

Pets & Service Animals in Food Facilities

Pet dogs are allowed in outdoor dining areas of a food facility per Health & Safety Code (HSC) Section 114259.5 if these requirements are met:

- There is a separate entrance to the outdoor dining area, so the dog does not enter the food facility.
- No food preparation is allowed outdoors, including mixing or dispensing of beverages.
- Utensils may not be stored or set at the tables.
- Dogs are not allowed on furniture (e.g. chairs, tables, countertops, or sofas.)
- Dogs must be controlled by owner (e.g. restrained by leash.)
- If food and water for pets shall be served, it must be in single-use disposable containers.
- Business owners shall clean and sanitize any contaminated area. The dog owner should clean up after their dog's excrements or other bodily fluids (urine, saliva, vomit), but the employee must further clean and sanitize the affected area.
- Business owners shall have Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on-site to prevent contamination.
- Employees shall not handle animals. If so, they must wash their hands.
- Facility owner can ask that dogs be removed if they pose a safety hazard.



A service animal is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, or that is in training to do that work or perform those tasks (HSC Section 113903). Dogs who provide comfort or emotional support are not considered service animals.

- Service animals are allowed in food facilities as long as there is no contamination of food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-use items.
- Service animals are not allowed in food preparation areas to avoid health and safety hazards.
- Employees are prohibited from direct contact with service animals.
- Employees are not allowed to ask the customer about his/her disability, but can ask questions about the tasks and services the dog provides to determine the eligibility of the service animal.
- Service animals cannot be asked to be removed unless it poses a health or safety hazard or is behaving uncontrollably.

County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health (DEH) works to safeguard public health and ensure food provided to consumers is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented, by regulating the food sold or distributed to the public. Through the use of risk-based food safety guidelines and inspections, we work to reduce the risk of food-borne illness among consumers.