

Animal Caregivers' Check Sheet of Essential Resources to Advance Animal Welfare

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Animal Welfare (AWA): This is the law which is the foundation for the legal requirements and agency recommendations that follow.

AWA Regulations: These provide the general and species-specific standards for the humane care and treatment of animals covered under the AWA. Compliance is legally required but should be viewed as the starting point rather than the end of our work on behalf of animals.

Animal Welfare Inspection Guide: This resource for agency inspectors details the manner in which inspections are to be conducted and reported, including items to be observed and checked regarding the animals, conditions, facilities, policies, practices, records, staffing, training and other considerations.

Tech Notes and Animal Care Aids: Contain informal agency guidance and suggestions for certain situations or species. The agency may also provide similar information in other formats.

Accreditation Standards and Guidelines/Professionally Accepted Standards: These include the standards and guidelines required to be fulfilled to attain and maintain accreditation from a professional accrediting association. These may also include professionally accepted or recognized standards such as those included in species-specific husbandry manuals. Significantly, the AWA regulations reference or incorporate by reference professional standards so these have greater weight than some may realize.

Self help tools to “go the extra mile” for animals: periodic review of animal records (by individual, social group, species, and shared living areas), including animal and veterinary care, behavior, and other observations, and even necropsies. Regularly scheduled and unannounced rounds and self-inspections. Be the first to know, understand and improve potential vulnerabilities.

Professional development activities: Including in house and zoological community and other forms of training such as that provided by the San Diego Zoo Global Academy.

Scientific and other credible literature: This is a source for evaluating and updating practices based on experiences and research relevant to your activities and the animals in your care. Be on the leading edge of innovative new practices like Vicino and Miller's Five Opportunities to Thrive.

Developments and incidents elsewhere, including third party reviews: Learning from others

should extend to incorporating lessons from unfortunate situations.

Concerns, complaints, critic, and public perceptions/positions: Each of these challenges us to examine ourselves and our facilities/organizations. It may not be easy but each of these provides points for reflection, growth, and improvement all of which demonstrate our unyielding commitment to the animals.

Excellence Beyond Compliance®: Comprehensive, holistic, approach and philosophy , proactively integrating all of the above, where advancing animals' interests, protection and well-being is our overriding priority and we commit to continuously improving ourselves and our organizations, and constructively engaging others, in furtherance of our efforts on behalf of animals.
