

# DOCENT GUIDELINES

1. Active docents are required to participate in a minimum number of hours or assignments per month as listed below:

- A. Active Interpretive docents will be scheduled to complete three (3) interpretive assignments of two (2) hours each month or, with prior arrangement, any other combination of interpretive assignments that meets the individuals needs, and equals six (6) hours per month
- B. ZooMobile docents will be scheduled for six (6) hours of presentations per month during the school year. Beginning January 2005 new Zoomobile docents will be scheduled for interpretive assignments equaling six (6) hours per month in the zoo during non-ZooMobile months.
- C. Emeritus docents will be required to fulfill six (6) Benefit hours per month verified by the Chair of the Docent Status Committee.
- D. In addition to interpretive assignments active docents are expected to contribute four (4) benefit hours each month. These hours are doing anything that benefit the Docent Council in particular or the Zoo in general. Hours include such things as tour preparation & paper work, or helping with special projects done at home, hours spent at the General Meetings, Zoo classes or lectures, volunteering at Events, helping with mailings, DEC service, etc.
- E. Active touring docents are also required to accumulate a total of four(4) Continuing Education Units(CE) yearly. One unit will be obtained by mandatory attendance at either of the General Meetings in the Spring or Fall. The remaining three units may be obtained by participating in any combination of the following: Brown Bags, Zoo Lectures, New Docent Class Training, Special Zoo/Docent Trainings, or presenting a Brown Bag talk or writing a Docentinel article from a trip or a class.
- F. Active Docents are responsible for recording their hours worked in the binder provided. This will be used to generate the permanent record of attendance and fulfillment of the hour requirements in the database.

2. Docents unable to come in on an assigned tour date must notify the Education Department before the day of the tour with a replacement docent and info on when they will make up their hours. Notification of illness or emergencies on the day of a scheduled tour must be made to the Education Department by telephone as early as possible. A docent with a non-touring assignment must also notify the Education Department that they cannot come in and when they will be making up their hours. If a docent fails to appear once without notifying the Education Department, the Docent Status Committee Chair will be notified. After one missed assignment the docent will be contacted by phone or Email to remind them of their obligation especially if they had a tour and the need to secure a substitute. After a second missed assignment, a letter of warning will be sent. If the docent fails to come to the Zoo and fails to call the Education Department on three (3) regularly scheduled days, they are subject to termination as outlined in Article III, Section 8 of the Docent Council by-laws. \*

3. Docents should wait thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled arrival time for a tour. After 30 Minutes, if the tour has not arrived, they should check with the Education Department to determine tour status. Interpretive hours can be filled on the same day by roaming as an alternative. \*
4. Docents are never allowed “behind the scenes” without permission from the keeper or staff person responsible for the area. This permission may not come from another volunteer nor be solicited by the docent. Docents should not take family or friends behind the scenes. Special events such as Night Tour are expressly for the purpose of allowing Zoological Society members and their families supervised access to those areas.
5. Docents should never take school groups behind the scenes anywhere unless the tour has been arranged through the Education Department. We occasionally arrange behind the scenes tours for classes and organized groups by appointment. \*
6. Docents will not accept personal tips. Contributions will be accepted solely for the Zoological Society.
7. Provisional Docents must fulfill all scheduled assignments during the provisional period to be considered for Active Docent status. One month prior to the provisional period ending, the Docent Status Committee shall present to the Docent Executive Committee a summary of each provisional docent’s commitments and assignments completed. The Executive Committee shall approve those provisional docents to be elevated to Active Docent status. Each new active docent shall be sent written notice of successful completion of their provisional period. A docent who has not successfully completed their provisional period shall be notified in writing by the Executive Committee, which may, at its sole discretion, extend the provisional period in individual cases.
8. Active Docents are required to attend one General Meeting either in the spring or fall. Attendance at both is recommended but not mandatory.
9. Docents must wear a ‘Docent Uniform’ when participating in educational and interpretive activities. The official docent uniform is the provided Khaki vest with the current Zoo logo on the front and the words ZOO DOCENT on the back. Under the vest you may wear any shirt that is non-patterned white, black, Zoo green, or shades of brown. Similarly, plain pants, skirts or knee-length walking shorts of black, tan or shades of brown may be worn. Hats should be plain or have the current Zoo logo. Nothing but the docent nametag, Docent Council approved pins and the “Ask Me” button may be worn with the uniform. If you forget your vest on your scheduled day, you may borrow a vest to be returned after your shift. No logos from other institutions should be worn. The uniform vest remains the property of the Docent Council and must be returned to the Education Department when the Docent is no longer an active member. Starting January, 2010, payments are taken for the vests and are the property of the docent. \*
10. In order to insure maximum visibility of docents on Zoo grounds, when completing their interpretive assignments docent shall not engage in behavior that interferes with their interpretive work such as lengthy visiting with other docents or friends. Meal breaks should be taken away from work areas. Docents should also avoid spending excessive amounts of time in non-interpretive areas such as the Café or gift shop while on duty. \*

11. In the event of inclement weather or notification of a natural disaster (Tsunami, etc), docents should always call the Education Department to verify the Zoo is open and to see if any scheduled tours have been cancelled. Remember that unless the group cancels, we give tours rain or shine; if you are scheduled you must complete the tour. We do appreciate docents working their non-touring shifts in inclement weather and there are a number of protected areas where you can station yourself. But if you can't make a non-touring shift because of the bad weather, and the Zoo is still open, you still need to notify Education Department by either phone or email including when you plan to make up the shift. \*

12. Docents may not use the title "Docent" or indicate any official connection with the San Francisco Zoo, the Docent Council or the San Francisco Zoological Society, in any communication with newspapers or other periodicals, radio or television without prior approval of the Education Director. Any such communication can, of course, be made as a private individual.

13. The Docent Roster, and all information in it, is to be used only for official business of the organization.

\* Changes made, 12/4/12

## **SAN FRANCISCO ZOO AND GARDENS DOCENT VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

When acting in your capacity as a San Francisco Zoo and Gardens docent you are a representative of the Zoo and as such you will:

1. Always observe the mission of the Zoo in all of your communications and interactions with Zoo guests and staff
2. Follow all directives given by members of the Education Department and other Zoo staff
3. Refrain from expressing personal opinions and from confronting or challenging guests, Zoo staff or fellow volunteers in an argumentative or demeaning manner
4. Always act in an ethical manner
5. Be respectful, polite, positive, patient and courteous when interacting with Zoo guests, staff or fellow volunteers
6. Accept constructive feedback and respond positively to input from Zoo staff
7. Be reliable, adaptable and flexible
8. Silence cell phones and other personal devices when on duty
9. Avoid excessive socializing with fellow volunteers when on duty
10. Adhere to all written and oral safety procedures and policies established by the Zoo in general and specifically by the Education Department
11. Satisfactorily complete all required docent training/refreshers classes.

In addition to the above:

- You will agree to always remove your docent vest and keep it out of sight when visiting Gorilla World
- You will abide by the rules contained in the "Bylaws of the Docent Council of the San Francisco Zoological Society" and the "Docent Guidelines", which can be found in the Guidelines and Protocols section of the Docent Notebook, including, but not limited to:
  - Consistently meeting your obligation to complete 6 interpretive hours and 4 benefit hours each month and to attend a minimum of one docent general meeting per year
  - Observing the written docent dress code while on duty

I have read and agree to observe the above standards:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_