

**F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(Pt.)**

**Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Central Zoo Authority**

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**Dated 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020**

**To**

The Chief Wildlife Warden of all States and Union Territories,

**Sub: Phased emergence from lockdown imposed for containment of COVID-19 –Recommended S.O.P. for reopening zoos to public– regarding**

**Ref:**

1. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(Pt.) dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2020
2. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(Pt.) dated 14<sup>th</sup>May, 2020
3. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(AK)/2469/C/2020 dated 6.04.2020
4. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(AK)/2469/B/2020 dated 6.04.2020
5. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(AK)/2469/A/2020 dated 24.03.2020
6. This office Circular F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(AK)/2469/2020 dated 23.03.2020
7. This office Circular F.No.19-115/93-CZA(53)(Vol.XIV)(Pt.)/2427/2020 dated 13.03.2020

Sir,

With reference to above, I am directed to refer to the Order No.40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India regarding extension of lockdown in containment zones upto 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 and phased emergence from lockdown imposed for containment of COVID-19 in areas outside containment zones.

2. Further, the national directives for COVID-19 management specified in Annexure - I of the said Guidelines applicable throughout the country specify that large public gatherings / congregations continue to remain prohibited.

3. Based on the assessment of the local situation and in consultation with the respective State Disaster Management Authority, the Zoo Operator may take decision on reopening zoo to public. In this regard, S.O.P. recommended by this office for consideration of zoos to take decision on reopening zoos to public is enclosed herewith. The same may be followed until further orders from concerned authorities in the Government of India / State Government.

This is for your information and necessary action.

Yours sincerely

Encls. As above



**(Dr. Sonali Ghosh)  
Deputy Inspector General of Forests**

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**Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to:**

1. PS to Hon'ble Minister (EF&CC), Government of India
2. PS to Hon'ble Minister of State (EF&CC), Government of India
3. Sr. PPS to the Secretary to the Government of India (EF&CC)
4. PPS to the Director General of Forests and Special Secretary
5. The Director, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar
6. The Zoo Operator of all recognised zoos
7. The Member Secretary of State Zoo Authority wherever applicable
8. The Officer in-charge of all recognised zoos
9. The DPA, CZA – to upload on website of the CZA

**sd/-**

**(Dr. Sonali Ghosh)**

**Deputy Inspector General of Forests**

**S.O.P. recommended for consideration of zoos to take decision on reopening to public**

[Ref: This office letter F.No.25-1/2002-CZA(Vol.II)(Pt.) dated 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020]

1. Guidelines issued from time to time by the Government of India and respective State Government with respect to work places and places of public gathering shall be strictly adhered to.
2. Guidelines issued by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) as general recommendation for consideration to take decision on reopening zoos to public may be followed. Copy of the updated Guidelines is accessible at following link and enclosed herewith for your perusal.  
<https://www.waza.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WAZA-COVID-19-Reopening-Recommendations-5-june-2020.pdf>
3. Zoos are encouraged to take part in webinars being hosted by the WAZA in light of the COVID-19 and to avail the resources available therein. Webinar recordings in this regard are accessible at link <https://www.waza.org/news/waza-webinars-covid-19/>
4. National Guidelines on the Management of Biological Disasters and Do's & Dont's stipulated by the National Disaster Management Authority in case of Biological Disasters shall be followed by zoos. (available at <https://ndma.gov.in/en/biological-guidelines.html> and <https://ndma.gov.in/en/biological-do-s-dont-s.html>)
5. Zoos must ensure that there is no dilution of the Guidelines issued by the Government of India, under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, in any manner.

**Relevant to captive animals:**

6. Precautionary measures specific to the COVID-19 suggested by this office from time to time (available <http://cza.nic.in/news/en>) may be followed by zoos to ensure welfare of captive animals housed in zoos.
7. Zoos shall ensure compliance with generic precautionary measures specified in 'Suggested Health Monitoring Protocol for Zoos' circulated to zoos vide Circular No.25-1/2002-CZA(M) dated 18th November, 2004 and 'Standards, Guidelines and Protocol on Disease Diagnosis and Cure of Wild Animals in Indian Zoos' published by the Central Zoo Authority in collaboration with the ICAR - Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar.
8. Norms specified for upkeep and healthcare of captive animals including disease surveillance measures prescribed in the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009 shall be strictly implemented.
9. Health Advisory Committee (of the respective State as well as zoo) may be actively consulted by zoos for advise on animal healthcare related matters. If required, may seek advise from the in-charge, National Referral Centre on Wildlife Healthcare, ICAR – Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar.

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**Relevant to zoo personnel:**

10. Based on requirement, staggered working hours and a duty roster chart may be adopted.
11. It is advisable that zoos conduct trial run to identify lapses, if any, and to take corrective measures prior to reopening to visitors.
12. Infection Control Supervisor may be designated and put in-charge for compliance of norms specified for reopening of the respective zoo.
13. Orientation session may be conducted to personnel working in zoos to ensure that they are well equipped to prevent contracting infection.
14. Disinfection Schedule may be drawn and augmented to meet the requirement and shall be strictly implemented.
15. Exclusive deputation of personnel to monitor visitors' behaviour, to ensure compliance with the norms specified for operation of the zoo.
16. Efficient waste disposal system and sanitation practices for maintaining hygienic and clean environment in zoos. Compliance with Waste Management Rules notified by the Government of India should be ensured. Colour coding for disposal of bio-medical waste should be strictly implemented. (Copy of Rules available at <https://cpcb.nic.in/rules-3/>)

**Relevant to visitors while re-opening of zoos:**

17. Number of visitors permitted at a given point of time may be roughly calculated using social distancing norms, crowd management, area of zoo etc. Morning and afternoon slots may be decided to stagger the visitors.
18. Reopening on a weekday, rather than a weekend may be limit pressure, allow for testing and readjustment if required.
19. Encourage least contact purchase and checking of tickets through digital payments including online systems and contactless security screening.
20. As per centre's directives persons above 65, persons with co morbidities, children below 10 years and pregnant women should avoid coming to the zoo.
21. Public spaces with a possibility of crowding such as in Children's Park, Nocturnal Houses, Food Courts, Interpretation Centres with movie theatre may be closed or closely monitored to ensure least congregation and social distancing.
22. Separate entry and exit may be planned for visitors.

**Relevant to both zoo personnel and visitors:**

23. COVID appropriate behaviours suggested by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India shall be widely publicised for awareness among visitors and shall ensure strict adherence to the same.

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24. Marking may be done in places of queue formation of visitors to ensure physical distancing.
25. Hygienic practices, Personal Protective Equipment / Face Mask / Face Shield as recommended by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India shall be used.
26. Maintenance of Visitor Register at point of entry to the zoo with details necessary for contact tracing by the concerned agency, in case of requirement.
27. Promotion of cashless transaction to the extent possible, for sale of entry tickets.
28. Usage of medical grade mask and alcohol based sanitizers may be done judiciously. Purchase of masks/ face shield, hand sanitisers may be facilitated next to ticket counters from authorised vendors.
29. Thermal screening of zoo personnel and visitors may be mandatorily done at the point of entry.
30. Dos and Don'ts for visitors as well as zoo personnel may be prominently displayed at multiple locations in zoos.
31. Vehicles permitted by zoos should also adhere to norms for physical distancing as advised by the Government.
32. Visitors may be advised to minimise contact with surfaces and to specifically discourage from coming in contact with the stand-off barriers in zoos.

**Suggested resources:**

Zoos are advised to refer to following resources in this regard:

- To calculate carrying capacity of the zoo in respect of visitors and to manage the visitors - Guidelines for crowd management issued by the National Disaster Management Authority, (available at <https://ndma.gov.in/en/managing-crowd.html>)
- Safe return to work - Guide for employers on COVID - 19 prevention, International Labour Organisation, (available at [https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS\\_744033/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS_744033/lang--en/index.htm))
- Consideration for Public Health and Social Measures in the workplace in the context of COVID – 19, World Health Organisation (available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/considerations-for-public-health-and-social-measures-in-the-workplace-in-the-context-of-covid-19>)
- Cleaning and Disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID – 19, World Health Organisation, (available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cleaning-and-disinfection-of-environmental-surfaces-inthe-context-of-covid-19>)

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## **WAZA COVID-19 Reopening Recommendations**

*Last updated: 5 June 2020*

The following recommendations are a compilation of reopening recommendations made by different WAZA recognised national and regional associations. Considering the diversity of territories and respective legislation under which WAZA member zoos and aquariums operate, these guidelines are merely general recommendations. Some suggestions might not be applicable for your region and/or particular institutions. Many WAZA recognised national/regional zoo and aquarium associations have further detailed recommendations that includes specific elements of respective local/national regulations. For additional details, we encourage you to explore those resources that are listed in the reference section.

### **Elements to consider regarding reopening zoos and aquariums:**

#### **1) Relevant to visitors:**

- Number of visitors: Establish maximum capacity per day considering authorities' indications that apply to the area of your zoo and/or aquarium. Might be beneficial to assess if the number of visitors allowed is worth the costs of reopening at this time.
- Date of reopening: Reopening on a weekday rather than a weekend might help to limit the pressure on staff, allow for testing and re-adjustment if required.
- Communicating the reopening: Consider communicating the conditions under which you are reopening. Inform visitors in advance of the limit to prevent all unnecessary travel and queuing. Place clear notices on the website and on social media about the reopening, especially about admission restrictions and limited operation.
- Sale of tickets and other sales: If available, promote online selling of tickets for specific timeslots instead of ticket sales at physical ticket counters. Offering the opportunity to reschedule time of visit might be useful. If online booking is not an option, consider taking card payments only (preferably contactless payment). Consider updating ticket sale terms and conditions and your privacy policy so you can request contact details to aid government contact tracing should it be necessary.

- In countries/regions with travel restrictions, consider limiting access to visitors only from your region/state/province.
- Monitoring visitor behaviour to ensure compliance with government distancing requirements between individuals or families.
- Refer to your relevant health authority's advice on kids' playgrounds, play equipment and other tactile learning equipment (i.e. interactive interp) to reduce risk, you may decide to keep them closed during initial stages of reopening.
- Ensure visitors follow directions and stay home if unwell.

**2) Relevant to both visitors and staff:**

- Check recommendations made by the relevant government health authority to make sure you are in compliance with local regulations. Look for details on what the recommendations are for personal protective equipment (PPE).
- In some countries, temperature checking of visitors at entrance is a common practice.
- Maintain strict physical distancing in accordance with those recommendations. This might include clearly marking spaces on the ground to indicate safe distance where queues might form e.g. food access, bathroom access, tight flow areas in the park; blocking out seats or rows of seats to give visitors further guidance in how to keep distance correctly; separating essential animal care staff from other staff and visitors; making sure that the rules are clearly communicated, that you can enforce them, and that you have the right to intervene if the rules are not complied with.
- Have a regular and thorough cleaning schedule in place, paying extra attention to high contact areas (door handles, counters, railings, locks, taps, food prep areas etc.) Ensure adequate cleaning supplies are available.
- Practice good hygiene – ensure hand sanitiser and hand washing facilities are readily available and maintained around the site for visitors and staff. Promote good hygiene practices to visitors and ensure they are followed by staff.

- Clearly communicate the plan to staff and expectations around physical distancing requirements, hand hygiene, cough/sneeze behaviour to all.
- Ensure workers follow directions and stay home if unwell
- If a worker or visitor is suspected to have COVID-19, follow your health authorities' recommendations.
- Throughout critical points at the facility install signs indicating the minimum distances and safety rules. These can also be included on apps and website.
- Consider whether indoor venues (nocturnal houses, reptile houses etc.) can operate within the physical distancing requirements. If not, keep these types of locations closed to visitors.
- Use a one-way system where path or corridor space does not allow visitors to pass each other within 1.5m distance.
- Maintain split shifts for staff teams and reduce the use of communal kitchens or lunch rooms where possible.
- If required, consider hiring additional mobile security units to ensure that the rules are observed on the large premises. In the event of non-compliance, explore if a reprimand may be issued.

### **3) Relevant to animals:**

- Practice the same physical distancing protocols with animals as is recommended between humans unless necessary for animal care, health or welfare reasons.
- Carefully evaluate all visitor animal interactions to assess whether physical distancing with the animals and between people can be complied with.
- Ensure your veterinary team has access to the latest technical information and can seek advice from other zoo vets if required.
- Ensure your general biosecurity practices are of the highest standards possible (check what guidelines are available for your city, state, country).

- Minimise the number of people working with animals, or inside enclosed spaces housing animals, or where food is prepared, to the minimum necessary for safety and welfare.
- Contact your vet as soon as possible if you notice any signs of disease in your animals.
- During the COVID-19 closures, many animals may have become used to a new environment and experience change as routines return to normal operations:
  - a. Consider the potential changes to the animal's environment and their routine and implement a plan to allow the animal to gradually accustom to any significant changes.
  - b. Consider implementing a monitoring programme to observe the animals' behaviour during reopening. If a person is monitoring the animals, they may also assist with supervising visitors.
  - c. It is plausible that some animals may find increased visitation more rewarding compared to their experiences over the last few months. Be aware where this may be the case and support this opportunity where appropriate and physically distanced.

### **Additional resources and references used for this document**

*\*Please note that your national/ regional association of zoos and aquariums might have additional resources available for members. If you would like to suggest additional resources for an upcoming update of this document, please write to [secretariat@waza.org](mailto:secretariat@waza.org)*

#### **Global**

- 1) [COVID-19 reopening guidance - Considerations for the Global Attractions Industry](#)
- 2) [WAZA webinars and lessons on COVID-19](#)

#### **Africa**

- 1) [PAAZA COVID-19 Daily Updates & Survival](#)
- 2) [PAAZA Recommendations for workplace](#)

#### **Asia**

- 1) [SEAZA board letter on COVID-19](#)
- 2) [India Central Zoo Authority notes on COVID-19](#)
- 3) [JAZA Coronavirus guidelines](#)

## **Europe**

- 1) [EAZA Reopening a zoo or aquarium after lockdown: Good practice guidance](#)
- 2) [EAZA Reopening a zoo or aquarium after lockdown - communications guidance:](#)
- 3) [Notes on exist strategies and reopenings of zoo. Verband der Zoologischen Gärten](#)
- 4) [BIAZA Covid-19 guidance for zoos and aquariums \(includes re-opening guidelines\)](#)
- 5) [DTG letter on COVID-19](#)

## **North America**

- 1) [AZA COVID-19 resources](#)
- 2) [CAZA Newsroom on COVID-19 response](#)

## **South America**

- 1) [ALPZA tools for COVID-19](#)
- 2) [COVID-19 recommendations from the Brazilian Zoos and Aquariums Association](#)

## **Oceania**

- 1) [ZAA COVID-19 response](#)