



Accessibility Guide

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San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, an Access-Friendly Organization

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is committed to ensuring that our campuses are welcoming to all! This is a pledge made by all of our team members. We strive to provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment where guests of all ages and abilities can enjoy getting close to nature as only the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park can offer. We are committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Access Laws.

This guide addresses many of the accommodations we provide for people with disabilities. If you have needs or questions outside of the content found in this document, please contact us based on the location you are planning to visit:



San Diego Zoo

(619) 231-1515, ext. 3905



**San Diego Zoo
Safari Park**

(760) 747-8702, ext. 5126

Or email us at: accessibility@sdzwa.org

We are able to best serve you if you contact us at least one week prior to your visit. We always welcome calls, comments, and suggestions from our guests. On the day of your visit, please feel free to discuss any special needs you have with our Guest Services team.

Access is a field that changes frequently as new information, technology, and laws evolve. We reserve the right to modify this guide and our accessibility policies as appropriate.

Frequently Asked Questions

Wheelchairs & Other Mobility Devices

Q: Do you have wheelchairs available for rent?

A: Yes, manual wheelchairs and Electronic Conveyance Vehicles (ECVs) are available to be rented for the day on a first-come, first-served basis.

Q: What is the cost for a wheelchair rental?

A Prices are subject to change. Prices are posted onsite at the rental facility and on the Guests with Disabilities pages of the [Zoo](#) and [Safari Park](#) websites.

Q: What is the minimum age to operate a rented ECV?

A: Guests must be at least 18 years old to operate an ECV owned by San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance.

Q: Do your attractions accommodate wheelchairs?

A: Please refer to the “Site Specific Attractions” section on page 17 for more information.

Q: Do you have a map that suggests the best path of travel?

A:

- The [Zoo's accessibility map](#) indicates the best path of travel with a blue, dotted line. It's available at the Guest Services podium outside the Zoo's entrance or at the Guest Services/Tours & Membership booth located inside the entrance next to Map Locator #4.
- The [Safari Park's accessibility map](#) does not suggest the best path of travel. However, with the exception of Gorilla Trail and World Gardens, the Safari Park is fully accessible. Safari Park accessibility maps are available upon request at the entrance turnstiles and all Guest Services locations.

Service Animals

Q: Do you allow service animals?

A: Yes, we welcome guests with disabilities that choose to bring their ***trained service animal*** into the Zoo or Safari Park. Service animals are defined only as dogs and miniature horses. Service animals in training and emotional support animals are not allowed in our parks. Please refer to the Service Animal section on page 10 for more information.

Attendants

Q: If a person with a disability requires an attendant, does the attendant get into the Zoo/Safari Park free of charge?

A: Yes. A San Diego Zoo or San Diego Zoo Safari Park guest with a disability who has a valid ticket or membership and requires assistance to visit the Zoo or Safari Park is welcome to request one complimentary Attendant Pass. Please refer to the “Attendant Pass” segment of the “Specific Disability Accommodations” section on page 7 for more information.

Mobility & Transportation

Q: Is there a shuttle service for guests with limited mobility?

A: Yes, both parks offer a limited-service accessibility shuttle for guests with mobility-related needs. Please refer to the “Accessibility Shuttle” section on page 11 for more information.

Specific Disability Accommodations

Q: Do you provide assistance for guests that need American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation?

A: Yes. Please contact our Guest Services team at accessibility@sdzwa.org for more information. Please note that we require a minimum of seven (7) business days’ notice to book an interpreter. Services are subject to availability.

Q: Do you offer Assistive Listening Devices (ALD)?

A: Yes.

- At the Zoo, ALDs are available at Wegeforth Bowl during regularly scheduled presentations.

- At the Safari Park, ALDs are offered at Benbough Amphitheater during regularly scheduled presentations.

Special Assistance

Q: Can a team member assist a guest with disabilities in the restroom?

A: No. Team members and volunteers are neither trained nor permitted to lift a guest or help them inside a restroom. Guests needing this assistance should plan to visit with an attendant who can physically assist them.

Q: Do you have an adult changing facility?

A: We do not have adult changing tables but can provide a safe and clean space within our Health Services offices.

Specific Disability Accommodations

Attendant Pass

Any San Diego Zoo or San Diego Zoo Safari Park guest with a disability who has a valid ticket or membership and requires assistance to visit the Zoo or Safari Park is welcome to request one complimentary Attendant Pass. Please plan to have the guest who requires an attendant, and the attendant, visit a ticket window to request an Attendant Pass. Attendants must be 16 years of age or older. Any ticket seller will be able to help you with this.

Attendant Passes also apply for special programs and tours. When booking a premium experience, please be sure to state that you will have an attendant in your party so that the correct amount of space is reserved.

Complimentary Attendant Passes do not have monetary value and may not be sold or transferred.

Interpretive Services for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Guests

In the event you plan to purchase a Premium Experience, participate in the Zoo's Guided Bus Tour, the Safari Park's Africa Tram tour or Journey into the Wild presentation, and require interpretive services, please contact our Guest Services Department by emailing accessibility@sdzwa.org with the details of your visit. We're pleased to offer up to four (4) hours of complimentary interpretive services selected from the options listed below.

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)
- Tactile Interpreter
- Lip Reading Interpreter

Please note that we require a minimum of seven (7) business days' notice to book an interpreter. Services are subject to availability.

Guests with Sensory Processing Needs

We proudly partner with KultureCity (KC) to improve our ability to assist and accommodate guests with sensory processing needs. We strive to raise awareness of the needs and challenges faced by individuals with sensory processing disorders by supplying our team members with continuous training in addition to offering the resources and accommodations below to our guests with sensory processing needs.

Sensory Bags

Sensory bags containing special KC VIP badges, fidget tools, noise canceling headphones, and other resources are available for checkout at no additional cost by leaving a photo ID to be picked up when the bag is returned.

- At the Zoo, please visit our Guest Services Tours & Membership booth located inside the entrance next to Map Locator #4.
- At the Safari Park, please visit the Guest Services office in Safari Base Camp or the Africa Tram Guest Services Booth.

Weighted Lap Pads

Weighted lap pads are also available upon request at no additional cost by leaving a photo ID to be picked up when the lap pad is returned.

- At the Zoo, please visit our Guest Services Tours & Membership Booth located inside the entrance next to Map Locator #4.
- At the Safari Park, please visit the Guest Service office in Safari Base Camp.

Social Story and KultureCity All-Inclusive App

Download the KultureCity All-Inclusive App to see the social story for the San Diego Zoo or San Diego Zoo Safari Park:

- App Store: <http://bit.ly/KCiphone>
- Google Play: <http://bit.ly/KCandroid>

Guests with Limited Mobility

Both the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park have many natural hills and valleys, which are inherent barriers to easy mobility. Both parks offer accommodations to make our hills and valleys more accessible to guests. Please pick up an accessibility map for more information on accessible routes, elevator and shuttle stop locations, and wheelchair & ECV rentals.

- At the Zoo, an accessibility map can be requested at the Guest Services podium just outside the Zoo's entrance or at the Tours & Membership Booth inside the Zoo's entrance next to Map Locator #4.
- At the Safari Park, an accessibility map can be requested at the entrance turnstiles and all Guest Services locations.

Please note that both the Zoo and Safari Park have many changes in road and walkway surfaces and guests are advised to use caution when traveling throughout the parks.

When attending a Wegeforth Bowl presentation at the Zoo or a Benbough Amphitheater presentation at the Safari Park, look for the accessible seating designated by the wheelchair access symbol, or ask a team member for assistance.

Please keep in mind that our team members and volunteers are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. A guest requiring such physical assistance should plan to visit the Zoo or Safari Park with an attendant.

Parking

Accessible parking is available in our parking lots on a first-come, first-served basis. A valid disability parking placard or license plate is required. Please note that the San Diego Police Department enforces disabled parking spaces. Be sure to properly display your placard issued by an appropriate government motor vehicle agency. If designated disabled parking spaces are all taken, please proceed to the closest available parking option.

Zoo: Please visit the [Plan Your Visit](#) page of the Zoo website for current parking rates.

Safari Park: Please visit the [Plan Your Visit](#) page of the Safari Park website for current parking rates.

Service Animals

We welcome guests with disabilities that choose to bring their ***trained service animal*** into the Zoo or Safari Park. Service animals are defined only as dogs and miniature horses. Service animals “in training,” emotional support animals, and pets kept for companionship and comfort are not allowed in our parks. Service animals must check in at the Zoo’s Guest Services podium outside the entrance, or at the Safari Park’s turnstiles prior to entering. Please download the accessibility map for the Zoo or Safari Park to familiarize yourself with the restricted and sensitive areas for service animals, as well as relief stations.

- For everyone's safety, the handler is responsible for always maintaining control of their service animal.
- We require that the animal be restrained with a leash or tether no longer than six feet.
- When encountering free-roaming wildlife or wildlife-in-training, service animals should be kept within two feet of their handler, with six feet maintained from the wildlife.
- Service animals must be removed from any area if a conflict occurs or appears likely to occur between the service animal and Zoo or Safari Park wildlife, or when Zoo or Safari Park wildlife appear stressed by the presence of the service animal.
- Service animals may not be held up by their handler—even briefly—next to wildlife habitats. If a service animal exhibits inappropriate behavior at any time, it will need to be removed from the premises.
- Service animals must be trained to relieve themselves only at designated service animal relief stations. Handlers or their attendant must clean up after their service animals. Please refer to the accessibility map or app for the Zoo or Safari Park for exact locations.
- Service animals are restricted from entering areas where there is direct contact with wildlife at the Zoo or Safari Park and limited in certain areas due to the

sensitivity of the wildlife. Please refer to the accessibility map for sensitive and restricted animal areas.

- Service animals must be kept at least six feet from wildlife presentations in public spaces.

Easy Access Pass

Our queues are wheelchair accessible; however, guests who have difficulty standing in line due to a disability may request an Easy Access Pass. Some waiting may still be required. Easy Access Passes are only valid on the day they are issued.

San Diego Zoo: At the Zoo, an Easy Access Pass may be obtained at the Guest Services podium outside the Zoo entrance or at the Guest Services/Tours & Membership booth next to Map Locator #4. This pass may be utilized at the Guided Bus Tour and Skyfari® Aerial Tram. Up to three additional members of the guest's party may accompany the guest with a disability. If there are more than three guests in your party, you may request to be seated while waiting for them to reach the front of the line. The attendant on duty will direct the guests to a designated boarding area. Some waiting may still be required.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park: At the Safari Park, guests who have difficulty standing in line at the Africa Tram may request a complimentary "Easy Access Pass" at the Africa Tram host podium, across from the Africa Tram ticket booth. The team member on duty will provide a return time for the group that is equivalent to the current estimated wait time. Guests may continue exploring and return to the Africa Tram host at their assigned time to board. Up to four additional members of the guest's party may accompany a guest with a disability.

Accessibility Shuttle

San Diego Zoo:

The Zoo offers an on-call accessibility shuttle, which can accommodate most mobility devices using an electric lift. The shuttle travels on the main roads throughout the Zoo;

however, it does not operate on the narrower walking-only pathways. During peak times, the shuttle may be busy, so please plan accordingly.

Space is limited to 6–10 seats and 3–5 securement locations, depending on the vehicle in use. In times of high attendance, access may be limited to guests with limited mobility and their attendant.

Contact any Zoo team member or volunteer to request service and get directions to the nearest pickup location:

- Safari Kitchen
- Restrooms near Map Locator #15
- Arctic Trader near Map Locator #17
- Urban Jungle
- Restrooms near Map Locator #19
- Restrooms near Map Locator #10

San Diego Zoo Safari Park:

The Safari Park offers an accessibility shuttle for guests with mobility needs that operates between two shuttle stops, one in Safari Base Camp near Guest Services and one at Okavango Outpost near the cheetah habitat.

- Refer to the [accessibility map](#) or the [Safari Park app](#) for shuttle stop locations.
- This shuttle does not provide transportation to and from the guest parking lot.
- Shuttles picks up every 30 minutes starting a half hour after the park opens and ending at park closing.
- Transportation from Safari Base Camp to Okavango Outpost stops 30 minutes before the park closes.
- Each shuttle can accommodate two standard size wheelchairs or mobility devices.
- All mobility aids and strollers must be foldable at the time of boarding.
- Groups of four or more are not guaranteed to ride together on the same shuttle.

Wheelchairs, Electric Conveyance Vehicles (ECVs), & Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs)

Wheelchairs and Mobility Devices

The Zoo and Safari Park are widely accessible to guests using both manual and electric mobility devices. Consistent with federal guidelines, we define “wheelchairs” as devices designed primarily for use by individuals with mobility disabilities.

- We also accommodate the use of certain non-traditional wheelchairs (e.g., steerable knee walkers).
- We reserve the right to inspect devices to determine whether they are safe enough to navigate the park you are visiting.
- While at the Zoo, if your child is using their stroller as an accessibility device and is unable to transfer out of it, please visit the Guest Services podium before the Zoo entrance and request a “wheelchair tag.” Albert’s Restaurant does not routinely allow strollers but will make exceptions for strollers that serve as wheelchairs.
- Tricycles with push handles are allowed, provided an adult (18 years of age or older) holds the handle at all times.

We advise guests using mobility devices to consult the Zoo or Safari Park’s accessibility map or app and follow signs to determine which areas are accessible. Please note, all personal property is the responsibility of the owner.

Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs)

The Zoo and Safari Park accommodate the use of some OPDMDs, designed primarily for use by individuals with mobility limitations.

In the interest of maintaining a safe and pedestrian-friendly environment while at the same time ensuring that everyone has a positive experience at the Zoo and Safari Park, it is prohibited to operate a mobility device at a speed significantly greater than the flow of the surrounding pedestrian traffic.

Acceptable OPDMDs

Permitted OPDMDs include the following:

- Electric OPDMDs and other single-seat electric scooters with three or more wheels that cannot exceed more than six miles per hour. OPDMDs may be used by one person at a time.
- Segways® with a steering handle are permitted but must operate only in “turtle” mode.

Prohibited OPDMDs

Prohibited OPDMDs include the following:

- Any device that has or should have a registered license plate
- Any device that has only one wheel
- Any two wheeled device other than Segways® as described above (e.g., two-wheeled motorized scooters and Razor scooters)
- Any type of kick scooter
- Any device that has been structurally or mechanically altered, including the addition of an attached trailer
- Any gas or diesel-powered vehicle
- All Hoverboards or Segways without a steering handle
- Any golf carts or similar type of vehicle
- Any device with towing features, or any mobility devices used to tow objects or persons
- Bicycles

Notwithstanding the above lists, for safety reasons we reserve the right to inspect any mobility device to determine whether it appears safe enough to operate at the Zoo or Safari Park. During such an inspection, we will consider various factors, included but not limited to the following:

- The type, size, weight, dimensions, minimum speed, and maximum speed of the device.
- The potential harm the device might cause to its operator, other guests, and the environment.

- Whether the device appears stable and can balance on its own without the use of a kickstand.
- Federal, state, and municipal regulations (e.g., whether the device is permitted on sidewalks).
- Other information the Zoo or Safari Park may find in the device's use manual or through other investigation.

The Operation of Wheelchairs and OPDMDs

Please consult both the Zoo and Safari Park accessibility maps before operating a wheelchair or OPDMD on the grounds. Familiarity with the areas of the parks that have steep slopes, and other limitations will ensure a safe and enjoyable visit.

- We recommend guests consider only operating their wheelchairs and OPDMDs on mild slopes. The Zoo and Safari Park have areas with steep grades that limit accessibility. In the interest of safety, we recommend that guests in manual wheelchairs avoid these areas. All guests using these routes should use caution to avoid serious injury.
- Guests are required to operate their wheelchairs and OPDMDs within the applicable manufacturer guidelines.
- Operation of wheelchairs and OPDMDs is restricted to those for whom the devices have been fitted.
- Before operating an OPDMD, please read the device's manufacturer guidelines to determine whether the vehicle is susceptible to electromagnetic interference.

Wheelchair and ECV Rentals

Manual wheelchairs and ECVs are available for rent on a first-come first-served basis just inside the main entrance of both the Zoo and Safari Park. Guests 18 years and older may rent an ECV or wheelchair. A picture ID is required. Only the person for whom the rental is assigned is allowed to operate the ECVs. ECVs and wheelchairs are designed for single passengers. Tandem riding or holding children on your lap is



not permissible. Rental prices are subject to change. Please visit the Guest Services page of the Zoo or Safari Park's website for current pricing.

Zoo: [Guest Services | San Diego Zoo](#)

Park: [Guest Services | San Diego Zoo Safari Park](#)

Health Services/First Aid – Refrigeration for Medication

The Health Services Office is located:

- Zoo: Next to the Reptile House, near Map Locator #3
- Safari Park: In the Guest Services office at Safari Base Camp, near Map Locator #2

If at any time you need immediate assistance, please ask any team member to call for medical assistance. If you have specific needs, such as a larger changing station, feeding tube, refrigeration for medication, etc., please consult with our health service personnel at the Health Services Office.

Restrooms

All of our public restrooms are accessible. Please refer to your map or app for all restroom locations, many of which are family or gender-neutral restrooms.

Our team members and volunteers are neither trained nor permitted to lift a guest or help them inside a restroom. Guests needing such assistance should plan to visit with an attendant.

Dining & Shopping

All dining and merchandise locations are accessible. Our team members are available to read menus or reach merchandise if you require assistance.

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains accessible to guests are located throughout the Zoo and Safari Park. Complimentary cups of water or water bottle refills may also be requested at any food stand or restaurant.

Site-Specific Attractions

San Diego Zoo:

Guided Bus Tours

The Zoo offers a Guided Bus Tour, which is a narrated round-trip adventure through Zoo grounds on our double-decker buses (tours are 35–40 minutes). Guided Bus Tours are included with your ticket or membership. Access for guests using a wheelchair is available on the lower deck. Guided Bus Tours load from a level dock via a ramp. Each bus has one wheelchair location suitable to secure manual wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, and some small OPDMDs. Guests with larger OPDMDs, including the model available for rent at the Zoo, will need to transfer to a bench seat and park their OPDMD at the loading dock.

If you are able to transfer to a bench seat, this option is available to you: Your wheelchair or personal OPDMD will be parked at the loading dock. At the end of your tour, you may ride forward from the unloading dock with the bus to return to your device. Zoo rental ECVs will be reparked for you at the unloading dock. If transferring to the bench seat is not an option for you, then you are welcome to wait for the next tour.

Skyfari® Aerial Tram

The Skyfari Aerial Tram offers transportation in four-passenger gondolas over the treetops from one end of the Zoo to the other, featuring spectacular views of the Zoo and surrounding Balboa Park. Our Skyfari Aerial Tram can accommodate guests who are able to transfer to a bench seat and offers round-trip rides as requested for guests with disabilities.

A guest using a folding manual wheelchair who can transfer to a gondola seat without assistance or with the help of those in their party may have the wheelchair transported ahead by gondola. The wheelchair will be available upon arrival at the opposite terminal. Team members are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. If your device cannot fold, a round-trip ride may be requested prior to loading. Please note the Zoo is not responsible for personal property.

Presentations

Wheelchair seating is available at the top of Wegeforth Bowl. These areas are designated by the wheelchair access symbol. Please ask any team member for assistance if needed.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park:

Africa Tram

At the Safari Park, the Africa Tram queue is accessible to all guests. Guests using a wheelchair, stroller or other mobility device should enter through the general queue entrance. Each tram can accommodate up to two standard-sized wheelchairs or mobility devices. Strollers, wheelchairs, and OPDMDs will be stored during the queuing process. The tour begins and ends at the same location. If you are unable to transfer from your mobility device, please notify a team member. Please note that team members are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. Guests who require physical assistance are required to ride this attraction with an attendant.

Important Information:

- Delays may occur in sensitive wildlife areas. During these times guests may be asked to remain quiet until the tour resumes or you disembark.
- The queue and waiting areas can be busy and loud. Please consider if this environment is suitable for your group.
- Trained service animals may ride the Africa Tram with the person they are trained to assist.
- Guests who cannot transfer out of their wheelchair must be accompanied by an attendant who can provide any necessary assistance.
- In the event of a tram evacuation:
 - Guests may need to navigate uneven paths and inclines.
 - Guests using wheelchairs must be able to walk independently or have an attendant accompany them who is able to provide assistance.
 - Ramp deployment may be limited due to uneven surfaces along the tram path.

Conservation Carousel

The Conservation Carousel can accommodate one wheelchair or OPDMD per ride subject to the carousel manufacturer's operating guidelines. Please inform Carousel team members while you are waiting in line if you are not able to transfer and will be riding the carousel in your wheelchair or OPDMD. The team member will deploy a ramp to provide access and your wheelchair or OPDMD will be secured in place at the designated location. Please note that team members are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. Guests who require physical assistance are required to ride this attraction with an attendant.

Trained service animals may ride the Conservation Carousel with the person they are trained to assist.

Balloon Safari

The Balloon Safari can accommodate one manual wheelchair per ride subject to the balloon manufacturer's operating guidelines. Please notify the Balloon Safari team member when you check in if you plan to ride the balloon in your manual wheelchair. The team member will deploy a ramp for wheelchair access to the ride and your wheelchair will be secured in place at a designated wheelchair location. Electric wheelchairs and OPDMDs are not allowed to ride the Balloon Safari per the manufacturer's operating guidelines. However, if you are able to transfer, a manual wheelchair can be provided by the Balloon Safari team for the purpose of riding the balloon only. Please note that team members are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. Guests who require physical assistance are required to ride this attraction with an attendant.

Trained service animals are allowed to ride the Balloon Safari with the person they are trained to assist.

Presentations

Wheelchair seating is available in Benbough Amphitheater in front of the first row in the first section of seating and is indicated by the ADA placards on the benches. Please ask any team member for assistance if needed.

Premium Experiences

San Diego Zoo:

Animals in Action, Discovery Tours, Inside Look, and Exclusive VIP Experiences

Guests must purchase a separate ticket for these experiences. Please contact the Reservation Sales team at (619) 718-3000 to discuss any accommodations needed before making a reservation.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park:

Safari Experiences

Guests must purchase a separate ticket for Safari Experiences. Please contact the Reservation Sales team at (619) 718-3000 to discuss any accommodations needed before making a reservation.

Trained service animals are allowed to accompany the person they are trained to assist on Cart Safaris, the Wildlife Trek Safari, and Roar & Snore.

Wildlife Safaris

Each vehicle can accommodate one wheelchair. Both the person with a disability and the wheelchair itself must be able to withstand the movements of the safari vehicle on unimproved roads. Service animals are not permitted on this tour.

Roar & Snore

The Roar & Snore campground is wheelchair accessible, with partial access to behind-the-scenes areas. An ADA restroom is located at the campsite. For more information, please contact the Reservation Sales team at (619) 718-3000.

Best Times to Visit

To avoid large crowds, we recommend visiting the Zoo or Safari Park during non-peak times. Weekdays, non-holidays, and early mornings are generally less crowded.

Guest Services

Upon arrival, feel free to stop in and visit Guest Services.

- At the Zoo, you can visit the Guest Services podium outside the entrance or the Guest Services Tours & Information booth inside the entrance next to Map Locator #4.
- At the Safari Park, Guest Services is located at the entry plaza and Safari Base Camp near Map Locator #2.

Team members will advise you of our accommodation tools that might be beneficial. Both parks are living organizations with the task of caring for a variety of animals and plants and, as such, changes may occur. Our team members can provide tips and updates on the daily calendar of events that might help you plan your day. San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance welcomes ALL guests.

Contact Us

For accessibility questions, please contact Accessibility@sdzwa.org or call the park you are planning to attend Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.



San Diego Zoo:

(619) 231-1515

Zoo Accessibility Questions:

ext. 3905



San Diego Zoo Safari Park:

(760) 747-8702

Safari Park Accessibility

Questions: ext. 5126