



**THE ELEPHANT MANAGERS ASSOCIATION**  
300 Parkside Ave., Buffalo, New York 14214

---

**STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT**

The Elephant Managers Association (EMA) is an international nonprofit organization of professional elephant handlers, administrators, veterinarians, researchers and elephant enthusiasts. The Association is dedicated to the welfare of the world's elephants through improved conservation, husbandry, research, education and communication. The EMA collaborates with other professional groups and regulatory agencies to address matters relating to elephant care and management. Our members, who are elephant managers in all environments, adhere to a Code of Professional Ethics and are committed to providing elephant care at the highest professional level.

The EMA recommends that, at a minimum, the following guidelines for the care and management of elephants be met, regardless of management or handling system used.

**Proper Elephant Husbandry should include:**

- Elephant environment kept clean at all times
- Fresh drinking water provided daily
- High quality and appropriate fodder, grain and supplements provided daily
- Daily bathing (skin care)
- Regular exam of all body parts
- Weight and height of the elephant measured regularly
- Ability to take samples from elephant anytime necessary (blood, urine, feces, saliva - trunk wash)
- Ability to work on elephant's feet anytime necessary
- Ability to medicate elephant anytime necessary
- Ability to manage elephant in an emergency medical situation (separation)
- Ability to manage elephant if it is showing aggression to another elephant or to a human
- Providing for psychological well-being of the elephant: stimulation, tactile contact
- Need for environmental and behavioral stimulation as well as physical exercise

### **Proper Elephant Housing should include:**

- Opportunity for exercise and social interaction with other elephants as much as possible
- Elephants should have access to other elephants, females should not be housed alone
- Elephants should have access to dirt as much as possible
- Barns well lit, ventilated, and heated in cold climate environments
- Outdoor areas with adequate fencing to prevent animals from straying and to prevent unwanted access by public
- Program of pest control and prevention
- Awareness of social compatibility and dominance hierarchies
- Responsible social groupings: being able to deal with new animal introductions and separation

### **Written Elephant Management Protocol should include:**

- Elephant Management Program's mission statement and goals
- Management policies
- Definition of responsibilities for all personnel involved in Elephant Management Program
- Guidelines for all elephant management and handling activities
- Emergency response

### **Responsibility of Elephant Managers:**

- Should continually improve elephant management techniques
- Share information and experiences with other elephant managers
- Should be knowledgeable about chain or rope work, if needed in an emergency situation
- Should liaison with members of related organizations
- Promote their own Elephant Management Programs by effective communication of needs

### **Responsibility of Elephant Facility Administrators:**

- Understand ethical commitment necessary to maintain elephants, from animal welfare to conservation issues
- Understand financial commitment necessary to maintain elephants
- Provide proper number of qualified elephant care staff
- Understand the level of staff expertise necessary for an effective program
- Support ongoing education of elephant care staff
- Provide responsible program of veterinary care
- Understand and communicate how the goals of the facility and of the elephant program dictate implementation of elephant management strategies

### **Public Education should include:**

- Up-to-date educational signs and display information about elephants readily available

- Educational presentations, talks or demonstrations by elephant managers and staff
- Importance of elephant populations in human care
- Elephant Conservation message

### **Elephant Research:**

- Take advantage of new research opportunities
- Involvement in elephant research in the following areas (but not limited to) is strongly recommended:
  - Behavioral, cognitive
  - Physiological
  - Reproduction - to include physiological and social aspect
  - Communication

### **Conservation Goals:**

- Support ongoing research with elephants in human care
- Support in situ research to benefit wild elephant populations

This Standard Guidelines for Elephant Management is intended as a living document that will be re-evaluated and updated as elephant management techniques improve.

For additional information about elephant management---particularly management in various environments---refer to publications such as the AZA Elephant Husbandry Manual (North America), the EMOA Guidelines for the Welfare of Elephants in Captivity (South Africa), the Elephant Care Manual for Mahouts and Managers (Thailand) [all three currently in draft form only] and Practical Elephant Management (India) which is already available.