

Black Pine Animal Park Dangerous Animal Escape Protocol

Date: March 2005

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide for the security of the park and recovery of a dangerous animal in the event of an escape.

Protocol: If a dangerous animal escapes, the protection of the visitors, employees, and the community is the highest priority. The animal should be recovered or dispatched according to the following procedures.

Procedure:

General:

When a dangerous animal escapes, our responsibilities are in this order:

1. Ensuring the safety of our visitors and the community
2. Ensuring the safety of park employees and volunteers
3. Recovering the animal the safest way possible.

A dangerous animal escape is any situation in which a dangerous animal is out of its primary enclosure or is **UNCONTROLLED** and could injure or kill a person.

The most senior animal staff person (Assistant Zookeeper and above) present at the park is the person in charge of the recovery of the animal.

Response should be made from an enclosed vehicle or secure building if possible.

Vehicles are to be driven carefully and at a slow rate of speed.

All perimeter gates (front gate, gate by house, gate by caracals to the bus, and gate to the cooler) should be closed and locked once escape is announced.

Remember every animal escape will be different.

Communication:

The person that discovered the escaped animal should get on the radio immediately and announce what animal has escaped and where it was last seen. Do not ask for a specific person, just announce the escape. Announce twice, slowly, and clearly, so everyone is clear. Example: "Ghana is out, Ghana is out, he is standing in front of the primate building repeat Ghana is out, Ghana is out, he is standing in front of the primate building."

If the location of the animal is not know then report where it was last seen.

The animal should be kept under surveillance, but not if it prevents the escape from being reported.

The person reporting the escape should not attempt to capture the animal until others arrive.

Once the escape is announced the senior animal person will ask for all staff to report their locations.

In the case of the practice escape drills the person announcing the escape drill will say “this is a drill, this is a drill _____ has escaped and is located _____ repeat this is a drill, this is a drill _____ has escaped and is located _____.”

Responsibility to the Public:

ALL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS must direct the public to safety. Respond to their questions only by saying that a potentially dangerous animal is not secure and then escort them or direct them to the nearest safe area. Inform them that they will be notified when everything is secure. Remember that you can not force someone to go somewhere they don't want to go. In the case of an escape drill just merely inform visitors what is going on and that it is just a drill.

Injury or Death:

If the injury is discovered at the same time as the escaped animal, it should be reported with the report of the escape. The injury should be described as well as possible. This way the gift shop person can notify 911.

The area where first aid is being rendered and where EMS is being awaited should be a secure area.

EMS/911 should be advised of any potential risk from the escaped animal. **No one is to risk their own life to “rescue” another person. One victim is enough.**

911 Notification:

The gift shop staff member is to call 911 to report the escape only if, and when notified by a senior animal staff member. The senior animal staff member will confirm whether or not the escaped animal is actually a dangerous animal or an animal likely to escape the perimeter fence. If 911 is called, the gift shop person is also responsible for relaying information regarding any human injuries.

If the animal that has escaped is declared “not dangerous” and not likely to escape the perimeter fence, the senior animal staff member will instruct the gift shop staff either not to call 911, or to cancel a 911 call for help if it is not needed and they’ve already been contacted.

The sheriff’s department and or EMS should be told where to report once on park grounds. This instruction will come from the senior animal staff person in charge.

Employee Duties:

No one is to endanger him/herself to “rescue” another person.

The animal care staff will make it their first priority, if not further endangering themselves, to check the area from which the animal(s) escaped to determine if the area is secure and if any other animals have escaped. Secure and check the area only if it is safe to do so, and then help respond to escape.

Every staff member should report to the senior animal person with their location and if they are secure. All staff members are to remain in radio contact and listen until the escape is over.

The senior staff animal person is in charge! Do not do anything or take any action until instructed by them.

Shooting and Tranquilizing:

The senior animal staff (assistant zookeeper and up) will be trained to use the guns in these situations. There may be times when two senior animal staff members (assistant zookeeper and up) are on grounds that day. Based on experience it will be determined who leads the recovery.

If the senior staff member can get to the gun safely they are to do so. If they are not able to get to the gun then safely, but another staff member is able to bring the gun to them in a safe manner (in an enclosed vehicle) they are to do so as instructed. If the senior person in charge can not get to the gun then that is when 911 can be called for backup.

If the senior person in charge can get to it, then they are to use the tranquilizer gun, assuming all other means of recovery have been exhausted as outlined in individual animal escape protocols. (Each animal has their own escape protocol sheet in the office in the emergency info binder that lists how to safely bring that animal down.) If the animal can not be taken down chemically and all other means have been exhausted, then the kill gun should be used.

Remember that most animals associate firearms with unpleasant tranquilization episodes and experiences. Try to conceal the weapon as best as possible to prevent flight and panic.

Shooting with the kill gun is always permitted in life threatening situations or if a dangerous animal is escaping the perimeter fence. With any shot, ensure that no people are down range or otherwise in the line of fire.

Priority of Notice and Area of Park:

Report escape immediately to all radios.

Call 911 when instructed; wait for instruction, do not automatically call. The person in charge will notify you if the situation requires their help.

Notify any staff that would help in the recovery of an animal, as listed on individual escape protocol sheets. For example, if one of the leopards has escaped and the situation is not life threatening or the animal is not escaping the perimeter fence then Mark and Anna should be called to help recover the animal. The senior person will instruct gift shop personnel to call in staff support if that is applicable according to the individual protocols.

Notify Board of Directors

Gift Shop: Close entry gate and get as many people into gift shop as possible.

Tour Guide and Animal Staff: Get visitors to safety.

Animal Staff: Recover the animal(s).

All Clear:

After the animal is recovered the person in charge will give the all clear. Each staff member will report in on the radio that they have received the all clear radio call.

Escape Drills and Training:

Ensure that animal escape drills are conducted at least four times a year.

Live fire arm training opportunities should be made available twice a year.

Once each year, training should be conducted with the sheriff's department, EMS, state police and fire department.

New staff members will receive an overview of the training at orientation.

Dangerous Animals:

The following list provides examples of the types of animals known to be dangerous. Each situation will be different.

Large Cats: Tigers, Lions, Cougars, Leopards

Primates: Chimpanzees, Baboon, Macaque
(Baboon and Macaques escapes should follow policy, but in most cases 911 should not be involved and animal can be recovered by means of net, kennel, and if necessary, chemically.)

Bears

When confronted by any of the above animals:

1. Do not panic and do not run.
2. Stand and face the animal backing away slowly, if possible
3. Find safety in a vehicle or building until help arrives.
4. Keep the animal in your line of site at all times.
5. If you are carrying a weapon and can, fire it away from the animal. You may distract the animal long enough to get away.
6. Extend your hands over your head to appear larger.
7. Grab a long object like a rake, shovel, or stick to ward off attack if it comes.
8. If attacked, do not struggle. Lay in face down position with no movement. Lock your hands behind your head and pull your elbows in. Try to protect your head and neck with this position as much as you can. If the animal is dragging you or grabs and appendage, go for the animals eyes with your fingers or anything handy.
9. Pepper spray can be an effective method to distract an animal during an attack. All senior staff is required to carry a pepper spray canister at all times.
10. CO2 extinguishers often distract animals. If possible, and it may help, utilize them. These are located throughout the park by dangerous animal habitats.

Places of Safety:

You must be able to secure a place of safety for people during an animal escape that is completely enclosed.

Stay away from glass.

Doors do not have to be locked except in the case of a chimp escape.

Animal barns, dens, and other enclosed areas may be used if all doors, including animal doors, are closed and secured and the area isn't shared with the escaped animal.

Examples:

Gift Shop

Primate Building

Cooler or freezer

Enrichment building

Bear barn

Enclosed Vehicle

Animal Barn or den.

Trained Staff

Those qualified to shoot, and to fill role of senior staff person in charge:

Jess Toles

Brad Bonar

Josh Price

Karen Hoag

Lori Gagen

Colby Cheney

Mark Thaler

Anna Lytle

Dr. Wm. Kerley