



CHAPTER 81

SPECIES-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

REPTILE GUIDELINES

(Lizards, Snakes, Turtles, etc.)

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Reptiles are known to carry salmonella. When reptiles are used and handled on a set, antibacterial gel and/or facilities for washing hands with soap and warm water shall be made available, and their use encouraged among cast and crew. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists children, the elderly and people with impaired immune systems as particularly at risk of infection.

8-262 American Humane Society’s *Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media* apply to anyone bringing an animal to the set, including members of the cast or crew.

- a. For safety and efficiency, American Humane Society recommends that producers hire animal handlers experienced in motion picture production to supply all reptiles for production. However, if production chooses to have private owners — including cast and crew — provide reptiles, all requirements of the *Guidelines* must be implemented.
- b. When applicable, producers shall distribute in advance the instruction sheet on “Special Requirements for Extras/Others Who Supply Animals.”

8-262.1 ... Only animal handlers with knowledge of the specific reptile species being utilized shall be used.

8-263 Reptiles shall be provided with adequate housing for their species. (See the Housing and General Care section in Chapter 1.) Sand or wood shavings are not recommended for most species because they are often eaten by the animals and can cause digestive impaction.

8-264 When using dangerous reptiles, a safety meeting must be called to include all relevant cast and crew. American Humane Society shall be invited to participate in the safety meeting. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #12, “Guidelines for the Use of Exotic Venomous Reptiles.”)

- 8-265 When using snakes and other animals together in the same scene, care must be taken to protect the safety of both the snakes and the other animals. Each must be accustomed to being around the other.
- 8-266 When venomous snakes are used with other animals or actors, safety precautions must be taken for the welfare of all concerned. These precautions may include the use of barrier glass and/or the use of professional snake wranglers as stand-ins for stunt people.
- 8-267 American Humane Society does not condone the suturing of snakes' mouths for filmed entertainment. Should questions of human safety be at issue, please call American Humane Society for consultation.
- 8-268 **ADVISORY:** Productions are advised to discuss safety precautions with the venomous-snake supplier and American Humane Society. It is advised that a medical facility equipped to handle venomous-snake bites be identified. Any person bitten by a snake should be treated at a medical facility, whether or not antivenin is administered on set. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee Safety Bulletin #6, "Animal Handling Rules for the Motion Picture Industry," paragraph 13.)
- 8-269 Under no circumstances may a snake's fangs be pulled, clipped or otherwise altered.
- 8-270 Snakes may only be milked on-screen if done by an experienced snake handler familiar with the procedure. They may not be milked in an attempt to reduce the amount of venom in the snake's fangs, because milking does not completely eliminate venom.
- 8-271 Neither carbon dioxide gas nor dry ice may be used around snakes or other reptiles. Should a production or animal handler need to slow down the movements of a snake or other reptile, temporary containment in a box or other darkened condition shall be allowed. A 10- to 20-degree Fahrenheit drop in temperature is natural and is the maximum that a snake or other reptile shall be required to endure. When cooling methods are used, American Humane Society must grant prior approval, and production or the animal handler must indicate the method to be employed to gradually cool and warm the animal.
- 8-272 Before and after handling a reptile, individuals must wash their hands with warm water and mild soap. The reptile must be gently scooped up, taking care to provide full support with one hand and using the second hand to ensure that the animal does not fall or otherwise escape. When in doubt, check with the animal handler or coordinator.
- 8-272.1 ... Care must be taken to ensure that animals do not escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must also have a safety plan in place that will prevent the escape of animals from the set or location and provide for their safe recapture, should an accident or escape occur. (Also see *Guideline 1-36.*)