ages in both in and outdoor settings during an overnight.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Responsible for conducting evening programs and activities for groups and individuals of all ages to promote an understanding of and appreciation for the Zoo and the natural world in a fun and exciting manner
- Assists with the preparation and break down of facilities and materials used in overnight programs and activities
- Establish and maintain a positive atmosphere to ensure the highest level of performance and guest service while enforcing and complying with safety procedures and guidelines
- Greet and assist overnight participants during check-in and out and remain with assigned group throughout the program
- Teach and conduct all activities as written in the curriculum
- Provide world class service to guests and team members
- May handle live animals for programs and activities (Training provided)
- Required to work weekends, which may include holidays and overnight shifts
- Ability to work a minimum of 3 overnight or evening shifts per week
- Must be able to obtain and retain updated CPR/First Aide certification (Training can be provided)
- Contributes to saving animals in the wild through: reduction of waste, water and energy use and inspiring guests and staff to take wildlife protecting actions
- Performs other duties as assigned

SUPERVISION:

Receives guidance with respect to general objectives, assignments, methods, and scheduling; operates within department policy guidelines using independent judgement to facilitate and achieve assigned work.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

- Associate's degree (AA) or equivalent from two-year college or technical school; or six months to one year related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

- 6 months of experience working with children is required. Experience in an informal setting is preferred. Experience working with animals preferred.

LANGUAGE/REASONING ABILITY:

- Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions and procedural manuals
- Ability to write routine reports and correspondence
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from supervisors, customers, and the general public
- Ability to solve practical problems and respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers and the general public
- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.

COMPETENCIES:

- Professional maturity: The ability to separate emotional feelings from the real issues at hand. The ability to legitimately and objectively challenge the substance of our beliefs and biases of our observations.
- Initiative: Takes a responsible, proactive approach and willingness to get things done independently; readiness to take the lead on new projects, ideas, tasks or assignments.
- Responsibility: The ability to meet commitments made to yourself and others, keeping the promises you make, and acknowledging and accepting the choices you have made, the actions you have taken, and the results they have led to.
- Communication: The ability to write and speak effectively using appropriate convention based on the situation; actively listens to others, asks questions to verify understanding, and uses tact and consideration when delivering feedback to others.
- Flexibility: Demonstrate responsiveness and adaptability following change initiatives, and demonstrates ongoing support for change efforts.
- Intelligence: Understand and comprehend information, as well as find application and value from new knowledge.
- Employee Service: The ability to address employee concerns/issues in an appropriate and timely manner
- Job Knowledge/Technical Knowledge: Demonstrates a sound working knowledge of current role and the technical systems and applications used in performing this role, and understands the impact this role has on other business functions within the organization
- Interpersonal Communication: Writes and speaks effectively based on the psychological, relational, situation, environmental and cultural dynamics within the situation
- Manages Change: Demonstrates effectiveness and flexibility with changing environments, responsibilities, tasks, and people.
- Problem Solving: Identifies and resolves issues timely by gathering and analyzing information skillfully.
- Attention to Detail: Follows detailed procedures to ensure accuracy in the entry and reporting of data/information

- Organization: Uses time efficiently by prioritizing and planning work activities. Methodical and efficient in structuring tasks to be accomplished.
- Integrity and Respect: Demonstrates upmost level of integrity in all instances, and shows respect towards others and towards company principles.
- Judgment: Demonstrates ability to make independent and sound decisions in all situations.
- Teamwork: Shares key information with others involved in a project or effort, works in harmony to accomplish objectives, responds with enthusiasm to directives, and shows support for departmental and organizational decisions.
- Quality: Sets high standards and measures of excellence to ensure quality assurance in every aspect of work performed.
- Computer Savvy: The knowledge and ability to use computers and technology efficiently and effectively.
- Collaboration and Partnership: Encourages and embraces dialogue from team members, while anticipating and resolving conflicting differences by exploring mutually agreeable solutions.
- Accountability: Takes personal responsibility and ownership for adhering to all company policies and procedures while also completing work timely and in accordance with performance expectations.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

- Moderate physical activity performing somewhat strenuous daily activities of a primarily production/technical nature. Manual dexterity sufficient to reach/handle items, works with the fingers, and perceives attributes of objects and materials.
- Close vision (clear vision at 20 inches or less), Distance vision (clear vision at 20 feet or more), peripheral vision (ability to observe an area that can be seen up and down or to the left and right while eyes are fixed on a given point), depth perception (three-dimensional vision, ability to judge distances and spatial relationships), ability to adjust focus (ability to adjust the eye to bring an object into sharp focus)
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds
- Substantial movements (motion) of the wrist, hands, and/or fingers in a repetitive manner
- Ascending or descending stairs, ramps and the like, using feet and legs and/or hands and arms.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

- Exposure to outdoor conditions and changing weather such as heat, humidity, and rain; position requires work outside in the zoo for special events, tours and presentations
- Moderate noise (business office with computers and printers, light traffic)

PUBLIC CONTACT:

Requires heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal skill, extensive interaction with the public, donors, and members requiring a high degree of customer service skills

WORK HOURS:

Normal schedule –Part Time, varied evenings and overnights throughout the week. Hours and days for each week will fluctuate and are dependent on guest registration. Schedules are created 2-4 weeks in advance.

Observations

All overnight staff will be observed a minimum of 2 times by the Senior Overnight Coordinator, Camp and Overnights Supervisor, or other full-time education staff. Observations may be scheduled or unscheduled. Completed evaluations will be submitted to the Senior Overnight Coordinator and shared during Mid-Year and Annual Reviews.

Working with Volunteers

Volunteers are invaluable to the success of overnights. These are dedicated and hardworking individuals who are truly passionate about the Houston Zoo, lending their time, care, and knowledge to create memorable experiences for our guests. While it is important for overnight staff to clearly state their expectations, as volunteers become more comfortable, guides may allow volunteers to accept more responsibility. Continue to listen, learn about their passions, and find out how they would like to contribute to the overnight experience. Be open to their ideas and suggestions on engaging the participants –many of them have spent hours if not years volunteering as Keeper Aides, Animal Handlers, or in Interpretation and Guest Service and have valuable insight to share. Working with volunteers is not only rewarding for guests, but can be rewarding for the overnight staff as well. Report any issues (including tardiness) immediately to volunteer staff or Sr. Overnight Coordinator.

Shift time: 6:15pm -10:15 p.m. or 5:30-9:15 p.m.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are here to *assist* with overnight tasks and to help shape memorable experiences for our guests. They do not count towards our staff to participant ratio and are able to leave the group if needed. They are expected to follow the same policies as overnight staff. Exceptions are as follows:

Absences/Tardiness

Volunteers sign up for shifts via Better Impact and can cancel their shift up to 24 hours before the time of the program. Volunteers will email or call to report tardiness or absences to the Volunteer Management team or Sr. Overnight Coordinator. Excessive absences or tardiness will be handled by the volunteer staff.

Computers

Volunteers have access to the computers in the BEC breakroom for checking in and out for their shifts.

Dress Code

Volunteers are required to wear the Volunteer uniform for each shift. Their uniform is identical to the Guide uniform, except their t-shirt is royal blue.

Flashlight Use

Volunteers are not permitted to utilize flashlights while out on grounds for the evening tour.

Tips for Working with Volunteers

Volunteers offer hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, excitement, a wealth of knowledge, and a positive attitude among other things. Our job is to make them feel included and a part of the team, instead of a tool to be used. We can do this by creating structure and consistency, providing them with opportunities for growth and improvement, sharing our knowledge and experience, and providing guidance and opportunities for them to contribute. Some things to remember when working with volunteers include the following:

- Make time for volunteers at the beginning of a shift to feel welcome and to inform them about the program –it may be their first time!
- Set volunteers up for success by introducing them with the staff during an overnight. We want guests to recognize them as a resource and person to listen to instead of ignoring. They help create experiences and do a lot to assist with managing our guests!
- All volunteers to take ownership of tasks and to share knowledge when appropriate.
- Engage them in conversation as a contributor, instead of talking “at” them.
- Ask Volunteers for their input and feedback at the end of a shift. Let them be creative and share their perspective. They may see things you missed when leading a group or activity.
- All volunteers have the opportunity to choose a topic or animal of interest, become the “expert” on that topic, and present to guests during the tour or other activities.
- Be aware of the perception of your relationship with volunteers. Guests should see our volunteers as an integral part of the program and having positive interaction with the staff.
- Provide positive feedback to volunteers and voice your gratitude for the time and effort they have invested in helping. Specific and constructive feedback can be valuable to volunteers who have been participating for a while. If you want specific results, give specific directions! We want them to know we appreciate them, so they will continue to come back!

Overnight Expectations

The Overnight Experience

The Zoo atmosphere at night is unique. Not many people have the chance to explore a Zoo after dark or experience the different behaviors of animals and nuances of night hikes. It is a place where guests have fun, learn something new, and create memories with friends and family they will keep with them for years to come. Participants can develop a more in-depth

understanding of wildlife and the natural world during their experience. We want every child and adult to leave their overnight with:

- Meaningful and positive interactions with Guides, Volunteers, and guests from diverse backgrounds
- Exploration of the Zoo and natural world
- Safe, interesting and fun activities which connect families and individuals to the Zoo, our conservation partners, and tangible actions they can take to save wildlife.

We achieve this through **YOU!** Overnight staff and volunteers are the key to the success of overnight programs.

First Impressions

The Senior Overnight Coordinator communicates regularly with participants through email and phone calls before their program date. We set the stage that the overnight experience will be a welcoming, fun and exciting place to learn.

You help continue that message every evening you work. We expect guides to:

- Smile and be enthusiastic.
- Greet everyone!
- Let them know you are happy they are here!
- Try to initiate conversations within the group to start building a positive rapport. Make introductions and include everyone.

What We Ask of Parents & Chaperones

Parents and chaperones are provided with information prior to the overnight in order to best prepare their children for a fun, successful experience. We provide a checklist of suggested items to bring, a sample schedule, and answer a list of frequently asked questions. Even with this information, you may encounter guests who are not aware.

Ensure each group has the appropriate sleeping gear, double check allergies, and get a final head count before directing them inside.

If you see iPads, cell phones, flashlights, game systems, etc., ask the adults to put them away for the night. Cameras are allowed during the indoor or morning components of the program.

At the end of the program, we ask guests to fill out a digital evaluation. These evaluations are used to make changes and improvements to the program.

Last year's feedback was used to pilot changes to the guests' experience this year:

- Next-day admission included
- Later start time

We are currently surveying participants from the past 2 years to gain additional insight into the values and needs of our guests.

Staff Expectations

The Conservation Education Department has a set of cultural values we use to define how we approach each work day and our relationships with each other. All Camp Guides are expected to honor these words and hold each other accountable for meeting them each day.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

POSITIVE
+
Approach the day with
OPTIMISM
AND CHOOSE TO
FOCUS ON SUCCESS

EMPOWER

INSTILL
trust & belief
TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THE
betterment
OF THE TEAM

COLLABORATE
leverage
OUR COLLECTIVE GENIUS INTO
action

PASSIONATE
CAPITALIZE ON
OUR ENTHUSIASM
AND
INDIVIDUAL
interests
TO
INSPIRE OTHERS

INNOVATIVE
encourage creativity
TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS TO BE RELEVANT

SUPPORT
selflessly act to
HELP OTHERS
in their time of need.



Supplemental Policies for Overnight Staff

Absences from an Overnight

If you are unable to come in to teach due to illness or other emergencies, please contact the supervisor (work or cell), the overnight cell, or the Education Office. Do not leave a message on voicemail or send a text message. You must speak personally to a member of the Conservation Education staff. This will allow time to contact a substitute guide or prepare an Education staff member to fill in for you. If you are aware you will not be able to attend your shift prior to the day of the overnight, you can switch with other staff. However, you must do so on When to Work prior to the day of the shift and have supervisor approval. Switching shift on the day of an overnight will be considered an absence.

Tardiness will be recorded daily. If uncontrollable circumstances (car trouble, emergencies, etc.) cause you to arrive late, please call the Sr. Overnight Coordinator. Heavy traffic is not unusual in Houston, so please plan to account for traffic along your route.

Excessive absences or tardiness will result in termination and ineligibility for rehire.

Curriculum & Food Supplies

All curriculum materials can be found in the bins for overnight programs. Additional snacks can be found on the shelves under the stairs in the BEC Hall. Remember to return any extra supplies to the correct location at the end of the day so they will be available for use by others.

Computers

Overnight staff have access to public information on the P:\ drive of the Houston Zoo network, which is available from most Zoo computers. On the P:\ drive you may find overnight curriculum and other information. Remember to keep your use work-related and to a minimum.

Conflict Resolution

The overnight environment is an informal, relaxed workplace. We strive to provide a conflict-free workplace but realize that situations do arise. Disagreements between staff should be settled one of two ways.

1. Guides meet away from the group to discuss their differences in a calm, respectful manner.
2. If this can't be done, inform camp management of the dispute and appropriate steps will be taken to correct the situation.

Discounts

Zoo employees receive a soft drink refill for \$0.25 when you bring your own cup. Employees also receive a 40% discount on all food and beverage purchases and a 20% discount on purchases in the Zoo gift shop. You must be in uniform, including your name badge to receive the discount.

Dress Code

All overnight staff are required to wear the Zoo uniform daily. You may wear the overnight t-shirt or the issued Houston Zoo staff shirts. Guests need to be able to easily identify staff; your uniform and nametag provide important identification. Your badge gives you access to the BEC and other buildings. Your uniform should be neat, clean and in good condition. In addition, please remember to wear the wristband that matches your group color for the evening as this helps participants to easily identify their guide. At the end of your time with the overnight program, nametags, uniforms, and security badges must be returned to the overnight coordinator. There is a fee for \$50 for lost badges or name tags.

You will be provided with one blue polo, one overnight shirt, one blue sweatshirt, two bottoms of your choice, a badge, and a nametag. You will need to provide the following:

- Closed-toe shoes. Crocs with holes, Keens, or other similar shoes are not acceptable.
- Hats may be worn, but they must be a safari-style or baseball cap and logo free. You may purchase a hat from the gift shop with the Zoo logo, if you wish.
- Belts, shoes, and socks can be any color.
- Plan to wear a watch, as cell phones may not be used as a clock.
- You can provide your own neutral khaki shorts and/or pants, if preferred. Shorts should have at least a 5" inseam.

Meals

Meals are to be prior to arriving for work or before clocking in. If you work the overnight shift, you may eat breakfast with the participants. Socializing among co-workers should be kept to a minimum during work hours until Lights Out.

Parking

All overnight staff will be provided with a Houston Zoo parking sticker, obtained through Human Resources. This parking sticker allows you access to the employee parking area, accessible through Gate 1, located on Cambridge. Please be aware parking may be limited when you arrive, depending on the start time of your shift.

Personal Belongings

Limited lockers are available in the BEC office space for storage of personal items. Lockers may be utilized by other staff and volunteers, so space is not guaranteed. Please keep in mind when sharing lockers or using a locker without a lock, your personal items cannot be considered completely secure. The Zoo is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Staff may keep one sleeping bag and one cot/air mattress/sleeping pad for overnight use in the overnight storage space. These items must remain neat, organized, and out of the way of daily use of the supplies. If items cannot be stored in this manner, staff will be asked to remove their items.

Telephones

Use of personal cell phones is prohibited during work hours. Do not use your cell phone as a clock, to access information from the internet, or to text or call. Computers are available for you to conduct research related to overnight programs. Staff are not to carry cellular phones unless they are Zoo phones. DO NOT use your cell phone to text or talk while out on Zoo grounds, even when you are arriving to or leaving the Zoo. Your primary responsibility is to teach and supervise participants; using a cell phone impairs your ability to do both and does not make a good impression for guests.

To make business-related calls regarding overnight programs, please use Zoo telephones. To place a call from a Zoo phone to a number inside the Zoo, pick up the receive and dial the 4-digit extension. To place a call outside of the Zoo, press 8-1, then dial the 10-digit number.

Schedules

The schedule will be sent out via When to Work 2-4 weeks in advance. If you are unable to work your scheduled programs, you are responsible for finding a replacement and notifying your supervisor. Should you have reason to request a specific date off for an event such as a wedding, funeral, etc., this must be done in advance of receiving the schedule; requests are not guaranteed.

Overnight staff meetings will be held quarterly. Attendance to these meetings is mandatory. If you cannot attend a quarterly staff meeting, you will be expected to schedule a makeup meeting with your supervisor during normal business hours to review information/training provided in the meeting. Makeup meetings should not exceed one occurrence per year. Occasionally, additional opportunities for extra hours will be available. These will be assigned on a volunteer basis.

Training

All overnight staff are required to complete the following training:

- First Aid/CPR (including renewals)
- Animal handling (including refreshers)

Shifts

All shifts will be assigned by the overnight coordinator. Shifts are as follows:

- Overnight: 6:15 PM – 9:15 AM
- Half-Night: 6:15 PM – 10:30 PM
- Evening only: 5:30-9:30 PM

Hours worked should not exceed these times unless you have received prior approval. You should be prepared to teach all aspects of the curriculum and be familiar with the program logistics before arriving for your shift.

The following are the staffing ratios utilized for overnight programs. 1 staff: 20 participants

0-20 participants	20-40 participants	40-60 participants	60-80 participants
1 lead	1 lead	1 lead	1 lead

1 overnight guide	1 overnight guides	2 overnight guides	3 overnight guides
	1 half night guide	1 half night guide	1 half night guide

Group Management

During the welcome at the beginning of each overnight, staff will review the rules and regulations with program participants. You are welcome to review or refer to the expectations at any time. All participants in overnights are expected to act in accordance with the following rules:

1. Listen and follow directions.
2. Participate in camp activities.
3. Respect others.
4. Respect property.
5. Have fun!

In the event a child or adult chooses not to follow one or more of the above stated rules and is disruptive, the behavior will be dealt with by the guide, unless the behavior is severe or repetitive. If disruptive behavior continues, the lead guide and the overnight coordinator will be involved. Should the behavior continue, the participants may be asked to leave and not return to the program.

The Positive Approach

1. Let children and adults know what is planned and what is expected of them.
 - Share behavioral expectations positively. Hold adults to the same standards as the kids.
 - Set them up for success.
2. Establish a positive rapport with participants.
 - We establish rapport by being dynamic, interesting and enthusiastic as well as being a positive leader. Children look for leadership to feel comfortable. Interact in a positive way with each guest, especially those who may be more challenging. Have fun with your group. Be a firm, consistent, but positive leader.
3. Reward positive behavior with praise.
 - Point out those who are doing it right. Let them be more involved.
 - Call on children who are quiet but interested during discussions.
 - Do not draw attention to participants who are showing inappropriate enthusiasm.
 - Respect.
4. Show participants respect in the way you treat them.
 - Call them by name and show you are invested in their conversation by actively listening and giving eye contact.
 - Say thank you when they do what you ask.
5. Let them know that you will require respect for you and Zoo property.
 - Make sure they show manners during meals and in dealing with each other.
 - Be consistent.
 - Set and maintain a standard of behavior. If you say you will start when everyone is quiet, wait for everyone to do that.

6. Ask the group if there are certain ways they want to be treated.

If That Doesn't Work

Every guest has the right to learn and have a fun, memorable experience during an overnight. If some are causing distractions and compromising that experience, their behavior should be addressed.

1. Don't be nervous about saying something. It is your job to create a positive environment. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to get the child or adult to correct the behavior.
2. Try not to reward negative behavior. Not exactly "rewarding" but drawing attention to undesired behavior is what children often want.
3. Correct a child or adult quietly and discreetly.
4. No corporal or physical punishment should ever be used.
5. No direct threats should ever be used, such as "If you don't stop misbehaving, you will be sent home."
6. Don't state anything if you don't plan on following through.

Behavior Management

Our goal is to keep all participants safe and happy during overnights. However, sometimes certain behavior warrants the staff to step in. The steps below should be followed by guides when disciplinary action is necessary.

First Step is eye contact with that guest or standing next to the guest

Second Step is talking to the guest. Explain what is not appropriate about the behavior and the consequences for repeating the behavior. Parents/chaperones should be brought into the conversation at this point. It is their responsibility to help manage the kids in their care.

Third Step If a guide has used the above procedures and the child or adult continues to show "behavior problems," a Lead Guide should be called upon to assist.

1. The Lead Guide will reiterate the behavior issue, advise them of what needs to change and warn the participants that if their behavior does not improve, they will be asked to leave without a refund.
2. The guest will be given a second chance to improve the behavior.
3. Lead Guides will document, in writing, all information about disciplinary incidents and submit it to the Sr. Overnight Coordinator in the lead report. If necessary, please call for support.

Fourth Step

If the participant's behavior does not improve, they may be asked to leave without a refund.

Immediate Action

In the case of serious behavior issues, notify the Lead Guide (or Senior Overnight Coordinator) immediately, so action may be taken.

Examples of such behavior include:

- Open defiance of staff directions
- Overt sexual behaviors towards children or other participants
- Running away from the group
- Behaving in a manner that is unsafe to self, others, or Zoo animals

Safety

Personal Safety

Safety is a top priority. Practicing safe work habits ensures a safe environment for you, other team members, and Zoo guests. Please do your part to ensure a safe work environment by observing all safety guidelines and enforcing them.

Houston weather fluctuates throughout the year, experiencing both very hot and very cold temperatures. Most of the overnight program occurs outside. We highly recommend you come prepared and dressed for the outdoor conditions, wearing the appropriate protective clothing (hats, gloves, sunscreen, etc.). Be sure to drink plenty of water and take frequent rest breaks while out on Zoo grounds when needed.

Pepper Spray

Don't forget to carry this with you on grounds, but only use it in an emergency. If you do not know how to use it, the training canisters are in the supply cabinet (labeled "inert").

Supervision of Participants

Safety is our number one priority during overnights. The following are tips to remember to ensure the safety of the participants, as well as staff.

- Remember you are role models for younger children. You are expected to set good examples for them through your actions.
- Treat participants politely and respectfully. They are our guests, and we want them to have an enjoyable time and return to the Zoo.
- Look for participants who need help or guidance as they participate in the activities, whether they are working on a craft, playing games, or out on tour. Offer to help when needed.
- Encourage children and parents to participate but never force a child that is timid or afraid to do anything he/she doesn't want to do.
- Accompany participants to the bathroom or water fountain while out on Zoo grounds. Guests should not be allowed to leave the group by themselves.
- Always know the number of participants in a group. When touring Zoo grounds make regular "head counts" every time you leave an exhibit area to be sure everyone is present. Check frequently to ensure that all participants from your group are still with the group.
- Staff should be group leaders, walking in front of the group. Volunteers should close doors and gates when entering and exiting areas and walk in the back of the group to make sure all participants stay together.
- Help all participants to have FUN!
- Water must be available to guests while on Zoo grounds. Make sure water breaks are taken, as well as rest stops and bathroom breaks. Participants are responsible for carrying their water bottles and other belongings.

Escorting Participants to Restrooms

All participants must be accompanied to the restroom or water fountain while out on Zoo grounds. Participants should not be allowed to leave the group by themselves, especially when out on Zoo grounds. When you are escorting children and families to the restroom, do not enter the facilities with them. Staff and volunteers should wait in the hall or area outside the restroom for participants to return. Note: Most restrooms will be locked unless requested to be opened by Rangers.

Bathrooms are located:

- In the BEC
- In concession areas (in the front plaza, , near the Trading Post in African Forest, and across from Twiga Terrace)
- Near Natural Encounters and the red panda exhibit in Sarofim Court
- In the Children's Zoo (by the Discovery Center and farm exhibit)

Water Fountains are located:

- In the BEC
- The Reptile and Amphibian House and outside the komodo dragon exhibit
- At the Macaw Café concession area near the restrooms
- Wortham World of Primates (between Siamangs and Orangutans)
- The Children's Zoo near the restrooms at the Discovery Center, at the Farm and the cactus fountain in the desert/prairie area
- The west hoof run near giant eland
- The area behind the tropical bird house
- The lion water fountain in front of the lion exhibit
- Next to the okapi exhibit
- Near the restrooms at the Trading Post in African Forest
- Near the restrooms across from Twiga Terrace

Radio Protocol

Each Guide will have a radio for use during the evening. Pick up your radio when you arrive and turn it on. Education staff are on EDU. At the end of the day, please turn the radio off and place it back in the charger. To operate the radio:

1. Press and hold the radio button on the side of the radio. Wait a moment before speaking to ensure the beginning of your transmission is heard.
2. Speak clearly and say, "This is ____ to ____." Release the button to listen. Keep your conversations brief to reduce radio traffic.
3. Upon completion of the dialogue, both parties should end with "10-4", "clear" or "out".

Use only the following channels:

EDU – To notify other overnight guides, lead guides, education staff, or overnight coordinator

Animals – To contact an animal section for any animal specific reasons

Ranger- To contact a ranger for any on-grounds emergency, first aid, lost child, etc.

Proper radio etiquette should be used at all times. Some tips to remember are:

- If you are on one channel and switch to another channel, wait about 10 seconds before speaking to prevent interrupting someone else.
- If you have an emergency situation, state the code upon your first transmission.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice while using the radio, clearly and concisely.
- Before you begin to speak be sure you know what you will say.
- Transmissions should be professional and work-related only.
- Use a telephone whenever possible or when a detailed conversation is necessary.
- Remember that channels may be shared among many individuals
- If you feel your radio is not working properly, notify your supervisor so arrangements can be made for repairs.
- Items of a sensitive nature should NOT be shared via the radio – remember that staff, volunteers, and even guests and media may be listening to or overhear radio transmissions.

Radio Codes and Expectations

If you hear a code called while on Zoo grounds, DO NOT rush to the scene of the emergency. Zoo personnel have specific responsibilities during emergencies and the addition of even the best-intentioned people may impede employees as they perform their duties.

Should any emergency situation occur, your number one priority is to ensure that all overnight guests are safe. In the event of an emergency, you and your group will be treated like a guest. Your only responsibility is to ensure all participants in your group are accounted for during the emergency.

Code Adam (Rangers):

When Zoo Staff has care of a lost Child:

1. Keep the child in the location where they were originally found if possible. In most cases the family or chaperones are in the immediate vicinity.
2. Call Zoo Rangers on RANGERS for a Code Adam and give your exact location.
3. Once the Ranger arrives, you may leave the area.

Code Amber (Rangers):

When Zoo Staff has the Caretaker and the Child is missing (or when a Guide loses a participant): If you are approached about a lost child, call Zoo Rangers and inform them that there is a Code Amber and give your exact location. Please keep the parent with you until a Ranger arrives at the scene. If the lost child is **not** an overnight guest, you may leave the area once a Ranger arrives.

1. If a child is lost, the Ranger will gather as much information about the child as possible including: Name, age, hair color, eye color, approximate height and weight, what they were wearing, **shoe color and style**, (although the clothes may be easily changed, an

abductor typically cannot change the child's shoes). Also, the color of the child's wrist band can be helpful.

2. After contacting Rangers, notify the lead guide, as supervisors will need to be informed of the situation.
3. Rangers and Education Management will assume control of the situation. The Guide will need to remain available to help identify the child if they were a participant.

Code: First Aid (Rangers)

1. Situations which would warrant calling Rangers include guest overheated, guest vomiting, etc. Most basic first aid can be handled using first aid kits located in the BEC.
2. When using the radio, indicate your name, location and that you need first aid assistance. Do not give details over the radio, unless a medical emergency (see below).
3. Contact the Lead Guide to inform them of the situation.

Staff and volunteers are not allowed to give any medication to participants, including adults.

Code Blue (Rangers)

1. Code blue is a medical emergency requiring an ambulance. Severe bleeding, heart attack, stroke, choking, etc.
2. When using the radio, indicate your name, location and that you have a Code Blue. When asked, describe the situation as briefly as possible.
3. If you are CPR/First Aid trained and certified, you may administer CPR or First Aid to the individual.
4. Guides, Volunteers or other staff should take the group out of the area to a safe location and stay with the group until another staff member arrives at the scene. If you are near the BEC or other indoor exhibit facility, please direct the group to one of these areas. The guide should remain with the injured guest until help arrives.

Code Red (Rangers)

Should a fire occur when you are in any building, remain calm, line the children up and quickly escort them out of the building following the safest route to the nearest exit and then contact Rangers on the radio.

Code 99 (Rangers)

"Code 99" situations include:

- Animal escapes: any incident where an animal is outside of its containment and outside of animal care staff's control.
- An animal in an enclosure with compromised containment (i.e., tree falls into enclosure, damaged containment barriers, etc.)
- Unauthorized guests in animal enclosures while animals are present in the same space.
- Staff trapped or injured in a dangerous animal's enclosure with animal(s) still present.

In all of these situations, the following must be considered in this order:

- Safety of humans (staff, volunteers, guests)
- Animal welfare – safe and quick containment of the situation, making every attempt to avoid termination of the animal

Code 99 Call

1. Escort the participants to a safe area and wait there for instructions. Overnight staff must leave the radio clear until an “all clear” is given. So, you will need to sit tight with the rest of the guests until we can communicate with you.
2. DO NOT:
 - Panic or risk your own personal safety
 - Approach an escaped animal; all animals are potentially dangerous
 - Go to the scene unless directed
3. Switch to Channel EMERGENCY unless otherwise instructed. This will remain in effect until the Incident Manager instructs otherwise or until the code has been declared clear.

Once in a secure location, you are to remain there with the program participants and monitor radio channel 1 until the “all clear” is communicated.

Other Radio Emergencies

Severe Weather

Overnights occur rain or shine. Participants have been asked to come prepared with an umbrella or jacket, and ponchos are provided. During storms involving lightening or severe downpours (flash flooding), all groups must be indoors, preferably in the BEC.

Evacuation Plan

There may be instances when an evacuation of the Zoo or a shelter in place becomes necessary. These may include: a chemical leak, major fire, severe weather warning or other natural disaster, fatality or escape of a dangerous animal. As Guides responsible for guests and volunteers, you will follow any instructions given to the public. As soon as possible, Ranger staff will contact you for further instructions.

Your priority is your safety and the safety of the overnight guests and volunteers with you. In the event of any emergency, you will be treated like a guest and moved accordingly.

Other Safety Measures

Restricted Areas

Restricted areas are those areas not open to the public and are not intended for all Zoo staff to access. Many are marked with “Authorized Personnel Only” signs. Do not expect that as a staff member you can enter any area. If you need to go behind-the-scenes for any reason, contact the area supervisor for their approval. This includes mechanical areas as well as animal care or quarantine facilities.

- Overnight staff may enter the parking lot to access the break trailer and Backyard Café through the Rhino or Stroller Gates.

- All other visits to behind-the-scenes areas, keeper chats, and enrichment activities require prior approval and are listed in the curricula.
- Guests should never be left to wander around restricted areas.
- It is critical that all restricted access gates remain closed during public hours so that guests do not have access to these animal care and maintenance areas. Be sure the last person in your group closes the door.

Animal Health

It is important that the public doesn't feed the animals—even "traditional" foods like peanuts for the elephants. If you see anyone feeding animals, ask them to stop or contact a Ranger.

Even healthy animals can carry organisms, which, if given the proper environment, can cause disease in humans. Ensure all campers wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after touching an Ambassador Animal or exploring natural spaces outdoors.

If you, a volunteer or participant are bitten or scratched by an animal, notify Rangers and the overnight coordinator.

Please DO NOT FEED, and respectfully ask guests not to chase the pigeons, squirrels or ducks.

Feral Animals, including Bats

If feral or non-Zoo animals are encountered on Zoo grounds, notify Rangers. State your name and that you are an overnight Guide, the place in the zoo where you are and the type of animal observed. Keep participants away from the animal, even if this means leaving the area. Please reference the **HZI Wild Protocol** for additional information regarding bats.

Additional Information

Zoo Operations

All information can be found on our website at www.houstonzoo.org. If you encounter questions from guests which you are unable to answer, please contact another staff member or the Sr. Overnight Coordinator to assist you. Our goal is to provide excellent guest service to all our visitors.

Conservation

The Houston Zoo is involved in a variety of conservation programs around the globe. In addition, we offer guests, including our campers, a number of ways to Take Action to save animals in the wild. Visit the Conservation pages on the Houston Zoo website for the most updated information. <http://www.houstonzoo.org/saving-wildlife/>

Animal Enrichment and Training

Wild animals must work for a living, finding food and shelter. We use enrichment to encourage natural behaviors. Enrichment items include things such as phone books or cardboard boxes, adding new textures, smells, visual barriers, bedding materials or hiding places for food.

Zoo staff trains animals by providing positive reinforcement, such as treats or praise. Training allows staff to interact with animals with minimal stress, such as with husbandry or veterinary procedures or when moving an animal from one area to another.

<http://www.houstonzoo.org/meet-the-animals/animal-care/>

Hermann Park Train

You may purchase tickets for train rides from the booth in front of the train depot. Tickets are \$2.50 per person. The Hermann Park Train is not associated with the Houston Zoo, although you may hear guests refer to it as the “Zoo Train.”

Lost and Found

Items found in the Zoo’s public area should be turned in to the Guest Relations Office. Direct guests seeking lost items to the Guest Relations Office during normal operating hours. Turn in items found in non-guest areas to Guest Services personnel.

Media/Press

Overnight Guides are not permitted to contact the media or make statements on behalf of the zoo. If you are approached by the media on grounds, contact Sr. Overnight Coordinator or Rangers on the radio.

Service Animals

Individuals with service animals such as seeing-eye dogs need to check in with the Guest Relations Office in the North Administration building. If you see a suspicious animal, call a Ranger to investigate. If we have a Service Animal scheduled to attend an overnight, you will be notified during pre-shift meeting.

What’s Allowed/Not Allowed on Zoo Grounds

At the Zoo, the following are prohibited activities and/or items:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Smoking
- Littering
- Playing any game involving an airborne object (Frisbee, baseball, etc.)
- Playing audio equipment
- Harassing, feeding, and/or throwing objects at Zoo animals
- Glass bottles or straws
- Rowdy or inappropriate behavior
- Balloons or other inflatable objects
- Skateboards, roller/inline skates, tricycles, bikes or scooters
- Outside pets or animals, except certified service animals

If you observe any of these activities or objects during an overnight, you may approach guest(s) and explain the rules or contact Rangers.

Zoo Conservation Definitions

AZA Accreditation

Accreditation is an official recognition & approval of a zoo or aquarium by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. An accredited institution has met a high standard for animal management and care, conservation, education programs, safety, security & guest service.

SSP (Species Survival Plan)

A program developed by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) to manage & conserve endangered & threatened species. Participating institutions collaborate with other zoos to coordinate breeding efforts to maintain a healthy & self-sustaining captive population that is genetically diverse & demographically stable. There are now 107 SSPs covering 161 species.

TAG (Taxon Advisory Group)

Established to analyze the status of a specific group of animals in zoo collections & recommended long-term management programs, TAGs provide a forum for discussing husbandry, veterinary & conservation issues. There are currently 46 TAGs covering groups of invertebrates, fish, birds, mammals, reptiles & amphibians.

Studbook

Set up to help in the management of a species in captivity to ensure the best genetic pairings & demographic management of the captive population. The studbook keeper is responsible for maintaining a current & historical database of pedigrees, births, deaths, locations, transfers & pairings & general biology & ecology status & distribution of wild populations.

Enrichment

Creating an environment for Zoo animals that allows for physical and mental choices and challenges.

Zoo Locations

Brown Conservation Education Center (BEC): Located between the Herpetology building and Natural Encounters, the BEC houses the Conservation Education Department, which includes the Volunteer Team.

Front Plaza (Main Gate, Gate 10, and Main Exit): The entrance to the Zoo fans out into a plaza where you will find Macaw Café, the gift shop, and a 'Plan Your Day' kiosk with a map and list of daily and upcoming events such as keeper chats.

Gate 1: The staff/employee entrance located directly off Cambridge at the edge of Hermann Park.

Stroller Gate: Located just behind the Aquarium and is an entrance to the staff/volunteer parking area, behind-the-scenes buildings and the employee lunch line.

Rhino Gate: Located past the bug house at the end of West Hoof Run, this gate accesses behind-the-scenes staff parking and many buildings.

Medical Center Entrance (West Gate, Gate 3): Public gate on Cambridge across from the Children's Medical Center emergency room. This gate is only open on weekends and other high traffic days (including Spring Break, some summer days, and some holidays).

Reflection Pool: Front and center at the Zoo, directly behind Sea Lions and between the Herpetology Building and Tropical Bird Houses, this area is a great place for guests to have lunch or relax; it can also be rented for events.

Formerly, Duck Lake: Currently being renovated to become the new Texas Wetlands habitat and restaurant.

Hoof run (East and West): Both hoof run locations include single- and multi-species exhibits. The West area is home to okapi, warthogs, nyala, and more, while the East side houses bongos, tapirs, anteaters and maned wolves.

Wortham World of Primates (WWP): Located at the center of the Zoo, this area houses much of the Zoo's primate collection. The entrance is at the end of the Reflection Pool on the Tropical Bird House side.

John P. McGovern Children's Zoo (Children's Zoo, CZ): Located on the side of the Zoo closest to the Med Center, between the Texas Direct Auto Wildlife Carousel, Duck Lake and West Hoof run. The CZ is home to a wide variety of species, from fish and carnivores to birds and reptiles. The CZ also has 3 pavilions (blue, yellow, and red) that can be rented out or used by the public; the red and yellow pavilions are enclosed for year-round use. The Houston Texans Enrichment Zone is just inside the CZ entrance. The CZ also features the Contact Yard, Swap Shop and the Bug House.

Kipp Aquarium: Located in the Front Plaza, the Kipp Aquarium is home to over 200 species and 2,000 individual fresh and saltwater fish, as well as marine invertebrates.

Natural Encounters (NE): Located just past the gift shop and before the Herpetology Building, this building is easily recognized by the bronze animal sculptures adorning the entrance and by the meerkat exhibit on the south side. It houses small mammals, birds, reptiles and fish.

Herpetology Building (Reptile House): Located next to the Reflection Pool, this building contains some remarkable creatures, from venomous snakes and lizards to critically endangered amphibians.

Tropical Bird House (TBH): Many of the Zoo's 250+ bird species are housed here in a combination of both enclosed exhibits and a free-flight aviary.

African Forest: Opened in late 2010 and houses chimpanzees, white rhinos, giraffes, gorillas and more. Entrance is located at the end of east hoof run and exit is near the Medical Center Gate across from the carousel. The Great Ape Gallery is indoors and air conditioned.

Karamu Outpost: Tented area currently housed next to Masihara Pavilion. Picnic tables are located under the tent. This area is available to rent for private parties.

Masihara Pavilion: Large white tent between African painted dogs and the entrance to the African Forest. This area is available to rent for private parties. This space is not typically used for overnight programs.

South Administration Building (South Admin): Located above the Gift Shop, and to the left of the main gate as you enter. This building houses membership, and development staff offices, as well as a conference room.

North Administration Building (North Admin): Located to the right of the main gate as you enter, this building houses the offices Executives, Human Resources, Technology, and Admissions, as well as a conference room. This is also the location of the Guest Relations office (commonly referred to as 'Base' or 'Dispatch'), which monitors Ranger radio channels and serves as the emergency coordination center.

Facilities Building: this building is in the employee parking lot directly across from the Birds Department. This building is home to many departments including Facilities, Horticulture, Marketing, Interactive Marketing/Web Development, Graphics, Special Events, Accounting, Conservation, and more.

Warehouse/Animal Nutrition (Commissary): Located behind the Facilities building, this area houses the Purchasing, Warehouse, and Animal Nutrition Staff. This building the center for all deliveries within the zoo. All food for the animals and supplies for all departments goes through this building.

Veterinary Services (Barn/Quarantine/Hospital/Clinic): This is a set of four buildings that includes the Quarantine Building (partially shared with Aquarium and Houston Toads), Veterinary Barn, Veterinary Services Building, and the Hospital and Administration Building. Access to these areas is limited and subject to approval from veterinary staff.

Explore the Wild: New nature play area opening in the late spring/early summer 2017. Guests will be able to play in this space, which is open to the public.

Swap Shop: Kids and adults alike may bring in natural items they find and trade them for points.

Wherler Lawn: The green space next to the Herpetology Building.

Staff Resources

Education Staff Contact Information

Education Office

Kelly McCreery, Education Administrative Assistant..... 713-533-6739
Education Cell Phone 713-201-9701

Sr. Director of Education

Melanie Sorensen 713-533-6571

Director of Education

Melissa Wong..... 713-533-6557

Education Programs Manager

Lainie Deterling 713-533-6738

Camp and Overnights Program Supervisor

Nicholas Larberg 713-533-6643

Teen Programs Supervisor

Colleen Cavanaugh..... 713-533-6532

Interpretive Programs Supervisor

Bennett Dones 713-533-6543

Sr. Overnight Coordinator

Jessica Briley 713-533-6646

Family Programs Coordinator

Kate Unger 713-533-6573

Early Childhood Programs Coordinator

Leia Cook..... 713-533-6533

Senior ZooMobile Coordinator

Elizabeth Fries 713-533-6547

Educator & Adult Programs Coordinator

Joanne Baptista..... 713-533-6553

School Programs Coordinator

DeAndra Ramsey..... 713-533-6748

Interpretive Specialists

Sarah Fern 713-533-6581

Celina Bergueno 713-533-6581

Volunteer Staff Contact Information

Volunteer Engagement Manager

Samantha Junker..... 713-533-6549

Volunteer Program Coordinators

Heidi Garbe, Interns & Corporate Volunteers 713-533-6558

Shina Bharadwaja, Staff Volunteers, Keeper Aids, and Externs 713-533-6506



HOUSTON ZOO, INC.
Houston, Texas

Overnight Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form

This handbook describes important information about the overnight program including hours of work, expectations and other work-related guidelines. The handbook does not constitute any type of contract. The Education Department may deviate from the stated guidelines as it considers necessary. I understand that I should consult my supervisor regarding any questions not answered specifically in the handbook.

The information and guidelines described here are subject to change. I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur and any such changes will be communicated through official notices. I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies, and that I am responsible for keeping my handbook current. Only Houston Zoo, Inc. has the authority to approve revisions to the guidelines in this handbook.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it. In addition, I am aware the company may access and monitor employee communications and files, as it considers appropriate. My signature below is my acknowledgement of the information above and my consent form authorizing the monitoring.

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____