

## BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

#### MILLER PARK ZOO ANIMAL ESCAPE POLICY

Reviewed by: Sgt. Jeffrey Albee	Effective Date: July 5, 1995
Authorized by: Asst. Chief Gary Sutherland	Revision Date: August 24, 2015

#### PURPOSE

This SOP has been established between the Bloomington Police Department and Miller Park Zoo to provide appropriate procedures for animal escape situations. It shall be the policy of the Bloomington Police Department to respond when requested to all reported animal emergencies to the zoo, and to assist zoo staff and personnel.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Life Threatening** - tigers, wolves\*, and bears

**Hazardous** - animals that could cause injuries such as bites (e.g. primates, otters, New Guinea dogs, red wolf\*)

**Non-threatening** - animals that pose no danger to people.

**Non-public areas** - holding areas, keeper work areas, animal building basement.

\*Wolves may fall into either category depending on the situation.

#### PROCEDURE FOR POLICE ASSISTANCE FOR A LIFE THREATENING ANIMAL ESCAPE

1. The Bloomington Police Department will be informed when a life threatening animal has escaped from confinement.
2. The Police Department will be called (911) by the zoo superintendent, senior keeper, the keeper handling the animal escape, or other zoo staff.
3. The Bloomington Police will respond to the reported escape of a life threatening animal, regardless of the source of the information.
4. The following information will be given to the Police:
  - a. What animal escaped;
  - b. When the animal escaped;
  - c. Last sighting;
  - d. If the animal is injured or ill;
  - e. Who may be in pursuit of the animal;
  - f. If the person in pursuit is armed and/or equipped with dart guns.

5. The primary responsibility of the Police during an escape incident on zoo property is to assist zoo personnel. The Bloomington Police may be requested to shoot the animal if the situation demands and there is no firearms qualified zoo staff available.

### **PROTOCOL FOR ZOO PERSONNEL FOR A LIFE THREATENING ANIMAL ESCAPE**

The following procedure should be followed as far as possible, keeping in mind that each escape may need to be handled differently.

1. The keeper who is first aware of an escape shall be the person responsible for handling the escape until either the senior keeper or the zoo superintendent is on the scene. On days when neither is at the zoo, the most senior keeper shall be the person responsible for handling the escape. **REMEMBER: THE FIRST ZOO KEEPER ALERTED TO THE ANIMAL ESCAPE MUST TAKE CHARGE** until a senior staff person arrives.
2. There are two factors that must be determined when notified of or observing an animal escape. These are:
  - a. Whether the escaped animal is a life threatening animal;
  - b. Whether the escaped animal is in a public area.
3. If the answer to both is "yes", then:
  - a. Begin moving visitors to a safe area;
  - b. Send for help;
  - c. Try to keep track of the animal;
  - d. Inform admissions or the office that a life threatening animal has escaped and is in a public area and if there are injuries to people. If necessary, instruct a visitor to call admissions. At the time the office staff or cashiers (as directed) will be responsible for calling for assistance and securing the entrance to the zoo.
4. If the escaped animal is one of the cats and not in the public area or cannot get into the public area (in the holding area but out of a cage for example), have all visitors leave the building and lock the doors. Inform admissions or the office that there is a life threatening animal escape, but it is not in a public area. They will then close the zoo and not allow visitors in until the situation is resolved.
5. In the situation where it is a life threatening animal that is contained and not a threat to visitors, do not attempt to confine the animal by yourself. Notify the zoo superintendent, senior keeper and or other animal staff (even on days when the superintendent and senior keeper are both gone from the zoo). Ensure that the building remains secure and that the animal cannot move into a public area.
6. When appropriate help has arrived, decide how to either immobilize the animal, return it to a secure cage, or shoot the animal. At no time will the safety of the animal be a priority over the safety of staff, visitors or other persons.
7. If a life threatening animal is in the public area, it will be shot. If there are no qualified staff persons available, then the Bloomington Police need to be called to do the shooting. If you have not been trained with the zoo's firearms **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SHOOT THE ANIMAL**.
8. If there are injuries to staff or visitors, move the injured person to a place of safety as soon as possible. **DO NOT PLACE YOURSELF AT RISK TO DO SO**. Remember you may be the only person capable of handling the situation until help arrives. Once the injured person is in a safe place first aid should be given.
9. If the escaped animal is not a life threatening animal and not in a public area, then make sure the animal is confined and obtain help to return the animal to a secure enclosure.

Inform the zoo superintendent as soon as possible or the senior keeper if the superintendent cannot be reached.

10. If the escaped animal is not a life threatening animal and in a public area, move any visitors out of the area, secure the area, and obtain help as needed to capture and confine the escaped animal.
11. If an animal has escaped from an exhibit which normally has more than one animal in it, make sure other animals in that exhibit are accounted for. If the escape route is unknown, do not return an animal to its enclosure until the escape route has been determined and corrective measures taken.
12. If there is a possibility of the loose animal escaping from the zoo grounds and it is either a life threatening animal or a potentially hazardous animal, the Bloomington Police need to be informed. Follow the protocol for notifying the Bloomington Police Department.
13. In the event of an animal escape, radio use will be restricted to information pertinent to the escape only. (Note: One of the reasons we have radios is to be able to obtain help in these situations, but the radios will not be of any help if they are not carried and turned on.)
14. Questions from the media or other agencies regarding any animal escape need to be directed to the Zoo Superintendent or other designated staff person ONLY. Cashiers will respond to media questions only as directed by the Zoo Superintendent or other designated staff person ONLY. Cashiers will respond to media questions only as directed by the Zoo Superintendent, no exceptions.
15. In any animal escape there are variables. Staff is expected to react to an animal escape in a professional manner to the best of their abilities.