



*Inspection reports are enormously useful tools in legislative and educational campaigns to help wild animals in circuses and traveling shows.*



While “formal” inspections of animal husbandry and housing conditions in circuses and traveling shows are typically carried out by organizations and agencies (i.e., humane societies, municipal animal control agencies, provincial wildlife departments) that have the legislated authority to do so, other animal welfare organizations and individuals may be able to conduct informal inspections because performing animals are often kept where they can be viewed by circus patrons and bystanders.

Prior to conducting an inspection, it is useful to review information about the biology and behaviour of those wild animal species you expect to encounter. Most animal circuses in Canada tour with Asian elephants and big cats, such as tigers and lions. Some shows also feature performances by brown bears, primates (macaque monkeys, chimpanzees or orangutans) and, on occasion, crocodylians (i.e., crocodiles, alligators). Make sure you've reviewed information about the natural history of these animals before conducting your inspections.

If possible, it is also very useful to review information about professional zoo husbandry and housing standards in advance of your inspection. This will allow the circus conditions you observe to be compared to professional zoo standards.

Official agencies often announce their inspections in advance and may have the authority to demand that the circus or traveling show produce veterinary records, import permits and other relevant paperwork for review. Since you may not have that authority, where possible, engage circus staff in conversation and ask them

questions. Notes about who you spoke to and what they said should be made during your conversation or as soon as possible afterward.

When possible, the following information should be obtained during circus and traveling show inspections. Some of the information listed below may only be available to official agencies.

1. Legal name, address, and phone number of the circus.
2. Legal name, address, and phone number of primary animal trainers.
3. Species, number, sex and age of all animals.
4. Are there any non-performing animals?
5. Size (length, width, height) of all cages and enclosures.



6. Shape of cages and enclosures.
7. Type of substrate in each cage and enclosure.
8. Barrier type (chain-link, bars, hot-wire).
9. General condition of cages and enclosures.
10. Number of animals in each cage and enclosure.
11. Furnishings and moveable objects in each cage and enclosure.

[ continued on reverse ]





## Inspecting Circuses and Traveling Shows

12. Are animals using furnishings and moveable objects? Describe in detail.
13. If the animals are outside, are shade areas provided?
14. Are privacy areas available that allow animals to remove themselves from the view of the public, staff and cagemates? Provide details.
15. Are appropriate bedding materials provided?
16. If separate exercise cages are used, see points 6 - 14.
17. What is the duration of each day spent by each animal in their exercise cage?
18. What is the duration of each day spent by each animal in their primary cage or enclosure?
19. Are elephants chained or are they kept in an electrically fenced area?
20. What duration of each day is spent chained or within the electric fenced area?
21. Are elephants chained in a row? What type of movements can they make?
22. Are elephant chains padded?
23. What type of substrate are elephants required to stand on?
24. Are elephants used for rides? If so, which animal(s) and for how long?
25. Are any animals situated in close proximity to excessive noise?
26. Are all animals provided with potable water in


sufficient quantity?

27. Are there any noticeable scars, abrasions, hair loss, injuries, etc.? If yes - provide details including description of injuries, number and location on body.
28. Are animals exhibiting abnormal behaviours (rocking, swaying, pacing, etc.)? If yes - provide details.
29. Are social animals individually housed?

This list is not comprehensive and can be expanded considerably based on the experience of the person conducting the inspection. In some cases, qualified specialists may have to be brought in to determine whether or not particular conditions are problematic, or in the case of official agencies, whether or not the conduct of the circus or traveling show is legally actionable.

In addition to recording your observations in written form, your inspections should also be documented through photographs and video. Visual documentation will verify your observations and support your conclusions, so they are a critical part of the inspection process.

Inspection reports are enormously useful tools in legislative and educational campaigns to help wild animals in circuses and traveling shows. Therefore all reports should be as comprehensive and detailed as possible.

	<p>Zoocheck Canada Inc. 2646 St. Clair Avenue East Toronto, Ontario, M4B 3M1 phone: 416.285.1744, web: <a href="http://www.zoocheck.com">www.zoocheck.com</a></p>
---	---

