

Job Description

Zoo Caretaker I

1 FTE | POS #100000585

Direct Report	Asst. Director of Zoological Services	Grade	Gr- G \$22.67hr - \$31.65hr
Department	Buttonwood Park Zoo	FLSA	Non-Exempt
Division	Buttonwood Park Zoo	Bargaining Unit	Union
Date	July 2026	Location	425 Hawthorn Street

Homeland Security Emergency Status: Essential

Safety Classification: Non-Safety Position

Summary

This position provides exceptional animal care including life support and veterinary assistance, husbandry, training, and enrichment, and is also responsible for general maintenance, housekeeping and groundskeeping at the zoo.

Supervisory Responsibilities

Supervision Scope: Zoo Interns and Volunteers.

Supervision Received: Assistant Director of Zoological Services.

Supervision Given: Assigns and assesses work of Zoo Interns and Volunteers.

Essential Function

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

1. Performs daily observation of animals including gathering vital signs and statistics for each animal.
2. Inspects all animals under care daily for signs of illness, injury, motor impairment, stress, reproductive behavior, pregnancy, the presence of ectoparasites, abnormal behavior patterns or other signs of health and welfare.
3. Reports injuries and illnesses of animals to the Assistant Director of Zoological Services.
4. Provides thorough, accurate and complete recordkeeping in daily reports, treatment sheets, feed logs and/or other records as required by the Assistant Director or the Zoo's Veterinarian.
5. May assist in the diagnosis, treatment, and extended care of sick or injured animals including the administration of medication and physical therapy.
6. Assists in the capture and restraint of animals for the purpose of diagnosis of illness, administration of medication, confinement for transportation, or the shifting of animals between habitats.
7. Provides positive and effective customer service and promotes and maintains responsive community and working relations.
8. Aids in the design of animal diets through daily observation and analysis of the animals' food intake, metabolism, and physical condition to determine the diet's nutritional effectiveness; may conduct diet research for animals.
9. Examines fecal material and urine for signs of abnormal functioning of the digestive tract, the presence of parasite infestation, and the ability to metabolize foodstuffs.
10. Feeds and provides water to animals under care; cleans and disinfects food and water dishes.
11. Cleans animal habitats, pens, cages, and barns; disinfects animal areas and cages; cleans buildings and public areas; removes all waste from dumpsters.
12. Observes the public to prevent harassment or injury to animals and ensures the safety of the public.

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13. Answers questions from the public about animals, making use of knowledge acquired through independent research and in-service training as well as through practical work experience.
14. May give educational animal demonstrations (both on and off Zoo grounds) and Zoo tours.
15. Performs manual work in cleaning, repair, construction and general care of animal habitats, buildings, and grounds to promote the safety of animals and visitors to the Zoo.
16. Performs routine groundskeeping work such as cutting grass, raking leaves, picking up debris and snow removal within the Zoo area.
17. Performs minor maintenance work for the Zoo facility, including painting and minor carpentry work; keeps drains unclogged; repairs fencing; patches concrete.
18. Cares for trees, shrubs, plants, and flowerbeds on Zoo grounds.
19. Drives motor vehicles to deliver hay or feed to animal areas, to pick up supplies from sources outside Zoo grounds, or to transport animals to the veterinary staff or other Zoos.
20. Participates in training programs for animals under care; may include 24 hours a day care in administering specialized feeding schedule and other vital maternal care.
21. Prepares animal diets by reading diet sheets and placing food in appropriate dishes; scrubs and disinfects food preparation area.
22. Directs activities of new employees, seasonal employees, and volunteers in their responsibilities.
23. Performs related duties as assigned.
24. **This position is deemed essential personnel and must report to work during emergency situations.**

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position. The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the City of New Bedford and the employee and is subject to change by the City as the needs of the City and requirements of the job change.

Competencies

Communication Proficiency	Independent Judgement	Thoroughness & Attention to Detail
Public Speaking	Customer Service	Organizational Skills
	Expert Reporting	

Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

- Associate's degree or two years of technical training in Zoology, Biology, Wildlife Management, Psychology, or a related field.
- Any equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Requirements

- Subject to Mandatory CORI (Criminal Offender Record Investigation)

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- Must provide documentation of negative Tuberculosis (TB) testing from within six (6) months prior to employment.
- Possession of a valid Massachusetts driver's license and good driving record. Operates a motor vehicle on a regular basis.

Required Skills and Abilities

- Animal care and feeding practices.
- Materials, methods (including animal restraint) and equipment used for daily care, medical care, grounds keeping, aquatic life support and plumbing.
- Applicable safety measures and precautions.
- Research and convey current animal and conservation statuses.
- Understand and follow written and oral instructions and established safety procedures.
- Work independently with minimal supervision.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with supervisors, coworkers, and the general public.
- Observing and recognizing normal and abnormal animal behavior, stress, shock, distance, territoriality, and social dominance.
- Handling wild animals.
- Public speaking.
- Customer service.

Tools and Equipment Used

Computers, Gator, tractor, landscaping, and small power tools.

Work Environment

The **Zoo Caretaker I** makes constant contact with other staff, members of the public and City departments. This requires excellent customer service skills. The **Zoo Caretaker I** is expected to operate in an environment where errors can be costly regarding animals' wellbeing and efficiency of the operation.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. The work environment and exposures described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to remain stationary 50% of the time and move about through Zoo facilities; position self to obtain objects at varying vertical heights; effectively communicate and exchange information and ideas with coworkers; smell; operate objects, equipment, tools, and controls; and reach for extended objects. Occasionally required to traverse and/or sustain uncomfortable physical positions. Specific vision abilities required by this job include the ability to observe details at close and long-distance ranges.

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The position requires frequent and extended periods of outside work subject to all weather conditions and extremes such as heat, cold, precipitation and humidity, dim or bright lighting, dust, odors, noise, allergens, and other toxic agents. The employee is occasionally exposed to vibrations, electrical currents, smoke, heavy machinery, radiation, and zoonotic pathogens. Must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles, masks, respirators, and protective footwear as applicable. The position involves heavy physical demands such as occasionally transporting objects up to 50 pounds and exerting up to 100 pounds of force to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects.

Work Hours

This is a full-time non-exempt position with a typical 40 hours per week with possible availability for after normal hours of operation during emergencies and other departmental critical needs.

Other Duties

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties, or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice as needed by the City of New Bedford within the scope of departmental needs. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment of the position.