



GUIDELINES FOR ALLOWING DOGS IN OUTDOOR DINING AREAS



A new law modifying California health code effective January 1, 2015, allows retail food operators with outdoor seating areas to allow pet dogs in those areas. State law previously prohibited dogs in “all” areas of retail food businesses, except for police dogs and service animals. Operators have the discretion to choose whether to allow pet dogs, but may do so only if they meet specific criteria.

- 🐾 A retail food facility may permit pet dogs in outdoor dining or patio areas if it meets these conditions.
- 🐾 An exterior pet entrance is designated that does not lead through the establishment to reach the outdoor dining area.
- 🐾 No food preparation or storage shall be allowed in the pet area, including the dispensing or mixing of drinks and ice. Water may be poured from a vessel brought from inside the establishment.
- 🐾 Reusable dishes and utensils shall not be stored, displayed or pre-set in the outdoor dining area.
- 🐾 Dogs may only eat or drink from single-use, disposable containers provided by the establishment – no dishes brought by customers are allowed.
- 🐾 Facility employees may not have direct contact with pet dogs while on duty, and must immediately wash their hands if contact occurs.
- 🐾 All dogs must be leashed or confined in a pet carrier, and may not occupy seats, benches or other furniture.
- 🐾 The outdoor dining area must be kept clean. In cases where excrement or other bodily fluids (urine, saliva, vomit) are deposited, an employee shall immediately clean and sanitize the contaminated areas.
- 🐾 Operators must continue to follow local ordinances related to sidewalk, public nuisance and sanitation issues, as well as all previously applicable health code requirements.

Retail food facilities that permit dogs are encouraged to post signage indicating where pets are allowed and rules for customers with dogs.

Questions?

For more information, contact Tulare County Environmental Health Services at (559)724.6400.