

For FHA Environmental Health Officers: Pet-related Guidance for Extreme Heat Shelters and Businesses

During the heat and smoke season, Fraser Health is working with municipalities and community partners to ensure that all members of the community feel welcome in and can access cool, air-conditioned spaces, as people's homes can get dangerously hot. In some communities, this can mean welcoming people into recreation centres or other buildings used as cooling shelters. One of the identified barriers stopping people from accessing or taking part in these services is not wanting to leave their pets.

While pets are not permitted in pools, PSEs, or the indoor areas of food premises for the purpose of maintaining a low risk of infectious disease, when working with municipalities this season, FHA health protection is providing the following guidance:

- Providing a pet-friendly space inside a cooling centre will reduce barriers for some attendees
- Best practice would be to provide designated, separate areas for people with pets (optimally a separate room if indoors), as the nearby presence of animals may deter others from attendance (allergies, anxiety). Requirements for leashing or crating will likely also reduce conflict. Animals should not be near any food serving or preparation areas.
- Other options include provision of outdoor cooling spaces for people with pets (<https://www.bchousing.org/publications/Covid-19-Outdoor-Cooling-Spaces-Guide.pdf>).
- If restaurants or other businesses decide to open their doors as a cooling shelter or encourage people to stay longer to cool down, they are encouraged to allow pets in outdoor areas. Similarly, animals would need to be well-behaved and leashed or small pets in crates.
- [Guidance for allowing animals in outside restaurant/patio](#) areas is as follows:
 - Update the establishment's sanitation plan to reflect an operator's responsibilities around sanitation procedures. The plan must be submitted to and approved by an EHO before pet dogs are allowed into outdoor dining areas.
 - Ensure food or drinks are not prepared, nor any utensils stored, in the outdoor dining areas.
 - Provide a separate entrance where a pet dog can enter without going through any indoor areas of the establishment to reach the outdoor dining area.
 - Ensure a pet dog is under the control of its owner using a leash, harness, or carrier and kept at ground level at all times. In addition, the operator should post a sign at the entrance to the outdoor dining area, stating, *"Dogs are permitted in outdoor dining areas and owners are responsible for controlling their dogs at all times"*.
 - Ensure a pet dog does not eat or drink from the establishment's reusable dishware or utensils.
 - Ensure surfaces that have been contaminated by animal waste (e.g., feces, urine, or vomit) or other by-product are cleaned and sanitized immediately by staff of the establishment in an area separate from the establishment's dishwashing area.
 - Require any employee who comes into contact with a pet dog, its accessories, serving containers for the pet dog, or animal waste wash their hands before undertaking any of their regular work duties. An employee's hygiene instructions must address hand washing after handling or dealing with a pet.
 - Ensure employee clothing is free of dog dander, fur, or body fluids.