

City of Northampton, Massachusetts
Human Resources Department

Effective Date: 7/1/15

Animals in the Workplace Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Northampton is a municipal government engaged in managing the resources invested in it for the public good of the Northampton community. As a public entity, the City has a legal duty to provide access and to accommodate the needs of staff and visitors with disabilities. It must also provide a healthy and safe environment in which individuals can work and the public can transact its business. In accordance with this, employees are generally prohibited from bringing pets/animals into any Municipal Facility(ies) except as required by State or Federal Law and/or with the exception of Service Animals, Working Animals, and Animal Control Animals.

DEFINITIONS

“Municipal Facility(ies)” refer to any municipal building and other individual work spaces to include parking lots, grounds, vehicles and common areas. Municipal property that the general public are permitted to bring pets/animals to, such as unposted parks and open spaces, are excluded from this policy when used by employees on non-work time.

“Service Animals” refers to animals used to guide or provide assistance to persons with disabilities in the activities of independent living. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Service Animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guide dogs, signal dogs or other dogs individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

“Working Animals” refers to an animal authorized for use by the Mayor to accomplish a task necessary to the City’s charge as a public entity, such as police canines, cadaver, search and rescue or other dogs and animals that provide a service for which they are trained and certified.

“Animal Control Animals” refer to animals impounded and taken into custody and held temporarily until the animal is transferred to an off-site location or person.

RATIONALE

In addition to providing a professional and conducive work environment, this policy responds to concerns for the health and safety of employees, citizens, visitors and animals. Further, it limits potential distractions/disturbances in the workplace and addresses the City’s concern about possible liability issues.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees in any Municipal Facility(ies).

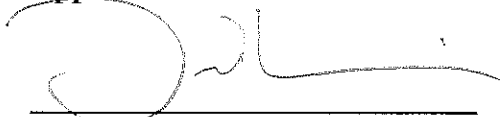
POLICY

Even the calmest and most well-behaved of pets can be a distraction or disruptive to the work and lifestyles of employees, citizens, contractors and visitors. In addition, individuals may have allergies or simply be afraid of animals. A poorly behaved animal or one who is sick, not-up-to-date on vaccinations, or unaltered may also pose a safety concern. All of these factors put the City at risk of potential liability. Therefore, employees are generally prohibited from bringing pets into Municipal Facility(ies) except as required by State or Federal Law and/or with the exception of Service Animals, Working Animals, and Animal Control Animals.


Where pets/animals are permitted in Municipal Facility(ies) or other exempted municipal areas, the following conditions shall apply:

- a. The pet/animal must be under the direct physical control of the owner/caretaker at all times;
- b. The owner or caretaker will care for the pet/animal in a responsible way that ensures the safety of those in the municipal facility, as well as the safety of the pet/animal;
- c. Owners or caretakers will ensure that the pet/animal relieves itself outside and will clean up after the pet/animal and dispose of its waste properly; and ensure that the pet/animal is clean, groomed, and in a healthy condition;
- d. Where applicable, the pet/animal should be licensed, vaccinated, and have identification tags;
- e. If the pet/animal creates a disturbance, poses a health or safety risk to others who are exposed to it, or interrupts the work of others, it must be immediately removed; and
- f. AS permitted by law, the City may require the owner or caretaker to accept sole financial and legal responsibility for any injury, damage, or other harm caused by an animal/pet and the owner or caregiver may be responsible for indemnifying the City should it be found legally liable for any injury or other harm caused by the animal/pet.

Approved:



David Narkewicz
Mayor



Glenda G. Stoddard
Human Resources Director