

Standards for Exhibiting Seals in New South Wales

Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986

A publication of the Director General, NSW Department of Primary Industries
(pursuant to Clause 8 (1) of the Exhibited Animals Protection Regulation, 2005).

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Definitions

Closed Water System – A recirculating water system with minimal supplementation from an external water supply. Usually relies on filtration and chemical dosing systems to maintain water quality for prolonged periods.

Conditioning – A change in the frequency and form of behaviour due to the influences of the environment. It can be brought about by positive and negative reinforcement.

Open Water Systems – Seawater systems that rely on free flowing tidal water for their water supply. These systems are most often used in enclosed bays or estuarine situations.

Public Interaction Program – Where a member of the public is permitted by an animal display establishment licence holder, or qualified member of staff, to interact with seals. Interaction includes wading, swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, touch and tactile sessions, guest photos and filming, and feeding by members of the public.

Total Coliform Count (TCC) – is the sum of all coliforms (including faecal) counted in a water sample.

Seal - for the purposes of this standard document a “seal” is defined as a member of the eutherian Suborder Pinnipedia and includes all species of seals, sea-lions, fur seals and the walrus.

Semi-closed Water System – Periodic influx of natural sea water (dump and fill systems, or systems with limited filtration capacity).

Staff – Employees of an authority holder.

IATA – International Air Transport Association.

Appropriate Officer in Charge – an employee of the licence holder deemed competent and qualified by the licence holder to manage the licensed animal display establishment and associated events in the absence of the licence holder (the requirements of such a person are further defined in Cluse 3(1) and (2)).

Part 1 – General

Clause 1

Scope of Standards

- 1) These standards apply to all seals displayed, or kept for display, by exhibitors authorised under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986 (EAPA) and must be used in conjunction with all other relevant existing standards and NSW Department of Primary Industries policies where appropriate, including:
 - General Standards for Exhibiting Animals in NSW.
- 2) An applicant may seek the Director-General's approval to any variation of the application of these Standards. An applicant would be required to satisfy the Director-General that the proposed variation is appropriate for the particular species for display. The Director-General if so satisfied may approve a variation in the particular circumstances.

Clause 2

Purpose of the Standards

- 1) The standards within this publication have been developed to maximise the welfare of animals in captivity and cover a range of areas including:
 - a) psychological and physical animal welfare;
 - b) educational value of exhibits;
 - c) public safety;
 - d) guidelines for new or existing displays; and
 - e) legal effect.
- 2) All areas provided within this document are minimum areas required. Exhibitors are encouraged to make enclosures larger than those listed in order to further increase the animal welfare benefit to the animals being held.

Note

Please note: All material found within the document in a box such as this one, is for information only.

Part 2 – Staff Experience

Clause 3

General

All staff responsible for the care of seals must have the following minimum experience and skills:

- a) A demonstrated knowledge of seal natural history and husbandry;

- b) A demonstrated knowledge of training and conditioning techniques for seals;
- c) Experience and competency in safe handling methods, minimising danger to seals, zookeepers or trainers and stress to animals;
- d) Experience and competency in the restraining and transporting captive seals;
- e) A demonstrated ability to identify abnormal health and behavioural and social problems relevant to the care of seals;
- f) A demonstrated understanding of good husbandry and maintenance of seal facilities; and
- g) A demonstrated understanding of water quality issues and chemistry relevant to the care of seals.

Note

The person responsible for the care of seals should be included in the review and follow up of any research affecting the husbandry of the animals. Any research must be conducted in accordance with the *Animal Research Act 1985* and approved by the appropriate animal research ethics committee.

Part 3 – Enclosure Construction

Clause 4

General

- 1) An enclosure housing seals must contain a pool of water and a dry haul out area that provides the enclosed seals with easy access to and from the water.
- 2) All enclosures housing seals must have appropriate stand off fences, or other measures, that prevent members of the public from being bitten by a seal in the enclosure or from falling into a pool.
- 3) Enclosures holding seals must not have any loose objects, sharp projections and/or edges that may cause injury or trauma to the animals, seal keepers/trainers and facility visitors, and be constructed to contain the seals and prevent unsupervised public from accessing the animals or the exhibit.
- 4) Holding enclosures and treatment facilities for seals that are safe to both animals and seal keepers/trainers must be provided.
- 5) A reliable source of clean salt water and adequate power must be available. Backup power and water supply must be available where the animals' well being depends upon a continuous source of water and/or power to maintain water quality or air quality.

- 6) Readily accessible facilities such as washrooms, basins, and showers with cleaning and disinfecting materials must be provided to facilitate cleanliness and sanitation among seal keepers/trainers.
- 7) Any power sources must have earth leakage protection.
- 8) As many seals develop ocular problems that may be caused or exacerbated by high levels of solar radiation, all seal facilities must have structures and characteristics that minimise the amount of incident and reflected light (e.g. dull, non-reflective surfaces on walls and above water structures that provide shade).
- 9) All above-pool areas (e.g. roofs, ceilings, walls, awnings etc) of any facility holding seals must be maintained to prevent the shedding of particulate or toxic material into any pool.

Clause 5

Pools

- 1) Adequate drainage must be provided for all pools and must be located so that pools may be rapidly drained of water.
- 2) All pool floors must fall to a drainage point to facilitate complete pool drainage. Drains surrounding pools, including stormwater drains, must be placed to avoid standing water and bacterial build-up and must be arranged so that effluent does not flow back into pools holding seals.
- 3) Clause 5(2) does not apply to facilities that utilise clean natural marine water areas such as tidal basins, bays or estuaries for holding seals. However these facilities must take effective precautions to exclude debris and contaminants.
- 4) Facilities that utilise natural water areas such as tidal basins, bays or estuaries for holding seals must have a means to allow for the removal of any seals for veterinary or husbandry purposes or procedures with a minimum of stress and handling. This may be via training and behavioural conditioning, gating systems or raceways.

Clause 6

Water Quality

- 1) Particulate animal and food waste, rubbish, or debris that enter any pool must be removed as soon as possible to maintain the required water quality and to prevent health hazards to the seals contained therein.
- 2) The wall and bottom surfaces of pools of water and dry resting areas holding seals must be cleaned as often as necessary to maintain the required water quality. When hazardous chemicals are in use, all animals must be removed from the area. Chemicals must not be stored in animal areas and must be far enough away to not contaminate any areas used by seals through leakage or gases.
- 3) Water quality must be maintained by filtration, chemical treatment or other means so as to maintain the health of the animals.

- 4) Facilities using an open water system are exempt from pH and chemical testing unless chemicals are added to maintain water quality. However, testing for coliforms is a requirement in such facilities.
- 5) The median bacterial content in samples taken from each water body must be less than 150 faecal coliform colony forming units (CFU) per 100ml of water. Should a test show otherwise a second test must be taken 24 hours later. If this test shows greater than 150 CFU immediate action must be taken to reduce the CFU levels to below 150 within 24 hours.

Note

Water Sample Collection and Analysis Methodology

- a) Collection of water samples.

As a guide, a minimum of five samples should be taken at regular intervals each month. It is recommended that samples be taken every six days as this will provide the five samples required for analysis each month and will also ensure that sample collection occurs on varying days of the week. This is important because different days have different water quality depending on the use of the pools by the animals.

- b) Analyse the samples for both faecal coliforms (now called thermotolerant coliforms) and enterococci.
- c) Analyse the data using a rolling-compliance approach.
 - Take the results from the last five samples.
 - Rank them from lowest to highest

Compliance Parameters

As a guide, seal pool water in closed or semi closed water should have the following parameters:

- a) Faecal Coliform Bacteria: The median bacterial content in samples taken from each water body should not exceed 150cfu per 100ml of water. The second highest sample taken must be below 600cfu/100ml.
- b) Enterococci Bacteria: The median bacterial content in samples taken from each water body should not exceed 35cfu/100ml of water. The second highest sample taken must be below 100cfu/100ml.

This calculation should be completed each time a new result is received from the lab. The five most recent results must be used each time.

Note: If either the median of the second highest samples exceed the relevant guideline level for either indicator then the pool has failed the swimming guidelines, and the appropriate course of action must be taken immediately to rectify such issue.

- c) pH: The pH of any pool water must be maintained within the range 7.2 - 8.4.

- d) Salinity: The salinity of any pool water must be maintained within a range of 26 – 36 parts per thousand (grams/litre).
- e) Temperature: Generally the temperature of any pool water must not fall outside the temperature range experienced within the natural geographical range of the species. Where this is not achievable, the temperature range of a pool must not fall outside a range of temperatures that compromises the health of an animal. The maximum temperature range is 5 to 28°C. It is acknowledged that the temperature varies depending on the depth of water at any particular location in the pool. Therefore temperature readings should be taken within the main column of water.

Note

There has been some contention regarding the maximum water temperature. Therefore it is suggested that a maximum water temperature of 26°C is kept, however temperatures up to 28°C may be acceptable until further evidence is provided.

- f) Suspended Solids: The total amount of suspended solids present in any pool must not exceed 1% by volume.
 - g) Oxidants: When any oxidant is used, the daily average combined bromine level must not exceed 0.5 parts per million (ppm or milligrams/litre). The average free bromine level must not exceed 100% of the combined bromine level. In the event that combined bromine levels exceed 1.0mg/litre or tribromamines are found to be present, the situation must be rectified immediately. Total chlorine must be below 1.5 ppm, with the free chlorine no more than 0.7ppm. Higher combined and free bromine and chlorine levels may have deleterious effects as they are potentially toxic and may cause tissue or eye damage.
- 6) Sampling frequency must be at least once daily to determine pH, salinity and temperature.
 - 7) Any changes in the normal operation of life support or environmental conditions such as excessive rainfall, water quality changes, runoff or algae blooms that may affect the water supply or pools would indicate testing is required. Substantive increases in biological loading would also indicate testing is required. Where facilities are using artificial seawater, testing must be done daily. These results must be recorded as part of the records of the facility.
 - 8) Where continuous dosing is used, concentrations of chlorine, ozone, bromine or other oxidant and heavy metals used in the treatment of water inhabited by seals must be monitored and recorded not less than twice daily unless an appropriate sensor is used. Water must be monitored once daily if a sensor is used to guard against failure of equipment. If Oxidation Reduction Potential (ORP) electrode probes are used they must be cleaned and calibrated monthly.
 - 9) The results of all tests for the water quality parameters as set out in Clauses 6(4) and 6(7) must be recorded in a permanent register of records for future reference.

Clause 7**Indoor Facilities**

- 1) The air and water temperatures in indoor facilities must be sufficiently regulated by heating or cooling to protect captive seals from extremes of temperature, and to provide for their good health and well-being and to prevent discomfort.
- 2) Indoor facilities for seals must be ventilated by natural or artificial means to provide a flow of fresh air for the seals and to prevent the accumulation of potentially noxious gases such as ozone, chlorine dioxide, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and objectionable odours.
- 3) Indoor facilities for seals must have ample lighting, by natural or artificial lighting, of a quality (i.e. intensity and spectral composition), distribution, duration and intensity that allows normal physiological and behavioural functions appropriate to the species involved. Daily access to natural light must be provided (except when veterinary or quarantine requirements may demand different circumstances).
- 4) The lighting provided must be sufficient to permit routine inspections and cleaning of all parts of the enclosure.

Clause 8**Outdoor Facilities**

- 1) Captive seals must not be held in outdoor facilities unless the range of air and water temperature (i.e. where the water temperature does not fall below 5°C nor rise above 28°C) to which they may be subjected during the period does not adversely affect their health and comfort.

Note

If a seal is moved from an indoor facility to an outdoor facility or vice versa, consideration may need to be given to acclimatisation to the range of temperature it will encounter in the new enclosure if it is significantly different than in the previous enclosure.

- 2) Natural or artificial shelter, which is appropriate for the species concerned when local climate conditions are considered, must be provided to all seals maintained in outdoor facilities, to afford any necessary protection from weather and direct sunlight.
- 3) In cases where temperatures are consistently high, cooling devices are to be in place to control the environment. For example water chillers, fans or sprinklers can be used.

Clause 9**Spatial Requirements**

- 1) Sufficient space must be provided both horizontally and vertically to enable animals to exercise, to protect them from undue dominance or conflict and to provide for their social, breeding, husbandry, psychological and physical well-being.
- 2) Exhibit enclosures and off-exhibit holding enclosures must have a pool and haul out area that satisfies the minimum requirements set forth below. Note that smaller enclosures may be utilised temporarily for neonatal care or for training purposes only.

a) Exhibit Enclosure Requirements

i) Species \leq 2.5 metres in length (See Appendix)

For one to four animals:

Pool

Surface area	60m ²
Volume	200m ³
Average depth	2.0m
Must incorporate a vertical column of water that is 2.5m deep and 5m in diameter.	
Volume per additional animal	25m ³
Surface area per additional seal	15m ²

Haul Out Area

Surface area	20m ²
Area per additional animal	5m ²
Minimum dimension	1.5m.

ii) Species $>$ 2.5 metres in length - Leopard Seals

For one or two animals:

Pool

Surface area	180m ²
Volume	600m ³
Average depth	3.0m
Must incorporate a vertical column of water that is 3.4m deep and 7m diameter.	
Volume per additional animal	200m ³
Surface area per additional seal	90m ²

Haul Out Area

Surface area	32m ²
Area per additional animal	16m ²
Minimum dimension	2.0m.

iii) Species $>$ 2.5 metres in length - other than Leopard Seals

Pool and haul out areas for these species must be as approved by the Director-General.

c) Public Interaction Enclosure - Species \leq 2.5metres in length

For one or two animals:

Pool

Surface area	30m ²
Volume	100m ³
Average depth	2.0m

Haul Out Area

Surface area	20m ²
Minimum dimension	1.5m.

- Maximum time per day an individual seal is allowed to be displayed within one of these enclosures is two hours within a 24 hour period.

Note: Where minimum haul out dimensions apply, consideration should be given to allow additional room for public interaction program participants to occupy the same area without impacting on the minimum haul out dimension.

c) Short Term and Medium Term Off-exhibit Holding Enclosure Requirementsi) Species ≤ 2.5 metres in length.

For one or two animals:

Pool

Surface area	10m ²
Volume	20m ³
Average depth	2.0m
Minimum width	2.0m
Volume per additional animal	10m ³
Surface per additional animal	5.0m ²

Haul Out Area

Surface area	5.0m ²
Minimum dimension	1.5m.
Area per additional animal	2.5m ²

ii) Species >2.5 metres in length - Leopard Seals

For one animal:

Pool

Surface area	15m ²
Volume	50m ³
Average depth	3.0m
Minimum width	3.0m

Haul Out Area

Surface area	10m ²
Minimum dimension	1.5m.

iii) Species >2.5 metres in length - other than Leopard Seals

Pool and haul out areas for these species must be as approved by the Director-General.

- 3) Authority holders must provide sufficient off-exhibit holding enclosures to remove all animals from the exhibit and maintain them in groups small enough to ensure protection from other animals or to allow isolation for treatment.
- 4) The haul out areas provided with each pool must allow all seals to haul out simultaneously without touching each other or causing significant conflict between individual seals.

Part 4 – Nutrition and Hygiene

Clause 10

Food

- 1) The food for seals must be wholesome, palatable, free from contamination, and must be of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain all seals held in a state of good health.
- 2) The diet must be prepared with consideration for age, species, climatic conditions, size and type of seal being fed.
- 3) At least three species of fish must be offered on a regular basis to the animals to ensure a more varied diet and to ensure that the animals will continue to feed if a favoured species of fish is in short supply.

Note

As the availability of some food species may vary throughout the year the provision of at least three species of fish should be taken into account when planning seal diets.

- 4) All food storage facilities must be clean to guard against the contamination of perishable food supplies and must be defrosted as required to maintain the quality of the stored food.
- 5) No substance known to be, or which may be, toxic or harmful to a seal, must be stored or maintained in areas used for food storage.
- 6) Frozen fish must be hygienically packaged to minimise contamination, dehydration and freezer-burn.
- 7) All fish must be labelled with the catch date and date of packaging.

- 8) Frozen fish or other frozen food must be stored in freezers that are maintained at a temperature below -20 .
- 9) Tuna, mackerel, other scombroid fishes and any species particularly susceptible to fat and vitamin E deterioration or protein denaturing, must not be stored longer than three months. All other species of fish must ideally be used within a six month period. If stored longer than six months, quality tests must be carried out to ensure the quality of fish is fit for human consumption. Any fish that is deemed unfit for consumption must be discarded in a hygienic manner.

Note

Scombroid poisoning is a potential health hazard whenever poorly preserved scombroid fish, are eaten over an extended period. Scombroid fish have high levels of histamine and when inadequately preserved or handled, histidine is decarboxylated to histamine. The toxic effects can be high, even without visible evidence of putrefaction. There is no direct evidence of scombroid poisoning in marine mammals as yet but this may be due more to a failure in recognising the problem. The best prevention appears to avoid feeding scombroid fishes that have been stored beyond their safe shelf life.

- 10) The length of time food and food supplements are stored, the method of storage, as well as the thawing of frozen food, must be conducted in a manner which minimises contamination and ensures that the food or food supplement retains nutritive value. This procedure must be documented for staff to follow. This precludes thawing using microwaves.
- 11) Thawing facilities must be clean and constructed of materials that can be readily and effectively cleaned and disinfected. Cooling facilities (e.g. refrigerator or icebox) must be provided for fish or other food that has been thawed and prepared for feeding each day.

Note

Frozen fish must be thawed in air at temperatures between $4-7^{\circ}\text{C}$ to reduce contamination and reduce the loss of nutrients and moisture from the fish.

Thawing in saltwater (of $<25\%$ saltwater) or as long as the fish are in plastic bags is acceptable. Fish should be thawed at $4-7^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Following thawing the food must be held in chilled conditions ($1-4^{\circ}\text{C}$) until just prior to feeding. There must be minimal use of cut food to minimise nutritional loss and bacterial build-up unless for specific veterinary or training purposes.

- 12) Any thawed fish not used within 24 hours must be discarded.

Note

Fish should be typically fed out within 12 hours of thawing.

- 13) Fish must not be fed frozen.
- 14) Food preparation and handling must be conducted so as to prevent contamination by harmful bacteria or chemicals and to ensure the nutritive value of the food.

- 15) Caution must be used in selecting any insecticide, particularly organochlorins, used and in its application in food preparation areas, due to the potential contamination of these into the food and subsequent absorption into the body fat of the seals. Any chemicals used must be approved for use by a veterinarian.
- 16) Impervious, non-porous containers and buckets that are easily disinfected and cleaned must be used for food handling.
- 17) All foods must be inspected just prior to feeding to ensure they are of suitable quality.

Note

Suitably qualified seal keepers and trainers must have the appropriate experience for assessing the quality of fish. As a guide, a combination of any of the below criteria can be used to assess quality:

- Damage to fish
- Colour changes / lack of lustre / Gills greyish-yellow
- Protrusion of viscera
- Strong or Rancid odour / Sour smelling gills
- 'Flabby', soft and spongy feeling / General lumpy appearance
- Dehydrated skin / easily indented or breaks open when handled
- Dull / sunken / opaque / red bordered eyes
- Presence of mucous
- Sharp / pointed fins
- Unwanted fish specimens

- 18) All food utensils, other equipment and the facility itself must be effectively cleaned and disinfected to maintain hygiene.
- 19) No non-food dead animal must be placed in food-fish preparation, feeding areas or in a freezer used for the storage of food-fish.
- 20) Food must be offered at least twice a day, preferably more often, unless directed by veterinary treatment or other professionally accepted practice. Food intake for each animal during each day must be recorded. This provides a sensitive indicator of health and welfare.
- 21) Appropriate medication and food supplements must be routinely added to the diet as directed by a veterinarian.
- 22) Public feeding must only be permitted if it is done under the supervision of a uniformed seal keeper/trainer. Only food supplied by the facility where the seals are kept is to be fed to such seals by the public.

Part 5 – Handling and Transport

Clause 11**General**

- 1) Except in an emergency, only animals certified by an experienced veterinarian or curator, to be capable of withstanding the journey, can be transported.
- 2) Containers must be large enough to ensure that each animal has sufficient space to fully stretch in all normal postures.
- 3) All containers used for transporting seals via air between institutions or to off site displays must be built to IATA standards.
- 4) Animals transported other than by air must be transported in a manner that protects them from being:
 - a) injured by other animals;
 - b) injured by the transport container; and
 - c) exposed to unsuitable or stressful climatic conditions.
- 5) Animals must not be transported together in the same container.
- 6) The animal transport compartment must:
 - a) be structurally sound so that it is crush resistant and escape proof; and
 - b) be constructed in such a way that it will not injure any animal; and
 - c) allow for easy loading and unloading; and
 - d) allow frequent visual or environment (e.g. monitoring of ambient temperature) inspections to be undertaken; and
 - e) allow handling of transport containers without risk to the handlers; and
 - f) be designed to allow ease of cleaning and disinfection. If movable containers are used for transportation within vehicles these must be designed to control spillage of faeces and be disinfected after each use.
- 7) The animal transport vehicle must incorporate:
 - a) facilities to securely fasten transport containers to prevent them moving within the vehicle; and
 - b) a vehicle exhaust system that does not pollute the air inside the vehicle; and
 - c) a barrier between the animals and the driver's compartment strong enough to hold the weight of animals and their containers in the event of an accident.

Note

Animals are susceptible to injury or the exacerbation of sub-clinical infection during loading, handling and transportation. These problems often arise due to cumulative stresses. Common stressors include:

- a) unusual yarding and handling;
- b) deprivation from food and water;
- c) changes in climatic conditions;
- d) overcrowding or isolation, unfamiliar surroundings, noises and sensations;
- e) inappropriate care during road transportation; and
- f) physiological responses associated with pregnancy and lactation.

The greater the number of stressful experiences you can remove from the transport experience, the better the chances of the animal arriving at its destination in the same condition as it departed.

Clause 12**Transportation**

- 1) The authority holder or appropriate officer in charge must ensure that a sufficient number of experienced staff accompany animals during transport, to ensure compliance with these standards.
- 2) An authority holder or appropriate officer in charge must have a documented contingency plan detailing how the person in charge is to manage the animals in the event of an accident, breakdown or escape of animals while transporting the animals.

Note

For many animals it is recommended that inspection of animals be carried out by the person in charge, not more than two hours after the commencement of a journey, and thereafter at maximum intervals of two hours. During these inspections clean fresh water should be offered to all animals.

Temperature probes can be installed into boxes or the compartment carrying animals and temperature reader can be fixed to the dashboard of the car to allow constant monitoring.

The inclusion of additional food and water, and ideally a generator to power a fan to allow air flow, in the event of a vehicle breakdown should be included on the transportation vehicle.

- 3) Veterinary assistance must be sought as soon as possible for animals seriously injured during transportation to or from the display site.
- 4) All animals must be checked as soon as possible upon arrival at the display destination.

- 5) Where animals are to be displayed within an enclosure, they must, where possible, be released directly into the exhibit enclosure from the transport vehicle or container. If the animal must be walked from the transport vehicle to the exhibit the authority holder must ensure appropriate crowd control is in place and that the animal does not walk on unsuitable substrate i.e. Slippery floors.
- 6) Seals that are temporarily removed from their exhibit must be removed in accordance with the Standards for Exhibiting animals during Temporary Removal in New South Wales and under an approved Temporary Removal application or Standard Operating Procedure.

Part 6 - Behaviour

Clause 13

Behavioural Enrichment

- 1) Institutions holding seals must undertake measures to provide enrichment and reduce boredom and stereotypic behaviours. This can be in form of enrichment activities, socialisation, training or other activities that present the animals with a range of psychological and physiological stimuli.
- 2) Social species of seals must not needlessly be deprived of the company of other seals. However inter- and intra-specific aggression, sex ratios, and individual compatibility need to be considered. When it is necessary to maintain a seal in isolation, appropriate human attention and boredom-reducing activities must be provided.

Clause 14

Training

- 1) Training of seals must be done by, or under the direct supervision of, a suitably qualified trainer as outlined in Clause 3.
- 2) All seals must be trained to undergo routine veterinary examinations as required by the veterinarian on a case by case basis
- 3) Any seal suffering any disease, debilitating condition, sickness or behavioural trait that may cause a risk to itself, another animal or people when required to perform, must not be used in any performance until such conditions are cured or behavioural traits remedied.
- 4) A seal can be trained to occupy an area less than minimum standard dimension provided that:
 - a) it occupies the specified area for a maximum time of 30 minutes.
 - b) it is under supervision at all times, and that it displays positive behaviour while occupying the area.
 - c) the area is identified for a specific purpose for which a training program can accommodate for. Examples of such uses include restraint for veterinary purposes, transport training, and for staging / entry into other areas.

Part 7 – Public Interaction Programs

Clause 15

General

- 1) Public interaction programs must be supervised by a suitably qualified seal trainer.
- 2) Interactions with the public may occur outside the exhibit if the seals are appropriately trained to ensure the safety of the visitors and animals.
- 3) All public interaction programs must be designed to minimise the risk of injury to visitors and animals involved in the program.
- 4) Only animals in good health and suitable temperament are to be used in an interactive program.
- 5) All seals used in public interaction programs must be fully trained and conditioned to human contact so that they respond with appropriate behaviour to seal trainers involved in the interactive program.
- 6) The seal trainer must be able to gain stimulus control of the seals at all times during the interaction program.

Note

'Stimulus control' includes the ability for trainers to either call back (recall) seals to holding, to move to a station, or to target an object on cue.

- 7) The water clarity must be sufficient to allow the seal trainer to observe the interaction of animals with members of the public.

Clause 16

Public Interaction Sessions

- 1) Participants involved in the interaction program must be briefed on appropriate behaviour.
- 2) Two trained keepers must always be present while the interaction is being conducted. One trainer must have the animal under direct stimulus control and the second trainer must remain in close proximity to the animal observing the session at all times.
- 3) All seals participating in Interaction sessions must be trained in recalls.
- 4) Keepers responsible for the interactive session must be able to gain control of the animals used in the session, and must have a working knowledge of the precursors associated with aggression.
- 5) Where visitors are permitted to enter a seal pool, the following guidelines apply:
 - a) No more than ten human participants for each animal involved;

- b) No more than ten human participants for each seal trainer or other authorised program session staff member and no more than two seals to be used at any one time in one water body; and
 - c) All participants must wear or be offered a personal flotation device while having an in-water session.
- 6) Where visitors are permitted to enter a seal enclosure but are not permitted to enter a seal pool, the following guidelines apply:
- a) No more than ten human participants in the immediate area for each animal involved. Additional people may enter the area once others have left.
 - b) No more than ten participants for each seal trainer or other authorised program session staff member.
- 7) Public interaction time for each animal must not exceed two hours per day with at least one period of at least ten continuous hours each twenty-four hours without public interaction.
- 8) For each animal involved in a program, a rest period at least equal to the interactive session period must be allowed after each session.
- 9) The seal trainer conducting the program must monitor participants and deny participation to those assessed as representing a risk to the health and safety of the seals or people involved.
- 10) Before a public interaction session begins, all participants are to be given an orientation which informs them orally and in writing of the following:
- a) Suitable clothing to be worn.
 - b) Session times.
 - c) The various program areas and the function that each performs.
- 11) Any participant that fails to comply with the rules or instructions given to them is to be removed from the program session.

Part 9 - References

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Appendix

Body length of different species of seals

Species	Body Length (m)	
	Males	Females
<i>Arctocephalus forsteri</i>	1.5-2.5 (1.75)	1.0-1.5 (1.25)
<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>	2.0-2.3 (2.16)	1.4-1.7 (1.57)
<i>Arctocephalus tropicalis</i>	1.5-2.0 (1.75)	1.0-1.4 (1.25)
<i>Hydrurga leptonyx</i>	2.5-3.2 (2.80)	2.4-3.4 (2.90)
<i>Neophoca cinerea</i>	2.0-2.5	1.3-1.8
<i>Phoca vitulina richardii</i>	1.5-1.8 (1.6)	1.5
<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	2.0-2.5 (2.4)	1.5-2.0 (1.8)

Note: values in brackets is the average length.