

ALLIGATOR POLICY - Based on recent concerns about our policy, it has been updated to reflect current thinking.

**Regarding Alligators**

**MAY 2011**

### **BACKGROUND**

Many lagoons in our plantation are home to the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*). Most of our alligators are between 3 and 8 feet in length, although they can grow larger than this. Alligators are cold-blooded which means that they cannot self-regulate their body temperature. For this reason, alligators are most active during the spring, summer and fall. They often spend hours basking in the sun on lagoon banks in an effort to raise their body temperature. On the hottest days of summer, they spend much of their time submerged with only their eyes and nostrils above the water. During the winter months, they hibernate in underground dens.

Alligators mate in the spring and the female lays her eggs in secluded areas of the marshes. She will fiercely guard her nest against predators.

Alligators digest their food slowly and require only 1 pound of food per week. After a large meal an alligator may not eat for a year or more!

While the alligators may appear to be slow and lethargic, they are capable of great speed over short distances. Never approach within 60 feet of any alligator.

**The following safety tips should be heeded when dealing with alligators:**

- Leave alligators alone. It is against South Carolina law to feed or entice alligators with food. It is also unlawful to harass or harm an alligator in any way, including throwing objects at them.

- Closely supervise children if they are playing near the water.
- Don't allow pets, especially small ones, to go near the lagoon banks.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you should receive even a minor alligator bite. Alligators harbor a very infectious bacteria and a bite may require special treatment.
- Should you witness any of these actions please immediately contact Security. The Security Officer will immediately investigate the incident and, if necessary, proceed to step #2 in the following Policy.

### **POLICY - TO REPLACE APPENDIX B IN DIRECTORY**

**Palmetto Hall Plantation's Board of Directors has issued the following policy regarding alligators in our community - MAY 2011**

In the event that a PHPOA member believes that they are observing aggressive behavior from one of the members of PHPOA wildlife population:

1. The member is to contact PHP Security at 342-6482 and describe the situation.
2. Security will:
  - a. As soon as possible visit the site to observe the incident (to include animal as well as human behavior)
  - b. Immediately document the incident using a South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Complaint Form and notify the Association Manager or office Assistant during office hours.
  - c. Within 24 hours of the incident, the Association Manager or Assistant, with input from at least one other person (a member of the Environmental Committee, a Board member, Security Officer or a member of the Security Advisory Committee, in that order), will determine what action will be taken.

3. Possible actions include:
  - a. No action, or
  - b. Counseling of the reporting family on how to detect aggressive behavior, and how to behave among wildlife. This may include issuance of a SC citation if it is determined that the resident, resident's child or guest was at fault and caused the incident, or
  - c. Contact SCDNR or a qualified third party to assess the animal's behavior
  - d. With the assistance of a qualified third party remove the alligator. If the alligator is removed, it is certain that this alligator will be destroyed. This decision is not to be made lightly.

When assessing the situation, it should be taken into account that alligators are very rarely aggressive, and usually become aggressive only when taunted physically or repeatedly given food. An alligator less than six feet long would almost never be considered aggressive.

This procedure also includes the accumulation of statistics regarding reports of aggressive animal behavior.

If there are any questions about this policy, please contact the Association Manager.

**Note:** Any calls to a third party to remove an alligator from any portion of Palmetto Hall must be made by a Security Officer, the Association Manager or Assistant or a Member of the POA Board. If a resident calls a third party directly to remove an alligator from his or her property, the resident will be responsible for the cost of removal.