



Nontraditional Companion Animal & Aquatic Certification Standards

Live Animal Suppliers

Table of Contents

American Humane Certification Program	3
Environment.....	6
Appearance & Behavior	13
Nutrition	14
Health	18
Staff Training.....	20
Safety & Sanitation	21
Suppliers & Receiving.....	23
Transportation	23
Building.....	25

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American Humane Certification Program

As the nation's voice for the protection of animals, American Humane reaches millions of people daily via groundbreaking research, education, training, and services that span a wide network of organizations, agencies and businesses. From its beginning, the historic American Humane has been at the forefront of every major advancement in protecting animals from abuse and neglect as well as promoting the human-animal bond.

American Humane Certification Program

American Humane's Nontraditional Companion Animal & Aquatic Certification audit is focused on assessing the condition, well-being, and welfare of small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and aquatic life at pet provider locations and animal supplier facilities. On-site audit questions focus on animal housing, veterinary care, behavior, nutrition, and safety. Core principles set the stage for a set of detailed questions aimed at confirming that the animals are not only in physically good condition but have overall good welfare.

Core Principles

These principles represent criteria that are essential as indicative of animal welfare. They are animal-centric with the goal of confirming that good welfare and humane treatment of all animals is provided at a facility. These core criteria must be satisfactorily addressed in order to pass the certification audit. They underlie the entire audit and are not simply assessed once at the start of an audit but can be reviewed at any time during an audit.

The following core principles must be satisfied in order to pass the audit. Failure of these non-negotiable requirements will result in failure of the audit.

1) No Animal Abuse

No observations of willful acts or unintentional signs of abuse or neglect by any person at the facility are acceptable. Observation of such acts will automatically result in failure of the audit.

Animal Abuse

☐ PASS

☐ FAIL

2) Appropriate Veterinary Care Plan

The audit will identify whether a facility has a relationship and plan in effect regarding sick/injured animals with a qualified and licensed veterinarian. Review of the plan (if a physical document exists) and discussion with staff that such a plan exists is required. Failure to provide confirmation of a veterinary care plan will result in failure of the audit.

Approved Plan

☐ PASS

☐ FAIL

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3) Staff Conduct that Promotes Animal Welfare

Staff on duty must be aware of the facility's protocols and procedures as well as conduct themselves in a manner that promotes animal welfare.

Failure to do so, or observations of blatant abuse (see #1 above) will result in failure of the audit.

Staff Conduct

☐ PASS

☐ FAIL

Scoring Metrics

Welfare indicators for the American Humane Certification audit are presented generally with respect to direct and indirect information. Direct information includes aspects of welfare that are observable for the animals being assessed by an auditor while indirect information includes information obtained from staff (e.g., maintenance, feeding procedures, isolation area/procedures).

In addition to the three pass/fail core principles, checklist items related to housing/environment, appearance/behavior, nutrition, health/veterinary care and cleaning/sanitation will be reviewed and documented. Records and staff knowledge/training will be reviewed during an on-site assessment.

In order for a facility to pass the American Humane Certification audit, they must satisfactorily meet all items on the audit checklist. This checklist is in addition to the three (3) Pass/Fail core principles. These three pass/fail audit items MUST be addressed satisfactorily in order to pass the audit.

Non-Compliance Issues

Any checklist items that do not meet American Humane Standards during an on-site audit will be described in an Audit Summary Report made available within 10 days of completion of the on-site audit.

Corrective Action Plan

A Corrective Action Plan must be submitted to American Humane within 14 days of the Audit Summary Report date. The Corrective Action Plan describes the items identified through the audit process and the corrective actions that will be completed by the facility with a proposed timeline and including any supporting documentation (e.g., photos, documents detailing compliance acts, etc.).

Corrective Action Completion

The Corrective Action is to be completed within the timeline that was outlined in the plan by the facility and approved by American Humane. The facility is subject to a re-audit at the discretion

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of American Humane after plan completion. Variances are permitted through written submission to American Humane and upon prior written approval. Facilities are encouraged to report their progress on corrective actions throughout the correction period.

***Facilities that complete the audit as humane with good animal welfare in the American Humane Certification program are expected to maintain high welfare standards throughout the term of certification. If it is determined after an audit that a facility in the American Humane Certified™ program has fallen out of compliance, that facility must verify correction of the non-conformances and complete a new audit. **American Humane reserves the right to perform spot checks at any time during the certification period with reasonable notice.** ***

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Nontraditional Companion Animal & Aquatic Standards – Animal Suppliers

Environment

Housing - General

- Animals within the facility must be able to be identified by species and source (e.g., breeder or supplier) for tracking purposes.
- All animals should be housed under conditions that provide sufficient space as well as supplementary structures and resources required to meet physical, physiologic, and behavioral needs.
- The primary enclosure should provide a secure environment that does not permit animal escape and should be made of durable, nontoxic materials that resist corrosion, withstand the rigors of cleaning and regular handling, and are not detrimental to the health of the animals.
- The enclosure should be designed and manufactured to prevent accidental entrapment of animals or their appendages and should be free of sharp edges or projections that could cause injury to the animals or personnel.
- The enclosure should have smooth, impervious surfaces with minimal ledges, angles, corners, and overlapping surfaces so that accumulation of dirt, debris, and moisture is minimized, and cleaning and disinfecting are not impaired.
- All enclosures should be kept in good repair to prevent escape of or injury to animals, promote physical comfort, and facilitate sanitation and servicing.
- Animals should be housed in appropriate numbers to prevent overcrowding and meet American Humane space guidelines.
 - Animals housed in numbers exceeding American Humane space guidelines must meet all performance standards (e.g., bedding clean, no stress, no disease or behavior issues)
 - Facilities not meeting the space guidelines should strive toward meeting the guidelines within 24 months.
- Mammals must be separated by species in enclosures.
- Mammals must be separated by sex in their enclosures unless used for breeding.
- Predator species must not be housed within sight of prey species.
 - Predator species must not be housed in a habitat separated by a removable divider even if the divider is opaque.
- Temperature and humidity must be species appropriate and follow American Humane guidelines.

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- Lighting cycles in animal rooms should support the animal's (mammals, birds, reptiles, and aquatic life) normal circadian rhythm.
- All small rodents (mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils) should have adequate nesting materials (e.g., shredded paper, grass hay, alfalfa, etc.).
- Chinchillas should have dust baths offered to them a minimum of once weekly

Housing – Avian

- Enclosures should enable birds to spread their wings and turn around while perched without touching the enclosure ceiling, floor or walls with their head, tail or wings.
 - Larger birds, long-tailed birds, or a greater number of birds require bigger enclosures.
 - The appropriateness of cage dimensions is determined by volume and shape, and both in turn dictate the number and kind of birds within.
- For socially housed birds, sufficient perch space should be provided to allow the birds to perch communally.
- Birds housed individually should be housed so they can see other birds in the room.
- Favorable perch traits include:
 - Good grip texture and suitable diameter to ensure secure footing
 - Flexibility to stimulate balance and exercise
 - Varying diameter to promote foot health
 - Chewable for environmental enrichment
 - Non-slip and not cold (in contrast to metal bars)
 - Nonabrasive (a single perch designed to safely wear down beaks and nails located at an appropriate location in the habitat is acceptable)
 - Nontoxic
- Perches must be able to be disinfected or discarded before new groups of birds are introduced.
- There should be a minimum of two separate perches in each enclosure.
- There should be enough perch space to accommodate 20% more birds than are in the enclosure to allow birds to choose appropriate perching sites.
- For general guidance:
 - 3" perch length for each bird budgerigar size and smaller
 - 4" perch length for each cockatiel size bird
 - 6" perch length for each small parrot/conure sized bird
 - 8" perch length for each medium parrot sized bird
 - 10" perch length for each larger parrot
 - 12" perch length for each large Macaw sized bird
- Perches should be located in the enclosure to minimize soiling of food and water dishes.
- To provide climbing opportunities, the enclosure should have horizontal bars or mesh wire.

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- Solid habitat sides and habitats with vertical bars only are discouraged.
- Enclosures placed in racks that allow stacking vertically should ensure that food, waste, and water from the enclosure above cannot enter the lower enclosure.
- It is recommended that rooms/habitats holding avian species have air handling systems designed to provide negative air pressure with exhaust directly outside and no air recirculation.
 - This configuration ensures potentially contaminated air or contagious organisms from inside the room/habitat will not flow outside into common areas.

Temperature and Humidity – Avian

- The bird housing areas should be at the appropriate temperature (min 60 degrees F and max 80 degrees F).
- Birds housed in outdoor enclosures must be placed in enclosures with plenty of time to acclimate to seasonal outdoor temperature variations.
 - Birds in outdoor enclosures must have access to areas where they can safely protect themselves from direct sunlight, wind, rain, cold, and other extreme weather conditions.

Housing – Reptile

- The habitat should meet the needs of the species.
- Sufficient height should be provided for species that climb or perch (e.g., iguanas, anoles, etc.)
- Species that climb should have branches or ledges on which to perch.
- Enclosures for secretive species must be provided with refuges or visual barriers for animals to hide from view.
- Clear walls on all sides may cause reptiles to damage their rostrum. If rostrum damage is present on animals, the enclosure should be changed to prevent this from happening.
- Most species of juvenile reptiles can be housed in groups.
- Habitats housing aquatic and semiaquatic reptiles must include a water area for swimming/soaking.
 - The water must be deep enough for the animal to right itself if it becomes turned over and include a haul-out area for basking/drying.
- Lids do not need to be provided for habitats housing non-climbing species, provided that the habitat sides are tall enough to prevent escape.
- Long term goals for breeders using rack and drawer systems for breeding and keeping reptiles:
 - Move toward using natural substrates, provide water bowls large enough to soak in, provide opportunities to burrow and hide, and provide other forms of enrichment.

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Temperature, Humidity and Lighting – Reptile

- Reptiles must be provided with an environment that allows them to behaviorally thermoregulate.
- The temperature must be monitored in individual habitats where the ambient room temperature is too cold for the animals.
- Habitat humidity levels should be between 30%–90%.
 - Care must be taken to ensure microenvironments for reptiles requiring low humidity allow the animals to maintain proper hydration.
- Many reptiles require exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light in the range of 290–320 nm as a necessary component of proper vitamin D and calcium metabolism.
 - UVB light should not pass through any materials that absorb critical wavelengths such as glass or plastic.
 - UVB light sources should be placed within 18 inches of animals and changed as needed to remain effective.
 - A minimum of 13 microwatts of UVB at the basking site is required for reptiles needing UVB radiation.
 - Optimal exposure time for animals in need of UVB radiation is 30 to 60 minutes twice daily
- Animal facilities housing reptiles should have backup emergency power to ensure temperature stability.

Housing – Amphibian

- The primary enclosure should be sized and contain the necessary substrates to provide comfort and safety, while allowing for species-typical behaviors.
- Habitats that house aquatic and semiaquatic amphibians must include a water area for swimming/soaking.
- The primary enclosure should be escape-proof.
- Species that climb should have branches or ledges on which to perch.
- Clear walls on all sides may cause amphibians to damage their rostrum. If rostrum damage is present on animals, the enclosure should be changed to prevent this from happening.

Temperature, Humidity and Lighting – Amphibian

- Amphibians must be provided with an environment that allows them to behaviorally thermoregulate.
- The humidity in the habitat should match the natural environment of the species, and most require levels >70%.
- It is best to provide humidity gradients in the enclosure to allow the animals to find their desired microenvironment.
- Some amphibians can be housed using standard lighting conditions.

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- Some amphibians require exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light in the range of 290–320 nm as a necessary component of proper vitamin D and calcium metabolism.
 - UVB light should not pass through any materials that absorb critical wavelengths such as glass or plastic.
 - UVB light sources should be placed within 18 inches of animals and changed as needed to remain effective.
 - A minimum of 13 microwatts of UVB at the basking site is required for reptiles needing UVB radiation.
 - Optimal exposure time for animals in need of UVB radiation is 30 to 60 minutes twice daily
- Amphibian species that are predominantly nocturnal may require a low level of light at night to ensure that they can detect prey.

Housing – Aquatic

- All aquatic animals should be housed in life support/filtration systems with populations of the same health status.
 - Aquatic life in ill health must be maintained in a holding system that does not share the same water life support/filtration system as healthy aquatic life.
- All aquatic animals must go through an acclimation process, when received, that is appropriate for the species.
- All aquatic life should be eating readily available commercial diets and acclimated before being sold.
- The use of nets should be minimized, and protocols designed to reduce the chance of disruptions of aquatic life slime layers.
- Water quality/parameters must be suitable for the specific species housed in each separate aquatic system.
- Water quality/parameters in each aquatic system must be monitored regularly (minimum of twice weekly) and documented. Aquatic life outdoor ponds must be monitored regularly to maintain appropriate water quality. Some aquatic systems may have a large enough volume of water replaced daily/weekly that biweekly monitoring is not necessary.
- Betta fish should be housed on racks or shelves that have dividers, so the fish do not see each other.
 - Betta fish not housed on racks or shelves with opaque dividers must have their holding cups physically separated by a minimum of 4 inches horizontally.
- Water quality testing may include the following parameters:
 - Temperature
 - pH
 - Ammonia (NH₃)
 - Nitrite (NO₂)
 - Nitrate (NO₃)
 - Chlorine (Cl)
 - Salinity approximations (Marine and Brackish systems)

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- Refractometer: Specific Gravity – SG, Concentration in parts per thousand – ppt
- Hydrometer: Concentration in parts per thousand – ppt, Specific Gravity – SG
- Electrical Conductivity - $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$
- Total Dissolved Solids - ppm (mg/L)
- Backup equipment should be available for all life support/filtration system equipment and emergency power should be available to power the equipment during a power outage.
- Facilities that use outdoor ponds for producing or holding aquatic life must have methods to manage the ponds during extreme weather conditions.
 - Outdoor ponds/aquatic life must not be able to enter or flow into local surface water.
 - Ideally, the water source for outdoor ponds should be from well water and not surface water.

Substrate – Small Mammals

- Animals should have adequate bedding substrate and/or structures which is appropriate for the needs of the species.
 - For many animals (e.g., rodents) bedding provides opportunities for species-typical behavior such as foraging, digging, burrowing, and nest building.
 - Bedding should be used in amounts sufficient to keep animals dry between cage changes and should be kept from coming into contact with sipper tubes as such contact could cause leakage of water into the cage.
- In addition to standard bedding, nesting material should be provided to all mice, rats, gerbils and hamster species. Nesting material can be any product that allows rodents to build nests (e.g., shredded paper, grass hay, alfalfa, etc.)
 - Corncob and cedar shavings should not be used as a substrate for any animal.
 - Hardwood shavings such as aspen are preferred over softwood shavings such as pine.

Substrate – Reptile

- Substrates for enclosures may include paper, wood shavings, indoor–outdoor carpet, or more natural substances as determined by the needs of the species and limit ingestion by the animals in the enclosure.
 - Corncob and cedar shavings should not be used as a substrate for any animal.
 - Hardwood shavings such as aspen are preferred over softwood shavings such as pine.

Substrate – Amphibian

- Substrates for enclosures should be appropriate for the species and limit ingestion by the animals in the enclosure.
 - Corncob and cedar shavings should not be used as a substrate for any animal.
 - Hardwood shavings such as aspen are preferred over softwood shavings such as pine.

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Cleaning and Sanitation Standards - General

- Animal enclosures must be spot cleaned as needed to remove waste and perishable food.
- Enclosures must be cleaned and disinfected as needed.
 - An animal enclosure must have no more than 20% of the bedding soiled/dirty at any time.
 - Ambient ammonia (NH₃) levels in the enclosures/facility must not exceed 10 ppm.
- Food/water containers must be sanitized regularly as needed.
- Water lines should be opaque, and a cleaning and disinfecting schedule must be developed to ensure water in all automated watering systems are in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-safe-drinking-water-act>
- All cleaning and disinfecting products must be appropriate for staff and animals.
- Special care should be taken when cleaning habitats to reduce cross contamination between habitats.
- Safety data sheets must be readily available for all chemicals used in the facility.
- Facility must always be kept neat and clean.
- During thorough cleaning and disinfecting, animals must be removed and placed in temporary habitats or standard clean habitats for animals' safety and to allow for thorough disinfecting of the enclosure.
- Employees should be properly trained in how to safely and effectively clean and disinfect enclosures.
- All habitat furniture must be able to be cleaned and fully disinfected.

Cleaning and Sanitation Standards – Avian

- Avian species in breeding situations should have their habitats cleaned as often as necessary to maintain the health of the breeding birds and babies.

Cleaning and Sanitation Standards – Reptile and Amphibian

- Phenolics (e.g., Meytol, Dettol, etc.) are toxic to reptiles and amphibians and should not be used to sanitize habitats or rooms.
- Cleaning frequency will vary depending on species.
 - Many reptiles and amphibians eat and defecate less frequently than mammals; therefore, enclosure cleaning intervals, especially if spot cleaning is implemented, can be less frequent.
 - In general, snake and lizard cages can be completely cleaned and disinfected at 1- to 2-week intervals, depending on need and frequency of spot cleaning.
 - Aquatic and semiaquatic species of turtles and crocodilians and amphibians may require more frequent cleaning.

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Cleaning and Sanitation Standards – Aquatic

- Excess food must be removed and discarded as quickly as possible to help maintain appropriate water quality.
- Aquatic life housed in systems without filtration must have the water in the system changed and holding container cleaned/disinfected as needed to maintain appropriate water quality.
- Aquatic life support/filter systems should be cleaned and maintained as needed to produce and maintain appropriate water quality for aquatic life in the system.
- Aquatic life nets and capture cups, etc. must be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
 - Aquatic life facilities must have separate nets, capture cups, etc. for each aquatic system.

Appearance & Behavior

Animal Health Appearance – Small Mammal

- Appropriate size and weight for the animal's age
- Smooth fur with no bald patches; no scabs or visible wounds
- Eyes bright and fully open, not cloudy; no discharge
- Nose free of discharge; no labored breathing
- Ears free of discharge; no cuts or scabs
- No external parasites
- No evidence of diarrhea/wet tail
- Animals should be alert and active with no evidence of lameness and no head tilt

Health Appearance – Avian

- Appropriate size and weight for the bird's age
- Normal respiratory rate with no tail bobbing
- Eyes and nares clear with no discharge
- Vent/cloacal area should be free of droppings
- Feathers and skin should appear smooth, not fluffed, have no bare spots, scabs, or wounds and not excessively soiled
- Few missing or broken feathers
- Some birds may require a day after transportation to groom feathers
 - Feathers should not appear soiled or ruffled 24 hours after transport
- Feet, legs, and wings should appear symmetrical
- Long term goal:

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- Birds raised by humans (HF cockatiels, conures, parrots, etc.) should be encouraged to learn to fly prior to offering for sale.
- Birds may favor one foot while sleeping
- No signs of feather picking

Health Appearance – Reptile and Amphibian

- Appropriate size and weight for the animal's age
- Smooth skin/scales with no bald patches, scabs or visible wounds
- Eyes bright and fully open, not cloudy; no discharge
- Nose free of discharge; no labored breathing
- Auditory openings free of discharge; no cuts or scabs
- No external parasites
- No evidence of diarrhea or loose stool
- Animals should be alert and active with no evidence of lameness

Health Appearance – Aquatic

- Appropriate size and weight for age
- Active, alert with normal behavior; freely and evenly swimming
- Gills should rise and fall rhythmically
- Eyes bright and clear
- Fins intact, with no tears, splits, spots, or streaks of blood; held away from the body, not drooping or folded.
- Scales should have vibrant coloration and show no injury or fungal/bacterial growth.
- Vent should be clean and without stringy feces.

Animal Behavior

- No evidence of aggression
- Appear to be appropriately socialized with other animals in their enclosure
- Exhibiting “normal” behavior for the species
- Enrichment opportunities are available
- Animals are handled safely
- Animals appear to be free from stress

Nutrition

Food, Feedings and Water – General

- Food must be palatable, wholesome, nutritious, species specific, and available as appropriate for each species.

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- All food shall be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the normal daily requirements of each species.
- Frozen food that has been thawed and not used must be discarded.
- Special care should be taken when feeding animals in separate habitats to reduce cross contamination between habitats.
- Employees must track feeding schedules.
- Feedings must only be done by adequately trained employees.
- Food/water containers must be cleaned/disinfected regularly as needed.
- Fresh water must always be available to animals as appropriate for each species.
- Water provided by bottles must be checked daily and refilled as needed.
- All automated watering systems must be designed to prevent animals in enclosures from drowning if the watering system leaks.

Food and Feedings – Small Mammal

- Food should be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to ensure the health of the animals.
- Fruit and vegetable supplements must be species specific.
- Grass hay/alfalfa and other supplements to the standard diet must be provided to each species as needed.
 - Grass hay/alfalfa is a staple and the primary part of the diet for rabbits, chinchillas, and guinea pigs and must be available at all times. It can be a supplement for rats and smaller rodents.
- Tooth wear is primarily caused by the teeth (incisors and molars) rubbing against each other, not against items being chewed.
 - All rodents must be provided with products designed to be chewed to keep the animals chewing enough to maintain proper tooth length.
 - This can be in the form of manufactured food, chew products (e.g. chew sticks or wooden branches), or natural food such as grass hay or alfalfa.
- Juvenile ferrets must be provided with appropriate wet food to reduce the instance of rectal prolapse.

Food and Feedings – Avian

- Food should be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to ensure the health of the animals.
- Food must be offered to birds in a food receptacle such as a gravity feeder or bowl
 - Food placed directly on bottom of enclosure must be located so perching birds do not soil the food containers.
- Granivorous psittacine birds such as budgerigars and cockatiels should be fed a diet consisting of a minimum of 50% commercial pellets

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- Other psittacine species such as conures, small, medium, and large parrots, and macaws should be fed a diet consisting of greater than 50% commercial pellets with a goal of exceeding 70% commercial pellets.
- Pellet and seed must be mixed in food receptacle provided to birds.
 - Psittacine birds with specialized diets are exempt from eating pellets (e.g., Lorikeets).
- Canaries, finches, dove, and quail may be fed an all-seed diet.
- Fresh fruit and/or vegetables should be offered as appropriate.
- Hand feeding birds:
 - Birds being hand-fed must be housed in appropriate enclosures suitable in size for the number of birds.
 - Hand-fed birds must be given formula mixed fresh before every feeding.
 - The formula temperature, when fed, must be within the range of 102-105 degrees F.
 - All feeding utensils must be clutch specific and cleaned after every feeding.

Food and Feedings – Reptile

- Food should be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to ensure the health of the animals.
- The dietary needs of reptiles vary significantly, depending on species.
- Food can be a source of enrichment for many species.
- The use of live food is necessary for some reptiles (e.g. chameleons), as they require prey movement to stimulate feeding.
- Feeder insects must be gut loaded with a diet shown to provide optimal nutrition and calcium to the animals consuming the diet.
 - Feeder insects may also be dusted with a vitamin and mineral supplement.
- Commercial/prepared food should be placed in an appropriately sized container and not directly on bottom of the enclosure/substrate.
- Some reptile species will consume commercial/prepared diets
- Sand impaction:
 - Juvenile reptiles kept on a sand type substrate may be fed live food in a habitat without a sand substrate to limit the amount of substrate ingested while eating.
- Some reptile species must be fed in the water to consume their food (e.g., some species of aquatic turtles).

Food and Feedings – Amphibian

- Food should be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to ensure the health of the animals.
- Food can be a source of enrichment for many species.
- The use of live food is necessary for most amphibians, as they require prey movement to stimulate feeding.

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- Feeder insects must be gut loaded with a diet shown to provide optimal nutrition and calcium to the animals consuming the diet.
 - Feeder insects may also be dusted with a vitamin and mineral supplement.
- Some amphibian species will consume commercial/prepared diets.
- Commercial/prepared food should be placed in an appropriately sized container and not directly on the bottom of the enclosure/substrate.

Food and Feedings – Aquatic

- The dietary needs of aquatic life vary significantly, depending on species.
- Aquatic life food should be species specific.
- Most aquatic species will consume pelleted/flake/frozen/freeze dried diets.
- Food should be provided in sufficient quantity and frequency to ensure the health of the animals.
- Frozen food that has been thawed and not used must not be refrozen and used again.
 - Frozen food that has been thawed and not used must be discarded

Water – Reptile

- Water bowl size is dictated by species behavior and number of occupants in the enclosure.
- All animals within the habitat must be able to easily access the water.
 - For animals that soak, the container must be large enough for animals to fit inside.
- Box turtles and tortoises should be provided with shallow water dishes that are easy to access and cannot be tipped over.
- Some species need water to be moving before they drink (e.g. chameleons).
 - Water spray systems or running water may be needed for these species.

Water – Amphibian

- Many amphibian species do not consume water, but rather absorb water through their skin.
- Filtered water, (e.g. activated charcoal), reverse osmosis (RO), distilled, and deionized water may all be used.
 - pH should be monitored to ensure it is correct for the species.
- It is necessary to conduct periodic monitoring of not only the source water and the treated water provided to the animals, but also the water in the enclosures.
- Excess food and animal waste should be removed as necessary to maintain good water quality.
- In systems with recirculating filtration systems, the water parameters should be tested as needed to ensure the water is healthy for the species.
- If the tanks do not have a recirculating filtered water system, the water must be changed as frequently as necessary to maintain water quality.

Water – Invertebrates

- Hermit crabs:
 - Maintain two shallow bowls of water in the habitat at all times:

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- One with fresh, de-chlorinated water
 - One with marine saltwater with a specific gravity range of 1.021 - 1.026.
- The water should be shallow enough to keep the crabs from drowning.
- Clean sponges may be used in the water bowls
 - Sponges should be cleaned/disinfected as needed to ensure animal health.
- Extra appropriately sized shells must be available at all times
- Other invertebrates:
 - Maintain shallow bowls with fresh, de-chlorinated water in the habitats as needed
 - Clean sponges may be used in the water bowls
 - Sponges should be cleaned/disinfected as needed to ensure animal health.

Health

- All breeding events must be recorded.
- All illnesses must be tracked electronically or hard copy form and include information of date/species/problem/treatment/medications at a minimum.
 - Medications used to treat animals must be included.
- All mortality must be tracked and recorded.
- Animals must be observed a minimum of once a day.

Veterinary Care

- Facility must have an ongoing relationship with a veterinarian who shall provide adequate veterinary care to its animals and is legally licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the state the facility is located.
 - Formal arrangement shall include a veterinary care plan and a minimum of quarterly scheduled visits to the facility.
- Aquatic life-**only** facilities must have technical support provided by an experienced biologist or veterinarian. In cases where an experienced biologist serves this role, they should consult with a veterinarian if more advanced diagnostics or therapeutics are needed that require a prescription.
- The facility shall assure that a corporate or consulting veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care.
- Surgeries may only be performed by a licensed veterinarian or by trained technicians under the supervision of a veterinarian as allowed by the USDA and/or state veterinary boards where applicable.
- The program of adequate veterinary care shall include:
 - The availability of appropriate facilities, personnel, equipment, and services to comply to provide adequate care.
 - The use of appropriate methods to prevent, control, diagnose, and treat diseases and injuries, and the availability of emergency, weekend, and holiday care

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- A mechanism of direct and frequent communication so that timely and accurate information on problems of animal health, behavior, and well-being is conveyed to the contracted veterinarian
- Adequate guidance to personnel involved in the care and use of animals regarding handling, immobilization, anesthesia, analgesia, tranquilization, and euthanasia.
- Adequate pre-procedural and post-procedural care in accordance with established veterinary medical and nursing procedures.
- All sick or injured animals must be seen by a veterinarian, a veterinarian be consulted about the animal's condition, or a veterinary approved protocol be enacted within 24 hours of the illness or injury being noticed.
- Facility must have a designated isolation area for ill animals being treated for communicable diseases or in need of convalescence. Facility must have protocol for monitoring animals' health daily.
- Isolation room lighting cycles should support the animal's (mammals, birds, reptiles, and aquatic life) normal circadian rhythm.
- Ferrets must be vaccinated against canine distemper virus and rabies virus based on vaccination protocols for the vaccine products being used.
- Veterinary visits must be recorded and updated as needed.
- All animal medical records must be kept a minimum of two (2) years and updated as needed and be in compliance with the state veterinary medicinal board.

Returned Animals

- All animals returned to the facility from any source via truck must be tended to in a timely manner (less than 12 hours) upon arrival to receiving facility.
- All returned animals must be accessed in a timely manner (less than 12 hours) upon return for health/wellness concerns by a qualified person.
- Animals assessed as being ill or injured must be seen by a veterinarian, a veterinarian be consulted about the animal's condition, or a veterinary approved protocol be enacted within 24 hours of the illness or injury being noticed.
- Returned animals may only be euthanized for valid medical reasons.

Medication

- All prescription medications must be prescribed by a veterinarian and administered only by properly trained employees under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian.
 - Medications for one animal should not be given to another animal without specific directions to do so.
 - Special circumstances may warrant the use of antibiotics for some specific marine species.

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- Prescription medications must have a prescription label on the medication bottle or container/box that is in compliance with the state veterinary medicinal board requirements.
- Safety data sheets must be available for all medications used and stored in the facility.
- Records of prescription medications given must be kept a minimum of two (2) years and updated as needed and be in compliance with the state veterinary medicinal board.
- Expired medications must be discarded appropriately.
- The use of prophylactic or sub-therapeutic antibiotics (prescription or over the counter antibiotics that are used to prevent disease rather than treat disease) such as spectinomycin, enrofloxacin, doxycycline, etc. is prohibited.
- Prophylactic treatments may be used to treat/eliminate parasites.
 - Prophylactic treatments used to treat/eliminate parasites may not include antibiotics.

End of Life Standards and Protocol

- Euthanasia protocols must be species-specific and follow AVMA guidelines.
 - Euthanizing any animal by hypothermia in a freezer is NOT allowed.
- Euthanasia must be performed by adequately trained employees and in a secure and sanitary location.
- Disposal of deceased animals must follow local, state, and federal laws.
- Records of euthanasia must be kept a minimum of two (2) years and updated as needed and be in compliance with the state veterinary medicinal board.
- Reptiles should not be euthanized with CO₂ as a sole means of euthanasia. If CO₂ is used, a secondary step must be taken to ensure the animal has been humanely euthanized. Freezing is not an acceptable secondary step.

Staff Training

- Employers must follow all state, local, and federal labor laws.
- Employers have a duty of care to their employees to take all the steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Each shift must have enough staff to ensure that animals are properly and attentively cared for.
- All staff must be properly trained in order to work with animals. Re-training should be completed as needed.
 - Training should include, but is not limited to proper cleaning techniques, animal care techniques, animal handling techniques, and training in how to monitor visual cues of the health of the animals.
- Training and re-training records should be kept for a minimum of two years.
- Personal biosecurity and safety measures must be made available to staff (gloves, protective coverings, hand washing/sanitation stations).
 - Information on the healthy way to handle animals should be available.

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- Pre-employment screening protocols are encouraged either internally or using a third party.
- Security measures should be in place to ensure employees are only able to access areas that pertain to their responsibilities at agreed upon times.

Safety & Sanitation

Biosecurity

- Facilities must have a biosecurity plan designed to minimize cross-contamination between all areas created with input from your corporate or consulting veterinarian. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) between areas must be used where appropriate to prevent cross contamination.
- Animal rooms must be equipped with full hand washing stations, or, at minimum, hand-sanitizer stations.
- Human interaction with animals that results in the breaking of human skin and/or bleeding:
 - Must be reported to a supervisor/manager on duty
 - The person sustaining the injury must be provided with the opportunity to seek aid from a human health care professional.
- Enclosures must be cleaned and disinfected prior to new animal shipments being placed in the enclosure.
- Areas must be clearly marked as restricted for employees only where applicable.
- Waste disposal must follow state, local, and federal guidelines.
- African rodents and other animals that may carry the monkeypox virus and any other FDA or CDC prohibited species must be housed in buildings separate from animals sold to companies in the audit program. Biosecurity measures must be in place to eliminate the chance of prohibited animals spreading infectious organisms to animals sold to companies in the audit program.

Storage of Food, Medicine, and Bedding

- All food must be stored properly in a cool and dry place sealed to prevent moisture and vermin access.
 - Food must be stored off the ground for added security.
- Food must be dated and have necessary information to track possible recalls.
- Storage containers must be cleaned as needed to maintain the integrity of the food.
- Prescription medicine must be securely stored with restrictive access.
- Medicine and supplements must be dated and clearly labeled/identified.
- Prescription medications must have a prescription label on the medicine bottle or container/box that is in compliance with the state veterinary medicinal board requirements.
- Safety data sheets must be available for all medicines used and stored in the facility.
- Bedding/substrate must be securely stored to prevent contamination from outside sources.

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- Bedding must be stored off the ground for added security.

Remediation in the Event of a Zoonotic Outbreak

This section is for zoonotic outbreaks involving local, state, or federal involvement and is not intended for normal day-to-day occurrences with common diseases such as ringworm or internal parasites.

- Movement of animals, habitats and equipment within the areas of facility without prior sanitation and disinfection should be avoided.
- Staff working with infected (or potentially infected) animals should have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (dust mask/respirators, gloves, washable coveralls, and footwear).
- Facility should cooperate fully with the Centers for Disease Control, local or state health departments, and departments of agriculture or animal health.
- All recent records of shipments should be made available to inspectors.
- Customers that have received animals should be notified immediately.
 - Customers of all animals shipped after the pathogen was documented should be notified immediately, including animals potentially exposed to the pathogen prior to discovery.
- Transporters of animals in transit should be notified immediately by the appropriate personnel.
- Animals in the facility should be isolated until the extent of the outbreak has been determined.

Emergency Contingency Planning

- Facility must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan to provide for the humane handling, treatment, transportation, housing, and care of their animals in the event of an emergency or disaster (one which could reasonably be anticipated and expected to be detrimental to the good health and well-being of the animals in their possession). Such contingency plans must:
 - Identify situations the facility might experience that would trigger the need for the measures identified in a contingency plan to be put into action including, but not limited to, emergencies such as electrical outages, faulty HVAC systems, fires, mechanical breakdowns, and animal escapes, as well as natural disasters most likely to be experienced.
 - Outline specific tasks required to be carried out in response to the identified emergencies or disasters including, but not limited to, detailed animal evacuation instructions or shelter-in-place instructions and provisions for providing backup sources of food and water as well as sanitation, ventilation, bedding, veterinary care, etc.

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- Identify a chain of command and who (by name or by position title) will be responsible for fulfilling these tasks.
- Address how response and recovery will be handled in terms of materials, resources, and training needed.

Suppliers & Receiving

Animal Suppliers

- All animals must be provided by a company licensed with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) unless exempt from licensing.
- Those suppliers that are exempt must still conform to all the same standards of animal care including but not inclusive to handling, housing, space, feeding and watering, sanitation, ventilation, veterinary care, euthanasia methods, separation by animal type, transportation, and transit requirements.
- No facility shall knowingly obtain any animal from any person who is required to be licensed but who does not hold a current, valid, and unsuspended license.

Receiving

- All animals delivered or returned to the facility from any source via truck must be tended to in a timely manner (less than 12 hours) upon arrival to receiving facility
 - If transport is by air, animals must be picked up as soon as available and taken to the receiving facility.
- Primary enclosures must be handled carefully so as not to jostle the animals.
- Animals must be carefully placed in cleaned and disinfected habitats and in an environment that provides them with an acclimation period (reduced lighting, minimal activity, etc.).
- There must be a method to track all animals by their source (breeder or distributor).
- Animals must be assessed for health and appropriate actions taken for animals that are not healthy.
- Animal receiving and acclimation protocols should ensure diseases are not transferred from the new animals into the existing habitats.

Transportation

General

- Transport activities must be compliant with local, state, and federal regulations, including but not limited to regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Transportation (DOT), and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Enclosures (Animal Carriers)

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- Animal carriers must comply with USDA AWA standards for transportation enclosures.
- Enclosures must be large enough to allow for normal postural movements.
- The number of animals transported in each enclosure must meet standards outlined by American Humane.
- Animals in the same primary enclosure must be the same species and/or in compatible groups.
- Small mammals in the same primary enclosure must be separated by sex.
- Animals must be in enclosures that allow them to be safe and secure while preventing escape.
- Carriers must be large enough for the animals to remain separated from waste products produced during transport.
- Enclosures must be properly labeled to comply with local, state, and federal requirements (e.g., "live animals").
- Aquatic life shipping containers must be appropriate for aquatic life and the shipping container system must be able to maintain the temperature parameter requirements necessary for the health of aquatic life for the duration of the trip.
- All previously used enclosures must be properly cleaned and disinfected prior to re-use.

Animal Transport

Packing and Shipping

- Primary enclosures must be packed so that animals remain safe and secure during transport.
 - Straps or other securing methods should be used when transporting in company owned delivery vehicles.
- The animal enclosures must be packed in the vehicle in such a fashion that always allows adequate air circulation for appropriate ventilation.
- All appropriate required documents (local, state, and federal) for each mode of transportation (company owned vehicles and other transports) must accompany each shipment such as: health certificates from place of origin, certificate of compliance, and acclimation certificates.
- Provisions must be made for food and water in the shipping containers and account for the possibility of transportation delays.
- The amount of time spent in the shipping container should be less than 72 hours.
- Enclosures must have appropriate bedding based on the species of animal.
- Enclosures must always allow the animals proper footing.
- Aquatic life packing protocols should be species appropriate to reduce the stress associated with packing, transportation, and introduction into new aquatic life water systems.
 - Packing protocols for aquatic life from ponds must include an appropriate acclimation period.

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- Shipping containers must be appropriate for aquatic life and the shipping container system must be able to maintain the temperature parameter requirements necessary for the health of aquatic life for the duration of the trip.

Monitoring During Transport - Company Owned Delivery Vehicles

- Animal cargo spaces must always maintain appropriate temperatures for all species and meet temperature guidelines listed by American Humane.
- Cargo space must have a temperature gauge visible to the driver.
- Cargo space temperature must be monitored throughout the trip.
- Cargo space must be visually monitored a minimum of once every 4 hours.
- The vehicle should be monitored with a GPS during transport.
 - Cameras that monitor the driver at all times are advisable
- Vehicles used in transport must be regularly inspected and maintained and include a vehicle safety kit and fire extinguisher.
- Vehicle drivers must be provided with a checklist to ensure the interior of the vehicle (heat, lights, etc. are properly working before each transport).
- Drivers must be trained in animal transport.
 - Driver must carry backup food and water for each animal species.
 - Backup food is not required for aquatic life in sealed bags.

Emergency Protocol - Company Owned Delivery Vehicle

- Emergency protocols must be in place and should be updated regularly.
- In case of vehicle malfunction or accident, plans must include a protocol for maintaining correct temperature.
- In case of delay caused by an accident or malfunction, an emergency plan must include a back-up transportation method (bringing to another location or offloading to another driver).
- Theft of transport protocol must be in place.
- Transportation vehicles should be always monitored by a GPS.
- The driver must carry an extra set of keys.

Building

Building Standards

- The building must be constructed and maintained to provide adequate shelter.
- The building must be properly maintained to prevent entry of wild/feral animals or pests.
- Sticky traps designed to capture mammals, birds, or reptiles must not be used to prevent the escape of owned animals.
- Sticky traps designed to capture mammals, birds, or reptiles must not be used to prevent the entry of wild/feral animals.

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- Rooms must be designed to prevent animals from escaping outside of their designated rooms.

Lighting, Water and Air Quality Standards

- Air and water quality must comply with all local, state, and federal regulations.
- Air and water systems must have monitoring protocols to ensure animal safety.
- Non-municipal water must undergo quality and microbial testing to check fecal and coliform levels at least once a year or as needed to ensure water quality standards.
 - Guidance from local public health officials should be used to determine the need for additional testing.
- Non-municipal water must be filtered as needed to maintain water quality for the health of the animals.
 - Municipal water systems that are in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act meet this requirement.
- HVAC systems must receive maintenance at least once every heating and cooling season.
- Air prefilters and filters must be changed as needed to reduce the incidence of airborne microbes from infecting the facility.
- Air handling system ducts must be cleaned as needed to reduce the incidence of airborne microbes from infecting the facility.
- Lighting systems
 - Facility lighting must be sufficient to allow adequate cleaning and inspections.
 - Lighting for the enclosures must follow American Humane Guidelines, when applicable, and should be species specific.

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