

TEN STEP CLEANING ROUTINE

These are the ten steps to the cleaning routine. They must be memorized and preferably done in order. **These cleaning instructions are for cleaning in an occupied area. If the cat is switched to another area both the lead and the back-up can share the cleaning responsibilities.**

Habitat observation – includes a visual check of the habitat.

- Look for the location of the cat(s), the location of the stool(s), and any obstacles that could make cleaning difficult.
- Check the fencing, hinges, latches and “furniture” for any needed repairs, replacement or cleaning needed.
- Be sure to have any needed tools or assistance ready prior to beginning cleaning.

Cat observation – includes a close up and in-depth observation of the cat.

- You want to look at the cat's eyes, ears, nose, coat, and over-all physical condition.
- You also want to observe the cat's attitude as this will affect the cleaning of the habitat.

Entering the habitat and the job of the Back-up –

- Always bleach your shoes upon entering and exiting the safety. Be sure bleach pans are clean and refreshed with 1 cup bleach per 1 gallon of water mix.
- Once you have unlocked the lock, take it and hang it on the fence or gate near the latch or hasp. This way it is easy to see whether the gate is locked or unlocked, and you are less likely to forget to lock your gate later. Also turn your lock so the base is under the top "U", this will prevent the cat from knocking it down or a spring-loaded gate from flying it into the habitat.
- Prior to entering the safety, spray the rake head with vinegar to prevent the cat from approaching. Be aware of where you are spraying vinegar, so the wind will not carry it into a cat's exhibit. Do not spray vinegar into a switch area; this will prevent the cat from switching.
- Call out **“Safety Open”** prior to opening the gate. Call out **“Safety Closed”** after the gate is closed. **Call this every time the gate is opened and closed.**
- Take all cleaning materials into the safety that are appropriate for the cat. Do not lean plastic bags, tools or buckets against the fence of any occupied area. Do not obstruct any keeper exits with tools or cleaning materials.
- Make sure the outside gate is closed prior to opening the inside gate. Know where the cat(s) is prior to entering the habitat. Call out the cat's location.
- The lead cleaner is to tell the back-up that they are entering the habitat and call out **“Gate Open”** prior to opening the gate. Whoever closes the gate is to call out **“Gate Closed”** after the gate is closed. **Call this every time the gate is opened and closed.**
- The lead will enter the habitat with rake and vinegar in hand. The back-up is on-the-gate.

Removal of the food pan(s) –

- The food pan is removed first. This will prevent confusion between cleaning and feeding.
- Keep your eyes on the cat while bending down to pick up the pan or slide the pan with your foot to the back-up. Bones are to be safely pulled and hidden behind keepers back.
- The back-up is to be prepared to receive the pan(s) or bone(s) from the lead cleaner without having to make eye contact.
- With eyes on the cat, the pan(s) or bone(s) should be set out of the way of the gate.
- Any food left should be noted as this will be recorded on the health chart.

Scat observation and removal –

- Again, keeping your eyes on the cat, locate the scat.
- There may be more than one pile, which should have been observed prior to entering the habitat.
- Observe the size, color and texture to be recorded later.
- If there is anything unusual about the scat, take a closer look outside the habitat and notify your Senior Keeper or Management.
- Scoop up the scat and hand the shovel, wide end first, to your back-up. Again they should be ready to receive it without having to make eye contact.
- The back-up is to set the shovel down out of the way, without taking their eyes off of the cat.

Emptying and cleaning the water bucket –

- The water bucket should be emptied and cleaned every day.
- The water should be tossed outside the habitat. Be careful of the landscaping.
- In the summer the old water can be poured on the grass inside the habitat.
- Always keep an eye on the cat when emptying the bucket. Many cats are possessive of their buckets and/or their water. They may be helpful, playful or aggressive while trying to “help”.
- The bucket can either be scrubbed with the clean soapy bleach water from the bucket or the bleach water from the watering jug.
- Thoroughly rinse the bucket prior to adding fresh water. Do not pour bleach water on plants.
- Be sure the bucket is level and properly clipped to the fence to prevent spilling.

Den box observation and cleaning – den box observation is difficult to do in an occupied habitat and should be done prior to entering the habitat, if possible.

- Since the lead cleaner's eyes will be off of the cat in order to look into the box, it is extremely important for the back-up to be aware of the position of the cat and to be in verbal contact with the keeper as to the cat's location at all times.
- If the den box is in need of cleaning, the lead cleaner and back-up must work as a team to be able to remove the dirty straw, wash out the den box (the soapy bleach water and a scrub brush should be used for this. "Spray" areas need extra elbow grease) and put in clean straw.
- It is necessary for the lead cleaner (and hopefully the back-up too) to have a complete knowledge of the attitude and habits of the cat prior to attempting to clean a den box.

Raking of the habitat –

- The habitat should be raked from one end to the other. Remember that it is a large litter box that is used by a large cat. Rake efficiently and in a timely manner.
- Special attention should be paid to all wet spots, scat spots and food areas.
- It is still important to keep an eye on the cat, as many think the rake is to be played with or to attack. Never let a cat approach your rake. Use vinegar as instructed.
- The excess pine needles, straw, grass, etc. should be raked toward the gate.
- When the "coast is clear," the back-up should pull this debris out while the lead cleaner holds the gate and watches the cat.
- Again, move all obstacles out of the way of the gate so they will not be tripped over.
- The bleach watering jug with 1 cup water per 1 gallon of bleach mixed should be taken in at this time (if the cat will allow it) and the wet spots, the scat spots and food areas should be bleached. This will eliminate smells, insects, and bacteria. Rake through bleached areas.

Toy or Enrichment introduction or rearrangement –

- All cat toys or enrichment (including straw) should be checked on a daily basis.
- A tennis ball with a hole in it, a broken bowling ball, wet straw or a rotten log are just a few examples of enrichment that must be removed.
- Be careful while removing or handling toys or enrichment as many cats are possessive or may just want to play. Some will also show aggression.
- Rearrange the remaining toys or enrichment in interesting positions (if possible) to stimulate thinking and reduce boredom. (Again, use caution)
- Do not place toys or enrichment in a manner that could cause injury.
- Occasionally remove some toys or enrichment to reintroduce later.

Exiting the habitat –

- Prior to exiting the habitat, be sure and check for tools that may still remain inside.
- The back-up should be prepared to allow the lead cleaner to back out of the habitat. This way the lead cleaner can keep their eyes on the cat when exiting.
- Under circumstances when the back-up is in with the lead cleaner, the back-up exits first, the lead cleaner last.
- Always call out **“Gate Open”** prior to opening the gate and **“Gate Closed”** after closing the gate.
- Once you are in the safety area, the inside lock should be put on.
- **The locks should be fed down through a hasp (wooden gate) or from the back of a latch (chain link gate) or from right to left (wooden gate).** If all of the locks are the same, it makes unlocking easier.
- The back-up should double check the lock by pulling down on it to make sure it is locked.
- Call out **“Gate Secured”** once lock is secured and checked. Other keeper is to **“Copy, Gate Secured”**.
- All pans, shovels, rakes and debris should be removed from the safety area prior to exiting.
- Thoroughly rake and level the safety area prior to exiting.
- Always call out **“Safety Open”** prior to opening the gate and **“Safety Closed”** after closing the gate.
- The outside lock should be fastened as above. Again, the back-up should double check it.
- Call out **“Gate Secured”** once lock is secured and checked. Other keeper is to **“Copy, Gate Secured”**
- The scat, old food, and debris should then be put into the bucket with the liner and the tools and dishes loaded into the cart. Compost straw is to be bagged.

Prior to moving onto the next habitat, the water bucket must be filled with fresh water, the locks checked for security, the bleach pans cleaned and refreshed, the rakes sterilized, the health concerns for this particular cat reported, and the health chart completed if possible.

HUSBANDRY TOOLS

During cleaning, the cats of Cat Tales, have been taught behaviors to make our work easier and them more manageable. Included here is a list of training "tools" used during cleaning and how they are to be best incorporated.

- **Vinegar** used in a spray bottle serves many purposes. Specific instructions will be given concerning its use, when it is most effective and when not to use it. All of these factors vary with each animal.
- **Water** from the hose misted in the direction of, not at, the cat to encourage a behavior.
- **Food treats** to encourage or given upon completion of a behavior.
- **Rods** for closing and securing doors, gates and den boxes.

HUSBANDRY COMMANDS

For this course, the term “command” is defined as a signal which is either verbal or physical used in conjunction with a behavior. Husbandry commands are those which are utilized during basic animal maintenance to insure safety and ease of husbandry tasks.

Following is a list of commands, both verbal and physical which are to be used in basic animal maintenance. The following items are to be available to insure proper commands, **food treats** (cat appropriate) and **proper tools** (rods, meat sticks, etc.).

All verbal commands are to be given *following* the name of the cat or cats.

To **SWITCH** a cat or cats from one area to another, the entrance to the area is to be open. If the gate is to the rear of the cat it makes closing the gate easier. The verbal command to **“SWITCH”** is said by the person in charge of closing the gate once the cat or cats have gone through. No one else is to speak while this behavior is done. The physical command is to **point with your hand** in the direction you want them to switch at the same time as the verbal command is given. Reward them with the verbal command **“GOOD”** once this behavior is accomplished. Should the animal not switch on command, a food treat can be used at the same time as the command is given. Do not reward with food for a properly done behavior.

When removing a lock and chain(s) the back-up is to be on the rod and they are to call out “ROD SECURED” prior to the Lead Keeper entering the area. The back-up is to call out “REMOVING ROD” prior to doing so. When giving cat access to the area the back-up is to call out “GIVING CAT ACCESS” prior to doing so.

To secure a cat **IN THE BOX** the proper tools are to be ready to close the den door and the track of the door is to be free of obstructions. Have sufficient treats of the correct size and kind ready to insure complete boxing of the cat. The keeper on the rod is the one to give the verbal command **“IN THE BOX”** (It maybe necessary to have a second keeper feed the treats into the bait hole. This person should not give any commands during this time.) One or more treats are to be given through the bait hole once the behavior is completed and the verbal command **“GOOD”** is to be given. If their tail is out, the command **“TAKE your TAIL in”** is to be used. Again reward with **“GOOD”** and a treat. The person on the rod should close the door (be careful of tails, feet and heads) and properly secure the door. **When boxing a cat the back-up is to be on the rod and they are to call out “ROD SECURED” prior to the Lead Keeper entering the area. The back-up is to call out “REMOVING ROD” prior to doing so. When giving cat access to the area the back-up is to call out “GIVING CAT ACCESS” prior to doing so.**

To have a cat **COME** toward you use the verbal command **“COME”** and the physical command **both palms up and motion toward chest with hands.** Use the physical command at the same time as the verbal command. Once the behavior is completed reward the cat with the verbal command **“GOOD”**

To get a cat **OFF** of a den box the command **“OFF”** is used. The physical command **point to the ground** is used at the same time as the verbal command. Once the behavior is completed the verbal command **“GOOD”** is given.

HEALTH CHARTS

Health Charts are to be done every day. This is easiest to accomplish before cleaning, during cleaning, or right afterwards. Do not put it off or it will be forgotten. It is very easy to walk around prior to cleaning to get the basics as far as physical appearance, stool, fur length, and food remaining. Any comments should be brief and specifically describe any problems.

The Health Chart is broken down into the following areas:

Today's date

Weather – general weather condition (sunny, windy, rainy, etc.) and temperature.

Behavior – this includes behavior and general condition.

Bright, Alert and Responsive, **B A R**, are the number one things to look for.

If a cat is not B A R, then he could be sick or having other health problems.

All health problems are considered serious.

Eyes – look for bright and clear eyes. If weeping or crusting is observed, note condition and color and report it to your Senior Keeper or Management.

Ears – look for signs of itching or scratching, redness or puffiness. Note condition and report.

Nose – look for signs of discharge, wetness or dryness. Note color of discharge.

Coat – look for the consistency of the coat, shedding and fur length. Report any sores or hair loss.

Feces – feces is described by the size, color, firmness and any peculiarities including blood, mucus or parasites. Report these to the Senior Keeper or Management.

Food left – amount of food left from last feeding.

Special observations – this includes items not covered under other titles. Anything that you feel is unusual or not normal should be reported to your Senior Keeper or Management. Preventative medicine is our friend.

Keeper's Name

Be sure you get a full visual of the cats in your area.

If they don't get up, make sure they are not sick or dead.

Report your concerns immediately.

CLEAN UP

After cleaning is finished, the cart is to be washed and put away. The scat bags are to be tied off and taken to the dumpster, the shovels and buckets washed and rinsed, the soap bucket emptied and rinsed, the bleach water jugs and scrub brushes put away, and the rakes returned to the habitats from which they came. All other debris and straw is to be put in its proper place and the dishes are to be taken inside to be washed.

Dish washing – dishes are to be washed in hot soapy water with 1/4 cup bleach added per gallon of water. They should be scrubbed and thoroughly rinsed, then turned upside down on a towel to dry.

Garbage – all garbage is to be carried out in the morning and in the evening. This includes all scat and garbage generated in the base (cub area cleaning, domestic trash, office and food prep). All boxes are to be broken down prior to entering the dumpster or recycling area.

HOW TO “BIG BLEACH”

Big Bleaching is to be done SAFELY and CORRECTLY.

- Safety glasses are recommended when big bleaching.
- Wet down the area to be big bleached completely with clear water before beginning.
- Be sure the inner seal is completely off the bleach container. Dispose of properly.
- Have a long strong MIST- STREAM coming out of the end of the hose, pointing away.
- Hold the hose nozzle just short of arms length and slowly pour the bleach into the stream approximately 4 inches or more from the nozzle.
- Be aware of splash back if bleaching dens, walls or furniture.
- Replace the top on the bleach jug.
- Wet down area completely where bleach made contact to activate.
- Thoroughly rinse all bleach puddles until the area runs clear.
- Rake through puddles and fill with gravel as needed.
- At no time are there to be standing bleach puddles for the cats to have access to.
- Tigers especially like to drink bleach water. It is very bad for them!
- Do not Big Bleach in an occupied area unless absolutely necessary.
- **Never bleach near a cat.**
- **Be aware that bleach water will KILL any vegetation it comes in contact with.**

Big Bleaching can also be done in den boxes. Follow the above instructions, rinse and drain thoroughly. Using Dawn dish soap in the same manner as the bleach, first, will help to cut the greasy spots. Dawn can also be used on the ground before using bleach as it is a surfactant.

USDA EXPECTATIONS

We are required by the USDA to:

- Provide fresh water at all times
- Provide clean dens and fresh bedding
- Remove uneaten food prior to bacteria developing
- Remove feces on a regular basis
- Repair or remove nails or sharp objects that could cause injury
- House animals in strong habitats showing no metal fatigue
- Remove all debris and garbage from the areas in and around the animals
- Disinfect surface areas and substrate on a regular basis as regulated

The USDA is very particular about food storage, preparation and handling!!

- All food must be fresh or fresh frozen and not spoiled
- Food must not be allowed to thaw above proper temperature
- Food storage areas must be kept clean and sanitary
- Food preparation areas must be kept clean and sanitary
- Food pans must be clean and sanitary
- Freezers must be defrosted on a regular basis and kept free of ice and frozen meat juice or blood
- Food fed must be recorded
- All food waste must be disposed of properly