

Dogs on patios:

Information sheet for operators



Allowing dogs on patios

As of May 25, 2022, amendments to the [Food Regulation](#) give food establishment operators the option to allow patrons' dogs into outdoor eating areas, such as patios, without approval from a public health inspector. Operators must still comply with the Food Regulation.

Food establishments must continue to follow local municipal bylaws regarding dogs. This change does not override prohibitions set by municipalities.



Service Dogs

[Service dogs'](#) access rights remain the same, and they are allowed in both indoor and outdoor dining areas.



Rules to support new regulation changes

The Food Regulation provides clarity on the requirements to allow dogs on patios, such as:

- An operator of a food establishment does not need approval from Alberta Health Services to permit patrons to bring their dogs onto patios.
- An operator may permit a dog to enter or remain on a patio if:
 - The operator ensures that the dog accesses the patio without entering an interior food handling area, and
 - A person has physical control of the dog using a leash, carrier or other restraint at all times.
- Written procedures created for the safe and sanitary operation of the food establishment must include procedures to address the cleaning and sanitizing of areas contaminated by dog saliva, vomitus, feces and urine.



Outdoor eating area

- A patio is considered to be a part of the food establishment.
- The patio must be located outdoors.
- The patio must not be fully enclosed with floor to ceiling walls.
- The patio must be accessed without bringing the dog through interior food handling areas, including the dining room, kitchen and food utensil and food storage areas.
 - Examples of acceptable access include a patio gate that is directly accessible from outside or a separate corridor that does not pass through a food handling area.
- Providing food or water to dogs is discouraged. If it is provided, establishments should avoid using reusable food service dishes, utensils or tableware meant for patrons.
- Food handlers should not feed patrons' dogs.
- Dogs should not be allowed on any seat, chair, table, countertop or similar surface.
- The operator will ensure that dogs are not left unattended.
- Signs should be posted at each entrance to the patio in such a manner as to be clearly observable to the public that dogs are allowed on the patios.
- Tabletops must be cleaned and wiped down between patrons.
- Where necessary, a public health inspector may require additional control measures.



Food handling

All food handling in a commercial food establishment must be done in a manner that makes the food safe to eat.

This means that all necessary precautions must be taken in the food establishment, including on patios, to protect food from contamination.

- Food handlers must practise adequate and proper handwashing as necessary.
- Food handlers should not pet, touch, or otherwise handle a dog.
- Food handlers must exhibit cleanliness and good personal hygiene at all times, including keeping their clothes free of dog dander and fur.
- All food must be protected from contamination; this includes keeping dogs away from food preparation areas.
- Where food is prepared on the patio, an appropriate barrier or buffer zone should be in place to keep dogs away from the food preparation area.



Additional operator considerations

- All local bylaws relating to dogs must be followed. Contact information for local bylaw officers should be readily available and accessible in the event of a dog bite or other dog-related incident.
- Food establishment operators may elect not to allow patrons to bring dogs onto the patio, or may choose to remove or restrict patrons and their dogs, if the dogs are aggressive or unmanageable.
- Operators may wish to confirm their insurance covers any additional risks associated with the presence of dogs.
- The operator should ensure that dogs, leashes and carriers do not interfere with the safe movement of people, and do not impede an emergency exit.



Contact

If you have any questions about these changes to the regulation, or about food safety, please contact Alberta Health Services:

Toll free: 1-833-476-4743

Online: <https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/>