How to Build a Slide Door Crate

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A slide door crate has many qualities that may benefit a crate training program and husbandry needs. Additionally, it does not modify or destroy any of the crate material itself, so it will not affect the integrity of the crate and can be converted back to a normal crate easily. Below are instructions on how to modify a crate to have a slide door.

Materials:

- Crate (appropriately sized for your animal with the metal door removed)
- 2”x2” wood (amount dependent on size of crate)
- Lattice cap (amount dependent on size of crate)
- FRP board or PVC sheeting (for door, thickness should be appropriate for lattice cap width)
- Screws
- Washers
- Drill with Phillips head bit, as well as bits for drilling pilot holes as needed
- Saw

Directions:

1. Measure the top of the crate door to determine how long the support 2”x2” wood piece will need to be. It should cover both holes on top that the metal door would normally fit through. Those holes will be the anchoring spot for the screws to hold the slide door track.

The wood frame should extend over the edges of where the door will sit as well.

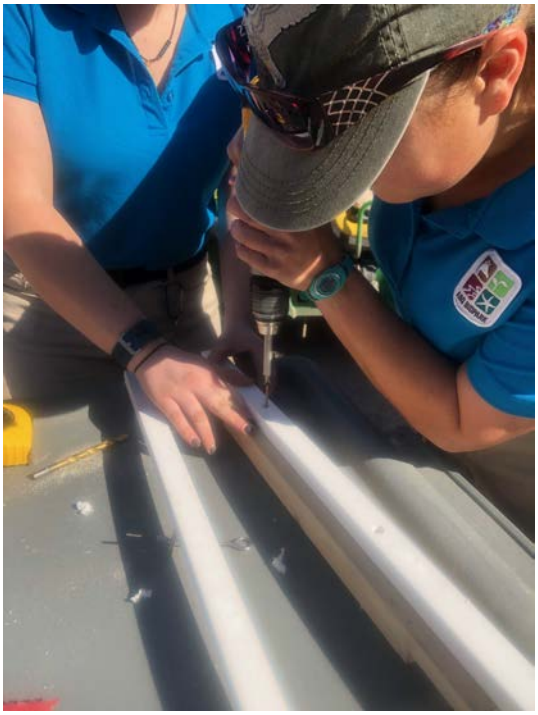
Cut two matching wood pieces, one for the top and one for the bottom

2. Using the measurements from the wood, cut matching lattice cap lengths that are the same lengths as the wood. When building the crate in the pictures, we did not have enough wood to fully support the lattice cap, but, if available, the wood and lattice cap should be the same

length. If there are screw holes in the lattice cap, it is ready to be attached to the wood. If not, use a drill bit to create a hole in the top layer of the lattice cap, such that a screw will be able to hold the cap flush to the wood and the door will slide smoothly through the track.

Make sure the screw head will fit through the hole you drill.

3. Attach the lattice cap to the wood, ensuring that the track sits at the bottom of the wood and will be far enough forward on the crate that the door will slide smoothly.



4. Attach the track to the crate now, placing the wood/lattice cap track in the center on the top of the crate. Depending on your type of wood and screws, you may want to drill pilot holes into the wood in the locations where the wood will line up with the crate holes.

Now is also the time to use washers with your screws to add extra support.

5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 for the bottom slide track.

Ensure that you line the two tracks up as closely as possible, using the screw holes or a midpoint as your guide.

Crate with completed slide tracks attached.

6. With the two tracks in place, take measurements to determine the size of your door. You will want the length to allow the door to sit in the track without being too loose or too tight, and the width to cover over the edges of the door opening completely.

7. Cut your door material (FRP or PVC sheeting) to the correct size. Determine which direction you will want the door to slide and attach scrap wood or plastic to the door to create a handle. The handle will also stop the door from sliding completely off in one direction.

You may create two handles on the same side, one that sits above the crate midpoint and one that sits below, for added support.

8. Test the door to ensure it fits and functions smoothly. If the length of the door is off, you can move the lattice cap up or down on the wood frame to account for the size difference. When the door works properly, the crate is complete!

Considerations:

- If leaving the crate in an area with animal access, consider removing the door when not actively training and making sure materials are animal safe in case of interaction or consumption.
- If leaving an animal inside the crate for an extended period of time, make sure there is always someone present to monitor and reinforce calm behavior as necessary.
- When using materials besides FRP for the door, you may consider creating windows, such as in the first photo, depending on the staff and animal needs.