RISK ASSESSMENT WIZARD

Reptile Handling

Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Develops fine motor skills and confidence in handling exotic animals safely. | Educates participants on reptile behavior, anatomy, and habitat conservation. | Encourages appreciation and respect for less common animals in ecosystems. | Promotes responsible pet ownership and proper handling techniques. | Provides interactive experiences that support science and nature education. | Reduces fear and misconceptions about reptiles through hands-on learning.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Aggression during breeding season	Increased biting, territorial behavior	Supports natural behaviors while maintaining safe working conditions.	Be aware of seasonal behavioral changes and adjust handling accordingly. Provide adequate space for territorial species. Use barriers when necessary to prevent direct aggression. Avoid unnecessary handling of reptiles during breeding periods. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Aggression from newly acquired reptiles	Unpredictable behavior, biting	Supports the safe integration of reptiles into collections, reducing stress and injury risks.	Quarantine new arrivals before introducing them to general collections. Handle new reptiles with caution, using gloves or hooks when necessary. Allow acclimatization time before regular handling begins. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Bites from venomous reptiles	Severe envenomation, allergic reactions	Allows for the care and study of venomous species, contributing to conservation efforts and public education.	Ensure handlers are trained in species identification and venomous snake handling techniques. Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as snake-proof gloves and boots. Keep antivenom accessible and maintain an emergency response plan. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Dehydration or overheating of reptiles	Stress, health decline	Ensures the health and longevity of reptiles under care, supporting conservation efforts.	Provide appropriate humidity levels and access to fresh water. Monitor environmental conditions and adjust as necessary. Educate staff on species-specific needs. **(ALL)**	Reptiles	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Electric shock from faulty heating equipment	Electrical burns, fire hazard	Ensures the safety of both animals and handlers while maintaining controlled environments.	Regularly inspect heat mats, ceramic heaters, and other electrical components for damage. Use RCD (residual current device) protection on electrical outlets. Keep cords and electrical components out of reach of enclosures. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, reptiles	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Enclosure security failure	Escape of reptiles, potential injury	Ensures the safety of both animals and humans, maintaining operational integrity.	Regularly inspect locks, latches, and barriers for wear and tear. Use escape-proof enclosure designs suitable for each species. Train staff to conduct routine checks before and after handling sessions. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Exposure to zoonotic diseases	Infections, respiratory issues	Promotes a healthy environment for both reptiles and handlers, supporting long-term care and study.	Conduct regular health screenings of reptiles. Implement quarantine procedures for new or sick animals. Provide staff with training on zoonotic disease prevention and PPE usage. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Incorrect diet causing health issues	Nutritional deficiencies, obesity	Ensures the health and longevity of reptiles under care, supporting conservation efforts.	Provide a varied diet based on species-specific nutritional needs. Consult reptile nutrition experts to ensure proper feeding schedules. Monitor feeding habits and adjust diets accordingly to prevent deficiencies or obesity. **(ALL)**	Reptiles	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Injury from escaped reptiles	Accidental bites, tripping hazards	Ensures the safety of both animals and humans, maintaining operational integrity.	Secure enclosures with locks and regularly inspect for potential escape points. Develop and practice escape recovery protocols. Educate staff on safe capture techniques. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Injury from handling large reptiles	Muscle strain, bites	Allows for the care of larger species, contributing to species diversity in collections.	Use multiple trained handlers for large reptiles. Employ appropriate equipment, such as restraint poles or stretchers. Plan handling procedures in advance. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Reptile ingesting foreign objects	Digestive blockage, internal injury	Ensures the health and longevity of reptiles under care, supporting conservation efforts.	Keep enclosures free of small, loose items that reptiles might ingest. Avoid using substrate that can be swallowed accidentally. Monitor feeding times and ensure all food items are appropriately sized to prevent accidental ingestion. **(ALL)**	Reptiles	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Respiratory issues from poor ventilation	Breathing difficulties, bacterial infections	Promotes a healthy environment for both reptiles and handlers, supporting long-term care and study.	Ensure proper airflow in enclosures to prevent stagnant air. Use appropriate ventilation systems to regulate humidity. Regularly clean and inspect air filters and vents to prevent bacterial buildup. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, reptiles	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Salmonella infection	Gastrointestinal illness, cross-contamination	Allows for the maintenance of reptile collections, supporting research and educational programs.	Implement strict hygiene protocols, including thorough handwashing with soap and water after handling reptiles or cleaning enclosures. Disinfect surfaces and equipment regularly. Educate staff on zoonotic disease risks. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Allergic reactions to reptile proteins	Skin rashes, anaphylaxis	Permits individuals with manageable allergies to work with reptiles, broadening staff expertise.	Identify staff with known allergies and provide appropriate PPE, such as gloves and masks. Ensure availability of first aid measures, including antihistamines and epinephrine auto-injectors. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Bites from non-venomous reptiles	Minor wounds, infections	Facilitates the handling and care of a wide range of reptile species, enhancing biodiversity understanding.	Train staff in proper handling techniques to minimize stress to the animal and reduce the likelihood of bites. Use tools like snake hooks or tongs when necessary. Ensure tetanus vaccinations are up to date. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Chemical exposure from cleaning agents	Respiratory irritation, toxicity	Maintains a clean and safe environment for reptiles and staff, preventing health issues.	Use reptile-safe cleaning products and follow manufacturer guidelines. Ensure proper ventilation during cleaning. Store chemicals securely and label them clearly. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Eye injury from reptile tail whips	Corneal abrasions, temporary vision impairment	Enhances safety during interactions, allowing for necessary handling procedures.	Train staff to recognize tail-whipping behavior and use appropriate handling techniques. Wear protective eyewear when handling species prone to tail strikes. Use calming methods to reduce defensive reactions. Maintain a safe distance when possible. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Handling stress-sensitive species	Increased stress, defensive biting	Enhances animal welfare and reduces the risk of injury to handlers.	Minimize direct contact with species prone to stress. Use indirect observation methods where possible. Provide enrichment that reduces stress, such as hiding spots and stable environments. Train staff on species-specific stress signals. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Injury during transportation	Escape of reptiles, temperature stress	Facilitates the safe relocation of reptiles for conservation, research, or educational purposes.	Use appropriate, secure containers for transporting reptiles. Minimize handling during transport and maintain suitable environmental conditions within transport containers. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Injury from sharp reptile teeth during feeding	Bite wounds, infection risk	Facilitates proper nutrition for reptiles while ensuring safe feeding practices.	Use feeding tongs for species with aggressive feeding responses. Never feed reptiles by hand. Ensure staff are trained to recognize feeding-related aggression. Supervise feeding sessions and remove uneaten food promptly. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Musculoskeletal injuries from improper lifting	Back strain, joint pain	Reduces the risk of staff injuries, promoting a safer workplace.	Train staff in proper lifting techniques and provide mechanical aids where possible. Encourage team lifting for heavy loads. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Overexposure to heat lamps	Burn injuries, heat stress	Maintains optimal health conditions for reptiles, ensuring their well-being.	Use thermostats to regulate heat output. Provide multiple basking spots to prevent competition. Monitor and adjust heat lamp placement to avoid direct exposure that may cause burns. Train staff on proper heat regulation. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff, reptiles	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Scratches from reptiles' claws	Skin abrasions, infections	Enables close interaction and care for reptiles, promoting health assessments and medical treatments.	Wear long-sleeved clothing and gloves when handling reptiles with sharp claws. Regularly trim claws where appropriate and safe to do so. Handle animals calmly to prevent defensive scratching. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Stress-induced aggression in reptiles	Defensive biting, tail strikes	Enhances animal welfare and reduces the risk of injury to handlers.	Minimize handling and provide hiding spaces within enclosures. Maintain consistent routines and environmental conditions. Recognize signs of stress and adjust care accordingly. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Thermal burns from heat sources	Injury to handlers, damage to enclosures	Maintains optimal health conditions for reptiles, ensuring their well-being.	Use thermostats to regulate heat sources and prevent overheating. Shield heat lamps to prevent direct contact. Regularly monitor enclosure temperatures. **(ALL)**	Handlers, staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Unpredicted risks	Illness, injury, death		Continuous risk monitoring conducted by all staff. Any unforeseen hazards must be reported promptly to supervisors or management, with immediate corrective action taken as necessary. **(ALL)**	All	**N/A**

NOTES

Extra notes & activity evaluation:

Completed by	Reviewed/Approved by	Risk Assessment Date	Review Required Date