

Circus Gatti

P.O. Box 3967, Tustin, CA 92781

Circus Gatti has failed to meet minimum federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Among other things, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Circus Gatti for repeatedly failing to provide structurally sound enclosures and for endangering animals and the public. Contact PETA for documentation.

March 16, 2013: Circus Gatti was cited by the USDA for leaving a female Asian elephant unsupervised and without adequate security barriers while performing a show featuring another elephant.

April 11, 2012: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to maintain the perimeter fence of the outdoor housing facility for the two adult female Asian elephants. Some sections were less than 6 feet high, and several areas had broken supports and broken chain-link fencing. This violation was first cited in January 2011 and again in December 2011.

December 15, 2011: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to correct a noncompliant item that it had ordered corrected nearly a year earlier—that of not having high enough perimeter fencing for the two elephants, which “could endanger the well-being of the animals and the public,” and for having areas of this fence insecure “and unable to restrict animals or persons from going through it.”

October 1, 2011: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to have a sufficient barrier between the public and the elephant-ride area, putting “the safety of the animal and the public” at risk. The inspector wrote, “During the intermission, children were observed entering the ride area at least twice without the handler noticing.”

January 21, 2011: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to have areas of the perimeter fence for the two elephants at the minimum height of 8 feet. There were also several areas of the fence where the chain-link fencing and supports had been broken, rendering the fence insecure and unable to function as a secondary containment. The USDA also cited Circus Gatti for failure to have primary transport enclosures free from protrusions. In the enclosure used to transport the two elephants, splintered wood was within reach of the animals, which could result in injury.

June 10, 2010: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to have a responsible person available so that an animal welfare inspection could be conducted.

May 15, 2008: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to have inventory records for two elephants.

May 11, 2008: An inspection conducted by the Santa Cruz County, California, Animal Services Agency during Circus Gatti’s appearance at the Watsonville fairgrounds revealed two dogs with injuries that required veterinary care. A cockapoo named Banjo had a fresh wound between two toes on one of his front paws that was causing him to limp. A terrier named Zorro was limping because of a toenail that had been torn off four days earlier. The dogs’ handler was unaware of Banjo’s injury and stated that she didn’t think that Zorro’s injury required veterinary attention. Animal services ordered the handler to seek veterinary care for both dogs.

December 10, 2007: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to have a responsible adult available to accompany officials for an inspection.

July 22, 2004: A USDA inspector noted that photos of the hind feet of the elephant Tiki indicated that “the feet are a potential problem if the excess skin is not removed, and the cracks and crevices on the bottoms of the feet are not beveled so as to prevent stones, dirt, and bacteria from becoming entrapped in the excess sole skin.” The elephant Wanda’s feet were also affected. According to *The Elephant’s Foot*, foot-related conditions and arthritis are the leading causes of euthanasia in captive elephants.

May 10, 2002: According to a Sacramento, California, Police Department incident report, police were summoned to the Memorial Auditorium when a tiger with Circus Gatti refused to return to his cage from the performance ring. The building was evacuated, and two SWAT officers stood by with guns while a veterinarian shot the tiger with tranquilizer darts.

March 29, 2002: Circus Gatti was cited for failure to provide a USDA official with access to animals, records, and property for the purpose of conducting an animal welfare inspection.

September 18, 2001: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to supply the required itinerary that allows the agency to make unannounced inspections.

July 1998: Circus Gatti refused to pay a \$10,620 balance owed to the city of Richmond, California, for a May 1998 circus show.

June 8, 1998: A USDA inspector noted that the elephants, trainers, and handlers had not been tested for tuberculosis.

January 26, 1998: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for noncompliance with the AWA for problems with the structure of its elephant barn. The inspector noted, "This is a notice that you have had the same violation(s) documented on the last two inspections. You are being given the opportunity to correct these violations. If similar violations are documented on subsequent inspections, all past and future violations may be used as evidence for formal legal action against you."

June 25, 1997: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for noncompliance with the AWA for problems with its primary enclosures for the animals.

March 9, 1995: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to maintain the transport trailer.

August 1994: A tiger was caught in a flaming hoop while performing in the circus.

May 1994: According to a complaint filed with the USDA, Circus Gatti tied a pony up and then repeatedly beat the animal. The complaint stated, "The trainer was hitting this pony so violently with the whip that you could hear the cracking of the whip from the stands." The USDA didn't do anything about this beating because horses have no protection under the AWA.

December 21, 1993: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to maintain the elephant barn and travel trailer, failure to provide the elephants with a safely constructed exercise pen, and failure to provide records of veterinary care.

October 9, 1992: The USDA cited Circus Gatti for failure to maintain the elephant enclosure.

March 1991: A letter from a detective with the Palm Springs (California) Police Officers Association states, "I did a little investigation on my own and it really opened my eyes to learn how these animals are actually taught to do certain tricks and how some of these animals are transported from place to place. Due to the letters that I have received from you and others, the Palm Springs Police Officers Association is currently looking for other avenues for fund raising, and have decided that this years [sic] circus will be the last."

July 7, 1990: According to people who attended a Circus Gatti performance in Portland, Oregon, two chimpanzees dragged the trainer into the audience and mauled a child

May 1990: A report was filed with the Palm Springs (California) Police Department alleging that the circus used electricity on elephants. The complainant claimed that a circus employee stunned an elephant for no apparent reason and that when the complainant told the employee that he was breaking the law and that he would report him to the police, the circus worker stated, "I know, but we'll be out of here before your police can do anything about it."