



Dogs in the Workplace Policy

Rationale

The School of Population and Public Health (SPPH) acknowledges the increasing recognition of the role that dogs play in improving human's ability to deal with stress in the workplace. Randomized controlled trials of pet ownership have demonstrated reduced blood pressure responses to stress.¹ Observational studies have demonstrated improved job satisfaction, and lowered perceptions of workplace stress associated with bringing their dogs to work.² Improved communication and morale among workers have also been reported,³ as has reduced turnover.⁴ The *Dogs in the Workplace Policy* acknowledges the value of bringing dogs to the workplace but views this as a privilege and a responsibility rather than a right. The policy does not apply to service dogs brought to campus to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and where the dog is certified as a guide animal pursuant to the *Guide Animal Act* of British Columbia.

Policy Objective

This policy is intended to set parameters whereby SPPH faculty and staff may bring their dogs to work in an environment that is safe and acceptable for all persons and canines in the building.

Implementation of Policy:

1. SPPH staff and faculty wishing to bring their dog to work shall fill out the SPPH Dogs in the Workplace Agreement. The agreement also requires that staff who work in a shared office, obtain prior permission from their co-workers.
2. Owners will post a photograph of their dog at their workspace.
3. When dogs are outside of the owner's workspace, and within the SPPH Building, they will be leashed.
4. Dogs will be kept out of areas utilized heavily in day-to-day SPPH activities, including: kitchens/lunch rooms, shared restrooms, mail and photocopy rooms, meeting rooms, classrooms, and open cubicles.
5. Owners are to ensure that their dog is licensed, and that standard veterinary care is maintained, including up-to-date vaccinations, and a flea management program. Documentation regarding vaccinations must be made available on request.
6. Dog owners are responsible for any personal or property damage caused by their dog, including: damage from accidents, excessive dog hair and odor. Owners of dogs must clean up after their dog while on SPPH or campus property.
7. Should there be a complaint regarding a dog, the complaint will be forwarded in writing by the complainant to the Chair of the SPPH Health and Safety Committee (H&S) spph.healthandsafety@ubc.ca. A meeting with representation from the H&S and SPPH Culture, Communication and Recognition (CCR) Committee will be called to discuss an appropriate mitigation strategy and make recommendations to all parties involved. If the strategy does not resolve the situation, the complaint will be referred to the Director of the School for resolution.
8. If a dog causes a significant disturbance or poses a health or safety risk, the dog will be removed from the building immediately, and will not return until a committee review of the incident has been completed.



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9. Individuals with allergies to dogs may bring their concerns to the attention of the Chairs of the SPPH Health and Safety and RCC Committees. The Chairs of these committees will work with all parties concerned to agree on an appropriate mitigation strategy. If the individual requires significant alteration to the environment to tolerate the presence of dogs in the building, a medical note may be requested so that medically appropriate strategies can be identified and implemented.
10. If the owner moves to a new location in the SPPH building, the agreement needs to be updated and emailed to the SPPH HR Manager.

Evaluation and Review

The SPPH Health and Safety Committee will review this policy every three years in consultation with the SPPH Recognition, Communication and Culture Committee for approval by the SPPH Full Faculty.

References

1. Allen K, Shykoff B, Izzo J. Pet ownership, but not ACE inhibitor therapy, blunts home blood pressure responses to mental stress. *Hypertension*. 2001;38:815-820.
2. Barker R. Preliminary investigation of employee's dog presence on stress and organizational perceptions. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*. 2012;10.1108/17538351211215366
3. Schorr M. Pets in the Workplace Reduce Stress. *J Occ Health Psychol*. 2007;6:81-87.
4. Palika L, Fearing J. Considering the Idea. *Dogs at Work*. 1st ed. Washington, DC: Humane Society Press; 2008:4-14.