

	<b>CITY OF DECATUR PERSONNEL POLICY</b>		
<b>Chapter 05</b>	<b>Conduct</b>		
<b>Section 23</b>	<b>Animals in the Workplace</b>		
<b>Revised By:</b>	<b>Nate Mara, City Manager</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b>	<b>2/9/2026</b>
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Nate Mara, City Manager</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>2/23/2026</b>

**05.23 Animals in the Workplace**

A. **Purpose.** The City of Decatur is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for all employees. To support this objective, the City establishes the following policy governing the presence of animals in City facilities and workspaces.

B. **Definitions.**

- 1) Household Pet – A *household pet* is any domesticated animal kept for companionship or personal enjoyment, including but not limited to dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, rodents, or other animals typically maintained in a private residence. Household pets are not trained to perform specific tasks related to a disability and are not permitted in City facilities or workspaces.
  
- 2) Contract Animal – A *contract animal* is any animal brought onto City property by a third-party vendor, contractor, or performer for the purpose of providing entertainment, education, demonstrations, or public engagement at a City-approved event or program. These animals are not owned, handled, or supervised by City employees and are permitted only when authorized in advance by the City and when the vendor complies with all applicable laws, safety requirements, and contractual obligations.
  
- 3) Service Animal – A *service animal* is defined in accordance with 28 CFR 36.104 as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities. Service animals are working animals—not pets—and are permitted in City facilities so long as they remain under control and do not disrupt City operations.
  
- 4) Emotional Support Animal – An *emotional support animal* is an animal that provides comfort, companionship, or emotional well-being to an individual but is not trained to perform specific tasks related to a disability. Emotional support animals are not considered service animals under federal law and are not permitted in City facilities or workspaces.

- C. **General Policy.** Employees are not permitted to bring household pets into the workplace. This policy does not apply to Police or Fire Department animals that are part of an authorized law enforcement or first responder K9 program. The care, handling, deployment, and presence of Public Safety Department K9s shall be governed by departmental procedures and applicable law enforcement and emergency response standards.
- D. **Risk Avoidance.** Animals may pose risks, including, but not limited to:
- 1) Allergic reactions or health concerns for other employees;
  - 2) Fear, distraction, or discomfort among staff or visitors;
  - 3) Damage to City property or fouling of office spaces; or
  - 4) The City's obligation to maintain a safe and effective workplace, which takes precedence over any personal preference to bring an animal to work.
- E. **Regarding Outside Contract Animals.** Outside contract animals may be permitted on City property for City approved events or programs, provided that:
- 1) The animal does not pose a danger to employees, participants, or the public;
  - 2) The animal's presence does not interfere with City operations or create an undue burden on staff or facilities; and
  - 3) The vendor, contractor, or performer provides any documentation, certifications, or assurances required by the City, consistent with applicable laws, safety standards, and contractual obligations.
- F. **Regarding Service Animals.** In accordance with 28 CFR 36.104, employees who require the assistance of a service animal may be permitted to bring the service animal into the workplace, provided that:
- 1) The animal does not pose a danger to others;
  - 2) The animal's presence does not create an undue hardship for City operations; and
  - 3) The employee complies with any request by the City for reasonable documentation or clarification consistent with applicable law.
- G. **Conditions for Exclusion.** Employees with concerns for grievances regarding an animal in the workplace shall report the concern or grievance to the animal owner's supervisor. Service animals may be excluded from the workplace if the service animal:
- 1) Causes allergic reactions, fear, or physical/psychological discomfort to others;
  - 2) Distracts employees or interferes with work performance; or
  - 3) Reduces productivity or disrupts City operations.

H. **Prohibited Animals.** The following animals are strictly prohibited from City facilities, even when identified as contract or service animals under federal law:

- 1) Sick animals;
- 2) Animals with fleas or communicable diseases;
- 3) Animals lacking required vaccinations or carrying internal or external parasites;
- 4) Dogs that bark excessively or display aggressive behavior;
- 5) Animals that foul the inside or outside of City buildings; or
- 6) Animals that are in heat and have not been spayed or neutered.

I. **Owner Responsibilities.** Employees, individuals, or organizations who are permitted to bring a contract or service animals into the workplace when identified as service animals under federal law shall:

- 1) Maintain full control of the animal at all times;
- 2) Ensure the animal remains:
  - i. In the employee's physical presence, or
  - ii. In the employee's office or immediate work area;
- 3) Keep all dogs leashed at all times; and
- 4) Clean up after the animal immediately and completely.

J. **Liability.**

- 1) Employees are solely responsible for any injuries or property damage caused by their animal.
- 2) Any repair, cleaning, or maintenance costs resulting from an animal will be charged in full to the owner.
- 3) The City may, at its discretion, require the employee to maintain a liability insurance policy covering any damage or injury caused by the animal while on City premises. Minimum coverage amounts may be established by the City.
- 4) The City of Decatur is not liable for loss of, or injury to, any animal brought into the workplace under any circumstances. All employees in possession of an animal on City property assume all risks associated with the animal and acknowledge that the City is not responsible for compensation in regard to the animal in any regard.

K. **Administration.** This policy shall be administered by the City Manager or their designee. Violations may result in disciplinary action consistent with City personnel policies.