



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PUBLIC HOUSING ASSISTIVE / COMPANION ANIMAL OWNERSHIP POLICY

General

Public housing tenants with special needs related to a disability may own an assistive or companion animal as a reasonable accommodation, subject to compliance with the requirements set forth in this policy.

Applications

Residents wanting to keep assistive or companion animals must apply to the Housing Authority using the Assistive / Companion Animal Application Form. Applications will be processed within thirty (30) days, provided all required documentation is submitted.

Approval and denial of assistive and companion animal applications shall be in writing. Approvals will be accompanied by a lease amendment the resident will be required to sign. Denials will include the reason for denial. Assistive and companion animals are not allowed to reside at Public Housing sites and within Public Housing units until the resident receives authorization from the Housing Authority.

Types of Assistive / Companion Animals

Please see below for specific policies regarding small animals and large animals.

1. Small Animals (animals kept in cages / aquariums such as hamsters, turtles, birds, and fish)

- There is a limit of one cage and / or one aquarium for each Public Housing unit.
- There is a maximum of two animals per age / aquarium.
- Aquariums are not to exceed 75 gallons. For Merrill Road, Tierra Alta and Casa Pajaro, aquarium size is limited to 20 gallons.
- Small animals shall be maintained in their cage / aquarium within the tenant's unit.
- Animals (except fish) left unattended for more than 24 hours are subject to removal and transfer to the proper authorities.
- Residents shall take adequate precautions to eliminate any odors within their unit and maintain their unit in a sanitary condition at all times.
- Resident is responsible for all damages caused by their animals. Charges stemming from such damage will be levied on the resident at the time the damages occur or are identified by the Housing Authority.

2. Large Animals (dogs and cats)

- There is a limit of one large animal for each Public Housing unit.
- Prohibited breeds: The Housing Authority reserves the right to determine breeds as vicious or intimidating on a case by case basis.

- Large animals shall be maintained within the tenant's unit. When outside of the unit they must be kept on a leash or carried and under the control of the resident or other responsible individual at all times.
- Residents shall not alter their unit, patio, or unit area to create an enclosure for an animal.
- Resident must agree to control the noise of animals so that such noise does not constitute a nuisance to other residents or interrupt the peaceful enjoyment of their housing unit or premises. This includes, but is not limited to, loud or continuous barking, howling, whining, biting, scratching or other such activities.
- Residents must agree to be present on the day of inspection or maintenance repairs to care for their animals or remove their animals from the unit so the unit is vacant until the inspection or maintenance repair is completed.
- Animals (except fish) left unattended for more than 24 hours are subject to removal and transfer to the proper authorities.
- Residents shall take adequate precautions to eliminate any odors within their unit and maintain their unit in a sanitary condition at all times.
- Resident is responsible for all damages, other than normal wear and tear, caused by their animals to their dwelling unit and common areas. Charges stemming from such damage will be levied on the resident at the time the damages occur or are identified by Housing Authority staff.
- Large animals must be spayed or neutered. Proof must be submitted with application for keeping the animal.
- For each large animal, the following must be attached to application for keeping the animal.
 - a. Statement signed and submitted by a licensed veterinarian or state/local authority that the specific animal in question (not the breed as a whole) does not pose a direct threat of harm to others and would not cause substantial physical damage to the property of others (attached see application form).
 - b. Certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian or state / local authority that the animal has received all inoculations required by state or local law, that the animal has no communicable disease(s) and is pest free.
 - c. Current license for the animal in compliance with local ordinance and requirements. The pet license must be visible at all times.
 - d. Photograph of the animal.
- Cats are to use litter boxes kept within the resident's unit and cleaned periodically. Resident is not allowed to let waste accumulate. Waste is to be placed in a plastic bag, closed and disposed of properly (by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and disposing of it in an outside trash bin).
- Dog owners are forbidden from permitting their animals to deposit waste on the project premises. If animal waste is deposited on the premises, the resident owner shall be responsible for the immediate removal from the premises of any / all waste deposited by their animal by placing it in a sealed plastic bad and disposing of it in an outside trash bin.

Resident Violation of Rules

- Residents who violate these rules are subject to being required to correct the violation or remove the animal from the dwelling unit within thirty (30) days notice by the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority notice will contain a statement citing the policy violation. If the resident fails to correct the violation or remove the animal within thirty (30) days, the Housing Authority will begin the process of termination due to lease violations.

Animal Care

- No assistive or companion animal (excluding fish) shall be left unattended in any unit for a period in excess of twenty-four (24) hours.
- All resident assistive or companion animal owners shall be responsible for adequate care, nutrition, exercise and medical attention for their assistive or companion animals.
- Resident assistive or companion animal owners must recognize that other residents may have chemical sensitivities or allergies related to animals, or may be easily frightened or disoriented by animals. Assistive or companion animal owners must agree to exercise courtesy with respect to other residents.

Responsible Parties

At the time application is made to keep an assistive or companion animal, the resident assistive or companion animal owner will be required to designate two responsible parties for the care of the animal if the health and safety of the animal is threatened by the death or incapacity of the owner; or by other factors that render the owner unable to care for the animal.

Animal Removal

If the health or safety of the animal is threatened by the death or incapacity of the owner, or by other factors that render the owner unable to care for the animal (including assistive or companion animals who are poorly cared for or have been left unattended for over twenty-four [24] hours), the situation will be reported to the responsible parties designated by the resident animal owner.

If the responsible party is unwilling or unable to care for the assistive or companion animal or if the Housing Authority, after reasonable efforts, cannot contact the responsible party the Housing Authority may contact the appropriate state or local agency and request the removal of the assistive or companion animal. Any cost to remove the animal will be a charge to the resident owner.

Emergencies

The Housing Authority will take all necessary steps to ensure that assistive or companion animals which become vicious, display symptoms of severe illness, or demonstrate behavior that constitutes an immediate threat to the health or safety of others, are referred to the appropriate state or local entity authorized to remove such animals. Any cost to remove the animal will be a charge to the resident owner.

Inspections

The Housing Authority may, after reasonable notice to the tenant, enter and inspect the premises.

Assistive / Companion Animal Policy Amendments

The Housing Authority reserves the right to amend the assistive / companion animal ownership policy.

**Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz
Public Housing Assistive/Companion Animal
Ownership Policy**

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Agreement

I have received a copy and understand the Public Housing Assistive / Companion Animal Ownership Policy and I agree to comply with all provisions of the Policy.

Name of Resident

Address

Signature of Resident

Date