

SAN DIEGO ZOO®

SAFARI PARK

Accessibility Guide



Figure 1 Giraffe

SAN DIEGO ZOO®
SAFARI PARK

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San Diego Zoo Global, an Access Friendly Organization

San Diego Zoo Global (SDZG) is committed to ensuring that our campuses are welcoming to all! This is a pledge made by all of our employees. We strive to provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment where visitors 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 and California Access Laws.

This guide addresses many of the accommodations San Diego Zoo Global provides for persons with disabilities. However, if you have needs or questions outside of the content found in this document, please contact us at the Zoo at (619) 231-1515, ext. 4526 or at the Safari Park at (760) 796-5621, based on the facility you are planning to visit. You will find that we are able to best serve you if you call 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 at our Guest Services office, adjacent to the front entrance.

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

Q: Do you rent wheelchairs?

A: Yes. We have manual and electric wheelchairs available to be rented for the day.

Q: What is the cost for wheelchair rental?

A: Prices are subject to change. Prices are posted on-site at the rental facility.

Q: Can a wheelchair (manual or electric) be reserved ahead of time?

A: No. Wheelchairs are rented on a first-come, first-served basis.

Q: What is the minimum age to operate an electric wheelchair?

A: 16 years old.

Q: Does your guided tram tour accommodate wheelchairs?

A: Yes. The guided tram tour accommodates one wheelchair per vehicle.

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

A: Yes. Our Park map indicates best path of travel, look for blue dotted lines

Attendants

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

A: Yes. For your convenience, complimentary passes for attendants may be obtained at any of the ticket windows at the entrance to the Safari Park.

Mobility/Transportation

Q: Is there a shuttle service for guests with disabilities?

A: Yes.

Q: Where does the shuttle service go?

A: Please download and refer to the Accessibility Map, which shows our Shuttle stops in the Safari Park.

Communication

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

A: Yes. We request that arrangements be made at least 1 week in advance of your visit. Please call (760) 796-5621 to arrange for an interpreter.

Special Assistance

Q: Do you provide assistance for guests who are Blind?

A: Yes. We request that arrangements be made at least 72 hours in advance of your visit. Please call (760) 796-5621 to make arrangements.

Q: Do you allow service animals?

A: Yes. We welcome guests with disabilities that choose to bring their **trained service animal** into the Safari Park. Animals "in training" are not allowed in the Safari Park. Please download the Service Animal map, which shows the restricted and sensitive areas for service animals.

Q: Are service animals allowed on safaris?

A: Service animals are permitted on the Africa Tram. All other Safaris require the animal to be kenneled.

Q: Can a staff member assist guests in the restroom?

A: No. Safari Park employees are neither trained nor permitted to lift a guest or help them inside a restroom. Should it be required, guests needing this assistance should plan to visit the Safari Park with someone who can physically help them.

Blind or Low Vision Guest Assistance

If you are blind and you would like your personal assistant to guide you, that person is considered an attendant and he/she will be admitted to the Safari Park for free.

If you would like a sighted staff person to accompany you, an Access Ambassador will be provided. We ask that you make a reservation 72 hours in advance of your visit. The Access Ambassador is a staff member who will accompany you on a walking tour, read informational signs or map information, read menus and pricing signs. These staff members are prepared to provide descriptions of animals and the exhibits. He/she will describe the current activity of the animals and provide you with visual descriptions of the areas you visit. If you have purchased premium tours or experiences, our Access Ambassador can accompany you if arrangements are made at the time of ticketing.

Please call our Access Coordinator, Tuesday through Saturday at (760) 796-5621 to make arrangements for an Access Ambassador. This service is available for guests who are blind or who have low vision. Please remember that we appreciate as much advance notice as possible, 72 hour minimum helps us to schedule the best experiences for you.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Guest Assistance

If you are Deaf or hard of hearing we have a number of accommodations available to you.

If you would like us to provide you with scripted information for our shows or tours, these are available. They can be picked up at Guest Services or at Ranger Base. Each tour presentation may vary depending on the route and/or the animals that are most visible so the script order may vary from the presentation.

If you would like an ASL Interpreter, we request a minimum of one-week notice in advance of your visit. Please call (760) 796-5621 to arrange an interpreter.

Developmental Disabilities Guest Assistance

If you are guest with a developmental disability who requires an attendant, the attendant will be admitted at no charge.

Autism Spectrum Sensory Processing Disabilities Guest Assistance

The Safari Park is unlike many recreation sites because our treasured collection of plants and animals are living. As such, the Safari Park is a place that includes many smells and sounds. These occur intermittently and without notice.

Here are some of the tools and suggestions we have to assist with your visit. Be aware of the changing environment at the Safari Park. We suggest bringing items to reduce stress. If you are looking for a quiet area, please ask our staff at the Guest Services office to provide suggestions. Health Services is located at Ranger Base.

Summer, holidays, and weekends are busiest at our facility. We suggest coming earlier in the day, on weekdays and during the off-season to avoid larger crowds. Note the Easy Access Pass section for more information.

Limited Mobility Guest Assistance

The San Diego Zoo Safari Park has many natural hills and valleys, which are inherent barriers to easy mobility access. The Safari Park has many accommodations to make our hills and valleys more access friendly. Please pick up a map for the most accessible routes. Additionally, we have a shuttle service and elevator to assist guests. The Safari Park has many changes in surfaces and guests are advised to use caution when traveling throughout the Zoo.

Please note: The Safari Park is an expansive, walking theme park. We recommend that guests with limited mobility/stamina bring or rent a mobility assistive device.

Please keep in mind that Park employees are neither trained nor permitted to lift guests. A guest requiring such physical assistance should plan to visit the Safari Park with an attendant.

Africa Tram

Guests may park or store their strollers, wheelchairs, or Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs, formerly known as electric scooters or ECVs) at the loading dock. Please utilize the accessible line if you require assistance loading onto the tram, or if you cannot transfer from your device. An employee will assist with the loading process. The tour is round trip, therefore, you will return to the same location as departure.

Easy Access Pass

Guests who have difficulty standing in line or who have limited mobility may request an “Easy Access Pass” at any ticket window at the entrance to the Safari Park, Ranger Base, or at the Africa Tram ticket window. This pass may be utilized at the Africa Tram, attractions, and show areas. The attendant on duty will direct the guests to a designated boarding area. 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 at the loading facility to wait until other members of your party progress through the line to the loading area.

Parking

Accessible parking is available in our parking lot 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 the Safari Park’s disabled parking spaces. If designated disabled spots are all taken, complimentary parking is provided in our Preferred Parking Lot. Be sure to display your placard issued by an appropriate government Motor Vehicle agency.

Shows

Wheelchair seating is available at the front of each amphitheater and on the road above Tembo Stadium. Please look for the accessible areas of the amphitheaters that are designated by the wheelchair access symbol. Please ask any employee for assistance if it is needed.

Shuttle Service

Shuttle service is available for access to different locations around the Safari Park. Please download and refer to the Map for Guests with Disabilities, which shows the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Shuttle stops in the Safari Park. The shuttle service runs on a continuous route throughout the day.

Wheelchairs and Mobility Devices

The Safari Park is widely accessible to guests using both manual and electric wheelchairs. 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 nontraditional wheelchairs (e.g. steerable knee walkers).
- We reserve the right to inspect devices to determine whether they are safe enough to navigate the Safari Park.
- If your child is using his/her stroller as an accessibility device and is unable to transfer out of it, please visit the Guest Services Office and request a “wheelchair tag.” Please note, all personal property is the responsibility of the owner.

Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs)

The Safari Park accommodates the use of some Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs), which are vehicles that are not wheelchairs, but rather are electric devices 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 Safari Park, we regulate the operation of mobility devices. It is prohibited to operate a mobility device at a speed significantly greater than the flow of the surrounding pedestrian traffic.

Acceptable OPDMDs

Permitted mobility devices include the following:

- Electric OPDMDs and other single-seat electric scooters with three or more wheels that cannot exceed more than 6 miles per hour.
- 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 device that has two tandem wheels (e.g. two-wheeled electric or motorized scooters)
- Any OPDMD that has been structurally or mechanically altered
- All Hoverboards or Segways without a steering handle
- Any golf carts or similar type vehicle
- Any gas powered vehicle
- Any OPDMD that is not listed as acceptable (above)

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 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 high volume of pedestrian traffic the Safari Park receives.
- The Park’s unique natural and architectural characteristics (e.g. hills, pathways).
- 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 Park might find in the device's use manual or through other investigation

The Operation of Wheelchairs and OPDMDs

Please consult both the standard Safari Park map and the Accessibility Map before operating a wheelchair or OPDMD on the grounds. Familiarity with the areas of the park 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.
- It is also required that guests 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. The Safari Park has 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.

Wheelchair Rentals – available on a first-come, first-served basis

Manual wheelchairs and electric scooters (an OPDMD), are available for rent just inside the main entrance to the Safari Park. Rentals require a picture ID and the age requirement to operate an electric OPDMD is 16 years old. Rental Prices are subject to change; please call for pricing.

Admission

All guests with disabilities must have a valid form of admission to the Safari Park. If a person with a disability requires an attendant, a complimentary pass will be provided for the attendant and it may be obtained at any of the ticket windows at the entrance to the Safari Park. This also applies for special programs and tours at the Safari Park.

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains accessible to guests are located throughout the facility. Complimentary cups of water may also be requested at any food stand or restaurant.

Health Service/First Aid – Refrigeration for Medication

Health Services is located in Ranger Base. If at any time you need immediate assistance, please ask any Safari Park employee.

- If you have special medical needs, please consult with our health service personnel at this location.
- Refrigeration for medication is available at this location.

Restrooms

Please refer to your guide map for restroom locations.

- All restrooms in the Park are accessible.
- Family/gender neutral restrooms are located near Ranger Base.
- Safari Park employees are neither trained nor permitted to lift a guest or help them inside a restroom. Should it be required, guests needing this assistance should plan to visit the Safari Park with someone who can physically help them.

Service Animals

We welcome guests with disabilities that choose to bring their trained service animal into the Park. Emotional support animals as well as companion, comfort or pets are not allowed entry into the Zoo. Service animal trainers may not bring their in-training animals into the Zoo.

- Service animals permitted to the Safari Park are dogs and miniature horses.
- Service animals must remain on a leash or a harness, be under control of its handler at all times. Leash cannot exceed 6 feet in length. Animals must be house broken.
- If, at any time your service animal's behavior is inappropriate, you will be asked to remove your service animal from the premises.
- You may temporarily house your service animal in our kennel while visiting the Safari Park. Please inquire with the attendant at the turnstiles at the entrance to the park, or at Ranger Base for assistance. Space is available on a first come, first served bases for trained service animals.
- For your convenience, any accessible planter may be used as a 'relief area'; please pickup after your animal.
- Service animals are restricted where there is direct contact with Park animals or limited in certain areas due to the sensitivity of the Park's animal collection. These restricted and sensitive areas can be found on the **Safari Park's Service Animal Map**.
- Please visit an attendant at the turnstiles at the entrance to the Safari Park to check-in your service animal, and receive a service dog bandana. Service animals must be kept back 6 feet from animal presentations in public spaces.

Dining and Shopping

All dining locations are accessible.

All merchandise locations are accessible.

Best Times to Visit

To avoid large crowds, visit San Diego Zoo during non-peak times. Typically, fall and winter tend to be less congested and summer and holidays bring the greatest crowds. Weekdays, and non-holidays and early morning times are generally less crowded.

Guest Services Office

Upon arrival, feel free to stop in and visit the Park's Guest Services office, located at the Zoo's entry turnstiles. The staff will advise you of accommodation tools the Park has in place that might be beneficial. The Park is a living organization with the task of caring for a variety of animals and plants and as such changes in exhibits may occur. The Park can provide tips and updates on its daily calendar of events that might help you plan your day. The Park staff is here to help. The San Diego Zoo Safari Park is a full inclusion organization welcoming ALL guests.

Premium Experiences

Caravan Safaris

Each Caravan vehicle can accommodate up to two wheelchairs. Both the person with a disability and the wheelchair itself must be able to withstand the movements of the truck.

Roar & Snore

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

Contact Us

Safari Park Accessibility Questions
(760) 796-5621

Customer Service
(Comments, suggestions, and questions about the Safari Park)
(760) 747-8702