

**CALHOUN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
POLICY STATEMENT**

SUBJECT: ANIMALS IN THE WORKPLACE & PUBLIC SPACES	DATE APPROVED: 6/6/19	EFFECTIVE: Immediately	POLICY NO. 211
	REPLACES: NEW		

PURPOSE: Calhoun County is responsible for assuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all employees, as well as the public visiting County facilities. In keeping with this objective, Calhoun County prohibits animals in the workplace and/or in Calhoun County owned buildings and property, with the exceptions noted in this policy. While animals may certainly have positive impact to some individuals, they can also have undesirable impacts as well, including but not limited to; animal related allergies, fear of animals, and/or distraction by the presence of animals that impacts the ability to effectively perform work duties. In addition, some animals elevate the risk of infection(s), can cause unwanted odors and property damage, and aggressive animals can also pose serious physical and mental harm.

RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of the Administrator/Controller’s office for the administration of this policy.

POLICY: Calhoun County prohibits animals in the workplace and/or in Calhoun County owned buildings and property. Exceptions to this policy include service animals for a person with disabilities as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), therapy animals that are approved for direct County service to the public, and other animals that are part of an approved County function/service, within the following guidelines:

Service Animals:

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal is defined as “any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” The tasks performed by the animal must be directly related to the person’s disability, including but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure or protecting individuals during one, and assisting a person in a wheelchair and fetching dropped items.” A person with a disability uses a service animal as an auxiliary aid.

Service animals are welcome in all County facilities and property. Attendance at County functions, such as a class, meeting or other event is also permitted. Employees requesting accommodation for a disability that includes a service animal must contact the Human Resource department for the approval process.

Therapy Animals:

Therapy animals, sometimes used for emotional support, comfort, and companionship, are not considered service animals under the ADA. Therapy animals are generally not authorized for use on the employer premises or during the course of County employment by employees. However, limited use of therapy animals may be authorized by the Administrator/Controller if they serve a public purpose associated with the County. An example of an appropriate public use would include, animals used for advocacy to crime victims and witnesses.

Other Animals:

Other authorized animals include those that are part of an approved County function/service, including dogs used by the law enforcement K-9 unit, search and rescue team animals, etc... Household pets or other animals that do not have an approved public purpose or provide a service to the County are prohibited, except for small fish. Any other exceptions to this policy can only be made by the Administrator/Controller, together with the Chief Judge in instances that involve the courts.

OWNER REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVED ANIMALS:

- All animals need to be immunized against rabies and other diseases common to that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current and presentable upon request.
- Animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag and any required registration tag.
- All dogs must be licensed per state law and/or local ordinance.
- Animals must be in good health and have a non-aggressive demeanor.
- The owner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of the owner.
- The animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places, unless it interferes with a service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.
- Cleanliness of the animal is mandatory. Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene of animals.
- The owner is expected to dispose of all animal waste. If an accident occurs, then it is the owner responsibility to completely clean the area.
- The owner understands that approved animals may need to be prohibited from certain areas, for example from a location where an employee has a severe animal allergy, etc...

VIOLATIONS: Violations of this policy by employees may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Reasonable behavior is expected from animals that have been approved to be on the County premises. If improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be told not to bring the animal into any facility until the owner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Disruptive and aggressive animals may be prohibited from Calhoun County facilities altogether depending on the situation.