

Pets at work

The following considerations are suggested for offices that may wish to allow pets into the work environment. It is guiding information only and any company intending to allow pets should do their own research and seek further advice.

1. Gauge staff interest in allowing pets to visit the work environment. There may be people in your office who are not suited to working in an environment with pets.
2. Check workplace hygiene regulations, especially in regard to areas where food may be eaten, and any Local Government regulations.
3. Establish a pet booking system and ask anyone who wishes to bring a pet to work to register their pet prior to the day. This will allow you to control the number and type of pets that are in the office on any given day.
4. Ensure that any pet that comes to the office is up to date on vaccinations and flea/worm control programs. This can easily be achieved by asking anyone who brings a pet in to sign a registration and indemnity form.
5. Consider asking pet owners to display a pet ID tag with their owners' name so people and pets can be easily matched up if the pet becomes temporarily separated from its owner.
6. Pet owners should be asked to bring leashes, toys and appropriate bedding to the office so their pet is comfortable and secure. Owners should also be asked to take their pets outside for a toilet break every one to two hours.
7. Pet owners should be asked to supervise their pet throughout the day. If they do have to leave the office for a short time they should have a 'pet sitter' colleague who can take responsibility for the pet.
8. Not all pets are suited to visiting the office and a nervous animal can sometimes display aggressive behaviour. Any aggressive behaviour from a pet that is directed towards other animals or people can not be tolerated and there should be a clear policy that owners will be asked to remove their pet from the office if this occurs.
9. Finally, some dogs are not cat lovers and the feeling is often mutual. Offices may want to consider cat only days.

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