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Assistance Dogs

This procedure sets out the specific requirements of the Safari Park when enabling those with assistance dogs to access the safari park as a guest. This does not cover employees, future employees, work experience or volunteer placements. Assistance dog owners have important rights under the Equality Act 2010 (EA) and these rights will be respected, as far as is reasonably practicable in a safari park setting.

This procedure is guided by the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums advice document on this subject (last review October 2020).

Key areas of concern for zoo operators are:

- Biosecurity: the potential risk of infectious diseases carried by assistance dogs;
- Animal behaviour: the potential for dogs to cause stress or distress to safari park animals (or stress caused to the dog by the presence of safari park animals).

Identifying Assistance Dogs

Most assistance are instantly recognisable by a harness or jacket. However, the law does not require the dog to wear a harness or jacket to identify it as an assistance dog.

Some, but not all assistance dog users, will carry an ID book giving information about the assistance dog and the training organisation together with other useful information. Again, this is not a legal requirement and assistance dog users should not be refused a service simply because they do not possess an ID book.

Assistance dogs can also be owner trained and the owner selects their own dog to fit their own requirements.

Assistance Dogs (UK) is the umbrella organisation for assistance dogs training organisations and member organisations provide dogs trained by them with an identification book and jacket to wear when working. However, there is no requirement for an assistance dog trainer to be part of Assistance Dogs (UK).

Although an Identification booklet is the best way to tell if the dog is a genuine assistance dog, each organisation provides its trained assistance dogs with a jacket to wear whilst it is working. This can be a good way to identify an assistance dog at first glance.

Assistance Dogs (UK) work on behalf of its members and recipients to improve:

- Access
- Mobility
- Independence
- Quality of Life

Member organisations include:

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D

- Dogs for Good
- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Support Dogs
- Seeing Dog Alliance

AD (UK) provides all of its members with copies of an identification booklet. A booklet is issued to each Assistance Dog Owner. <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/media/4762/aduk-id-book-england.pdf>



This booklet identifies the bearer and their dog as an Assistance Dog Partnership registered with Assistance Dogs (UK) and includes photo ID of the dog and its owner-handler who has the disability and gives details of the member organisation responsible for training and aftercare of the partnership.

Registered assistance dogs are recognised to have:

- Been trained to behave appropriately
- Have safe and reliable temperaments
- Are healthy and do not constitute a hygiene risk
- Are fully toilet trained
- Are regularly checked by a professional body
- Are accompanied by a disabled handler who has been trained in how to work alongside their assistance dog

We therefore have the confidence to allow those guests who are registered with one of the member organisations access to the park alongside their dog with the restrictions indicated below in place for the health and safety of the guest, their dog, other park visitors and the animals within the safari park.

In addition, assistance dogs who are not registered with Assistance Dogs (UK) Owners or handlers who are not members of Assistance Dogs UK will be required to sign a declaration prior to entry to state that the dog:

- Is currently enrolled on a standard canine vaccination program as advised by their vet and are up to date with all doses
- has not shown any signs of disease including vomiting or diarrhoea in the last 24 hours.

In all cases, the guest MUST:

- Provide their usual proof of disability- (PIP or blue badge, SLA Plan, Credibility or DID Card), if appropriate to the condition for which the assistance dog assists the individual
- Declare that an assistance dog is in attendance at the ticket lanes on arrival

- Only access those areas indicated on the park map as being suitable for the assistance dog
- Not enter the carnivore drive through or monkey jungle drive through
- Not enter into the following walkthrough exhibits - Lemurs, Rainbow landings, Australian Walkabout, Farmyard Friends
- Not attend any animal handling sessions, displays or other situations where the presence of the dog may distress animals or affect their behaviour
- Not attend the elephant demonstration
- Ensure the dog is wearing its associated assistance dog jacket (if it has one)
- Keep the dog on a lead and under control at all times
- If the assistance dog starts barking or growling, move their dog to an area where no safari park animals are present until the assistance dog stops vocalising
- Move away from exhibits if the dog is having an obvious effect on the safari park animals or at the request of a member of staff trained to assess the behavioural welfare of the safari park animals
- Ensure they only allow the dog to urinate and defecate on the grass car park in the leisure area (or on the grass by the car park before entering the park) next to the owners' vehicles and that, they clean up after them.

VIP tours and experiences will be restricted in that any tour with an assistance dog cannot enter the Carnivore section or Giraffe and Rhino Houses. Members of the VIP experience team should ask if an assistance dog would be accompanying any guest on the tour or experience, at the point of booking so the restrictions can be explained prior to confirming the booking.