

Dear Group Organiser,

Risk Assessment

Further to your recent request for information regarding Health and Safety procedures at Chester Zoo, unfortunately it is not feasible for us to forward in depth details and copies of all our documentation, given the sheer volume of information that this entails. I can however confirm that a comprehensive Health and Safety management system, including risk assessment, is in place and can assure you that the safety of our staff and visitors is of paramount importance to us.

To this end we have in place full procedures for many topics, including:-

- Fire evacuation
- Animal escapes
- Monorail breakdown and evacuation
- Lost Children

We also provide a comprehensive First Aid service for our visitors and are working towards full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Our catering establishments are also inspected regularly under Food Safety legislation.

Chester Zoo is subject to regular inspections carried out under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 as well as being subject to all aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. We are committed to continual improvement and our performance will always be in full compliance with relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

I can also confirm that we have adequate Public Liability Insurance cover for all our activities.

More information on all Health and Safety related topics and legislation may be found either on the Health and Safety Executive Web site - www.hse.gov.uk or Chester Zoo website – www.chesterzoo.org

I trust these comments are sufficient for your requirements.

Yours faithfully,

Safety, Health and Environment Manager

Health & Safety Information for Group Visits to Chester Zoo

Unfortunately we are not able to carry out risk assessments on behalf of groups because we are not aware of all the pertinent circumstances regarding your particular visit, for example, we do not know the level of supervision which you are proposing, whether you have any children with special needs, or other relevant individual details. However, we have prepared this document to help you and we also provide a free preview visit for members of staff to carry out risk assessments on the premises if required (by prior arrangement).

Please feel free to contact our Safety and Environment Department (Tel: 01244 389732) if you have any further queries.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Medical Provision

What are the medical provisions on site?

The site has a first aid post by the entrance and on busy days, another close to the Jubilee Square Zoofari overhead Railway. Fully qualified First Aiders are always on hand when the zoo is open. If necessary, you can contact any member of staff who will contact the duty first-aider by telephone or radio.

First Aiders are trained to deal with all minor injuries on site and also, in the initial stages of any major injuries until the emergency services arrive. The Countess of Chester Hospital is nearby and has accident and emergency facilities.

2. Slopes, Steps and Surfaces

Are there any steep slopes or any steps to climb within the zoo?

There are no steep slopes within the zoo. There are some steps, but disabled access is provided where necessary.

Could any ground or floor surfaces be wet and slippery? If so, what measures are in place to prevent accidents?

Ground and floor surfaces are non-slip wherever possible. The outdoor nature of the zoo means that it is exposed to weather conditions that can have an adverse effect on surfaces and care needs to be taken when surfaces are wet. Indoors, a 'Wet Floor' sign procedure is in operation when required.

3. Signposting

Is there clear signposting within the zoo?

Yes, the zoo is well sign-posted throughout. A free zoo map is provided on arrival at the zoo. The zoo itself is also well signposted on the local roads.

4. Traffic and Transport

Are there any traffic hazards, if so, how are these minimised?

The zoo is an enclosed area and contains no public roads. It is closed to vehicular traffic whilst open to the public. There is a large coach and car parking facility near the main entrance. Pedestrian walkways are provided throughout the zoo.

How do we see the zoo if we get tired?

The zoo covers a large area of ground. There is a monorail system which runs overhead around the zoo, from which most of the grounds can be seen.

5. Disabled Persons Provision

What provisions are there for disabled persons?

The walkways are all surfaced throughout the zoo and there is ramp access to areas where there are steps. The monorail is also accessible to wheelchair users. Wheelchairs and electric scooters are available for hire for a small charge near to the Ark Shop. These can be reserved in advance on 01244 389482. There are a number of disabled toilet facilities and there are many seats at various locations within the zoo grounds.

6. Lost Children

What are the zoo provisions for lost children?

If you lose someone, ask any member of staff to help (Staff are recognisable by their green uniforms with zoo logos). They will radio or telephone the 'Lost Children' areas as necessary and will escort lost children to the 'Lost Children' collection area within the First Aid point by the main entrance so that you can be reunited.

7. Emergency procedures

Is there a team of trained staff members on hand at all times and briefed in emergency and First Aid procedures?

Yes. The zoo has a comprehensive emergency plan that has been developed in conjunction with the emergency services. The emergency plan covers incidents such as fire, animal escape and monorail failure.

Is there an evacuation procedure?

Yes. There is a full evacuation procedure in place, which the zoo takes care of.

8. Security

What security measures are there in the zoo?

The zoo has a dedicated security team which is able to deal with any minor security issues on site. The security team spend their time patrolling the zoo and dealing with any security related matters and the team is also trained to deal with any emergency incidents. To help ensure your safety, CCTV is in operation throughout the zoo.

In the event that children misbehave and climb on fences etc. do staff members take disciplinary action?

Uniformed zoo staff are on duty at all times and would take the necessary steps. The zoo has regulations which are displayed at the entrance. Staff are trained to enforce these regulations for the benefit of all guests and will instruct children to behave when necessary.

The quality and safety of all our attractions are important and therefore, a considerable amount of time and effort is spent on ensuring that our visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at the zoo.

9. Lockers

Are lockers available to store belongings?

Yes. Lockers are available for left luggage, close to the Ark Shop just inside the main entrance.

10. Shelters

Are there areas of shelter for use during adverse weather conditions?

Sheltered areas are located throughout the zoo and sheltered picnic areas are also provided. Many of the animals are themselves housed in weatherproof viewing enclosures, so that large parts of the zoo can be seen in comfort, whatever the weather.

11. Food Safety

Is the food in the shops and food outlets clearly labelled?

Yes. All food for sale has 'use by' dates and fully complies with trading standards for food. The food catering outlets operate within Food Safety legislation and are regularly inspected by the local Environmental Health Department.

12. Glass Hazards

Do glass doors and windows pose a hazard to children?

No. Safety glass is used wherever necessary throughout the zoo.

13. Confined Spaces

Do any of the attractions involve being in confined spaces?

The only area in which people are likely to feel enclosed, is in Fruit Bat Forest, where the bats are housed because the area is dimly lit to resemble night time. There are additional exits for persons to leave more easily if they would like to do so.

14. Safety Inspections

Are the monorail and play areas inspected daily for any hazards?

Yes. Daily inspections are carried out by zoo staff. The play areas are also inspected regularly by RoSPA and the monorail is inspected regularly by a third party engineering company.

15. Access to the Animals

Can we stroke the animals?

Sorry, no. For your own protection from possible kicks, bites or scratches, for hygiene reasons and so that the animals are not stressed; we do not allow any of the animals to be stroked or petted.

How safe are we from the wild animals?

The animals are housed behind suitably constructed barriers through which the visitors are able to see, but through which the animals cannot pass.

Chester Zoo is operated under strict licensing conditions. A dedicated team of experienced animal keepers care for the animals. To ensure that they are content and to avoid stress, the animals are able to go into areas within their enclosures which are away from public view if they choose. Therefore not all of the animals may be visible for all of the time.

Safety, Health & Environment Manager