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AAIBI SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR ANIMAL HANDLING EVENTS

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The Ultimate Guide for Parents, Schools, and Event Organizers

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INSTRUCTIONS: Print this checklist and take it with you when booking or attending any animal handling event like "Creature Cuddles". Check off each item as you verify it.

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SECTION A: REGULATORY COMPLIANCE & PAPERWORK

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[] Licenses and Permits:

Does the organization hold all required local and national licenses to exhibit or transport animals?

[] Health Certificates:

Can they provide current health certificates for EVERY animal present, issued by a licensed veterinarian? These should certify the animals are free from infections and fit for public interaction.

[] Public Liability Insurance:

Do they have adequate insurance coverage? Ask for a copy of their certificate. This protects YOU in case of an incident.

[] Risk Assessment:

For venue bookings, have they provided a formal Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS)? This document outlines the hazards they have identified and how they plan to mitigate them.

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SECTION B: ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE

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[] Pre-Event Health Check:

Were the animals inspected on the day of the event? NO animal showing signs of illness should be participating. Look for:

- Lethargy (unusually tired)
- Lesions or scabs on skin
- Diarrhea or messy fur
- Coughing or sneezing
- Runny eyes or nose

[] Appropriate Species & Temperament:

Are the animals suitable for handling?

- Young animals should NOT be exposed to rough handling
- Animals known to be aggressive should NOT be used
- Pregnant or overweight animals should NOT be in contact programs

[] Veterinary Access:

Is there a veterinarian on-call who can attend quickly in an emergency?

[] Biosecurity:

Do they have a plan to prevent disease spread? This includes cleaning

and disinfecting equipment, pens, and transport vehicles between events.

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SECTION C: STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

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[] Species-Specific Knowledge:

Does the handler have demonstrated knowledge and experience with the SPECIFIC species they are managing? (Handling a rabbit is different from handling a reptile or a parrot)

[] Ability to Read Animal Stress:

Can the handler recognize signs of stress or fear in the animals?

Warning signs include:

- Hiding or trying to escape
- Freezing in place
- Aggression (hissing, growling, swatting)
- Repetitive movements
- Excessive grooming

[] Prohibited Practices:

Do they avoid harmful handling techniques?

- NO physical abuse
- NO deprivation of food/water to control animals
- NO use of tranquilizers to facilitate handling

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SECTION D: PUBLIC INTERACTION & ENVIRONMENT

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 Supervision:

Is a responsible, knowledgeable attendant present and actively supervising the interaction at ALL times?

Safe Handling Briefing:

Before contact, does the staff brief participants (especially children) on how to behave? They should teach:

- No startling the animal
- Being gentle and quiet
- Avoiding contact when animal is eating, sleeping, or toileting
- Proper handwashing protocols

Barriers and Distance:

For larger or more dangerous animals, is there a sufficient barrier or distance between the public and the animal to ensure safety?

Containment:

Are all animals secured to prevent escape? Pens and enclosures must be safe and secure.

Climate Control:

Are the animals protected from extreme weather? They should have:

- Access to shade
- Fresh water available
- Shelter from heat, cold, or rain

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SECTION E: HYGIENE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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[] Handwashing Stations:

Are handwashing facilities (soap, water, sanitizer) readily available and clearly signposted for use immediately after handling animals?

[] No Food Zones:

Is there a clear separation between animal contact areas and areas where food and drink are consumed?

[] Incident Protocol:

Do they have a clear plan for what happens if someone is:

- Bitten?
- Scratched?
- Having an allergic reaction?

[] Injury Response:

Is there a vehicle available to remove an injured animal, and is there a first aid kit for humans on site?

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3 QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK BEFORE BOOKING

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Write down their answers here:

1. "Can we see your current health certificates and public liability insurance BEFORE the event?"

2. "What training do your handlers have, and how do you know when an animal is too stressed to continue?"

3. "What is your hygiene protocol, specifically regarding handwashing and cleaning equipment between locations?"

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NOTES

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Event/Company Name: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Handler's Name: _____

Additional Notes:

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About AAIBI
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We are committed to raising the standard of safety in
animal-assisted interactions.

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Visit us at <https://aibi.com> for more resources.
