

ANIMAL POLICY

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Animal Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish conditions for the presence of animals in Thurston County buildings and facilities to protect the safety of employees, the public, and county property, and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Washington Law against Discrimination, Ch. 49.60 RCW.

The County recognizes the important role of pets in the lives of some employees. This policy allows pet visits to county buildings and facilities under limited circumstances.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Thurston County buildings and facilities, and to elected officials, employees, and persons entering County buildings and facilities.

This policy does not apply to animals at County buildings or facilities for official county purposes, such as a K9 under the control of a law enforcement officer, a courthouse dog approved by the court, or animals under the direct supervision of Animal Services.

3. General Policy

a. County Buildings, Facilities, and Vehicles

Animals are prohibited in Thurston County buildings and facilities, except for service animals and pet dogs and cats as provided in this policy. Pets are prohibited in Thurston County vehicles.

b. Employees, Volunteers and Agents

Pets

Employees, volunteers, and agents may only bring a pet into a County building or facility, and may only have a pet at work while on duty, for a specific reason at a specific time if approved by their department director or elected official (e.g., a dog used for a demonstration in an aggressive dog training class). Employees shall check with others in the work environment to ensure that there are no concerns, such as allergies, prior to bringing a pet to work.

Service Animals

Disabled employees requiring a service animal may have their service animal in county buildings or vehicles in places where they would have normal access in the performance of their duties. Employees must notify their supervisor of their need for a service animal and may need to obtain approval of a reasonable accommodation.

4. Definitions

a. Fully Socialized

To be fully socialized means the animal will not, except under rare occasions, unreasonably bark, yip, growl or make disruptive noises; has a good temperament and disposition; does not show fear; is not upset or agitated when it sees another animal; will not bite; is not aggressive; and is housebroken.

b. Handler

A person who is accompanied by a service animal, but not being assisted or accommodated by that animal.

c. Partner

A person with a disability who is assisted or accommodated by a service animal.

d. Pet

A domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. For purposes of this policy, pets are dogs and cats; not fish, ferrets, rats, snakes or spiders.

e. Service Animal

An animal that is trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a sensory, mental, or physical disability of a person with a disability.

f. Trainee

An animal undergoing training to become a service animal.

5. Pets

- a. Elected officials and department directors may allow a pet in a county building or facility on a case-by-case basis. The presence of pets in the workplace should be the exception, not the standard, and should be for a specific time and purpose.
- b. Pets are required to be on a leash or harness and controlled by the owner at all times while in a Thurston County building or facility.

6. Service Animals and Trainees

- a. Thurston County allows service animals to accompany persons with disabilities and handlers in areas of Thurston County buildings open to the public unless the presence or behavior of the animal creates an unreasonable risk to the health or safety of persons or to damage property. Service animal documentation or proof cannot be required from members of the public.

The partner/handler must be in full control of the service animal at all times. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether unless the partner is

unable use such restraints because of a disability or the restraint would interfere with the animal's performance service, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the person's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

- b. A trainee will be allowed to accompany its partner or handler in areas of Thurston County buildings where service animals are allowed if it is housebroken and fully socialized. If the trainee begins to show improper behavior, the handler is required to act immediately to correct the animal or remove the animal from the premises.

7. Requirements for Animals in County Buildings

The care and supervision of an animal is solely the responsibility of its owner/partner/handler.

a. Health and Hygiene

The animal must be in good health with good hygiene. It must have current immunizations against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must wear a rabies vaccination tag and licensing tags as required by applicable law.

Owners/partners/handlers are responsible to maintain a clean and well groomed animal at all times, and must ensure their animal is free from pests and parasites. Animals that shed must be groomed to maintain a work environment that is hair and fur free.

b. Control of Animal

The owner/partner/handler of an animal that is unruly or unreasonably disruptive (e.g. barking, running around, and out of control) may be asked to correct the animal's behavior and, if the behavior is not corrected, may be required to remove the animal from the building.

Individuals may be asked to remove an animal from the premises if:

- The animal is out of control; or
- The animal is not housebroken; or
- The animal causes unreasonable work interruptions or disturbances.

The owner/partner/handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into any county building or facility until he or she demonstrates that the animal is fully socialized so that the behavior will not occur again.

8. Responsibility

Any property damage, destruction or injuries caused by or as a result of an animal will be the sole responsibility of the animal's owner/partner/handler, including cleaning all indoor and outdoor messes.