

Appendix A

Animals in Public Settings: Guidelines for Venue Operators and Staff Members

Venue operators should know about risks for disease and injury, maintain a safe environment, and inform staff members and visitors about appropriate disease- and injury-prevention measures. This handout provides basic information and instructions for venue operators and staff. Consultation with veterinarians, public health officials, or other professionals to fully implement the recommendations in this report is suggested.

Operators and staff members should be aware of the following risks for disease and injury associated with animals in public settings:

- Disease and injuries have occurred following contact with animals in public settings.
- Healthy animals can carry germs that make visitors sick.
- Visitors can pick up germs when they touch animals or animal droppings or enter an animal's environment.
- Visitors can rid themselves of most germs if they wash their hands when leaving a public setting with animals and should do so even if they did not directly contact the animals.
- The risk for developing serious or life-threatening illnesses from contact with animals in public settings is higher among certain visitors, especially young children (i.e., aged <5 years), older adults, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems.

Operators and staff members should take the following steps to maintain a safe environment when animals are present in public settings:

- Design the venue with safety in mind by having designated animal areas, nonanimal areas, and transition areas.
- Do not permit any animals other than service animals in nonanimal areas.
- Provide hand-washing facilities where food and beverages are prepared, served, or consumed.
- Assign trained staff members to monitor animal contact areas.
- Exclude food and beverages, toys, pacifiers, spill-proof cups, and baby bottles, and prohibit smoking in animal contact areas.

- Keep the animal areas as clean and disinfected as possible, and limit visitor contact with manure and animal bedding.
- Allow feeding of animals only if contact with animals can be controlled (e.g., over a barrier).
- Minimize use of animal areas for public (nonanimal) activities.
- Design transition areas for entering and exiting animal areas with appropriate signs or other forms of notification regarding risks and location of hand-washing facilities.
- Maintain hand-washing stations that are accessible to children, and direct visitors to wash their hands when exiting animal areas.
- Position hand-washing stations in places that encourage hand washing when exiting animal areas.
- Ensure that animals receive appropriate preventive care, including vaccinations and parasite control.
- Provide potable water for animals.
- Prohibit consumption of unpasteurized products (e.g., dairy products and juices).

Operators and staff members should educate visitors regarding animal contact in public settings:

- Provide simple instructions in multiple age- and language-appropriate formats.
- Warn visitors about the risks for disease and injury.
- Direct visitors to wash their hands and assist children with hand washing after contact with animals or visiting an animal area.
- Advise visitors that they should not eat, drink, or place things in their mouths after animal contact or visiting an animal area until they have washed their hands.
- Advise visitors to closely supervise children and to be aware that objects such as clothing, shoes, and stroller wheels can become soiled and serve as a source of germs after leaving an animal area.
- Make visitors aware that young children, older adults, pregnant women, and persons who are immunocompromised are at increased risk for illness.